

Fall 2002

Excavating the remains of empire: War and postimperial trauma in the twentieth-century novel

Elizabeth J. Andersen

University of New Hampshire, Durham

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.unh.edu/dissertation>

Recommended Citation

Andersen, Elizabeth J., "Excavating the remains of empire: War and postimperial trauma in the twentieth-century novel" (2002).
Doctoral Dissertations. 87.

<https://scholars.unh.edu/dissertation/87>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact nicole.hentz@unh.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600**

UMI[®]

**EXCAVATING THE REMAINS OF EMPIRE:
WAR AND POSTIMPERIAL TRAUMA IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY NOVEL**

BY

ELIZABETH ANDERSEN

A.B. Bowdoin College, 1990

M.A. University of New Hampshire, 1995

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

September, 2002

UMI Number: 3057247

Copyright 2002 by
Andersen, Elizabeth J.

All rights reserved.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3057247

Copyright 2002 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

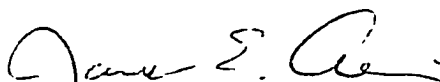
c 2002

Elizabeth Andersen

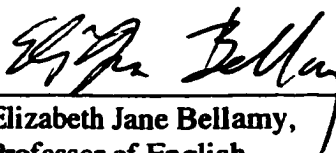
This dissertation has been examined and approved.



**Dissertation Director, Sandhya Shetty,
Associate Professor of English**




**Janet E. Aikins,
Professor of English**



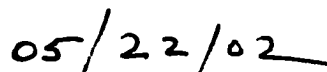
**Elizabeth Jane Bellamy,
Professor of English**



**Robin M. Hackett,
Assistant Professor of English**



**Mary E. Rhiel,
Associate Professor of German**



Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. “KNITTING TOGETHER EVERYTHING & ENDING ON THREE NOTES”: 2 BECOMES 3 IN VIRGINIA WOOLF’S <i>MRS DALLOWAY</i>	53
III. EMPIRE, REVISED IN PAT BARKER’S <i>REGENERATION</i> TRILOGY.....	100
Empire, Revised.....	108
Empire, Abroad.....	130
Empire at Home.....	150
IV. “THE GREAT ADVENTURE INTO NOWHERE”: POSTIMPERIAL TRAUMA AND THE NEW PASSAGE EAST IN MARGARET DRABBLE’S <i>THE GATES OF IVORY</i>	167
Trauma.....	177
Women.....	205
Literature.....	215
V. “THE THEATRE OF WAR” VS. “MEMORIES OF RIOTS” IN TWO NOVELS BY AMITAV GHOSH.....	236
VI. CONCLUSION.....	290
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	305

ABSTRACT

EXCAVATING THE REMAINS OF EMPIRE: WAR AND POSTIMPERIAL TRAUMA IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY NOVEL

by

Elizabeth Andersen

University of New Hampshire, September, 2002

In "Excavating the Remains of Empire: War and Postimperial Trauma in the Twentieth-Century Novel," I investigate the implications of the residual presence of empire in the contemporary novel set in England, by questioning that if it is generally accepted that in the age of imperialism novels co-produced empire, what do they now, in this historical moment of the late twentieth-century, produce in its stead? Do shame and nostalgia for empire and the trauma of empire's dissolution coexist in the postimperial, postwar novel? I use war as the key point of entry into the empire and novel connection, and claim that war operates in the novel on three essential fronts: as resulting from and encoding imperial tensions, as the traumatic event which magnifies empire's dissolution, and as the only acceptable model for a nation in crisis. Because war both results from and encodes imperial tensions, and novels are so often the battleground on which these imperial tensions wrestle for signification and reformulation, then war in novels can serve as the double lens which magnifies the residual workings of empire and the novel. I begin with Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, and claim that in it she reveals the limitations of the binaries of war and empire, while also portraying the anxieties regarding empire that have been raised by the First World War; I show how Pat Barker's *Regeneration* trilogy incorporates these two aspects as well, yet also furthers the connection between war and empire by using war to work out the traumas caused by

empire's loss; I claim that Margaret Drabble has a similar project in *The Gates of Ivory*, in which she too explicates this traumatic loss of cultural identity resulting from the end of empire; and then I proceed to an examination of how Amitav Ghosh shows the restrictions of war as the narrative of a nation in *The Shadow Lines*, while also proving war to itself be a significant means of empire's perpetuation. Despite the fact that the British Empire has been officially dismantled, imperialism and the novel are still interconnected.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When the sun at long last began to set on the British Empire, it also left dark certain key connections between empire and the novel. In the following study, I investigate the implications of this residual presence of empire in the twentieth-century novel set in England. The significance of empire to the nineteenth-century novel has been thoroughly researched and analyzed, with studies such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* leading the way; Said's reading of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, for example, in which he establishes how Austen "synchronizes domestic with international authority," shows how the pervasive, if understated, imperialist references in the nineteenth-century novel are crucial to the creation and depiction of a seemingly provincial England (87). If it is generally accepted that in the age of imperialism novels co-produced empire, what do they now, in the historical moment of the late twentieth-century, produce in its stead? Do shame and nostalgia for empire and the trauma of empire's dissolution coexist in the postimperial, postwar novel? To answer these questions, I examine the function and representation of the critical nexus of war and empire in a selection of novels set in England in the period extending from the First World War to the mid-nineties.

War is my key point of entry into the empire and novel connection. To examine war is really to examine empire, and even—or especially—in British novels, the two

World Wars, which are often parochially seen as Euro-American events, become symptoms of a larger crisis—that of empire and imperial consciousness. As such a symptom, war operates in the novel on three fronts. First, although war can exist without empire, empire cannot exist without war. War is the primary tool of empire in both overt and covert ways: the threat of war is used abroad to retain allegiance and the cult of war is used at home to retain support. As the British Empire cemented its strength in the second half of the nineteenth century, so “the army and its personnel rose in the public’s esteem” (Mackenzie 5). Britain’s military image and its imperial image became inseparable: each nourished the other. The popularity of the “military hero developed out of the Indian Mutiny.... The language of war entered into hymns, tracts, and sermons.... The public schools became wholehearted exponents of the new militarism, closely intertwining it with patriotic and imperialist endeavor” (Mackenzie 5-6). War became an intricate part of the image of empire, yet it was also a crucial means of its power and control. Pat Barker identifies this in *The Ghost Road*, when she has her character, W. H. R. Rivers, point out the irony involved when the British forbid the Melanesian headhunters to hunt heads, so to speak (185). Rivers notes dryly that the headhunters he lived with were “a people perishing from the absence of war” (207); Barker then explicitly juxtaposes this observation with a journal entry from the British soldier, Billy Prior, who is fighting in the Great War at the front in France, in which we see people perishing from the presence of war. The paradox of empire was that it was forcing some men not to fight, while simultaneously forcing other men to do just that. In one of these journal entries, Billy writes of how “Only the names meant anything. Mons, Loos, the Somme, Arras, Verdun, Ypres.... But now...I realize there’s another group of

words that still mean something. Little words that trip through sentences unregarded: us, them, we, they, here, there. These are the words of power” (G 257). These are the words of empire too, as we shall see, and Barker’s characters repeatedly realize how much, beyond words, war and empire have in common. The horrors of one bleed into the horrors of the other. Because of this interconnectedness, then, when war surfaces in the twentieth-century novel, empire is sure to follow.

The second “front” of war in the twentieth-century novel is as a traumatic event which makes clear that empire’s dissolution is imminent. Because trauma “is an experience that is not fully assimilated as it occurs” (Caruth 5), and because the response to trauma is thus a delayed response, I posit the sudden popularity of World War I as a topic in British novels written in the eighties and nineties as a belated processing of the moment that would force a drastic change to the British cultural image. As Said claims in *Culture and Imperialism*: “Imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible, I would argue, to read one without in some way dealing with the other” (71). If we agree with Said, then, that novels have had a role in producing empire, it is logical that novels will now have a role in producing—or coping with—its absence. As turning points for empire, therefore, the two world wars often become the locus for this approach to managing and synthesizing Britain’s lost imperial identity.

The role war plays in the theater of imperialism does not end with empire, however, and this is where the third front of war enters the scene. Nationalism is always quick to take imperialism’s place by tapping into the popular sentiment surrounding war, for one, so even though the times are postimperial, we are never left for long without hearing war propaganda. But war also maintains a kind of imperial presence by

dominating as the only acceptable model for a nation in crisis. In his novel, *The Shadow Lines*, for example, Amitav Ghosh demonstrates how war becomes the only means of telling the story of a nation; when other significant types of violence occur—such as riots—they have no place in the national narrative, because such a national narrative is based on imperial norms. In this way, war still functions as an extension of empire, long after empire itself has crumbled; war is empire’s coliseum-sized remains. Therefore, because war both results from and encodes imperial tensions, and novels are so often the battleground on which these imperial tensions wrestle for signification and reformulation, then war in novels can serve as the double lens which magnifies the residual workings of empire and the novel.

The First World War has long been implicated as playing a role in the demise of the British Empire. To begin with, this war is often seen as signifying the end of an era. In *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Paul Fussell claims that the Great War “reversed the Idea of Progress” (8), and as such ruptured not only a way of life, but an entire mode of thinking. The war interrupted a patriotic innocence and thus became a point that demarcated before—which was all good and reason and security and order—from after, which was chaos and insecurity. Fussell points out how even the weather aligned with such a theory: “all agree that the prewar summer was the most idyllic for many years. It was warm and sunny, eminently pastoral.... For the modern imagination that last summer has assumed the status of a permanent symbol for anything innocently but irrecoverably lost” (23-4). Fussell further emphasizes the war as an ending by writing that “Furthermore, the Great War was perhaps the last to be conceived as taking place within a seamless, purposeful ‘history’ involving a coherent stream of time running from

past through present to future” (21). What is significant about this quotation, however, is that Fussell fails to acknowledge or identify this “stream of time” as the linear progress of imperialism, and that what the Great War was disrupting, in particular, was the image of the strength and continuum of the British Empire. I argue that it is the innocence surrounding the perception of the British Empire that is lost after World War I; it became impossible, after the war, to miss the beginning dissolutions of empire.

Other critics and historians have not hesitated to make the connection between World War I and the beginnings of the end of the British Empire. Claire Tylee, for example, takes this same notion of a pre-war/post-war divide and unites it to the image of empire. She writes that the “myth” of pre-war innocence “has combined with an idea of Britain’s lost imperial splendour to support the current imagery by which the Great War was viewed over and over in diaries and memoirs: that the War was like the Flood, the Deluge, the Fall from Grace, and the world which was lost was Paradise” (245). James Joll suggests that the situation was more complicated than this, and that doubts about the empire were beginning to surface before the war. He explains that “For Britain, the euphoria produced by the great imperial pageant in London at the time of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897 was giving place to doubts...about Britain’s ability to maintain her place as the strongest imperial power in the face of other challenges” (177). Such doubts did not concern whether the empire *should* continue its current trajectory, but whether it *could*. And significantly, Joll claims that this doubt first surfaced as a result of a war: the South African or Boer war. This war “brought home to many people the cost of empire in a way no earlier colonial campaigns had done” (Joll 177). The Great War would further erode imperial sentiment. In *Propaganda and*

Empire John M. Mackenzie also avers that what one war started, the other war continued: “Some have seen the Boer War as cracking the imperial spirit. More conventionally, the Great War has been regarded as the critical turning point. The war, it is alleged, was followed by a period of pacifism, and militarism and imperialism were so intertwined in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods that revulsion from the one led to rejection of the other” (Mackenzie 9). Of course, the war itself was in part a war fought over the threat made to Britain’s imperial status: “It was because the German challenge to Britain’s imperial position was a general one rather than a specific set of territorial demands that it seemed so dangerous” (Joll 181). And the war did destroy empires, as well as the sentiment felt toward empires. A. J. P. Taylor observes that,

Before the war there had been four empires in Europe; after it, there was none. The Habsburg Monarchy broke up into national states; the core of the Ottoman Empire emerged as national Turkey; Russia and Germany survived somewhat diminished, but not Empires at any rate in name. The King of England was the only remaining Emperor in the world, in his capacity as Emperor of India; even that title had only another generation to run. (284)

Postwar, the British were right to feel that their empire was beleaguered. The First World War was in reality both the beginning of the end of empire and the unignorable signal that its dissolution was imminent. Regardless of how sunny and pastoral and halcyon the summers to come might be, the war made the British anxious over their now obviously troubled empire.

One of the characteristics of war that corresponds with the legacies of empire is the language that comes with it: war thrives on, produces, and is produced by the simple binary. For example, as Paul Fussell explains, the soldiers were forced to learn that “one thing [was] opposed to another, not with some Hegelian hope of synthesis involving a

dissolution of both extremes...but with a sense that one of the poles embodies so wicked a deficiency or flaw of perversion that its total submission is called for" (79). The Germans were evil—they were “them”; everything about them was “other”. As one soldier said, “On this side of our wire everything is familiar and every man is a friend, over there, beyond the wire, is the unknown, the uncanny” (Gilbert and Gubar 267). War seems inseparable from these binaries. There is us and them, winning and losing, good and evil. This language of simple dichotomy is a tool of war that is shared with empire, which also has an us/them binary as its base. This, of course, is not a new idea. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said established just how dependent the West is on its depiction of the East as its opposite. He writes that “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient” (3), and “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (1-2). The binary is a central component of the power/knowledge connection that orientalism uncovers, and empire, fueled by orientalism, is itself dependent on such binaries. War—as the overt handiwork of empire—can further expose how the binary distorts as it simplifies. The effects of imposed binaries are frequently a central concern in novels that scrutinize empire’s outcome.

The representation of the two World Wars in novels can also clarify an approach to the remains of empire from another significant angle: both wars disrupted the propaganda image of the British Empire as it was previously perpetuated by events of overtly imperial violence, such as the 1857 Mutiny in India. In *Colonial Power, Colonial Texts*, M. Keith Booker shows how this Mutiny became a favorite subject for novels in the late nineteenth century. Because of the violent role the British played in the Mutiny,

one would think this imperial event would have been downplayed. Yet instead, as Booker contends, “the Mutiny triggered an explosion of imperial discourse. The British got as much mileage as possible from their successful suppression of the Mutiny by making it central to their imaginary construction of the Raj and thereby using it as a crucial prop to the prestige of the British government both in India and at home” (104). As would happen again with World War I, numerous and gory rumors began to circulate which exaggerated and created the horrors done *to the British* during the Mutiny. The Mutiny thus became “enshrined at the center of the ritual of British power in India” and “took on a prominence in late-nineteenth-century British literature that was out of all proportion to its real historical significance” (Booker 104-5). Novels written with the Mutiny as their focus expanded and elaborated upon these rumors and “transformed the fictitious stories of rape and mutilation into factual evidence” (Sharpe 85). The different facets of the Mutiny were twisted and re-played until they came to represent in the British popular imagination the British Empire at its “best.” These Mutiny fictions were so popular because they reversed the colonizer/colonized roles in such a way that alleviated any residual feelings of imperialist guilt. As Patrick Brantlinger points out in his chapter on Mutiny fiction, “the imperialist dominators become victims and the dominated, villains. Imagining the Mutiny in this way totally displaced guilt and projected repressed, sadistic impulses onto demonized Indian characters” (222).

The Mutiny not only continuously reappeared in the popular literature of the times, but it also reappeared as an influence in imperialist decision-making. The Mutiny enabled Queen Victoria to dispense with pretense and issue in her Queen’s Proclamation of November 1858 that India was now Britain’s *Indian Empire*; the “English women’s

ravaged bodies”—elaborated upon in Mutiny fiction— “ushered in a new imperial authority” (Sharpe 81). Over sixty-one years later, the Mutiny was still being used as an excuse for imperialist cruelty; in her *Allegories of Empire*, Jenny Sharpe shows how officials tried to excuse the British massacre of unarmed civilians and children at Jallianwala Bagh on April 13, 1919, by using the events of the Mutiny as a defense (114). The Mutiny had become an imperialist rallying myth; swaddled in the rumors established as fact by Mutiny fiction, the Mutiny became a safe symbol to use to justify all sorts of imperial events.

Even E. M. Forster, a man well aware of the problems of empire and not necessarily a proponent of it, used the resonances of the Mutiny, instead of more contemporary events, in his twentieth-century novel, *A Passage To India*. Forster began to write *A Passage to India* before World War I, and then had trouble with it and set it aside for several years. During this break from the novel, Forster received a letter from his friend, Malcolm Darling, a colonial administrator in England, which described the events at Jallianwala Bagh in great detail. This massacre troubled Forster and many have speculated that when he returned to his novel, it was changed because of it: “the war and the Amritsar Massacre of 1919 were decisive steps in his experience, so that when he resumed his pre-war Indian novel, it became a different and darker affair, also a more complex and powerful one, than as originally conceived” (Forster’s *Letters* x). It is curious that in the many published volumes of Forster’s correspondence, although he discusses India and Britain’s presence there continually, he does not mention Jallianwala Bagh directly; and in *A Passage*—supposedly so influenced by Jallianwala Bagh—there are only allusions to it, yet there are several direct references to the Mutiny.¹

By substituting the Mutiny for the more pertinent—to his topic and times—and disturbing Jallianwala Bagh calamity, Forster becomes the forerunner for yet another characteristic of the imperial and postimperial novel: performing a kind of imperialist metonymy that is the equivalent of the sidelong glance. Perhaps out of feelings of guilt and trauma, Forster evades the direct implications of Jallianwala Bagh and instead will try to explicate them using the Mutiny as a more comfortable trope. In “Narrative Witnessing as Memory Work,” Irene Kacandes reminds us that “literary texts can be about trauma.... But texts can also ‘perform’ trauma, in the sense that they can ‘fail’ to tell the story, by eliding, repeating, and fragmenting components of the story” (56). Forster does not want to look directly at the most troubling aspects of empire; what his novel fails to reveal is indicative of such a shifting in gaze. Sixty years later, empire will still cause British novelists to perform such a shift: in *The Gates of Ivory*, Margaret Drabble will choose to write about empire and its effects in the late eighties and early nineties—yet instead of concentrating on one of England’s former colonies, she focuses on Cambodia, a nation ravaged by France and other European and American powers. The British Empire’s absence in Drabble’s novel is similar to the absence of Jallianwala Bagh in Forster’s.

In *Mrs Dalloway*—a novel also written soon after the Jallianwala Bagh event—Woolf, too, refers to the Mutiny instead: regarding Clarissa’s old aunt, Helena Parry, Woolf writes that “For at the mention of India, or even Ceylon, her eyes...slowly deepened, became blue, beheld, not human beings—she had no tender memories, no proud illusions about Viceroys, Generals, Mutinies—it was orchids she saw, and mountain passes and herself carried on the backs of coolies in the ‘sixties over solitary

peaks" (271); Helena Parry is, interestingly, "an indomitable Englishwoman, fretful if disturbed by the War, say, which dropped a bomb at her very door, from her deep meditation over orchids and her own figure journeying in the 'sixties in India" (271). The Mutiny does not disturb her, perhaps because it was made into successful propaganda; the war, on the other hand, *can* interrupt her reverie. In the twentieth century, novelists were still referring to the Mutiny—instead of more current imperial events—since it was yet a "safe" code event synonymous with the propaganda version of the British presence in India.

When World War I began, it appeared initially as if it might serve as a modern version of the Mutiny and function similarly in literature. And at first this seemed to work: the war was going to be another event that reinforced the image of the British Empire, a moment around which could coalesce the motivating feelings of nationalism and patriotism. The initial literature written about the war—such as Rupert Brooke's famous "If I should die, think only this of me:/ That there's some corner of a foreign field/ That is for ever England" sonnet—did act as an extension of Mutiny propaganda. War literature was to serve as a kind of cultural self-representation in the same way as Mutiny literature did. It was retro in function *and* in style; in *The Ruling Passion*, Christopher Lane points out how the war poets, for example, were (and still are) popular in that they allowed the reader to escape the contemporary issues confronting them in modernist works. Lane suggests that the war poets' popularity had jingoistic origins and that such impulses "may explain why the war poets remain so enduringly popular, and why their aesthetic seems central to Britain's disavowal of its imperial dissolution and economic turbulence at the war's end" (196). Paul Fussell has written extensively on

how “literary” the Great War was; often faced with an abundance of free time, the British soldiers read the English “classics” and anthologies such as the *Oxford Book of English Verse* (159). Such literature reinforced national cultural boundaries by reminding the soldiers of the cultural self-representation which needed to be preserved, and for which they were fighting.

It is not surprising that the British soldiers of World War I turned to “classic” English texts, for when the war lasted much longer than had originally been predicted, and when the horrors of trench warfare in particular became known, using a propagandistic image of war in literature to mask the dissolution of empire become a much more complicated enterprise. Patriotic poems such as Rupert Brooke’s war sonnets began to be replaced by poems critical of the war, such as those written by Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. Patriotism was now questioned rather than celebrated: for example, in Sassoon’s poem, “Lamentations,” when a soldier breaks down upon hearing of his brother’s death, the narrator dryly and sarcastically proclaims that “In my belief / Such men have lost all patriotic feeling” (131); and in “Base Details,” Sassoon writes regarding the upper strata of the military, and in the voice of a Major, that, “And when the war is done and youth stone dead, / I’d toddle safely home and die—in bed” (131). This is not the nationalist and imperialist propaganda put forth in accounts of the Mutiny. In her trilogy, Pat Barker zeroes in on this disjunction originating with the Great War. She begins *Regeneration* with the anti-war proclamation written by the real-life Sassoon, in which he states that “I am not protesting the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed” (3); she then dwells on the paradoxes within Sassoon (and others), focusing on just how Sassoon

could be a “tremendously successful and *bloodthirsty* platoon commander, and yet at the same time, back in billets, out comes the notebook. Another anti-war poem” (*Eye in the Door* 156). In this twentieth-century war, ruptures were forming which tended to reveal the real state of the British Empire; so immediately after World War I, for example, E. M. Forster could write a novel about British India which used the threat of a small colonial mutiny to convey “a sense of historical crisis that is related specifically to the historical experience of World War I” (Booker 3), and on the other hand, Virginia Woolf could have war and empire surface repeatedly in her everyday London of *Mrs Dalloway*. As with the later war poetry, war in these novels does not proselytize in the old way; rather, it becomes a flare which spotlights the dissolution of the British Empire and the ensuing apprehensions surrounding its demise.

It is important to note how historians continually refer to the feelings experienced by the British after the Great War as “anxieties”. For instance, James Joll writes that “the sense of British superiority which the existence of the Empire had helped to create over many generations was...accompanied by an *anxiety* that the British were losing the martial and administrative gifts which had won the Empire on which it was believed...Britain’s prosperity depended” (my italics) (Joll 179). That the British were “anxious” over the state of their Empire after the war is understandable. What is significant, however, is that such anxiety resurfaces in the eighties, a good forty years past the official end of empire, and seventy years past the insight occasioned by the war. In the eighties, cultural critics, literary critics, authors, and other writers joined the historians in using tropes of malaise, ennui, and general illness surrounding issues of the—now defunct—empire. For example, writing about the return of the British Raj in

these times, Salman Rushdie, in his essay “Outside the Whale,” declares that “the refurbishment of the Empire’s tarnished image is under way,” that many British “turn their eyes nostalgically to the lost hour of their precedence” and that “Britain is in danger of entering a condition of *cultural psychosis*, in which it begins once again to strut and to posture like a great power while, in fact, its power diminishes every year” (my italics) (91-2). In a similar fashion, Simon Gikandi asks in his *Maps of Englishness*: “And how are we to make use of a past whose practical and theoretical consequences were often negative and destructive—a past that casts such a long shadow over our present moment that many of us still reel from its trauma?” (21). Rushdie and Gikandi are not alone in making such characterizations. Contemporary British national and cultural self-representation is consistently referred to as stricken with a kind of malaise: Christopher Lane debates whether or not “Britain’s situation would appear closer to melancholia than mourning” (232); Benedict Anderson points out that a nation’s narratives are affected by “all profound changes in consciousness, [which] by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias” (204); and Fredric Jameson has claimed that imperialism appears in Western literature as “formal symptoms” (64). While for some, the dissolution of the British Empire enabled a creative “postimperial aporia,” for others, empire’s dissolution had the opposite effect. This is not a call to pity for the “poor” colonizers; nor is it an attempt to posit the English as victims: however, analyzing empire’s demise as a trauma, because of the ensuing and parallel demise of the traditional English cultural identity, goes a long way towards explaining such recurrent references of malaise and dis-ease.

In her book, *Unclaimed Experience*, Cathy Caruth examines Freud’s theory of “traumatic neurosis,” writing that it is “the unwitting reenactment of an event that one

cannot simply leave behind” (2). If, as Gikandi claims, English identity or “Englishness” “had been produced by a continuous conflict between the center and its Celtic and colonial peripheries” (xvii), then it can be assumed that the loss of the use of these peripheries as mirrors which reflected back a certain perception of England and the English must have profoundly affected the construction of cultural identity. In chapter two, I show how Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, written about one woman’s normal day in London in June of 1924, is permeated with thoughts of empire and the war. Characters will continually intersperse thoughts of “the dead; of the flag; of Empire” (25) in the midst of their daily activities. Such a presence is indicative of the breach the war has opened up. Having just experienced the war, Woolf naturally taps into its continued effect on the everyday lives of everyday Londoners. Why, then, does a writer such as Pat Barker return to the war in the trilogy she writes from 1991 to 1995? I use Cathy Caruth’s *Unclaimed Experience* to argue that English novelists like Pat Barker return to the war precisely to alleviate the implications of the demise of empire. War was the traumatic moment which revealed to the British the very instability of their empire. If, as Caruth reads Freud, trauma is always “*not known* in the first instance” and “returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4), then choosing war as a topic is a way to begin a cultural healing by returning to explore what at the time was too painful to do so. “In trauma, that is, the outside has gone inside without any mediation” (Caruth 59), so novels about this trauma will serve as a means for such mediation. Caruth explains that “Through the notion of trauma, I will argue, we can understand that a rethinking of reference is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding, that is, at precisely permitting *history* to arise where *immediate understanding* may not” (Caruth 11). By

writing about the war and emphasizing its connections to empire, Barker uses “history”—the events of World War I—to understand empire’s loss. Likewise, Margaret Drabble—by including in her trilogy so many references to empire and how England has changed because of empire’s dissolution—addresses what these constant illness references are indicative of: the cultural need to re-live the trauma of the end of empire as a working out of the question central to a traumatic neurosis—namely, “what does it mean to survive?” (Caruth 60). In *The Radiant Way*, *A Natural Curiosity*, and especially in *The Gates of Ivory*, Drabble addresses just what it means to “survive” empire and its dissolution, and portrays a new, postimperial, world order. In contrast, war plays a role that is just as tightly connected to empire, yet not at all cathartic in Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*. His narrator has to figure out a way to release the stranglehold that war still has on his nation’s construction of its history. War is a remains of empire that Ghosh’s narrator needs to excavate and wants to eradicate.

Since World War I is just the first major war in what will prove to be a century of deadly skirmishes, my dissertation is not limited to the scope and implications of that particular war. As Eric Hobsbawm claims, “Since August 1914 we have lived in the world of monstrous wars, upheavals and explosions” (327), and I examine the representation of many of these “wars and upheavals” as they are used in novels in relation to empire. As outlined previously, I use war as the key point of entry into the empire and novel connection, and claim that war operates in the novel on three essential fronts: as resulting from and encoding imperial tensions, as the traumatic event which magnifies empire’s dissolution, and as the only acceptable model for a nation in crisis. I begin with the representation of World War I in novels, because that war first caused or

revealed anxieties over the British Empire's strength and longevity. I use Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, written shortly after the war, to emphasize how the anxieties which the war created did not end with it; instead, the war fashioned a minefield of doubts and insecurities through which the average English citizen of that time period had to navigate her and his everyday.

My focus remains with World War I in my next chapter, in which I explore how and why it is represented in the novels of a contemporary author looking back at that specific historical moment with a specific need and intention in mind. I assert that it is no coincidence that World War I became a popular subject in the late eighties and early nineties, and that its sudden resurgence as a literary topic is indicative of the belated processing of a cultural traumatic neurosis. As the moment which revealed the beginning of the end of the British Empire, novelists turn to World War I to come to terms with and become acclimatized to this change in cultural identity. In her *Regeneration* trilogy, Pat Barker approaches World War I with the benefit of hindsight and concentrates on the psychiatrist, W. H. R. Rivers, as a historical figure who can act as witness to—and therefore make sense of—this dissolution of empire.

However, World War I is not the only historical event which contemporary novelists use to process the demise of empire; so instead of limiting the focus of my dissertation to the parameters of World War I, I also explicate novels in which the author uses other wars as a way of commenting on and revealing similar significant truths about empire's remains. I first pass over the Second World War in favor of Margaret Drabble's use of the Cambodian genocide under the rule of the Khmer Rouge, deviating from chronological order precisely because Drabble's project with Cambodia has distinct

similarities to Pat Barker's use of World War I. The Cambodian conflict, too, was also in part a result of empire, with Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge first replacing Sihanouk, who was seen to have too close ties to the previous French colonizers, and then cementing their support by taking a stance against what the American "empire" was doing to Viet Nam with bombing raids that often crossed over the Cambodian border. Atrocity stories of other violence—what Pol Pot did to his own people, what some Americans soldiers did in Viet Nam—become recurrent topics in Drabble's England, and follow in the footsteps of the earlier stories of Mutiny and World War I transgressions. Her characters focus on the horrors caused by other empires as a way of indirectly processing simultaneous feelings of guilt and nostalgia for the dissolution of the British Empire. They resituate their own feelings of loss into the obvious chaos of Cambodia, because there the scars of war are overt—in contrast to the cloaking that forty years has wrought on England's diminished status—and also there the scars are not the "fault" of the British Empire. Drabble's use of the genocidal horrors of Cambodia parallels Barker's use of the unexpected horrors of World War I: both novelists turn to these specific historical events to process the shift of cultural identity occasioned by the demise of the British Empire.

Finally, I move back in time to World War II and to various conflicts that occurred in India in the sixties and seventies, such as India's war against China in 1962, and partition-related riots. With the end of World War II came the official end of the British Empire, when India gained independence in 1947. World War II was undoubtedly a tragedy for Europe and the western world, as it brought to fruition anxieties that initiated with World War I; however, to India, World War II was a more complex signifier, since it opened the door to a new world order, in which India's

independence was inevitable. In *The Shadow Lines*, Amitav Ghosh shows how the war was in many ways a happy time for his narrator's relatives living in London. The changes that the war was commencing had the possibility of being changes for the better—from the viewpoint of the colonized. The colonizer's bane became the boon of the colonized. However, Ghosh's portrayal of some of the benefits of World War II is not simply positive, for in my dissertation I assert that while perhaps speeding the demise of empire, war also becomes a way that the stranglehold of empire keeps a firm grasp on India. War is the only available trope that a nation can use to explain and tell the stories of its own struggles. It becomes the valiant violence, and silences all other types of violence. Ghosh's narrator comes to the realization that the riots that occur in India during and after Partition do not become part of the historical record of India as a nation, whereas India's wars—such as its war against China in 1962—are analyzed, discussed, and written about: such discourses of war do not allow room for accompanying discourses of riots. War thus becomes part of the remains of empire, duplicating how the narratives of the nations of the west still impose themselves on the narratives of the nations of the east.

Although I begin with World War I in novels and what it reveals about empire, I expand the focus of my dissertation to include other wars and violent conflicts which are also used by authors to portray and comment upon the prominence of empire's remains. In doing so I disclose the multiple functions of war as it intersects with empire in the novel: war shares the binaries of empire, it is the primary tool of empire, it becomes the symptom of the crisis of empire, it carries on the tasks of empire, it magnifies the workings of empire, it becomes empire's coliseum-sized remains. The novels I choose to

include all contain, utilize, and develop several of these junctures between war and empire, overlapping in some instances and in others proceeding in different directions. In *Mrs Dalloway*, for example, Woolf reveals the limitations of the binaries of war and empire, while also portraying the anxieties over empire raised by the First World War; Pat Barker's *Regeneration* trilogy incorporates these two aspects as well, and also furthers the connection between war and empire, by using war to work out the traumas caused by empire's loss; Margaret Drabble also explicates this traumatic loss of cultural identity resulting from the end of empire; and Ghosh shows the limitations of the binaries of war while also proving war to itself be a significant means of empire's perpetuation. My dissertation identifies and speaks to the war/empire nexus in the novels of the twentieth century.

In *Excavating the Remains of Empire*, I examine how twentieth-century wars and violent upheavals are represented in novels, and conclude that novelists are frequently using war specifically as an instrument that allows them to access, both directly and indirectly, the topic of the British Empire and its dissolution. Novels, then, that in many ways seem to be *post-empire*, are in fact as riddled with the remains of empire as earlier novels were with the workings of empire. An important part of my project, therefore, is to read certain novels *for* empire that have hitherto been neglected in postimperial studies. If, as Said has claimed, "Without empire...there is no European novel as we know it" (69), then it is necessary to extend such readings of empire in novels to those novels written after empire's demise: for if empire once played such a significant role in the novel, then surely it does not just disappear after the official date of empire's end.

Empire must still be represented in novels—although perhaps in a different guise. I claim that empire does still play an essential role in the novel written in the second half of the twentieth-century, and I propose that a beneficial way of illustrating this empire preoccupation is to briefly emphasize the many similarities between such novels written towards the end of the twentieth century, and a novel that is widely acknowledged as being “about” empire and its problems—such as E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India*.

Forster’s *A Passage* has generated a small industry of books and essays devoted to discussion and explication of what it reveals about imperialism. It is a text that acknowledges the beginning of the end of empire: in doing so it breaks with previous colonialist literature by, for example, “serv[ing] as a central literary challenge to the kind of knowledge-based colonial power envisioned by Kipling in *Kim*,” while also illustrating the often overlooked “confluence of modernism and imperialism” (Booker 42). That *A Passage To India* provides a commentary on empire has already been well-established, so it is a helpful “touchstone” to use to make the connection between it and other novels which are not widely acknowledged as having a similar imperial focus. As I have been saying, there seems to be a frequent assumption made that when the British Empire was dismantled physically or geographically, it was also dismantled symbolically; when studies are made of empire in literature today, their focus is usually on novels written overtly about the colonies—like Forster’s *A Passage To India*—or by authors from the former colonies. However, by comparing Forster’s *A Passage* to novels that have been “allowed” to be post-empire, the direct similarities between them help make the case that empire is still a preoccupation and frequent theme in novels written forty to fifty years after empire’s demise. Using Forster as a touchstone colonial text makes it clear that we

have, perhaps, been too quick to disassociate England and certain “English” writers from the postcolonial situation. It becomes evident how prominent a place empire still sustains in the English novel of the late twentieth century.

As two of the most prominent British modernist novelists, Forster and Woolf are often paired, especially since they were also from the same social circles. But it is this friendship and historical proximity that is used to bring the two together, rather than any similarity in the subject matter of their novels. Such an absence is itself noteworthy: *A Passage to India* and *Mrs Dalloway* were only published a few months apart, but in contrast to the “industry” generated by *A Passage*, studies explicating empire in *Mrs Dalloway* are relatively recent in date. As such, the connections made between the two novels do not usually involve empire, despite the fact that comparisons between the two can emphasize the pervasiveness of empire—and anxieties regarding it—in both novels. Comparing the two is one way of demonstrating how novels set in London are as significantly *about* empire as novels situated in the colonies.

The similarities between *Mrs Dalloway* and *A Passage to India* abound. For example, as Clarissa learns from the experience of her “double” or alter ego, Septimus Warren Smith, a World War One veteran, so Adela Quested, the main character of *A Passage To India*, has a similar double in her traveling companion and future mother-in-law, Mrs. Moore. Mrs. Moore— and the personal crisis she faces in India—has been considered to be Forster’s portrayal of a particular kind of identity crisis occurring as a result of the war: “Her experience becomes, in fact, allegorical of the breakdown of nineteenth-century reliance upon cultivation of human affection when faced with the horror of the First World War” (Das xi). Septimus is devastated by the war, and Mrs.

Moore is a representation of the devastation of the war: both characters enable the protagonists—Clarissa and Adela—to experience an epiphany about their roles in the world.

The similarities between the two novels extend further. Just as Adela is tormented by the echo she hears after her trauma in the cave, so Clarissa is continually bothered and interrupted by the sounds of Big Ben chiming out the hour. Furthermore, throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa often appears to struggle against what her life has become once she made the decision to marry Richard Dalloway. As I will show in chapter two, she devises her own way of manipulating the traditional marriage role, and is as content within it as she is discontent. However, her unhappiness makes her able to understand and identify with the shell-shocked Septimus—a man ruined by merely following along the common route laid out by empire: enlisting to fight for the protection of us against them. The restrictions of marriage and the restrictions of empire thus intersect. Forster also has his main female character, Adela Quested, wrestle with marriage, while using the revelations of empire to talk herself out of succumbing to such a marriage. Marriage and empire change a woman in strangely conjunctive ways. For example, Adela comes to India with a healthy skepticism as to the role of the British there, but after agreeing to marry Ronny Heaslop, she automatically becomes an “Anglo-Indian” and must carry the racist baggage that comes with such a title and identity. An hour or two after the engagement occurs, Adela already seems different. Forster writes,

His [Ronny’s] voice grew complacent again; he was here not to be pleasant but to keep the peace, and now that Adela had promised to be his wife, she was sure to understand. ‘What does our old gentleman of the car think?’ she asked, and her negligent tone was exactly what he desired. (96)

Adela has no Sally Seton with whom she can discuss the implications of marriage, so she uses the canvas of empire to express her misgivings. She looks at the Marabar Hills as the sun sets and muses, “How lovely they suddenly were! But she couldn’t touch them. In front, like a shutter, fell a vision of her married life. She and Ronny would look into the club like this every evening...while the true India slid by unnoticed” (47). She connects what she dislikes about the role of the British in India, with what she fears she will dislike about her role in marriage. Virginia Woolf makes a similar conflation between marriage and empire when she has Clarissa frequently reassure herself about the choice she made to marry Richard Dalloway instead of Peter Walsh, by negatively equating Peter with his role as an administrator in India.

What is important and useful about these similarities is that they reveal a personal and political anxiety that is connected to war and empire and what war has revealed about empire. Such similarities expose a kind of minefield of cultural knowledge—an imperial unconscious—which is potentially explosive and difficult to negotiate. Keith Booker points out that “By the late nineteenth century India was so integral to the British national self-image that the idea of a Britain without India was almost inconceivable” (19). However, by the early twentieth century, when Forster and Woolf both wrote their novels, the idea that Britain *would* soon be a Britain bereft of India was becoming impossible to ignore; both novels encode this crisis and sense of loss as a critique of imperialism. The trauma of this dissolution of empire subtly begins to infiltrate and perhaps take the place of “the prominence of India as a motif in British literature” (Booker 66).

Parallels also exist between *A Passage* and Barker's *Regeneration* trilogy, despite the fact that war is only mentioned in the very last pages of *A Passage*. Forster has Aziz declare to Fielding that "Until England is in difficulties we keep silent, but in the next European war—aha, aha! Then is our time" (321). Here Aziz alludes to how the chaos that comes with war is also the chaos of empire, and it is in such moments that empire reveals its vulnerability. Although Forster's English characters in India frequently refer back to the military "glories" of the Mutiny, only Aziz refers to the fact that there has just been a "European war," and that the peace which ensued from it is, perhaps, temporary. Forster, although he does write quite critically about empire, mostly ignores the war and cannot seem to resist the temptation to orientalize India, often positioning it as England's sensual and chaotic opposite, as seen both from the viewpoint of the English characters who are prejudiced against India, and also from the point of view of the supposedly more neutral narrative voice. Critical of the English presence in India and of the administrators there who maintain that presence, Forster is still pessimistic at the thought of India becoming England's diplomatic equal. He even has the sympathetic Fielding scorn the idea: "India a nation! What an apotheosis! Last comer to the drab nineteenth-century sisterhood! Waddling in at this hour of the world to take her seat!" (322). In contrast, Pat Barker, albeit with the benefit of hindsight, addresses many of the same issues occurring in the same time-period as Forster, yet she embraces the war which Forster ignores, connecting it specifically to the corruptions of empire which Forster readily captured in his novel. Barker's character W. H. R. Rivers—who is in many ways the Fielding equivalent in her *Regeneration* trilogy—is able to see the scope of empire's inequities and its impending demise because of what the horrors of World War I have

revealed to him about the workings of empire. Rivers's war experiences make him go back in his mind and revisit his experiences as an ethnologist researching the Islanders of the Torres Straits for his book on kinship. It is this juxtaposition that Barker has Rivers make between war and empire which enables Rivers to grasp what remains just out of Fielding's reach, that empire is based on a system of fabricated dichotomies, whose boundaries can, should, and will be dismantled.

It is significant that Rivers's investigation into and processing of his own experience as a British academic doing "fieldwork" in the colonies takes place in the context of his work as a war psychiatrist working with shell-shocked soldiers. Thus, the view that the reader gets of Rivers's evaluation of empire is tempered by and in a way inseparable from what he has witnessed on the frontlines of empire's war. Rivers might have felt the same way at the time he was in the Torres Straits in 1898—he of course might then have viewed the witch-doctor Njiru as his equal, as he does when he reminisces about his experiences. But because Barker presents Rivers's colonial experiences as a recollection made during the war, he—and the reader—sees empire through the lens of war; the benefit he achieves from this retrospection parallels the benefit Barker has in writing about empire after its demise. Therefore, whereas Forster's Aziz can make the realization that the desire of British women like Adela and Mrs. Moore to simply *see* India is part of the way empire retains its power, when he claims that "This pose of 'seeing India' which had seduced him to Miss Quested at Chandrapore was only a form of ruling India" (306), Fielding himself, although sympathetic to the colonized, is not able to do the same. He cannot see the significance of his simply being

in India—and that, like Rivers’s ethnological observations, his presence there as a school teacher is part of how empire works.

Just as Forster uses the Mutiny as a touchstone event, while avoiding addressing the more recent and disturbing events at Jallianwala Bagh, so Margaret Drabble, in *The Gates of Ivory*, writes about the dissolution of the British Empire by having her characters be preoccupied with Cambodia, a country which—significantly—was not a colony of Britain. Her characters—while forward-thinking enough to not overtly *mourn* the loss of empire—frequently refer to the change in cultural identity caused by the dissolution of empire. Stephen Cox, one of Drabble’s main characters, travels to Cambodia with the perhaps irreconcilable goals of being artistically inspired and researching the atrocities of Pol Pot. His passage east is very much motivated by the colonial literature of the past—so much so that at a crucial moment for Stephen in Cambodia, the narrator interrupts by declaring: “Beware what you read when young.... It may bring you to this shore, this brink, this bridge” (356). Stephen constantly has Conrad in mind, but Kurtz is not Stephen’s only literary forebear: there is an underlying Forster element to Stephen’s passage East, so that whereas he ends up, perhaps, a Kurtz, he begins an Adela Quested.

If in *The Gates of Ivory*, Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* functions as the 1857 Mutiny—as a rallying cry for empire despite the fact that many of the characters admit to not grasping its import and will thus query “What actually *happens* in it? Who is going where and why?” (237)—then Forster is the Jallianwala Bagh, with the end of the kind of passage East represented in his novels more what Stephen seems to be unconsciously mourning. Stephen never mentions Forster—it is Conrad whom he tries to emulate—yet

his reactions in moments of crisis are voiced in Forster's terms. He hears the "boun boun" which was the sound of nothingness confronting Adela in the Marabar Caves; and although lying sick in the jungle, his experiences are aligned with Adela's when he thinks, "Why try to describe the real thing? It was not even very real. It was a shadow of a shadow on the wall of a cave" (356). Drabble has Stephen describe himself as an "old-fashioned book person," and his passage East reflects this. In a postmodern way, however, Stephen is aware of his anachronisms. While at a border camp waiting to begin his journey into Cambodia, Stephen looks around at his various fellow-travelers and thinks, "Were they out of step with their age, all of them, a ragged hangover from the past, emotional cripples, nostalgic dreamers of dreams, born out of their true time?... Have they been unable to adapt to the eighties?" (124). Drabble writes that "Stephen Cox hangs between two worlds. He is a go-between" (275); yet Stephen also seems to "hang" between two eras, the imperial and postimperial. By referencing Forster's *A Passage in* times of crisis, Drabble indicates that these crises are empire-related. When her characters search for a personal and cultural identity in the historical moment of the late twentieth century, it becomes evident that any passages East will be less Conrad and more Forster—yet not even a Forster passage, quite. While Forster still posited India as Britain's other, despite his awareness of the problems inherent in doing so, Drabble has her characters come to the belated conclusion that they can no longer define themselves against a colonial—or postcolonial—East.

Amitav Ghosh revisions *A Passage to India* in his novel, *The Shadow Lines*. Ghosh opens *The Shadow Lines* with an Indian family making the "reverse" passage from India to England. His novel begins: "In 1939, thirteen years before I was born, my

father's aunt, Mayadebi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib" (3). By establishing such a passage in his first sentence, Ghosh signals to the reader that his novel is a postimperial response to E. M. Forster's *A Passage To India*. The passages that Ghosh's characters will make, from this 1939 trip to the narrator's academic research trip in the late seventies and early eighties, are very much *of* the new world order, and as such, are significantly different from the passages of Forster's characters. Ghosh's May Price does travel to India like Adela Quested did before her, and, like Adela, unwittingly ends up in the center of a conflict. However, whereas in Forster's novel the conflict only served to solidify the opposing mindsets of both the Indians and the English, and thus sent each side back to their corner of the ring, so to speak, Ghosh's narrator tries to decode all the intricacies of the events set off by May's visit. Many of the scenes in *The Shadow Lines* reference scenes of *A Passage*; in the way that they differ can be seen some of the transitions made from colonial to postcolonial times. However, Ghosh uses the correspondence between the two novels to indicate that in the seventies—the present time of the novel—there is still a “shadow” of colonialism which still plies the colonialist trade, so to speak. Ghosh thus questions the *post* of the postimperial state.

To see the method in the way Ghosh parallels and updates certain scenes from *A Passage*, I am going to explicate a seemingly insignificant moment that occurs shortly after Adela Quested has come to India to see her friend, Ronny Heaslop, in action as a Colonial Administrator. While taking an evening car-ride in the Nawab's car, they have an accident and the car ends up in the embankment. Thus ensues chaos—the kind which Forster enjoys conceiving of as part of India and the experience of India. So picture the scene: it is now quite dark, the car lies mostly off the road and in the embankment in the

countryside, the driver begins to fix the car, the Nawab is upset, Ronny and Adela putter and hover, and whatever the car hit—a hyena, buffalo, and goat are all proposed as the unlucky beast—is on the loose. What else can round out this scenario? Enter: a pug. Miss Derek, an Englishwoman who works for a Maharani in the Mudkul State, and has more or less hijacked her employer’s car for a few days, appears on the road in said car—just in the nick of time. Her companions are a harmonium and two dogs. Ronny asks for a lift and she replies, “I’ll take three of you if one’ll sit in front and nurse a pug. No more” (91). The Anglo-Indian driver is left behind repairing the car (there is no room in Miss Derek’s car—and at this point no room in the universe—for such a conjoining of England and India), Ronny and Adela are safely ensconced in the back where they can resume holding hands, and the Nawab Bahadur? He’s stuck in the front with the pug on his lap. It is colonial times: an Indian animal has caused chaos and damage, and an English animal is used to humiliate an Indian man.

Now skip to about fifty years later. The English May Price—very much Adela Quested’s counterpart—has come to India to see it, and to perhaps begin a relationship with Tridib, the narrator’s uncle; Tridib “met” May when she was a baby and he a young boy in London, and had recently started up a correspondence with May that was romantic in subtext. May, like Adela, is troubled by what is now Britain’s colonial past in India. She is horrified by the Queen Victoria memorial in Calcutta, and is very much a principled idealist who believes the world can change and that she can help change it. May and Tridib are taking the narrator along on a car-trip to Diamond Harbour. The narrator is only eight or nine, here, yet he recognizes that there is tension between May and Tridib: they seem to have been fighting. As they are speeding down the highway,

they see a shape in the road ahead, slow down as they pass it, and notice that it is a dog who has been hit by a car and is dying, but is not yet dead. Tridib wants to keep going, but May forces him to stop the car so that she can do something to help. What follows is an absolutely horrific scene in which May uses a dull penknife to end the dog's suffering. No need for detail. Suffice it to say that Tridib at first thinks May is crazy to do what she does, and May gets angry at Tridib for at first not helping: "Can't you help a bit? she said. All you're good for is words. Can't you ever *do* anything?" (170). To interpret this dog scene is a more difficult venture than to interpret Forster's pug and goat moment, because it reflects its postcolonial tensions and interconnections which are not as black and white as colonial tensions were made out to be. Tridib, who often is anglophile in inclination, wants to do nothing here, while May, who has guilt over the colonization of India, wants to help; everything is complicated further because to help here means to kill the Indian dog. May does end its suffering, but only after adding a new kind of suffering and fear to the mix.

May is able to do more than Adela, but as an Englishwoman in India with a colonial legacy that has not been dismantled along with its colonial status, May ends up stepping into the mire created by the partition that followed Britain's precipitous and disorganized withdrawal. The chaos that May unwittingly causes reveals how stringently detrimental the connection still is between empire and India. May thus follows in Adela's footsteps, yet this time the outcome is deadly. May ends up in the center of a calamity that does not depart that significantly from the calamity unwittingly caused by Forster's Adela. Ghosh has May evoke Adela, and in doing so proves that many tensions, nursed by the British Empire, have yet to dissipate. That Ghosh, and the other

novelists in this dissertation, use, reference, and revision Forster's *A Passage To India*, a touchstone text for the problems of empire, is emblematic of how empire—even in its dismantled state—is still a central concern of the contemporary novel set in England.

In her essay, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" the postcolonial critic, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, writes that "It should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England's social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English" (262). If this is true of nineteenth-century literature, then it seems even more important to remember imperialism—when its function as England's "social mission" was beginning to falter—as a crucial part of the "cultural representation of England to the English" in the first half of the twentieth century when reading another "woman's text"—*Mrs Dalloway*, a book written in the early 1920's. And indeed, if *Mrs Dalloway* is approached with empire in mind, it becomes evident how inextricably imperialism is a part of *Mrs Dalloway's* London. In Elleke Boehmer's *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, she comments that "Virginia Woolf's writing also houses persisting imperialist attitudes alongside anti-colonial sentiment. This is despite—or perhaps indeed because of—the fact that she did not herself experience the Empire at first hand" (141-2). Whereas Woolf was never in the colonies, I argue in my chapter two, "Knitting Together Everything & Ending on Three Notes": 2 Becomes 3 in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*," that she did indeed "experience the Empire at first hand," and that, as Said proved with Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, empire was likewise an inextricable facet of Woolf's London life.

Since the events of *Mrs Dalloway* occur on one day of June 1924, not far from the end of the war, there are simple references to war's proximity. In the sixth paragraph of the novel, Clarissa Dalloway thinks, "For it was the middle of June. The War was over...thank Heaven—over. It was June. The King and Queen were at the Palace" (5). With this last sentence, Clarissa comforts herself that all is now as it should be: the war is over, the British Empire can claim victory, and the heads of the empire—the King and Queen—are home; order has been maintained. Or so it seems; for the war has created a rupture—not only for those touched by the deaths caused by the war, but for all who share in the general cultural consciousness. War made the dark side of empire unignorable, and the evidence for this is revealed in *Mrs Dalloway* by the fact that the tragedies of war so repeatedly are connected to issues of empire, and lie so close to the surface of characters' conscious thoughts. For example, a few pages after Clarissa thinks of the end of war, a limousine passes by and rumors spread that it contains a Queen, Prince, or Prime Minister. These rumors set off a chain-reaction of thought:

for in all the hat shops and tailors' shops strangers looked at each other and thought of the dead; of the flag; of Empire. In a public house in a back street a Colonial insulted the House of Windsor which led to words, broken beer glasses, and a general shindy.... For the surface agitation of the passing car as it sunk grazed something very profound. (25-6)

The supposed presence of a head of the British Empire causes a "wound" which reveals how the thought processions involving the London everyday of the ordinary English citizen continually bleed into thoughts of empire. This bleeding cannot be easily stanchied, however; for as *Mrs Dalloway* progresses, many symbols of the British state as easily trigger such hesitations and doubts about empire—a rift the war has caused.

Virginia Woolf does not view war and empire as a pair unto themselves: instead, she elevates the issue of gender relations to the side of war and empire, and considers them an equally guilty trio. The language of all three institutions relies on a simplistic binary that invariably compartmentalizes everything as this or that: in war, one side is good, the other bad; empire is based on the us/them binary; and gender as a social construct, of course, consists of women being “other” to men. Woolf thought that “Churchgoers’ practice in believing that men are better than women prepares them to accept other hierarchies, such as ‘England is better than Germany’ or ‘our navy is better than your navy’” (Phillips 131). Gender relations, empire, and war are constructed with a framework of binaries—and in turn work to perpetuate this construction. In my second chapter, then, I argue that in *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf confronts these three issues which all thrive on the division of everything into two, by having Clarissa Dalloway turn all twosomes that she comes into contact with into three. In this way, Woolf uses the master’s tools to dismantle the master’s house. Specifically, Woolf has Clarissa Dalloway fight against the restrictions of the all-pervasive binary by consistently choosing to bring a third person into her relationships.

Critics have long pointed out how Septimus Warren Smith serves as Clarissa Dalloway’s double in the novel. Since Clarissa is in many ways the archetypal upper-class middle-aged woman, it is significant that her alter ego in the book is an ill and traumatized war veteran. By setting up all sorts of parallels and unexpected similarities between Clarissa and Septimus, Woolf is able to raise the key point that *both* characters have been wounded by war and are victimized by empire. However, Clarissa’s one doubling with Septimus is far outnumbered by the many “threesomes” she is a part of.

Such triangulation—and its ensuing power shifts and tensions—ultimately becomes a more significant pattern than her pairing with Septimus Warren Smith. Clarissa is a participant in five significant triangles: with her husband, Richard, and Peter Walsh; with Peter Walsh and Sally Seton; with Doris Kilman and Elizabeth; with Septimus and Doris Kilman; and with the old woman who lives across the street and Septimus. In each relationship, it is Clarissa who continually brings a third person into what had been a twosome; she seems to both enjoy and thrive upon the shifting balances of power which a threesome enables. For example, when Clarissa is feeling insecure about how her party is turning out, she cheers herself up by reminding herself of her struggle with Miss Kilman for Elizabeth's affections. She thinks happily of "Kilman her enemy. That was satisfying; that was real" (265). The comfortable and shifting dynamic of a trio bolsters Clarissa: she escapes from the constraints of a binary by always complicating the either/or with a third option. By having Clarissa always turn to a third option, Woolf is able to subtly question the hierarchies that such binaries inevitably construct; she connects the inherent inequalities within the traditional male/female relationship to inequalities in the imperial world at large.

Woolf also attaches symbolic significance to the triangles which Clarissa uses as a refuge of sorts. An example of this which I explain in detail in the chapter is how in the Clarissa-Richard-Peter triangle, Woolf complicates what is in some ways a simple love triangle by constantly referring to Richard's profession as a member of parliament in England, and Peter's as an Anglo-Indian colonial administrator. Such a comparison always ends up in Richard's favor, for Peter seems sullied by his connection to India: doing the empire's dirty work often makes Peter the weak link in that particular triangle.

(This is despite the fact that, like the Bertrams' Antiguan plantation in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Peter Walsh's work is the work that makes Clarissa Dalloway's London financially possible.) The power shifts that are represented in the Clarissa-Richard-Peter triangle, therefore, go beyond the personal circumstances of both men desiring to marry Clarissa; instead Woolf uses the dynamics between the three characters to signify the tensions which were beginning to manifest themselves in that particular historical moment of 1924 post-war Britain. In such a comparison between a member of parliament and a colonial administrator in India, Peter does not fare well: as an Anglo-Indian, Peter Walsh becomes less the third point of the triangle and more the third wheel. That most of her characters associate a negative connotation with Peter's work in India reveals much about Woolf's own view of empire. By showing Clarissa gaining insight from and making things better for herself by changing a simple two to a more complicated three, Woolf thus is able to hint at the benefits that would also be attained by similarly complicating the simple binaries of empire and war.

In my third chapter, "Empire Revised in Pat Barker's *Regeneration* Trilogy," I examine how Barker documents the cracking surface of Empire in her trilogy, using the war as a way to expose both the discrepancies and hypocrisies of empire, as well as the more positive changes that accompany its nascent dissolution. All three novels of Barker's World War I trilogy—*Regeneration*, *The Eye In The Door*, and *The Ghost Road*—combine the actions and stories of fictional characters, with real-life people with documented war stories of their own, such as the poets Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, and the psychiatrist, W. H. R. Rivers. Setting her fiction during the Great War—an event which is considered to have had a significant and irreversible impact on

cultural consciousness, a marker of the end of an entire way of being, and blamed for “revers[ing] the Idea of Progress” (Fussell 8)—enables Barker to portray this supposedly new disillusionment, as well as show that the war did not so much create anew a troubling situation, but rather ripped the curtain away from the long-established workings of the British Empire. By constantly juxtaposing issues of war with issues of empire, Barker shows that the upheaval revealed by the Great War was there fomenting just under the surface all along.

Barker’s choice of topic for her trilogy can be seen as an indication that this upheaval is still a concern in England today. All three novels were hugely successful: *Regeneration* was shortlisted for the Booker prize and chosen by the *New York Times* as one of the four best novels of 1992; *The Eye in the Door* won the 1993 Guardian fiction prize; and *The Ghost Road* won the 1995 Booker Prize. *Regeneration* was made into a movie, joining in the sudden popularity and spate of Hollywood World War II movies. Furthermore, Barker was not the only one to be focusing on the World Wars; in the early nineties, for example, Rebecca West’s *The Return of the Soldier* and Susan Hill’s *Strange Meeting*—both war novels—were reissued. In a review in *The New Yorker* of several World War II books, John Gregory Dunne muses on how the publication of such books “crowns a season during which we have seen America grow particularly fond of the Second World War” because “the war in Europe is viewed largely as an American triumph” (98). I will posit that the English have returned to the First World War for precisely the opposite reasons—a reliving of the beginning of the end.

It is in *The Ghost Road*, the third novel of the trilogy, where Barker really makes the connection between empire and war clear. The chapters alternate between the

activities of one of Dr. Rivers's patients, Billy Prior, at the front, and Rivers's own memories of doing ethnological field work in the colonies of Melanesia. In case the reader does not immediately see the cause and effect going on here, Barker includes narrative hints, from the more subtle duplication of scene and language (switching from Rivers's tent in Melanesia to Billy Prior's tent at the front), to explicit musings of the war/empire connection made by Rivers himself. In addition to frequently pairing the effects of war with the effects of empire, Barker's Rivers probes the alleged differences between the ways of the colonizers and the colonized. For example, after Rivers views the shrine that his landlady has created for her soldier son killed in the war, he "thought about what he'd just seen: the portrait, the flowers. A shrine. Not fundamentally different from the skull houses of Pa Na Gundu where he'd gone with Njiru. The same human impulse at work. Difficult to know what to make of these flashes of cross-cultural recognition" (116-7). By dismantling these boundaries between the "us" of the English and the "them" of the colonized Melanesians, Rivers questions the whole (shared) foundation of war and empire.

Pat Barker's Billy Prior, a fictional participant in World War I, is a product of hindsight; this is not to say that Billy Prior is unbelievable, but that he is a man who would be quite at home in the second half of the twentieth century, as well. Although suffering from the same war-induced disease as Septimus Warren Smith, Billy reflects the fact that Barker wrote her novels seventy years after Woolf wrote *Mrs Dalloway*; shell shock is no longer a half-inexplicable condition. Whereas Septimus's condition is only sketched, Billy's is analyzed fully. Cathy Caruth describes how "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the

way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4). For Septimus, this trauma is his experience in the war, in general, but more specifically his witnessing of the death of his best friend, Evans. Woolf writes that “when Evans was killed, just before the Armistice, in Italy, Septimus, far from showing any emotion or recognizing that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably. The War had taught him. It was sublime” (130). Septimus does not consciously *know* how he has been affected by Evans’s death and thus it is that he now sees Evans everywhere he looks.

In contrast, Billy Prior understands exactly what he is going through—although such knowledge does not necessarily give him control over his mental state. Where Septimus’s attraction to Evans is just hinted at—they are “two dogs playing on a hearth-rug” and “They had to be together, share with each other, fight with each other, quarrel with each other” (130)—Billy Prior is fully aware of his bisexuality. And whereas Septimus’s shell shock has apparently been caused by his war experiences alone, Barker has Billy Prior’s shell shock be caused by his war experiences *as well as* by his childhood experiences of everyday English patriarchal life. While Septimus cannot escape from his memories of Evans, Billy’s shell shock manifests itself by his ability to “blank out,” or escape, certain experiences. As a child, Billy would go into a trance when his father came home drunk and abused his mother; the same thing now happens to him when he is at the front. The war, then, works as a kind of extension of the patriarchal tensions that Billy had to deal with as a young boy. When Billy blanks out at the front, his persona becomes that of a caricature of a super-warrior. This Billy is a “warrior double, a

creature formed out of Flanders clay” who tells his psychiatrist that “I was born two years ago. In a shell-hole in France. I have no father” (E 240-5). As a soldier, this double follows the wartime ideal to the letter, yet he is portrayed as frightening, not admirable, and thus with his odiousness mocks the ideal. In contrast to Septimus, who was harassed by his doctors, Billy seeks out psychoanalysis with the wonderful Dr. Rivers in order to pinpoint exactly what is happening to him. Barker thus rewrites the Great War and the beginnings of the dissolution of empire with a postmodern character who *can* cope with the occurring historical crises. She makes him aware of what is going on in a way that is soothing to the reader; for Billy, the trauma *is* known as it happens, so it is never a trauma, quite. Barker sends Billy back in time to analyze the event from all sides as it happens, thus thwarting the surprise of the trauma of the war and negating the “compulsion to repeat” (Freud 21). Billy is a World War I soldier with the benefit of post-World War II expertise.

It is the traits Barker emphasizes about her three main characters—Siegfried Sassoon, Billy Prior, and W. H. R. Rivers—that reveal much about her methods regarding empire. Barker’s Sassoon is supposed to be a portrayal of the real man, and as such she does not deviate much from the known facts about his life and wartime experiences. He is very much a man of his times and is tormented by the futility of trench warfare. Barker emphasizes Sassoon’s many dual aspects: that he wrote an anti-war declaration while at the same time being a much medalled and respected soldier, that he chose to return to the Front and would initiate daredevil raids—and then return to camp and write an anti-war poem. He is a writer, yet he is writing from within the historical situation; he does not have the benefit of hindsight. In contrast, as we have

seen, Barker's Billy Prior—a wholly fictional character—is in many ways a postmodern character. Billy crosses all boundaries: he can pass for both working and officer class, he is both gay and straight, healthy and sick, pro and anti-war; more importantly, however, Billy is always incredibly aware of what is going on around him and the underlying reasons for it. Barker has set loose into the fray of the Great War a postmodern fellow equipped with hindsight and the mindset of the second half of the twentieth century.

Ultimately, however, it is Rivers's task to psychoanalyze and help both Sassoon and Billy. He is the hearer of their testimony of the war; he processes and integrates the modern and postmodern viewpoints. Rivers is very much a Freudian—and as such is slightly ahead of his own times. He has studied Freud's theories, and takes the Freudian approach to the treatment of his patients. As Shoshana Felman writes in *Testimony*, Freud began the "psychoanalytic dialogue...in which the doctor's testimony does not substitute itself for the patient's testimony, but resonates with it, because, as Freud discovers, it takes two to witness the unconscious" (15). This is Rivers' role in Barker's trilogy: he, perhaps as a stand-in for the reader, is able to go farther than Sassoon, a victim of his times, and Billy, a victim of being out of his times. Rivers, as a hearer of testimony, is the one who is able to acknowledge—and finally celebrate—empire's demise.

In the Thatcherite eighties, there was a rather bizarre resurgence of nostalgia for empire evident in film projects, television, and general cultural commentary. As Salman Rushdie declared in an essay written in 1983, "Anyone who has switched on the television set, been to the cinema or entered a bookshop in the last few months will be

aware that the British Raj, after three and a half decades in retirement, has been making a sort of comeback” (87). Why did nostalgia for empire re-awaken at this particular point in time? Keith Booker claims that the “view of twentieth-century history as the story of the decline and fall of the empire often shows up in British literature as a desire to awaken from the nightmare of history. This ambivalence (even horror) toward history can best be seen in a postcolonial work like Paul Scott’s *Raj Quartet*...” (129). Whereas I agree with Booker that twentieth-century British literature frequently contains the “desire to awaken from the nightmare” or trauma of the dissolution of empire, and that novels with an overt empire theme like Paul Scott’s *Raj Quartet* are, perhaps, a logical place to start, in my fourth chapter, “‘The Great Adventure Into Nowhere’: Postimperial Trauma and the New Passage East in Margaret Drabble’s *The Gates of Ivory*,” I assert that it is equally as important to examine how such trauma surfaces in novels that are wrongly disassociated from this Raj revival and postcolonial tensions. It is in these novels where we can find the answer to why empire’s nostalgia “makes a comeback” towards the end of the twentieth century.

Salman Rushdie and Margaret Drabble often write about the same London, yet Rushdie’s London is automatically considered to concern the remains of empire, whereas Drabble’s London is not given this same kind of interpretation. As I explain in chapter four, there seems to be a history of critics classifying Drabble’s writing as having different aims from those of her postcolonial and postmodern peers. Roberta Rubenstein, for example, will claim that Drabble “raises complex questions about competing social and political forces in contemporary British life” (101), yet does not note how often these questions are connected to issues of empire. Patricia Waugh asserts that Drabble

eschewed most stereotypical postmodern novel characteristics and instead returned “to the traditional preoccupations of the psychological and domestic novel, but self-consciously from the perspective of writing as a woman” (24). However, Drabble herself, in a speech she gave to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in May of 1997, sees her writing as being very much a political portrayal of the contemporary world and classified her goals as being similar to that of Salman Rushdie. Complaining first about the new abundance of nostalgic, historical novels, she queried, “But who, one begins to wonder, is tackling the present? Have we abandoned it, despaired of it?” (23). She answers these questions by championing Rushdie, claiming that “Rushdie grapples both with the historical and the contemporary.... He confronts the contemporary world and the urban world with a courage and an invention that outrun those who pursue him. So it can be done” (23). Drabble then briefly outlined the novel she was working on (*The Peppered Moth*), with its plot overtly Rushdiesque in scope. I believe that Drabble’s most recent novels—the trilogy in particular—already share many components of a Rushdie novel: they too are “historical and contemporary” and deal with the empire as it is now—defunct—and not as it was in its “glory days”. So when Drabble concluded that “The past can move us into the future, in a way that has nothing to do with nostalgic retreat into the pastoral” (23), I claim that in her novels Drabble has already used the past in such a way.

In *The Gates of Ivory*, the thoughts of Drabble’s characters frequently are punctuated by references to empire. They grapple with what in the eighties and nineties seems to be always waiting around the corner: the realization of the demise of Britain’s imperial identity and the necessity of forming a new, postimperial English identity. In

Beyond The Pleasure Principle, Freud writes of how a person suffering from a traumatic neurosis experiences a “compulsion to repeat” and will continually re-experience the trauma, often in dreams and hallucinations. The traumatic neurosis forms, in part, as a result of not being prepared for the trauma, and thus not having built up the requisite anxiety which “protects its subject against fright and so against fright neuroses” (11). That Drabble’s English characters are just now—forty or so years after the empire’s official demise—coming to terms with a cultural identity that is no longer that of being rulers over one-fifth of the land of the globe, connects to Freud’s idea of a traumatic neurosis. The demise of empire is a culturally traumatic moment that is compulsively returned to in order to build up the anxiety that will eventually serve as a passage to a state of acceptance and acclimation to postimperial life. For example, in a melancholy moment of reflection on London Bridge, Alix’s train of thought begins with her husband’s illness and gradually travels to the figurative “Gates of Empire at Heathrow” (294). She then thinks of the chain of peoples who have reflectively looked at the Thames, “the No-people, the Celts, the Belgae, the Romans, the Angles, the Saxons, the Normans, the Huguenots, the Dutch potters, the refugees from the pogroms of Russia and Poland, the survivors of the Final Solution, the Hungarians, the Turks, the Indians, the Pakistanis, the West Indians, the Africans, the Cypriots, the Vietnamese, the Cambodians” (293-4). That there has been a history of a multitude of peoples in London reassures Alix about the inhabitants of London today; perhaps the present is not so completely divorced from the past. It is also significant that Alix’s list contains references to empires that dominated over England; she connects her present time, then, to other times when England were not the “rulers” so to speak. Alix’s feelings about

contemporary England vacillate, but that a character's thoughts can elide smoothly from personal trauma to aspects of England's postimperial condition reveals an uneasiness about the repercussions of this new condition.

Drabble makes it clear that the global cultural economy is, indeed, global.

Traveling in the east, Stephen Cox frequently comments on the international aspect of his surroundings. Wherever he goes, his fellow travelers are quite a mix; he is often noting "the motley of hotel guests. Japanese, German, Thai, American, Korean, French, Swedish" (52). In addition, he experiences many moments of cultural amalgam, such as when he is traveling in Aran, Thailand, and is invited to join a small village family who are gathered around their TV watching an old movie about Mary Magdalene (171). Stephen is not, however, completely at ease with this: with a friend he discusses "the notion of progress and the cycles of history and its tragic empires rising and falling" (119); he often muses fondly about the state of buildings and monuments during the colonial era (226). Stephen is slightly ambivalent as to how postmodern his passage to the east should actually be: he almost seems to regret that his passage to the East does *not* land him in a completely alien and "other" world. Stephen travels to Cambodia to experience an old-fashioned, imperial passage East. He specifically seeks out a kind of Conradian imperial adventure, yet he finds instead a rather empty tragedy. In the eighties, the adventure stories that Stephen grew up reading can not be duplicated. This realization comes almost too late for Stephen, but Drabble implies that the next generation—the generation that consists of Liz Headleand's children and the first-person narrator, Hattie Osborne—are able to better cope with, accept, and acclimate to England's new role in the postimperial world.

Although seemingly willing to confront England's postimperial state, Drabble's characters avoid a direct examination of their new condition by turning to Cambodia to come to terms with how things are now. By focusing on the Cambodian genocide, the characters make it an extension of twentieth-century traumas in general, and use it to build up the anxiety needed to assuage their own cultural traumatic neuroses regarding the end of the British empire—and try to do so indirectly, without having to delve into the particulars of their empire's decline. Drabble's characters travel to Cambodia because there the scars of war are overt, in contrast to the disjunctures of postimperial England. However, Drabble's characters also travel to Cambodia because there they can work out their traumas relatively guilt-free: that is, Cambodia, not being an ex-colony of the British Empire, is not England's "fault".

In this chapter I concentrate mainly on the third novel of Drabble's most recent trilogy, *The Gates of Ivory*. I claim that Drabble has the individual characters of *The Gates of Ivory*—together with her narrative voice of the text itself—react to and confront empire's decline in ways that serve as a specific response to how empire has been represented in and produced by novels written throughout the long history of British imperialism. She confronts the topic on three of the most firmly entrenched literature/empire fronts: trauma and war, the symbolic and metaphorical use of women, and the complicit role of literature, itself. Drabble examines the effect that the dissolution of empire has had on everyday life in England, and establishes how literature plays a central role in both bandaging and assuaging this trauma. Jameson writes that "it is in our time, since World War II, that the problem of imperialism is as it were

restructured...” (47). We can learn about this restructuring by examining how imperialism appears in novels like Drabble’s trilogy, the literature of our time.

In my final chapter, “The Theatre of War” vs. “Memories of Riots” in Two Novels by Amitav Ghosh,” I argue that Amitav Ghosh uses war in his novel *The Shadow Lines* to show that the way events of western history are prioritized over the events of eastern history is an insidious remnant of empire. Ghosh’s narrator is a boy who knows England as well as he knows his own native city, Calcutta, despite the fact that when the book begins, he has never been to England. His familiarity with London originates from the long ago circumstance of his great great uncle, who was “a judge in the Calcutta High Court” becoming friends with Lionel Tresawson, a colonial administrator. The two families have kept in touch, and the narrator grows up listening to the stories of his second cousin, Tridib’s, stay in England as a young boy with Tresawson’s daughter’s family in 1939 on the eve of World War II. These stories are more than just stories to the narrator: his own identity is intertwined with them, and when he later visits London he knows details of houses and neighborhoods as if he hadn’t just experienced these places vicariously. His personal history is as much a mixture of England and India as is the history of the two nations.

Cathy Caruth writes that “history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (24); in *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh’s narrator slowly becomes aware of how his Indian traumas are given short shrift. Ghosh uses war to show how the conflicts of the west are prioritized over the conflicts of the east, juxtaposing the centrality of the so-called World Wars with the riots and violence experienced in India during and after partition. Ghosh asserts that

“The theatre of war, where generals meet, is the stage on which states disport themselves: they have no use for memories of riots” (226). The narrator of the novel struggles against this prioritization, although he has also internalized it. He is in love with his third cousin, Ila, who spent many years of her childhood in London and is an anglophile, to say the least; at times Ila’s views irk the narrator, especially when she speaks of war. Ila boasts of the experiences of the Tresawsen family during World War II, and tells the narrator that he wouldn’t understand the thrill of working against the Germans:

You wouldn’t understand the exhilaration of events like that--nothing really important ever happens where you are. ¶Nothing really important? I said incredulously. ¶Well of course there are famines and riots and disasters, she said. But those are local things, after all—not like revolutions or anti-fascist wars, nothing that sets a political example to the world, nothing that’s really remembered. (102)

Sadly, Ila here is the voice of imperial propaganda, and she expresses the kind of mindset that the narrator is up against in his quest to make history—and the history of India—more inclusive of other constructs besides those of the west.

The narrator’s grandmother sees England as the culmination of its wars, and she, too, holds up England’s battles as actions India needs to emulate to become a united country: “regimental flags hang in all their cathedrals and...their churches are lined with memorials to men who died in wars, all around the world? War is their religion. That’s what it takes to make a country” (76). When she thinks of a nation’s decisive or laudatory action, she thinks of the two world wars and their characteristics, and when she later travels to Dhaka in what is then East Pakistan, she is surprised that India and Pakistan are not divided by the overt trappings of war: trenches and no-man’s-land and the like. Again, Ghosh is using war as the framework for postcolonial issues of nationalism, by demonstrating with war that events of western history are prioritized over

the events of eastern history. Dipesh Chakrabarty writes that “‘Europe’ remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories, including the ones we call ‘Indian,’ ‘Chinese,’ ‘Kenyan,’ and so on” (1); confronting such a subject becomes a central aspect of Ghosh’s project. His narrator begins to realize that there are other worthy subjects as he comes to see how the wars of the west and stories of it have displaced his own experiences of riots.

When the narrator begins to research the riots he experienced in the sixties—riots that were Partition-based—he discovers that “There are no reliable estimates of how many people were killed in the riots of 1964. The number could stretch from several hundred to several thousand; at any rate, not very many less than were killed in the war of 1962” (225). He ascertains that in contrast to this marked lack of data on the events of the riots, there are shelves and shelves in the local library containing books about the relatively minor war against China in 1962. War—an acceptable type of western skirmish—is documented and archived, whereas no one has discussed or written about the riots occurring around the same time. Some political events are championed while others are silenced. By making such a point, Ghosh raises several important questions which I explore in depth in that chapter: What is remembered and what *gets* to be remembered as history? Why isn’t Partition part of the crisis of western and European consciousness? In the oft-used dichotomy of global versus local, why does “global” so often equal the western local? How can one keep these dominant narratives from overtaking the narratives of one’s own life? Such questions will also resurface in Ghosh’s later novel, *The Glass Palace*. Although more comprehensive and epic in scope than *The Shadow Lines*, *The Glass Palace* features this same conflict between war and

riots. Ghosh cuts to the heart of the matter by having a character in this novel proudly become an officer in the British army in India, before beginning to question such an allegiance, and eventually defecting to the Indian National Army during World War II. Having this character, Arjun, be directly involved in both war and the military allows Ghosh to address in more detail and in a different setting the questions that the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* experiences in libraries and from stories and hearsay: Arjun acts out what the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* theorizes. The narratives of war position India similarly to how colonial narratives—both historical and literary—positioned India; therefore, the connections between war and nation have to be severed or revised to more accurately reflect a truly postcolonial nation.

When Forster's Adela Quested is making her way back home to England, she meets an American missionary in Egypt who asks her, "to what duties, Miss Quested, are you returning in your own country after your taste of the tropics?" and then continues, "Observe, I don't say to what do you turn, but to what do you return. Every life ought to contain both a turn and a return" (265). Passages east used to be that simple for the British—and that much of a resolved binary. The Empire, however, is already not what it was, and Adela's trip to India, where she could not keep her allegiances from shifting back and forth from the colonizers to the colonized, is indicative of the beginning of its end: the border between the binaries of us and them has become shadowy. Such "shadow lines," however, have not dissipated in the seventy plus years between Forster's writing of *A Passage* and Amitav Ghosh's writing of *The Shadow Lines*. In contrast to the advice Adela gets about a succinct turn and return, then, Ghosh's narrator has a

family joke about their inability to distinguish between coming and going. He writes that if “we happened to meet an acquaintance who asked: When are you going back to London? we would launch into a kind of patter: But she has to go to Calcutta first; Not if I’m coming to London; Nor if you’re coming to Calcutta...” (150). Their identities are still so connected to England that there is no distinct here and there, no obvious coming from and going to. Ghosh explains,

Every language assumes a centrality, a fixed and settled point to go away from and come back to, and what my grandmother was looking for was a word for a journey which was not a coming or a going at all; a journey that was a search for precisely that fixed point which permits the proper use of verbs of movement. (150)

His grandmother’s confusion originates from her alienation from her birthplace, Dhaka, due to partition—another casualty of Empire. But what is important to note here is how the issues Forster raises and explores in *A Passage* are still resonant in the novels written about contemporary Britain. Long after the British Empire released its claims of ownership over one-fifth of the earth, it still plays an integral—albeit different—part in the British novel. In the following study I will examine just exactly what its role has become. In each chapter I research the mutual implicatedness of empire and the novel, using war or the tropes of war as the point of entry. In my chapters on Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*, I extend and contribute to the postcolonial scholarship that already exists; and in my chapters on Pat Barker’s *Regeneration* trilogy and Margaret Drabble’s *The Gates of Ivory*, I offer a much-needed analysis and exposure of how a neglected set of postwar British novels process empire’s aftermath.

In each of the following chapters, war frames the British Empire as it appears in novels which represent distinct historical moments. I examine the implications of the progression of how empire is portrayed in a novel written as empire was beginning to dissipate; how a contemporary author looking back at this same time period uses war to expose the beginnings of this dissolution; how empire appears in novels at the end of the century, fifty years past its official dismantling; and how the traces of empire still have potency post-World War II in the former colonies. The remains of empire in the twentieth-century novel are still structures to be reckoned with, and as such should not be granted a museum-like untouchability: this dissertation aims to show how the clockwork of empire still occasionally will chime out the hour.

CHAPTER II

“KNITTING TOGETHER EVERYTHING & ENDING ON THREE NOTES”: 2 BECOMES 3 IN VIRGINIA WOOLF’S *MRS DALLOWAY*

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf first introduces the reader to her character Septimus Warren Smith by describing him as “aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat...” (20). Having just spent the first twenty pages of the novel following Clarissa Dalloway on a walk to buy flowers for the party that she is giving that evening, the discerning reader immediately notices similarities between this description of Septimus and that given of Clarissa pages earlier: his “pale-faced, beak-nosed” portrayal echoes Clarissa’s having “a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious, though she was over fifty, and grown very white since her illness” (4). To note such parallels between Clarissa and Septimus, however, is old hat: much has been written of how the two characters work as an incongruous pair, with the shell-shocked Septimus strangely resonating with Clarissa’s middle-aged and upper-class housewife. Virginia Woolf herself prepared for the making of such parallels with an oft-quoted diary entry in which she writes that “Mrs Dalloway has branched into a book; & I adumbrate here a study of insanity & suicide: the world seen by the sane & the insane side by side—something like that” (*Volume Two* 207). In an entry written a little over a month later, however, Woolf again comments on the progress she is making with *Mrs Dalloway*. This time she writes that, “The doubtful point is I think the character of Mrs Dalloway. It may be too stiff, too glittering & tinsely—But then I can bring

innumerable other characters to her support” (*Volume Two* 272). This entry has not been given the attention of the first one quoted above, yet I will argue that it reveals more about the significant underlying pattern of the novel and dynamic between the characters than can be fathomed from simply seeing Clarissa and Septimus as doubles. For Woolf does indeed “bring innumerable other characters to [Clarissa’s] support,” and she does so repeatedly in a triangular manner which emphasizes what at that particular point in time she was increasingly viewing as a critical and sinister nexus: the intersection of gender relations, war and empire.

Clarissa Dalloway almost always relates to other characters as part of a threesome. This triangulation—and its ensuing power shifts and tensions—ultimately becomes a much more significant pattern than her pairing with Septimus Warren Smith. The number of threesomes that Clarissa is a part of is cause alone for the reader to take note; that they reflect Woolf’s own political concerns is an added bonus. Clarissa is a participant in five significant triangles: with her husband, Richard, and Peter Walsh; with Peter Walsh and Sally Seton; with Doris Kilman and Elizabeth; with Septimus and Doris Kilman; and with the old woman who lives across the street and Septimus. In each formulation, there are shifting balances of power and tensions which Clarissa seems both to enjoy and upon which she thrives. For example, when Clarissa is feeling insecure about how her party is turning out, she cheers herself up by reminding herself of her struggle with Miss Kilman for Elizabeth’s affections. She thinks happily of “Kilman her enemy. That was satisfying; that was real” (265). When she interacts with Richard, her husband, her thoughts always return to Peter Walsh; when interacting with Peter Walsh, she inevitably mentions Richard or Sally Seton. Clarissa always seems to be escaping

from the—perhaps emotionally dangerous—interactions of one-on-one to what she sees as the more comfortable and shifting dynamic of a trio. In addition to having Clarissa use these triangles as a refuge of sorts, Woolf attaches symbolic significance to them as well. In the Clarissa-Richard-Peter triangle—which is in some ways the closest to the traditional homosocial triangle as defined by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, with the two men bonding with each other as they compete for the attentions and affections of the one woman—Woolf complicates this by constantly referring to Richard’s profession as a member of parliament in England, and Peter’s as an Anglo-Indian colonial administrator. Such a comparison always ends up in Richard’s favor, for Peter seems sullied by his connection to India: doing the empire’s dirty work often makes Peter the weak link in that particular triangle, despite the fact that Peter’s work makes Clarissa London life materially possible. The power shifts that are represented in it, therefore, go beyond the personal circumstances of both men desiring to marry Clarissa; instead Woolf uses the dynamics between the three characters to signify the tensions which were beginning to manifest themselves in that particular historical moment of 1924 post-war Britain.

The triangles have a multi-dimensional aspect that is ultimately more productive than the customary pair. To see Clarissa as part of five significant threesomes, then, enables a reading of *Mrs Dalloway* that is more layered than the traditional reading, which has focused on Clarissa and Septimus as doubles. To return to the opening quotation then, in which Septimus is described as “aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat...” (20), I propose that in addition to noting the similarities between that portrayal of Septimus and Clarissa, one should also note the significance of Septimus’s attire: his “shabby overcoat” there is akin to the

“green mackintosh coat” of Miss Kilman’s which Clarissa has just been ranting against on the previous page, by complaining that “Year in year out she wore that coat; she perspired...” (16). At the same time that Septimus is introduced as Clarissa’s double, then, he is also introduced as Miss Kilman’s: the three of them—Clarissa, Septimus, and Miss Kilman—form one of the many significant triangles that can be found throughout *Mrs Dalloway*. Woolf’s addition of a third person, side or angle blocks the magnification the powerless give to the powerful, for an interrupted binary is more easily dismantled when middle ground creates more room for maneuvering.

In *Virginia Woolf against Empire*, Kathy Phillips claims that Woolf’s “works can be seen to de-emphasize the failings of characters in their personal relations and instead to investigate personalities as products of dangerous ideologies” (xiii-xiv). Yet Woolf also uses the “personal relations” of her characters to act out against the pervasiveness of political ideologies which she sees as insidious. She does this most consistently with Clarissa Dalloway herself, by having Clarissa constantly choose to be in a triangular relationship with two other people, thus showing a penchant for the shifting tensions and power struggles that such a formation allows. In doing so, Clarissa is able to combat the restrictions of the traditional marriage, while also—in typical Clarissa fashion—both subverting and playing along with the binaries associated with empire and war. Phillips rightly maintains that “What remains is for someone like Woolf to bring to consciousness, in readers if not characters, the links among sexual dishonesty, money lust, and colonization: the coordinates of...*Mrs Dalloway*,” yet she fails to see Clarissa’s many threesomes as being precisely *how* Woolf highlights these links while also showing

resistance to them. Clarissa's constant need for a third person is symbolic of how Woolf desires to complicate the binaric thinking so prevalent in those times of war and empire to be complicated. Susan Bennett Smith is correct when she writes that "Clarissa is an inadequate model of sane bereavement to counter Septimus's insane grief" (317); yet there is a third person present at that moment when Clarissa is processing Septimus's death: the old woman across the street. Clarissa might be inadequate on her own, but bringing in a third person gives her the strength she needs to make her "sane bereavement" successful. Trudi Tate contends that "Clarissa's refusal to think about the Armenian problem is a crucial moment in the novel, and provides us with ways into thinking about the structural relationship between Clarissa and Septimus, the war-neurotic soldier. Who is the victim, who the victimizer; who is responsible for the suffering of others?" (159), yet I would argue that it is Woolf's belief that such a question can only be answered by giving up the dichotomy of victim/victimizer etc. Clarissa is not good and she is not bad, she is not merely the sane woman who will counteract Septimus's insanity; Woolf resists such easy categorization for her characters as a way of mirroring how such categorization should be resisted in one's political thinking as well. In her diary, Woolf writes, "...I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect..." (*Volume Two* 263). These "caves" do indeed connect: and usually in the shape of a triangle.

Clarissa, Richard, and Peter share a connection that originated decades ago when both Richard and Peter wanted to marry Clarissa. At first glance, their configuration might seem to fit in the mold of the homosocial triangle as demarcated by Eve Kosofsky

Sedgwick in her *Between Men*: two men compete for the affections of a woman, but in the process create a bond between themselves, which “is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved” (21). In fact, Sedgwick continues, one can see “the bond between rivals in an erotic triangle as being even stronger, more heavily determinant of actions and choices, than anything in the bond between either of the lovers and the beloved” (21). Sedgwick then sites Heidi Hartmann’s “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism” in which she defines patriarchy itself as “a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women” (Hartmann 14). Taking this a step further, Sedgwick asserts that “large-scale social structures are congruent with the male-male-female erotic triangles...” (25). Although such “large-scale social structures” definitely have a place in the Clarissa-Richard-Peter triangle, Woolf has created this triangle with two particular functions which are ultimately more complex and thus more rich than the homosocial model in which two men bond while competing for the affections of one woman. In the first, Clarissa situates her view of her marriage in between the viewpoints and different personalities of the two men, and uses the competing affections of each man in a power struggle which gives her comfort: in this way she has the marriage she wants without submitting entirely. The second way that Woolf uses the triangle has less to do with the personal relations of the characters and more to do with the political events and tenors of post-war England: Clarissa, the perfect English hostess, sees Richard as a representative of British rule at home, and Peter as a representative of the British Empire abroad. In such a comparison, between a member of parliament and a colonial administrator in

India, Peter does not fare well: as an Anglo-Indian, Peter Walsh becomes less the third point of the triangle and more the third wheel. The disdain people feel for Peter Walsh is, on the one hand, indicative of typical class snobbery: that Peter has to make a living for himself is too bad. On the other hand, however, by making most of her characters associate their negative connotation with Peter's work so intricately with its location *in India*, Woolf reveals the new—and ambivalent—view of empire.

Clarissa made a choice years ago to turn down Peter's proposal of marriage and instead marry Richard Dalloway. Peter was devastated; reflecting on it in the present day he thinks of "The final scene, the terrible scene which he believed had mattered more than anything in the whole of his life (it might be an exaggeration—but still so it did seem now)" (95-6), and "His relations with Clarissa had not been simple. It had spoilt his life, he said" (292). Clarissa feels otherwise. She presents her reasons for her decision to choose Richard early on in the novel, when she professes that "she had been right—and she had too—not to marry him" and makes the claim mentioned before that "in marriage a little license, a little independence there must be" (10)—independence which Peter would not have allowed her. Clarissa does not seem to regret her choice, yet she does have a need to constantly replay its pros and cons. Her marriage to Richard needs Peter's passion and possessiveness. By thinking of the alternatives she faced and the fact that it was choices *she* made—her agency—which led to her life now, Clarissa is reassured. But this reassurance, which relies on a constant interplay in Clarissa's mind between Richard and Peter, is found not so much in the choice itself, but in the shiftings of power that existed at the time of the choice and which still exist now. Clarissa thrives on the crosscurrents of power that such a triangle inevitably creates—and so, really, do

Peter and Richard. In interactions between two, one of them will always bring up the third.

Clarissa is always vacillating between Richard and Peter. She will happily think of the independence Richard grants her in their marriage, and then will have a good moment with Peter and wonder “why did I make up my mind—not to marry him?” (61-2). Clarissa will feel that being married to Richard makes her “invisible; unseen; unknown...this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway,” (24) yet then she will think of how “Richard her husband” was the foundation for the good in her life (43). Still later, she will switch back to being troubled by her independence, when she discovers that Richard has been independently invited to Lady Bruton’s luncheon without her. Clarissa avers that “here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other” (12) and then admits that she does not even read Peter’s letters when she receives them” (60). Her thoughts about the two men reveal how they constantly switch places in her good graces.

Richard and Peter have a similar compulsion. When Richard hears of Peter’s return while lunching at Lady Bruton’s, he is immediately prompted to remember “That Peter Walsh had been in love with Clarissa; that he [Richard] would go back directly after lunch and find Clarissa; that he would tell her, in so many words, that he loved her” (162). While walking home with Hugh Whitbread after lunch, “Richard’s mind, recovering from its lethargy, set now on his wife, Clarissa, whom Peter Walsh had loved so passionately” (173). Such an appellation seems to be one that Richard enjoys attaching to his thoughts of Clarissa; it makes her more valued and interesting, and ups the ante of their relationship: after all, she chose him over Peter. When Richard arrives

home having purchased some flowers for Clarissa, he finds that he “could not bring himself to say he loved her; not in so many words” (179); but he can bring himself to immediately bring up and discuss Peter Walsh’s return—which is code enough, not an “I love you” necessarily but a “You love me” (179).

Right after Clarissa thinks to herself that it was Peter’s “lack of the ghost of a notion what any one else was feeling that annoyed her,” Peter proves her wrong by thinking, “I know what I’m up against...Clarissa and Dalloway and all the rest of them” (69). Peter, the rejected, is able to think fondly of Richard on his own—“He was a thorough good sort” (112)—and Clarissa on her own, yet when he thinks of them as a couple he is inevitably angered: “With twice his wits, she had to see things through his eyes—one of the tragedies of married life” (116). Still, it is Richard’s presence that enables the happiest moment of Peter’s life, when they are all young and at Bourton and Clarissa leaves Richard to come back and get Peter to join them. Peter thinks “He had never felt so happy in the whole of his life!... And all the time, he knew perfectly well, Dalloway was falling in love with her; she was falling in love with Dalloway; but it didn’t seem to mater. Nothing mattered. They sat on the ground and talked—he and Clarissa” (94). That Richard is about to “win” Clarissa is what makes that moment of time spent with her so perfect for Peter; its perfection requires Richard as the third. Peter also uses Clarissa: when he later tells Clarissa about Daisy, the woman he is engaged to marry, telling Clarissa gives Daisy luster: Daisy “and her two small children became more and more lovely as Clarissa looked at them” (68). Peter needs Clarissa to know about the details of his life to make those details real to himself. All three characters

seem to derive benefit from their threesome. The shift in power that it enables defuses the tension of a binary. In an unusual way, the resulting situation is more equitable.

The power-play that Clarissa finds so beneficial is most evident in the scene where she and Peter are reunited after his long absence in India. As they chat, their struggle for one-upmanship goes back and forth—which is Woolf’s point. No character has all of the power all of the time. Fittingly, after Clarissa and Peter embrace, they both take out “weapons”—Peter his knife and Clarissa her scissors—and, thus prepared, the battle begins. Their words are civil and stable enough, but their thoughts oscillate wildly. When Peter asks what Clarissa is sewing, Clarissa thinks “He’s very well dressed...yet he always criticizes *me*” (60). Peter at the same time is thinking about how all the time he’s been in India, Clarissa has been doing tasks like this one, mending her dress, while married to “the admirable Richard,” and as he thinks this he becomes “more and more irritated, more and more agitated” (61). Sensing his distress, Clarissa is calmed and it is at this point that she remembers that Peter is “perfectly enchanting” and happily wonders, “and why did I make up my mind—not to marry him?” (61-2). Clarissa, in a Freudian slip mistake, refers to her father’s dislike for Peter, which reminds them both that Peter wanted to marry her: “Of course I did, thought Peter; it almost broke my heart too, he thought; and was overcome with his own grief.... I was more unhappy than I’ve ever been since, he thought” (62). Peter then gets annoyed with his grief and heartbreak and stops feeling nostalgic, whereas by now Clarissa’s own nostalgia for their days at Bourton are in full-swing. Clarissa becomes teary and “wiped her eyes” (62); Peter, not moved in the same way, temporarily has the power, and his

response is to be annoyed: “‘Yes,’ said Peter. “Yes, yes, yes,” he said” but “Stop! Stop! he wanted to cry” (64).

Peter thinks of his life and how it must seem a failure to the Dalloways; yet Clarissa has become insecure at this point as well, since Peter did not join in with her nostalgia, and thinks of how Peter is “Always making one feel, too, frivolous; empty-minded; a mere silly chatterbox” (65). Both brought low, the battle becomes overt.

Clarissa retorts, Woolf writes,

‘Well, and what’s happened to you?’ she said. So before a battle begins, the horses paw the ground; toss their heads; the light shines on their flanks; their necks curve. So Peter Walsh and Clarissa, sitting side by side on the blue sofa, challenged each other. His powers chafed and tossed in him....

‘Millions of things!’ he exclaimed, and, urged by the assembly of powers which were now charging this way and that and giving him the feeling at once frightening and extremely exhilarating of being rushed through the air on the shoulders of people he could no longer see, he raised his hands to his forehead. (66)

Peter has the courage, at this point, to tell Clarissa that he is in love. Clarissa doesn’t know what to do with this information: in her thoughts she first scoffs at such a notion—“That he at his age should be sucked under in his little bow-tie by that monster!” (67)—and then is made forlorn by it: “He has that, she felt; he is in love” (67). Clarissa feels jealous; Clarissa feels bereft. Yet Peter feels vulnerable. Both believe they have lost. When Peter gets out his weapon again, his pocket-knife, Clarissa is able to rally at the sight: “For Heaven’s sake, leave your knife alone! she cried to herself in irrepressible irritation; it was his silly unconventionality, his weakness” (69). Peter tries to keep up his defiance, thinking, “I know all that...I know what I’m up against” (69), but he breaks down: Peter cries. And since Clarissa can now afford to be gracious, she graciously kisses him.

But then Clarissa deflates her own power by thinking, “If I had married him, this gaiety would have been mine all day! ¶It was all over for her. The sheet was stretched and the bed narrow” (70). In her thoughts, Clarissa calls out “Richard, Richard!”, yet then remembers he is independently lunching with Lady Bruton. Lost, then, Clarissa needs the triumvirate and turns to Peter, inwardly proposing, “Take me with you” (70). Ever the warrior, Clarissa composes herself and walks over to Peter. Watching her do so, Peter thinks “And it was awfully strange...how she still had the power, as she came tinkling, rustling, still had the power as she came across the room” (71). Peter tries to wrestle this power away from Clarissa, and turns to use their triangle as a weapon: “‘Tell me,’ he said, seizing her by the shoulders. ‘Are you happy, Clarissa? Does Richard—’ ¶The door opened” (71). Clarissa sees her chance for escaping from what has suddenly become an uncomfortable one-on-one: she happily pounces on the newcomer, her daughter, Elizabeth: “‘Here is my Elizabeth,’ said Clarissa, emotionally, histrionically, perhaps” (71). Defeated—for there is no Peter-Clarissa-young daughter triangle—Peter makes his escape and runs outside. It is an emotionally exhausting battle for Peter and for Clarissa. Clarissa wins, though, and she does so by expertly surfing the waves of the shifting power dynamic; although often flummoxed, Clarissa ultimately knows when to bring in Richard to use their ménage à trois to her advantage. With Peter around, Clarissa’s marriage has extra facets; she uses Peter and his feelings for her to escape from the binary of husband and wife. Clarissa skillfully navigates the love triangle.

There is another factor—besides Clarissa’s not choosing him—that works against Peter Walsh in the Clarissa-Peter-Richard triangle: he does the work of empire in the

colonies. Richard works for England, but his doing so at home as a member of parliament seems only to add gloss to his patina. For instance, when Peter sees Clarissa after a long absence, he notices Richard's influence on her, which he describes as being "a great deal of the public-spirited, British Empire, tariff-reform, governing-class spirit" (116). In contrast to Hugh Whitbread's symbolism of the sillier aspects of the British façade, Lady Bruton "preferred Richard Dalloway of course. He was made of much finer material" (157). Lady Bruton gets Richard to advise her, and Milly Brush considers him "always so dependable; such a gentleman too" (162). Woolf creates Richard as "being pertinacious and dogged, having championed the down-trodden and followed his instincts in the House of Commons" (175), and although he is "rather speechless, rather stiff," he also has surprising moments of political liberalism, such as when he thinks, "and prostitutes, good Lord, the fault wasn't in them, nor in young men either, but in our detestable social system and so forth" (175). Like Clarissa, he cannot quite be pigeon-holed, and one gets the distinct impression that Richard, although stodgy, does good work.

In contrast to this, Peter is presented as a failure, one who, when his name comes up at Lady Bruton's luncheon, makes everyone smile and think of "some flaw in his character" (162). What is consequential about these alleged short-comings of Peter's is that they are usually connected to his work in India. Where Richard's work in England is seen by some as cause for admiration, Peter's work in the colonies is cause for slightly embarrassed scorn. He is sullied in the eyes of Clarissa's London circle by his connection to the colonies. Regarding the homosocial triangle in E. M. Forster's *A Passage To India*, Sara Suleri writes that "In place of the orientalist paradigm in which

the colonizing presence is as irredeemably male as the colonized territory is female, *A Passage To India* presents an alternative colonial model: the most urgent cross-cultural invitations occur between male and male, with racial difference serving as a substitute for gender" (133). Woolf is similarly devising such a model in *Mrs Dalloway*: only instead of replacing gender with the issue of racial difference, Woolf has Peter acquire a negative effeminacy from his contact with the female colonized territory; thus tainted, he becomes the weak rival in the triangle and loses clout both with Clarissa, his desired, and Richard, his competitor. "He was the best judge of cooking in India" (237), and whereas this makes "him attractive to women who liked the sense that he was not altogether manly," it does not impress the likes of Clarissa and Richard. As Suleri contends for Forster: "Geography thus functions as a cultural determinant...and as a consequence becomes a figure for the inefficacy of colonial travel, whether it be across acceptable cultural or sexual borders" (146). Peter's geographical decision to do empire work results from his own sexual disappointment (Clarissa's choice of Richard) while simultaneously affecting his sexual desirability, which is lessened by his becoming an Anglo-Indian. In this manner, Woolf suggests that there is an understated dishonor connected to work in the colonies; the cultural opinion regarding empire is shifting.

The amount of negative connections made between Peter and his work in India is overwhelming. Although Clarissa is always remembering Peter's witty "sayings," his letters from India "were awfully dull" (4). Clarissa, jealous, is horrified to hear that Peter is married: but she seems most horrified by the fact that "he had married a woman met on the boat going to India! Never should she forget all that!... Never could she understand how he cared. But those Indian women did presumably—silly, pretty, flimsy

nincompoops” (10). Of course on the one hand this is most indicative of Clarissa’s own prejudices; yet on the other hand, his attraction to and attractiveness towards Anglo-Indian women contaminates Peter. Even his association with such people—partners of colonial workers—makes Peter’s character suspect. Immediately after thinking of Peter on his way to India, Clarissa declares, “his whole life had been a failure. It made her angry still” (11). This is a frequent juxtaposition: when Peter tells Clarissa of his fiancée, she thinks, “What a waste! What a folly! All his life long Peter had been fooled like that; first getting sent down from Oxford; next marrying the girl on the boat going out to India; now the wife of a Major in the Indian Army—thank Heaven she had refused to marry him!” (68). India seems inextricable from Peter’s wastes and follies, and Woolf signals these aspects of the British Empire by making the foolish Peter representative of Empire in the colonies.

When Peter leaves Clarissa’s house, he eventually cheers up, and when he sees his reflection, asserts “And there he was, this fortunate man, himself,” yet then connects this fortune to the fact that “All India lay *behind* him; plains, mountains; epidemics of cholera...” (my italics) (72). Clarissa contends that Peter always had trouble appreciating the Englishness of England: “But Peter—however beautiful the day might be, and the trees and the grass, and the little girl in pink—Peter never saw a thing of all that” (9). As such, he is immune to the charms of the English pastoral. Yet such a “quirk” is magnified by his time spent in the colonies. He is “the other” upon his return to England: “the earth, after the voyage, still seemed an island to him, the strangeness of standing alone, alive, unknown, at half-past eleven in Trafalgar Square overcame him. What is it? Where am I?” (77-8). London is unrecognizable to him, and what he has

seen and experienced in the colonies is, in its own way, unrecognizable to people like Clarissa and Richard. In his own thoughts Peter defends himself, asserting, “For he had a turn for mechanics; had invented a plough in his district, had ordered wheel-barrow from England, but the coolies wouldn’t use them, all of which Clarissa knew nothing about” (73). As other critics have suggested, the refusal of the workers to implement Peter’s tools makes Peter’s efficacy as an administrator suspect (Phillips 15); however, Clarissa, as Peter points out, “knew nothing” about any of his colonial activities: it is almost as if it would be unseemly to hear the details of empire’s work abroad. Peter was in India, his letters were dull, he is—somehow—even more of a failure upon his return for no acknowledged reason other than where he has been.

Often, in his own mind at least, Peter’s time abroad adds a positive sense of mystery to his character. While walking down the streets of London, his recent return makes him special: “he was an adventurer, reckless, he thought, swift, daring, indeed (landed as he was last night from India) a romantic buccaneer” (80); yet even this goes slightly askew, for when he has these thoughts, Peter is following a woman he spotted on the street, and is fantasizing that she is encouraging him to do so. His idea of “daring” seems more like “creepy” to the reader. Peter’s “daring” spirals to being “careless of all these damned proprieties...respectability and evening parties” (80); in his own tame way Peter imagines he has “gone native”. He is no Kurtz, of course, there are no heads on sticks decorating his property, but his propriety has slipped a notch; he was always skeptical of Clarissa’s hostess abilities and her parties, and now his skepticism can be blamed on India. Such antagonism does go both ways. When Peter sees Clarissa sewing, he contrasts her life with his: “here she’s been sitting all the time I’ve been in

India; mending her dress; playing about; going to parties; running to the House and back and all that..." (61). Yet Peter also is disdainful—or at least ambivalent—regarding his own activities abroad. He is proud of the fact that he descends "from a respectable Anglo-Indian family which for at least three generations had administered the affairs of a continent," yet he also thinks in an aside: "it's strange...what a sentiment I have about that, disliking India, and empire, and army as he did" (82). Towards the end of the book, Peter even undermines his own authority by turning to Richard Dalloway for real knowledge about India, in a scene where Woolf's two uses of the Clarissa-Richard-Peter triangle intersect. After having decided that he will go to Clarissa's party after all, he twice thinks that "he wanted to ask Richard what they were doing in India" and "What did the Government mean—Richard Dalloway would know—to do about India?" (244). Peter bears the taint of empire while Richard has the authority over it. Woolf has Peter always be Richard's inferior. Because of his love for Clarissa, Peter has a bond with Richard, making it logical that he would turn to Richard for information and guidance. That Richard is the doyen in matters pertaining to India, however, is indicative of the stigma that certain affairs of empire were acquiring.

Clarissa is part of another triangle with Peter which is also concerned with marriage. Before Richard Dalloway arrived at Bourton, Clarissa, Peter and Sally Seton were experiencing a summer which Clarissa uses as a marvelous touchstone throughout the entire novel. Clarissa is fueled by these particular memories of times shared with Peter and Sally. Significantly, she returns to no such memory of Richard. In "Rewriting Family Ties: Woolf's Renaissance Romance," Diana Henderson notes that "What Clarissa need not live is the romance material that Woolf wants to reconceive, to revive

in a way that does not subdue female subjectivity. The solution would not be to return to the old bourgeois one-and-only-love and marriage plot" (150). Clarissa returns, instead, to the triangle; but unlike the triangle she shares with Peter and Richard—in which she always chooses to turn a twosome into a threesome—in this instance Clarissa desires yet fails to remain an exclusive pair with Sally. Peter always intrudes, and Clarissa cannot forgive him for it. The dynamics of this triangle reveal the strength and pressures of the traditional marriage plot; Woolf has the tensions between Clarissa, Sally, and Peter illustrate just what Clarissa is up against with regards to the marriage plot of her own life.

While reminiscing about Bourton, Clarissa thinks of how she was so in love with Sally Seton that "Peter Walsh might have been there," but she does not know for sure: she was only, and blissfully, aware of Sally. Clarissa continues on to remember "the most exquisite moment of her whole life," which is when Sally Seton kisses her on the lips (52). It is at this moment that the unfortunate Peter chooses to make the two into three, and interrupts their kiss with an inane question. Clarissa avows that this interruption "was like running one's face against a granite wall in the darkness! It was shocking; it was horrible!" (53). In love with Clarissa himself, Peter of course interrupts on purpose with "his determination to break into their companionship" (53). Clarissa can never forgive Peter for this; and one wonders whether she punishes Peter for it by later forcing him to always be the third who interrupts her marriage to Richard. It is interesting, however, that Woolf never presents Sally's view of this interrupted kiss. For Sally seems quite fond of Peter, and the two of them have many connections. To begin with, Clarissa's father dislikes them both, which, as Peter points out, "was a great bond"

(90). Secondly, Sally is Peter's advocate: she wants Clarissa to marry him. Her motives are not clear: perhaps she knows that there is a secure emotional place for her in a Peter-Clarissa marriage; or perhaps she just does not like Richard. At any rate, when they are young, Sally writes to Peter all summer confiding in him how much Clarissa likes him: "how they had talked of him; how she had praised him, how Clarissa burst into tears"

(95). Later, Peter thinks of how Sally had "implored him, half laughing of course, to carry off Clarissa, to save her from the Hughs and the Dalloways and all the other 'perfect gentlemen' who would 'stifle her soul'" (114). When Peter and Sally meet up at Clarissa's party, she repeats these sentiments, even though she herself has long been absent from Clarissa's life. She asks Peter, "to be quite frank then, how could Clarissa have done it?—married Richard Dalloway?" (288). Sally has forgiven Peter for that interruption; the two of them derive comfort from remembering a pre-Richard Dalloway Clarissa. They both represent and reveal the limitations of the choices available to Clarissa. For when Sally makes the claim that "Clarissa had cared for him [Peter] more than she had ever cared for Richard. Sally was positive of that" (293-3), the reader knows that Clarissa had cared for Sally even more.

Clarissa herself prioritizes the triangle she forms with Peter and Sally at her party. She looks at Peter and Sally chatting, and acknowledges that they have significantly shaped her past more than Richard has done. Henderson writes that "the return of Clarissa's long 'lost' sibling surrogates (her youthful loves Peter Walsh and Sally Seton) challenges the centrality of the conventional marriage plot that led Clarissa away from those friends to become Mrs. Richard Dalloway" (137). Clarissa shared with Sally the one pairing that she did not want to be anything but: it was a twosome she loved, but

which could not withstand the conventional marriage expectations. As Henderson enables us to see, however, Woolf does use the Clarissa-Peter-Sally triangle as a means of subverting the “centrality of the conventional marriage plot,” and she does so right up to the last page of the book. Peter and Sally keep punctuating their conversation by asking where is Clarissa? They need her to complete their triangle. When she does return to the party, Sally once again pleads Peter’s case: by going to talk to Richard Dalloway, she leaves Peter and Clarissa together to share the final moment of the novel. This prevents its ending with Clarissa joining her husband and daughter in what would have been the conventional marriage plot portrait.

Whereas Clarissa derives a kind of soothing, nostalgic comfort from her memories of her interactions with Sally and Peter, the comfort she gets from the tense connections between herself, her daughter, Elizabeth, and Elizabeth’s tutor, Doris Kilman, is antagonistic in nature. Clarissa despises Miss Kilman, and despises the allure she holds for Elizabeth; however, this negative energy seems to recharge Clarissa. She flourishes upon it and will return to Miss Kilman in mind when Miss Kilman is not present in body. Before Miss Kilman appears in the novel, Clarissa reminisces for a moment about the tutor she had as a youth, a “Fraulein Daniels” (11). We learn later that Miss Kilman, too, is of German descent, so it could be that Clarissa—ever one to mix the present with the past—is recalling or re-living an old antagonism she felt towards this Fraulein Daniels, who gave Clarissa only “a few twigs of knowledge” (11). However, like so many of Clarissa’s interactions, she actively triangulates this one: the issue becomes not her dislike for Miss Kilman, but how this dislike for Miss Kilman will enable her to participate in a power struggle against Miss Kilman for Elizabeth’s

affections. Clarissa's first reference to Miss Kilman is to express her annoyance that Elizabeth likes and is taken in by her. In the triangle Clarissa creates with Richard and Peter, because she has genuine feelings for both men, the power struggle between the three of them that she so relishes must remain somewhat under the surface, taking second place to her affection for both men. She has no such affection for Miss Kilman, so the power struggle aspect is as obvious to Clarissa as her power struggle with Richard and Peter is to the reader: it is overt. Woolf has Clarissa begin to list some of the small details that annoy her about Miss Kilman, but she soon abandons them to get to the heart of the matter:

For it was not her one hated but the idea of her, which undoubtedly had gathered into itself a great deal that was not Miss Kilman; had become one of those specters with which one battles in the night...for no doubt with another throw of the dice, had the black been uppermost and not the white, she would have loved Miss Kilman! But not in this world. No. (16-17)

But in a way, Clarissa *does* love Miss Kilman: she loves to hate her. Such a tension between two people over a third is Clarissa's existential crux, and when she goes on to describe how such hatred rocks the foundation of her world, one cannot help but think that there is a part of Clarissa that is positively fueled by this negative energy. Such hunches are confirmed at the end of the novel, when, at a low point at her party, and when Clarissa is despairing of it ever coalescing into a triumphant event, she cheers herself up by thinking, "Kilman her enemy. That was satisfying; that was real. Ah, how she hated her—hot, hypocritical, corrupt; with all that power; Elizabeth's seducer; the woman who had crept in to steal and defile (Richard would say, What nonsense!). She hated her; she loved her. It was enemies one wanted, not friends..." (265-6). Clarissa wants someone who will both torment her and come to her rescue. Woolf specifically

makes Clarissa drawn to those who will allow the binaries to be blurred: she can both love and hate Miss Kilman, she can have a marriage with Richard that allows in—and indeed depends upon—other people. Trudi Tate avers that “The struggle between Clarissa and Miss Kilman over Elizabeth’s affection, for example, can never be resolved so that both are satisfied or victorious. Towards the end of the novel Clarissa recognizes this, and relishes her discovery of the power struggle” (154). It is this more complex power struggle inherent in a threesome that Clarissa so desires.

Miss Kilman is not the only phantom at Clarissa’s party, for it is, of course, Septimus’s absence that becomes the party’s core. Clarissa, Miss Kilman, and Septimus form another significant threesome. Karen Levenback makes a persuasive case for seeing the integral role Miss Kilman plays in the novel as being of equal consequence to the oft-noted role of Septimus. She observes that “To isolate Septimus Smith as the doppelganger of Clarissa Dalloway is to miss the importance of Doris Kilman, for ‘Miss Kilman did not hate Mrs. Dalloway’; she understood Mrs. Dalloway and her limitations all too well” (80). Indeed the similarities between the three characters often overlap. Miss Kilman, for example, seems to relish the power struggle between herself and Clarissa over Elizabeth as much as Clarissa does: she wants “to overcome her; to unmask her” (189). Like Clarissa, Miss Kilman first professes hatred towards her and then clarifies that to hating the idea of Clarissa and what she represents (189). Where Clarissa pushes thoughts of Miss Kilman temporarily out of her head with declarations of “Nonsense, nonsense” (17), Miss Kilman pushes thoughts of Clarissa out of her head by thinking “of Russia” (195). Like Clarissa, Miss Kilman uses a third person in their power struggle. She thinks, “At any rate she had got Elizabeth” (195), showing that she

knows full well the shape of their battle. Miss Kilman uses Elizabeth as a pawn, and when Elizabeth leaves her, thinks, "She had gone. Mrs. Dalloway had triumphed" (201). Without that third person Miss Kilman knows the combustion will fizzle.

Miss Kilman and Septimus Warren Smith are even more alike. Both are from the lower classes; both were working their way up before the war, and then had the war interfere with and disrupt their upward mobility. As Gay Wachman contends, "In *Mrs Dalloway*, only Septimus and Doris Kilman oppose the postwar, ruling-class values embodied in the Dalloways and their essentially exploitative colonialist circle" (123). Both—Septimus in his overcoat and Miss Kilman in her green mackintosh—are now shabby. People look at Miss Kilman and wonder if there is something wrong with her, as they occasionally do with Septimus: a clerk sees Miss Kilman "muttering" to herself in the Army and Navy stores, and "the girl serving thought her mad" (196). Kilman's "fanatical religious zeal...begins at about the same time as Septimus's aberrational behavior became manifest" (Levenback 80). In "The Female Victims of the War in *Mrs Dalloway*," Masami Usui makes the point that "The bond between Septimus and Clarissa should be understood as a common sense of victimization by the war and by patriarchal values" (151). If this is true for the bond between Septimus and Clarissa, then it is even more so for the bond between Septimus and Doris Kilman. Miss Kilman's life circumstances were completely derailed by the war: she lost her job and with it her sole means for supporting herself. And as Usui herself goes on to contend, "Womanhood was still valued and judged by men" and so "Kilman's lack of beauty, money and social status symbolize a deeply rooted patriarchal view of a single, independent, and strong woman without social rank" (161). Kilman is smart enough to make this connection for

herself: “I’m plain, I’m unhappy” (MD 200 and Usui 162). Her physical looks cause her to be a victim whom no one will rescue.

“Patriarchal values” do give Septimus at least one advantage over Miss Kilman. When Woolf describes Septimus’s background, we see that Septimus is employed by Mr. Brewer, a man who, in the old boy manner, looks out for Septimus’s well-being. He sees potential in Septimus and can envision him advancing to the company’s higher echelons “‘if he keeps his health’ said Mr. Brewer, and that was the danger—he looked weakly; advised football, invited him to supper and was seeing his way to consider recommending a rise of salary,” yet at this point Septimus thwarts him by enlisting (129). After the war, when Septimus’s shell-shock begins to manifest itself, Mr. Brewer kindly gives him a leave of absence and writes him a glowing letter of recommendation which Septimus shows to the doctor. Of course in the long run, this supportive network is not enough to save Septimus; however, it stands in great contrast to Miss Kilman’s employment experience. Woolf explains: “And then, just as she might have had a chance at Miss Dolby’s school, the war came; and she had never been able to tell lies. Miss Dolby thought she would be happier with people who shared her views about the Germans. She had had to go” (187). Although Miss Kilman later has the “good fortune” to meet Richard Dalloway, who pities her and hires her as Elizabeth’s tutor, as a woman who must support herself, her value in the patriarchy comes to an unceremonious end. She is its victim in a way that Septimus is not—although there are other ways of viewing Miss Kilman besides as a merely pitiable character. As Wachman asserts: “Socialist, pacifist, and a lesbian historian, Kilman plays an important role as an outsider, opposing

with her solitary feminist consciousness the structures of the patriarchy in Woolf's reconfigured history of the aftermath of the First World War" (137).

Although a large portion of *Mrs Dalloway* consists of Clarissa being haunted by the ghosts of her past at Bourton, as readers we are forced to make a distinction between her ghosts and all the many times that Septimus Warren Smith is haunted by seeing visions of his friend, Evans, who was killed in the war. Septimus is insane and Clarissa is sane, and as Woolf noted in her diary, *Mrs Dalloway* is to be a study of just such a pairing; this is the most common way of interpreting the novel. Commenting on Septimus's shell-shock-induced insanity, John Mepham explains that Septimus "sees only two possibilities—meaning is everywhere or it is nowhere; our experience is full or it is empty; excitation or desolation. This way lies insanity" (150). Claire Tylee views Septimus and Clarissa as being linked by their imperial restraints. She writes that "The novel plots their mutual constraint by the values of an imperial political system" (150). Karen Levenback connects this directly to the binaries of war, clarifying that Septimus "returns unable to read Shakespeare, in whom he sees evidence of the same either-or, life-denying vision that is concomitant with war" (74). Sane, Clarissa does not view life in such an extremely bifurcated manner; Clarissa can see both sides of an issue. She can see Septimus's death as—for her at least—both a tragedy and a choice. But Woolf has more going on here than merely counteracting Septimus's insanity with Clarissa's sanity. Septimus and Clarissa are paired, but as Woolf wrote in the other diary entry already quoted, "I can bring innumerable other characters to her support" (*Volume Two* 272). In doing so, she successfully blurs the borderline between the either/or of Septimus's insanity and Clarissa's sanity, thus mirroring the possibility of how all such simplistic

binaries can and should be made more complex. Therefore, where on the one hand Clarissa's "'use' of Septimus to sustain her own spirit replicates the nation's recent use of many such naively patriotic young clerks in the war—destroying them to sustain an idealized image of English duty and nationhood" (Henderson 151), on the other hand Woolf writes a way out of the simple thinking that so often is part and parcel of the "image of English duty and nationhood" by having Clarissa turn to other characters as well—and indeed always insist upon bringing in these other characters. Woolf therefore has Clarissa at her party use both the idea of Miss Kilman *and* Septimus's suicide to reach her own epiphany. And when the image of Miss Kilman fades with the immediacy of the shock of Septimus's death, it is not long before Clarissa once again will make a twosome into a threesome by bringing the old woman across the street into her thoughts of herself and Septimus. As she had once used her view of the everyday of the woman in the house across the street to calm her feelings against Miss Kilman (191-2), so she does again with the turmoil she feels over Septimus's suicide. Clarissa is despairing at the comparison she makes between herself and Septimus: "Somehow it was her disaster—her disgrace. It was her punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness, and she forced to stand here in her evening dress. She had schemed; she had pilfered. She was never wholly admirable" (282). But then Clarissa notes the woman across the street: "She parted the curtains; she looked. Oh, but how surprising!—in the room opposite the old lady stared straight at her!" (283). This is the first time that the old woman has interacted with Clarissa by returning and sharing her gaze. Clarissa is not "alone" with Septimus; she now no longer forms a pair with Septimus, but a trio with him and the old woman across the street. Either/or has been

thwarted: “But what an extraordinary night!” (283). Clarissa then turns and returns to the party in general, and to a different triumvirate in particular: “She must find Sally and Peter” (284). Pairs will dissolve as she moves from three to three.

The many character triangles that Clarissa is a part of connect with many of the specific political points and opinions Virginia Woolf is known to have professed. One aspect of Woolf’s project in *Mrs Dalloway* is to create an awareness of the negative effects of the simple binaries that proliferated during World War I. She had long been a vocal critic of the rigid social and cultural distinctions that accompanied the gender binary, having experienced the educational limitations that were imposed on women firsthand when her brothers went off to acquire an education at school that Woolf had to acquire on her own at home. What Woolf does in *Mrs Dalloway*, however, is to set it in 1924—a time close enough after the war for the us/them propaganda binaries expounded during it to still be culturally present—and then to make the connection between these binaries of war, both with the same us/them binaries upon which the British Empire is based, *and* the dangerous simplicities of the gender binary. Of course, nothing is as simple as us/them and him/her, and one of the techniques which Woolf uses to make this point is to always bring a third person into Clarissa’s relations. As we have seen, the Dalloways’ version of husband-and-wife always becomes husband-and-wife-and-Peter. Clarissa even chooses to marry Richard Dalloway because she knows that with him she will have this kind of leeway: “For in marriage a little license, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her and she him...But with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into.

And it was intolerable” (10). Yet Clarissa chooses to view the independence Richard gives her through this possessiveness of Peter’s: one is not complete without the other, and Clarissa seems to *need* the tension that exists between the two.

This extension of the boundaries of the traditional male/female relationship is indicative of how Woolf believes the false binaric constructs that make up war and empire should be similarly complicated and dismantled. Kathy J. Phillips writes of how “One of [Woolf’s] most interesting juxtapositions associates Empire making, war making, and gender relations in a typical constellation” (vii). The example Phillips proceeds to use is taken from *Jacob’s Room*, the novel Woolf wrote before *Mrs Dalloway*. Although Woolf began her formulation of this triangular “constellation” in *Jacob’s Room*, it is in *Mrs Dalloway* that it really becomes a central pattern; as such, it is one that Clarissa will replicate in all of her relations and interactions throughout the book. As William Handley points out, “Woolf is interested not in fixing human beings but in unhinging them, in demonstrating how individuals are constantly impinged upon by social forces that shape their internal reality” (112). If this is true, then how Woolf has her individuals navigate these social forces can be seen as her proposed answer to the problems which the restraints of these forces impose. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Clarissa is always able to better understand herself and her interactions with others by subverting the traditional binaric relations and constantly bringing a third person into the mix. By showing Clarissa gaining insight from and making things better for herself by changing a simple two to a more complicated three, Woolf thus is able to hint at the benefits that would also be attained by similarly complicating the simple binaries of empire and war.

The problem with a binary is that all the power inevitably ends up on one side of it. A powerful us needs a weak them to remain powerful. The enemy in a war needs to be “bad” so that one’s own country can be “good”. Man needs woman to be the weak other. As Woolf so aptly and sarcastically phrases it in *A Room of One’s Own*, “Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size” (35). Characteristically, Woolf then proceeds to connect this disparity of gender to war and empire, commenting that:

Without that power...The glories of all our wars would be unknown...The Czar and the Kaiser would never have worn their crowns or lost them. Whatever may be their use in civilized societies, mirrors are essential to all violent and heroic action. That is why Napoleon and Mussolini both insist so emphatically upon the inferiority of women, for if they were not inferior, they would cease to enlarge. That serves to explain in part the necessity that women so often are to men. (*AROO* 35-6)

As stated previously, adding a third person, side or angle can block the magnification the powerless give to the powerful, for an interrupted binary is more easily dismantled when middle ground creates more room for maneuvering. Gilles Deleuze claims this space for Virginia Woolf directly when he writes that “The only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between the intermezzo—that is what Virginia Woolf lived with all her energies, in all of her work, never ceasing to become” (126). He elaborates upon this by asserting that “It is the middle where one finds the becoming, the movement, the velocity, the vortex. The middle is not the mean, but on the contrary an excess. It is by the middle that things push. That was Virginia Woolf’s idea” (208). Phillips takes a similar approach to Woolf when she points out that Woolf often “focuses on the lowly,” having, for example, the cook comment on the prime minister’s appearance at Clarissa’s

party, and that “She does so not to give exhaustive evidence from the foreground of social conditions, but to orient the gaze, through juxtaposition and metaphor, toward the background links among Empire, military, and gender relations, which together constitute a comprehensive imperial ideology” (xxix). By adding a third “channel” or route for power to pass through, Woolf magnifies this “middle” which Deleuze refers to, and the “background links” referred to by Phillips: the triangle structure she uses in *Mrs Dalloway*, then, interferes with the way that power is traditionally maintained and recharged. The triangle of characters exposes a more complex pattern of shifting allegiances which can also work to undermine the binaries of gender, war, and empire: triangulated, their inter-relatedness is revealed.

In her diaries written during the war, Woolf’s commentary often proves how aware she was of the machinations of the propaganda of war: how it simplified all outlooks, paring all issues down to that of us vs. them and good vs. evil, thus making war more compelling. She writes that “The Northcliffe papers do all they can to insist upon the indispensability & delight of war. They magnify our victories to make our mouths water for more” (*Volume One* 200). Yet she also reveals how persuasive such propaganda can be, discovering that she herself was not always immune to the fervor it produced. In an entry for March 14, 1918, Woolf quips that,

What excited me was the evening paper.... [I] read that the Prime Minister needed our prayers. We were faced with momentous decisions. We Britons must cling together. In a week or even a few days facts must be faced which would change the British Empire for ever. We evolved from this an offer of peace to France: but it appears to be only LG’s way of whipping up his gallery. Anyhow, I was whipped. (*Volume One* 128)

In this passage she mockingly acts out her “proper” role as receiver of propaganda: she self-consciously reacts the way she is supposed to react. But of course Woolf knows to

distrust the simplicity of the views put forth. Woolf does not necessarily see the war as an aberration disconnected from what came before or will come after. As Kathy Phillips points out, “Woolf consistently depicts the perpetuation of this dangerous ideology through the British public schools, universities, social classes, churches, professions...marriage and gender expectations. These institutions all reinforce each other, so that a unifying imperial outlook regulates life at home and dictates behavior overseas” (221). Thus, when the war ends, Woolf does not see cause for celebration: all the institutions that created the war are still in place. Phillips points out that World War I “is presented in all Woolf’s books not as an anomaly or an external threat to British society, but rather as its inevitable result” (1). It follows, therefore, that in her diary Woolf refuses to see the peace celebrations as anything other than slightly pathetic and meant for those who have been seduced by the war’s propaganda. She notes that even the celebrations are divided by a binary: “there seemed to be no mean between tipsy ribaldry & rather sour disapproval” (*Volume One* 217). Writing about a more formal celebration that occurred a few months later, Woolf grumbles that “One ought to say something about Peace day, I suppose, though whether it’s worth taking a new nib for that purpose I don’t know,” and later she clarifies her disdain, pointing out that “There’s something calculated & politic & insincere about these peace rejoicings” (*Volume One* 292). Viewing the war as a contained eruption with the Peace Day celebrations acting as the period to its sentence does not work for Woolf. She will explore this uneasiness in her novels. As Karen Levenback contends in her book, *Virginia Woolf and the Great War*, Woolf’s postwar novels “reveal the author’s engagement with ambiguities and realities that blur the lines between peace and war; civilians and combatants; survivors

and victims; and, most basically, life and death” (27). It is Woolf’s project to “blur the lines” of these binaries.

Woolf sees the gender binary as being part and parcel of the binaries of war and empire. Each creates simplistic divisions that work to uphold the power of one side. As Phillips describes, Woolf thought that “Churchgoers’ practice in believing that men are better than women prepares them to accept other hierarchies, such as ‘England is better than Germany’ or ‘our navy is better than your navy’” (131).² Although in 1938 when writing *Three Guineas*, Woolf will infer that “feminine discourse encourages an erosion of boundaries, permitting a collaboration between *you* and *us* rather than the absorption of *us* by *you*” (Hanley 58), in *Mrs Dalloway* Woolf’s view is more understated. Trudi Tate elaborates upon this in *Modernism, History and the First World War*: “Who was to blame for the disaster of the war, and who would take responsibility for the peace? Woolf does not simply criticize men and exonerate women, as some critics have suggested; rather, her writing directs both satire and sympathy in complex and unexpected ways” (151-2). Tate claims that one of the ways Woolf does this is to make Clarissa “a strongly paradoxical figure. The text constructs her quite explicitly as someone with whom we are invited to sympathize *and* whom we are forced to judge” (167). Practically nothing or no one in *Mrs Dalloway* remains in its corner of the box, so to speak. Septimus’s damage from the war is paralleled with Clarissa’s patriarchal constrictions—despite the fact that Clarissa herself often takes refuge in these constrictions. Clarissa will feel sorry for the suffering of Lady Bexborough, who lost her son in the war, and for Septimus, but feels nothing but antipathy towards Miss Kilman’s war misfortunes, and indifference regarding the carnage suffered by the Armenians—a

people whose fate Richard Dalloway has some control over. Woolf thus even wants her readers' opinions of Clarissa Dalloway to occupy a middle space: even the binary of like and dislike will be thwarted.

Kathy J. Phillips' *Virginia Woolf against Empire* was the first book-length study of the prominent role that empire plays in Woolf's novels. But critics before and since have theorized about Woolf's interest in and opinions regarding empire, war, and gender in general, and in how they unfurl in *Mrs Dalloway* in particular. Many have used the connection between Clarissa and Septimus as an entry into such a discussion. Trudi Tate claims that Woolf makes the point of how much the war effected the average London citizen if Clarissa, a civilian, can have so much in common with Septimus, a shell-shocked soldier (147). Karen Levenback adds to this line of thought by commenting that "What she came to see progressively in the war years proper was that the civilian experience of the war was no less real for being inherently ironic and that the facts of life thereafter would be measured against the experience of the war whether on the front or on the streets or in the village" (16). Diana Henderson expands this civilian/soldier connection beyond the war, arguing that *Mrs Dalloway* "tries to expose the particular social structures that limit the lives of women and nonelite men, associating oppression with the workings of empire and patriarchy" (144). In doing so she shows how many of the points made about war in *Mrs Dalloway* also hold true for empire and gender relations in that novel as well. The connection between Clarissa and Septimus works as a good first step towards uncovering the pervasiveness of the effects of the "constellation" of empire, war, and gender relations, but escalating this examination from

the one significant doubling in the novel to the multiple significant triumvirates will enable us to uncover even more.

In his essay, “‘We All Put Up With You Virginia’: Irreceivable Wisdom about War,” Roger Poole avows that “There is a case for regarding *Mrs Dalloway* as the finest ‘war novel’ that World War I produced” (79). He maintains that in addition to the connection between Clarissa and Septimus, war has a constant presence in *Mrs Dalloway*; in fact, he goes so far as to claim that its “absence” is also significant, and that Woolf is commenting on war when she has so many of her characters shy away from thoughts of it (Poole 80). Other critics concur: Nancy Bazin and Jane Lauter assert that “To read Virginia Woolf’s fiction intelligently, the reader must recognize fully the extent to which war shaped her vision and the reasons why it had such an impact” (14), while William Handley suggests that “Woolf’s aesthetic project...is a fighting response to the war, to the hierarchical structure, culture, and rigid psychology of a society that pulls itself toward this destructive end” (111). Mark Hussey extends such assertions to Woolf’s entire oeuvre, declaring that “*all* Woolf’s work is deeply concerned with war; that it helps redefine our understanding of the nature of war; and that from her earliest to her final work she sought to explore and make clear the connections between private and public violence, between the domestic and the civic effects of patriarchal society, between male supremacy and the absence of peace, and between ethics and aesthetics” (3). And finally, Karen Levenback effectively encapsulates these sentiments when she writes that “In fact, any effort to assess Woolf’s writings or her life without a sense of her experience of the Great War is as incomplete as it would be in a study of Robert Graves, for example, who was a combatant, or D. H. Lawrence, who, like the Woolfs,

remained a civilian" (4). The consensus is that *Mrs Dalloway* is a war novel and Virginia Woolf a war novelist: she captures how on a day in June of 1924, the war is still very much a part of everyone's everyday.

By constantly weaving the war into such a seemingly *post-war* sunny June day is precisely how Woolf emphasizes that when it comes to the Great War there is no "over". She immediately establishes this contradiction on the third page of the novel by having Clarissa muse:

For it was the middle of June. The War was over, except for some one like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin; or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed; but it was over; thank Heaven—over. (5)

After Clarissa proclaims in that passage that "The War was over," she immediately gives the lie to this by listing several of the ways in which it is *not* over. Clarissa herself might not have lost a family member in the war—although her Uncle William's death seems at least emotionally connected to the war, being described as "He had turned on his bed one morning in the middle of the War. He had said, 'I have had enough'" (15)—but she is surrounded by people who have experienced such losses. Such contradictions continue throughout *Mrs Dalloway*. Clarissa even contradicts herself before she reaches the flower shop that is the destination of her morning walk; she thinks that, "This late age of the world's experience had bred in them all, all men and women, a well of tears. Tears and sorrows; courage and endurance, a perfectly upright and stoical bearing" (13). It is not just Clarissa—a woman for whom the past is always very much present—who is preoccupied with the war: it seems to pervade the minds of everybody in London. A "Little Mr. Bowley" looks at some women and thinks, "poor women, nice little children,

orphans, widows, the War—tut-tut—actually had tears in his eyes” (28). Mr. Brewer, Septimus’s boss, remarks upon how his business has been affected by the war, “so prying and insidious were the fingers of the European War” (129). Even the complacent Richard Dalloway thinks, when he is walking across London to tell Clarissa he loves her, that “Really it was a miracle thinking of the war, and thousands of poor chaps, with all their lives before them, shoveled together, already half forgotten; it was a miracle” (174). Septimus—for whom, of course, the war is overtly ever-present—carries its presence to extremes. He hallucinates how “The dead were in Thessaly, Evans sang, among the orchids. There they waited till the War was over...” (105). Dead and alive are still waiting for the war’s “ending.” But one cannot dismiss Septimus’s feelings about the war as being a result of his shell-shock, for Woolf has all young men—even the sane ones—appear to be on a hair-trigger where war is concerned. When the gray car containing the unknown representative of the British Empire passes, Woolf writes of how “Tall men,” “men of robust physique,” and “well-dressed men” “stood even straighter, and removed their hands, and seemed ready to attend their Sovereign, if need be, to the cannon’s mouth, as their ancestors had done before them” (26). If war is indeed “over,” it certainly seems easy to begin it again.

In other novels, Woolf appears conflicted about the supposed divide between pre-war and post-war times. Josephine Schaefer makes this claim for *To The Lighthouse*, maintaining that “Certainly Virginia Woolf was aware of how flawed the prewar civilization of England was, and in *To The Lighthouse* she both reflects and rejects nostalgia for that world that lies irrecoverably on the other side of the Great War” (145). In *Mrs Dalloway*, however, such a notion is a binary to which she will not adhere. She

even seems to mock the tenor of such thinking by having Clarissa comment that “before the War, you could buy almost perfect gloves” (15). By connecting the pre-war mindset to this trivial example of gloves instead of to the more expected concept of a pre-war innocence, Woolf insinuates an underlying continuity: there is no pre-war and post-war, in part because war is a natural extension of the long established political and social culture of England.

In the same year that Woolf wrote *Mrs Dalloway*, she also wrote the essay “Thunder at Wembley,” in which she observes a storm raining upon the Empire Exhibition at Wembley Stadium and the procession leading up to it. Literally, therefore, it is raining on empire’s parade, and Woolf clearly uses the exhibition as a symbol for the British Empire itself. This Empire Exhibition was “first proposed in 1913, but postponed because of the war and turned into a demonstration of the Empire’s strength and resources after the ordeal of war...” (Joll 180). Woolf addresses this pageantry, recognizing empire’s imminent demise in this attempt to disguise its newly precarious state. In purple prose, Woolf observes that “Colonies are perishing and dispersing in spray of inconceivable beauty and terror which some malignant power illuminates. Ash and violet are the colours of its decay. The Empire is perishing; the bands are playing; the Exhibition is in ruins. For that is what comes of letting in the sky” (186-7). The sky, here, is making the sun never setting on the British Empire a moot point. Woolf displays a similar awareness of empire’s dissolution in *Mrs Dalloway*. Like war, an awareness of empire appears repeatedly in the everyday consciousness of the London civilians. Significantly, it is the dilapidation of empire upon which the characters usually remark.

To be fair, there are moments in *Mrs Dalloway* where empire is mentioned or thought of without reference to its demise. Clarissa, for example, finds it reassuring to think of the King and Queen being “at the Palace” where they should be, signaling how everything is right in her world (6). Often, however, what starts out to be a positive reference to empire will go strangely awry. As the gray car passes through the gates of Buckingham Palace, the people feel a thrill of patriotism which begins seriously enough, yet turns silly. Woolf writes of how they “all the time let rumour accumulate in their veins and thrill the nerves in their thighs at the thought of Royalty looking at them; the Queen bowing; the Prince saluting; at the thought of the heavenly life divinely bestowed upon Kings...” (27). This list, which begins with the rather strange visceral location of the thrill experienced, deteriorates from the onlookers being thrilled at the thought of the Queen inside the car to being thrilled by “the Queen’s old doll’s house” and the Prince’s newly acquired slim figure (27-8). One cannot help but hear the mocking in Woolf’s tone.

Furthermore, such more or less “neutral” references to empire are far outnumbered by moments where empire appears pathetic and askew. To begin with, the fact that the identity of the person in the gray car is so uncertain seems significant. When Woolf writes that “nobody knew whose face had been seen. Was it the Prince of Wales’s, the Queen’s, the Prime Minister’s? Whose face was it? Nobody knew” (20), such anonymity for the head of the British Empire stands in contrast to Queen Victoria’s marked presence as monarch during the empire’s heyday. A few pages later, Woolf again mentions the anonymity of the person in the car and this time takes the symbolism of decay even further. For she begins by writing of how the people who watch the car

are experiencing a brush with greatness, so to speak; however, she continues by proclaiming that they are

within speaking distance of the majesty of England, of the enduring symbol of the state which will be known to curious antiquaries, sifting ruins of time, when London is a grass-grown path and all those hurrying along the pavement this Wednesday morning are but bones.... The face in the motor car will then be known. (23)

What might seem like a tribute on a first reading—the fact that the head of England in the car will still be known in centuries to come—becomes overshadowed by the passing reference to London as “a grass-grown path”: what is Woolf saying about the British Empire by projecting its central city as greenery-covered rubble? One can hardly take it as a vote of confidence in empire’s ability to remain afloat. And indeed Woolf returns to such moments of unsettlement. In an oft-quoted passage, Woolf writes that even though the car has passed, the feelings its presence had stirred still remained:

for in all the hat shops and tailors’ shops strangers looked at each other and thought of the dead; of the flag; of Empire. In a public house in a back street a Colonial insulted the House of Windsor which led to words, broken beer glasses, and a general shindy.... For the surface agitation of the passing car as it sunk grazed something very profound. (25-6)

This roiling beneath “the surface” has something to do with empire and the changes that are occurring to it: thoughts of empire are connected to thoughts of “the dead,” and the colonies are now speaking back.

Like the car in this scene, an airplane soon follows which Woolf also portrays as causing its viewers to question the fitness of empire. The plane is spelling out a word that the people below have trouble reading: its message is not clear to them. Woolf writes of how “The clouds to which the letters E, G, or L had attached themselves moved freely, as if destined to cross from West to East on a mission of the greatest importance

which would never be revealed, and yet certainly so it was—a mission of the greatest importance” (30). The British Empire’s mission has always been one “from West to East”, yet it is significant that here such movement is for an *undefined* mission. Its *raison d’etre* is no longer clear—and is, perhaps, fading like the letters made out of cloud; furthermore, reassurance as to its importance seems to be needed—so much so that its “greatest importance” must be stated twice. Such a need indicates insecurity. And still the examples pile up: Peter Walsh sees a young regiment marching and at first notices “on their faces an expression like the letters of a legend written round the base of a statue praising duty, gratitude, fidelity, love of England” (76). Yet upon a closer look, he notes that “they did not look robust. They were weedy for the most part, boys of sixteen, who might, to-morrow, stand behind bowls of rice, cakes of soap on counters” (76). Their future, like the future of the British Empire, begins to appear bleak. When Clarissa looks in the shop windows at the pretty things for sale, she sees “the shopkeepers were fidgeting in their windows with their paste and diamonds, their lovely old sea-green brooches in eighteenth-century settings to tempt Americans...” (6). Significantly, it is the Americans who have the money to buy the decorations of empire, and Clarissa, whose “people were courtiers once in the time of the Georges” who “must economise” (6) and must later repair her own sea-green dress. It is not Clarissa’s ancestors’ British Empire anymore.

Woolf also comments on the state of England and the British Empire by using a triumvirate of characters that Clarissa is connected to, yet not directly a part of: Helena Parry, Lady Bruton, and Hugh Whitbread. Aunt Helena lived in Burma and India in the 1860s and 1870s; now, in 1924, she lives in her memories of those days in the colonies,

and seemingly could be a representative of how the British Empire used to be. Aunt Helena is preoccupied with her own personal memories of life in the colonies: she remembers the orchids she collected and painted, as well as “herself carried on the backs of coolies in the ‘sixties over solitary peaks” (271). She is an elderly woman, so it is perhaps not surprising that she lives now ensconced in her memories of times past. However, it is significant that Woolf specifically makes Helena someone who has experienced the usual “glory days” of empire, yet has “no tender memories, no proud illusions about Viceroys, Generals, Mutinies,” while at the same time being “fretful” and “disturbed by the War” (271). Helena thinks nothing of what was presented at the time as empire’s military triumphs; she does not use them to counteract or hold up against the military horrors of World War I. Instead, the war interrupts her memories of old Empire, which have become a watercolor landscape—and even that memory will soon die with Miss Parry. War causes empire’s memories to dissolve like empire itself.

In contrast to Helena Parry’s watered down memories of empire in the past, Lady Bruton is very much concerned with empire now. Much is made of Millicent Bruton’s lineage: she is descended from a long line of generals and Sirs and men who were involved in the government of England and its colonies. Lady Bruton is not married and has no children, however, so the line will end with her; and since she is female, she was not able to follow in the career footsteps of her famous forebears. Woolf writes that “if ever a woman could have worn the helmet and shot the arrow, could have led troops to attack, ruled with indomitable justice barbarian hordes...that woman was Millicent Bruton” (274-5), yet her gender makes her ineffectual. Lady Bruton is preoccupied with empire’s present state, but the specifics of her preoccupations do not bode well for the

British Empire. When she has Hugh Whitbread and Richard Dalloway over for lunch, she has them compose a letter for her regarding emigration, her latest cause, which is described as “that project for emigrating young people of both sexes born of respectable parents and setting them up with a fair prospect of doing well in Canada” (164). It is telling that the representative of present-day empire in *Mrs Dalloway* is concerned primarily with getting people out of England to a place where they have better chances for success. The emigration letter-writing at Lady Bruton’s luncheon is interrupted by the arrival of newspapers—“the news from India!” (168). Such a juxtaposition of the two issues—Lady Bruton’s frequent switching back and forth from the need for emigration to India as “a tragedy” (274)—enables the reader to make the connection between empire and the need to escape from it. Again, as the character who is empire’s champion, Lady Bruton’s naysaying reveals how unstable is the ground on which empire rests. Even at Clarissa’s party Lady Bruton “had the thought of Empire always at hand” (275) and manages to speak to the Prime Minister in a private room “about India” (279). But then Woolf mentions Lady Bruton’s future death, which at that point also seems to be the death of empire; it is as if Lady Bruton will take England’s heyday with her when she dies, since she cannot imagine being anything but English, even in death: Woolf writes that “one could not figure her even in death parted from the earth or roaming territories over which, in some spiritual shape, the Union Jack had ceased to fly. To be not English even among the dead—no, no! Impossible!” (275). Because of her sex Lady Bruton cannot accomplish for empire what she would like, and she has no sons who could do so; as the character most concerned with the British Empire, her status reveals the Empire to be a dead end.

If Virginia Woolf means for Helena Parry and Millicent Bruton to be representatives of the British Empire's concerns abroad, than Hugh Whitbread is symbolic of her worst fears of what England has become at home. Hugh is all surface niceties and empty ritual: he has a kind of court job at Buckingham Palace, but no one is quite sure what he actually does there. As Clarissa notes, "he was almost too well dressed always" (7), and he attends functions and social gatherings alone, since his wife Evelyn is a permanent invalid (7). Like Lady Bruton, he has no children to whom he will directly pass on his way of life. Woolf writes that "He did not go deeply. He brushed surfaces; the dead languages, the living, life in Constantinople, Paris, Rome; riding, shooting, tennis, it had been once... He had been afloat on the cream of English society for fifty-five years. He had known Prime Ministers" (155). Hugh represents a way of life that is changing, but his way is not admirable; again, Hugh is all façade. Lady Bruton gets Richard Dalloway to advise her about the subject matter, but she has Hugh help her write her letters, because Hugh is so adept at the language of political commentary. Although Richard laughs at Hugh's caution and bombast, Lady Bruton marvels at how "he began carefully writing capital letters with rings round them in the margin, and thus marvelously reduced Lady Bruton's tangles to sense" (166). Woolf will often make characters think of England and English society, and then think of or see Hugh. For example, Clarissa runs into Hugh in London right after she thinks of her own need to economize and contrasts that with the thought that "her people were courtiers once in the time of the Georges" (6); it is after that thought that she notices Hugh, who is just such a courtier. At Clarissa's party, Peter Walsh thinks, "Lord, lord, the snobbery of the English!... How they loved dressing up in gold lace and doing homage! There!

That must be, by Jove it was, Hugh Whitbread, snuffing round the precincts of the great” (262). Sally Seton sees through Hugh and tells him “he represented all that was most detestable in British middle-class life” (110). She complains that “He’s read nothing, thought nothing, felt nothing” and considers him “a perfect specimen of the public school type.... No country but England could have produced him” (110). Hugh is always viewed as being quintessentially English, and the other characters who see him as such mean this as an insult. After noticing Hugh at Clarissa’s party, Peter thinks that “God knows the rascals who get hanged for battering the brains of a girl out in a train do less harm on the whole than Hugh Whitbread and his kindness” (263). With Hugh and England so connected, Woolf indicates its precarious state. If “*Mrs Dalloway* is a penetrating indictment of British imperialism, the ‘tolerable show’ which covers over a hollow heart, the ‘damnable humbug’ that reduces to ‘stuffing and bunkum’ what is owed to the young and the war-dead” (Tylee 152), then Woolf’s use of the wobbly triangle of Aunt Helena, Lady Bruton, and Hugh establishes the political changes that are occurring to the show of imperialism. Empire has reached the end of its line, and the façade it has left is easily ridiculed.

In one of the moments when Clarissa is thinking fondly of Peter Walsh, she recalls how “She owed him words: ‘sentimental,’ ‘civilized’; they started up every day of her life as if he guarded her. A book was sentimental; an attitude to life sentimental. ‘Sentimental,’ perhaps she was to be thinking of the past” (53-4). Peter, who at Bourton was Clarissa’s tutor in the ways of the world, sets up a strict binary for Clarissa to follow. Of course, Clarissa is to play the sentimental female to Peter’s civilized male,

and equally certain is that the sentimental side of the binary is the strong civilized us's weak them. Peter will later think that Clarissa has become "sentimental," and he will mean the term as an insult. In that same paragraph, he proceeds to think of the work he has done bringing "civilization" to India: the wheel-barrows mentioned previously that the coolies disdain (73). As Peter walks through the streets of London, he constantly refers to civilization and things civilized. He considers that "the future of civilization lies...in the hands of young men...such as he was, thirty years ago; with their love of abstract principles; getting books sent out to them all the way from London to a peak in the Himalayas" (75-6); civilization will thus be sent from England to where Peter is doing civilization's work in the colonies. He muses, "A splendid achievement in its own way, after all, London; the season; civilization" (82), and then, "there were moments when civilization, even of this sort, seemed dear to him as a personal possession; moments of pride in England" (82). Virginia Woolf, however, knows better, and sets out to complicate Peter's simplistic civilization/sentimental binary. For besides getting English literature sent to him in the Himalayas, Clarissa also "comes" to Peter there as he philosophizes about civilization on his high perch. Peter admits that Clarissa "had come to him; on board ship; in the Himalayas; suggested by the oddest things.... and always in this way coming before him without his wishing it, cool, lady-like, critical; or ravishing, romantic, recalling some field or English harvest" (232-3). Then, when Peter returns from his life in the colonies--empire work which is often portrayed as a male adventure--when he should be able to demarcate the border between civilization and sentimental without even thinking about it, Woolf creates a confusion in Peter that he is not aware of, but that the reader--sentimental book in tow--realizes. For Peter first sees

Rezia trying to rein in Septimus's shell-shock and thinks they are "lovers squabbling under a tree; the domestic family life of the parks. Never had he seen London look so enchanting...the civilization, after India, he thought..." (107). Still later, Peter will begin to discourse about civilization and sentimental after being prompted by the sound of an ambulance—"That was civilization. It struck him coming back from the East—the efficiency, the organization, the communal spirit of London" (229)—which the reader knows is carrying Septimus, a man ruined by "civilization." Peter is all in a muddle and does not know it. His binary does not—and should not—stand.

As a character, Clarissa has been criticized for her insularity and seeming self-centeredness. She believes that when the war ended all returned to normal, for instance, and she is rather flippantly dismissive about the subject of Richard's committee-work, the plight of the Armenians (Tate 153). Woolf would be more sympathetic towards Clarissa; for in her diary she herself wrote that "In the way of history the Germans have gone back to Germany. People go on being shot & hanged in Ireland.... The worst of it is the screen between our eyes & these gallows is so thick. So easily one forgets it—or I do.... Is it a proof of civilization to envisage suffering at a distance...?" (2, 100) Clarissa, caught up in the bustle of a June day in the London of 1924, is prone to view short-sightedly the world from her mostly comfortable side of the binary—or so one might cursorily think. For Woolf gives Clarissa the underlying tendency to always turn a two into three, which enables her to circumvent the restrictions of conventional marriage. Clarissa thrives on the power-struggles inherent in a triangular relationship—indeed, she seeks them out. Woolf's most significant "constellation," as Phillips has noted, is the juxtaposition of "Empire making, war making, and gender relations" (vii); by having

Clarissa complicate the gender issue with her triumvirates, she demonstrates a way for all the simple binaries so prevalent in the times to be thus dismantled. In a diary entry about composing the end of *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf writes, “There I am now—at last at the party, which is to begin in the kitchen, and climb slowly upstairs. It is to be a most complicated spirited solid piece, knitting together everything & ending on three notes, at different stages of the staircase, each saying something to sum up Clarissa” (2, 312). By making Clarissa herself always choose “three notes” over two, Woolf proposes the first step towards “knitting together everything” that is in a bifurcated disarray.

CHAPTER III

EMPIRE, REVISED IN PAT BARKER'S *REGENERATION* TRILOGY

In *The Ghost Road* the wartime prostitutes are all “great enthusiast[s] for Empire” (G 36), but they stand alone. The soldiers fighting in the Great War are “the Sons of Empire,” but they are small and sickly and their fatigues do not fit, since “some of the Sons of Empire didn’t get much to eat when they were kids” (G175-6). The soldier who appears in all three books of Pat Barker’s trilogy, Billy Prior, writes of how while retreating from the front line after an interminable battle, “I waited for the sun to go down. And the sodding thing didn’t. IT ROSE” (G197-8). While nearing the end of the Great War, the British Empire, it seems, is losing its luster: its sons want its symbolic sun to set. Pat Barker has much to say about Empire. By giving all three books of her *Regeneration* Trilogy a Great War setting, she reconstructs an effective vantage point for viewing the British Empire at the crucial moment of the beginning of its end. At one point, Ruth Head, a character in *Regeneration*, guiltily confesses that she rather enjoys the air raids of the war, that she experiences “an immense sense of exhilaration” during them, and that she has “this feeling that the...*crust* of everything is starting to crack” (R 164). It is this—the cracking surface of Empire—which Barker documents in her novels, using the war as a way to expose both the discrepancies and hypocrisies of empire, as well as the more positive changes that accompany its nascent dissolution.

The Great War is often reflected upon as signifying the end of a halcyon era and the beginning of the disunities of the modern age. Much has been made of the perfect summer season experienced in 1914, and how in hindsight it contributed to the before and after demarcation of the war. In his book, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Paul Fussell claims that “Although some memories of the benign last summer before the war can be discounted as standard romantic retrospection turned even rosier by egregious contrast with what followed, all agree that the prewar summer was the most idyllic for many years” (23), and that “For the modern imagination that last summer has assumed the status of a permanent symbol for anything innocently but irrecoverably lost” (24). Throughout the trilogy, Barker works to erase this line between the times by showing how the tenets of war are an extension of the tenets of Empire—and both are crumbling.

Other critics and historians have not hesitated to make the connection between the horrors of World War I and the beginnings of the end of the British Empire. Claire Tylee, for example, takes this same notion of a pre-war/post-war divide and unites it to the image of empire. She writes that the “myth” of pre-war innocence “has combined with an idea of Britain’s lost imperial splendour to support the current imagery by which the Great War was viewed over and over in diaries and memoirs: that the War was like the Flood, the Deluge, the Fall from Grace, and the world which was lost was Paradise” (245). In *Propaganda and Empire*, John M. Mackenzie avers that: “Some have seen the Boer War as cracking the imperial spirit. More conventionally, the Great War has been regarded as the critical turning point. The war, it is alleged, was followed by a period of pacifism, and militarism and imperialism were so intertwined in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods that revulsion from the one led to rejection of the other” (Mackenzie

9). Of course, the war itself was in part a war fought over the threat made to Britain's imperial status: "It was because the German challenge to Britain's imperial position was a general one rather than a specific set of territorial demands that it seemed so dangerous" (Joll 181). And the war did destroy empires, as well as the sentiment felt toward empires. As A. J. P. Taylor observes, "Before the war there had been four empires in Europe; after it, there was none.... The King of England was the only remaining Emperor in the world, in his capacity as Emperor of India; even that had only another generation to run" (284). The British were right to feel that their empire was beleaguered. The First World War was in reality both the beginning of the end of empire and the unignorable signal that its dissolution was eminent. Regardless of how sunny and pastoral and halcyon the summers to come might be, the war made the British troubled over their now obviously troubled empire.

In her *Regeneration* Trilogy, Pat Barker thus reveals the beginnings of the dissolution of the British Empire, both at home and abroad. The question that arises, then, is why use war to discuss empire? Why does Barker bother to intersperse Rivers's thoughts of his time in Melanesia, for example, with Billy Prior's experience as a soldier at the front? Why mix fictional characters with historical figures? Answers to such questions can be found in a motif that recurs in articles written about England in the past few years. Journalism about England often will contain references to its postimperial state, usually putting this in terms of loss and pessimism. For example, Tony Blair is quoted in *The New Yorker* as saying, "Britain is a great country that has been through the pain of losing an empire, of having started this century as probably the superpower of the world..." (119). And in a more recent *Nation* article the past tense is optimistically used

to claim that “under this longed-for Labour government we have seen competent management and an end to postimperial gloom” (23). As I document in greater detail in Chapter 4, in the mid-nineties it was a frequent occurrence to hear England’s postimperial state mentioned as a malady, an illness to be cured, or a trauma from which the English were struggling to recover. We might understand this cultural phenomenon in the terms laid out by Cathy Caruth, as she writes about Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*: “In trauma, that is, the outside has gone inside without any mediation” (59), and continues on to explain how mediation is needed for there to be recovery, so often a person who has experienced a trauma will have dreams of the traumatic event as a means of trying to process that what happened was not recognized at the time that it occurred. As Caruth writes, “The return of the traumatic experience in the dream is not the signal of the direct experience but, rather, of the attempt to overcome the fact that it was *not* direct, to attempt to master what was never fully grasped in the first place” (62). In her trilogy, Barker’s approach to war is as an event that can expose Empire and be used as a means of “grasping” its demise; she returns to the Great War and specifically explores and processes its connection to this demise. In the nineties, when Barker wrote the trilogy, enough time had passed for it to be evident that the Great War in many ways signaled the beginning of the end of the British Empire, as well as for it to be acknowledged how significant such a demise was for the nation’s self-image. The end of the twentieth century becomes an opportune time to return to the war and examine it as a crucial moment for empire. And as Pat Barker travels to the beginning of Empire’s end, she does not go unarmed.

The traits Barker emphasizes about her three main characters—Siegfried Sassoon, Billy Prior, and W. H. R. Rivers—reveal much about her approach to empire. Barker's Sassoon is supposed to be a portrayal of the real man, and as such she does not deviate much from the known facts about his life and wartime experiences. He is very much a man of his times and is tormented by the futility of trench warfare. Barker emphasizes Sassoon's many paradoxes: that he wrote an anti-war declaration while at the same time being a much medalled and respected soldier, that he chose to return to the Front and would initiate daredevil raids—and then return to camp and write an anti-war poem. He is a writer, yet he is writing from within the historical situation; he does not have the benefit of hindsight. In contrast, Barker's Billy Prior—a wholly fictional character—is in many ways a postmodern character. Billy crosses all boundaries: he can pass for both working and officer class, he is both gay and straight, healthy and sick, pro and anti-war; more importantly, however, Billy is always incredibly aware of what is going on around him and the underlying reasons for it; he has superb analytical skills. He is almost a time-traveler: Barker has set loose into the fray of the Great War a postmodern fellow equipped with hindsight and the mindset of the second half of the twentieth century.

However, when the trilogy begins, Billy, like Sassoon, is suffering from shell shock, and it falls to Rivers to psychoanalyze and cure both Sassoon and Billy. He is the hearer of their testimony of the war; he processes and integrates the modern and postmodern viewpoints. Rivers is very much a Freudian —and as such is slightly ahead of his own times. He has studied Freud's theories, and takes the Freudian approach to the treatment of his patients. As Shoshana Felman writes in *Testimony*, Freud began the “psychoanalytic dialogue...in which the doctor's testimony does not substitute itself for

the patient's testimony, but resonates with it, because, as Freud discovers, it takes two to witness the unconscious" (15). This is Rivers's role in Barker's trilogy: he, perhaps as a stand-in for the reader, is able to go farther than Sassoon, a victim of his times, and Billy, a victim of being out of his times. Rivers, as a hearer of testimony, is the one who is able to acknowledge—and finally celebrate—empire's demise.

It is also Rivers who constantly makes the connections between the experiences and traumas of the soldiers at the front with his remembered experiences of his ethnology work in colonized Melanesia. The war becomes less of a Euro-centered event as Rivers is able to take the knowledge he acquired from his observations of the colonized Melanesians struggling to adapt to the new British laws they are forced to abide by, and use it to help in his treatment of English soldiers suffering from shell shock. The victims of empire and the victims of war share symptoms, and Barker establishes such similarities to erode the us/them dichotomy upon which empire rests. However, Barker's choice of using the real Dr. Rivers as her character who will serve as witness to the war testimony of the soldiers is an essential one. For Rivers—as an ethnologist and psychiatrist who thus has studied and observed the effects of colonization on other cultures, and the effects on those who have to fight to enable such colonization to continue—occupies the perfect vantage point for both dismantling the binaries of empire and war, and processing the loss of an imperial identity. It is his expertise in both fields that makes him the right medium for Barker's purposes.

Rivers was said to be “among the first in England to support the discoveries of Freud in the field of psychoneurosis and psychotherapy” (Showalter 181). He made the theories of Freud—and psychoanalysis itself—palatable to the English public by

“minimizing the significance of the sexual drives in Freudian theory” (Showalter 189). His knowledge and ability as a psychoanalyst is a crucial element of his value to Barker. In her book, *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock contends “...that psychoanalysis and material history are mutually necessary for a strategic engagement with unstable power...” (73-4); and in *The Order of Things*, Foucault claims that “Psychoanalysis and ethnology occupy a privileged position in our knowledge...but rather because...they form an undoubted and inexhaustible treasure-hoard of experiences and concepts, and above all a perpetual principle of dissatisfaction, of calling into question, of criticism and contestation of what may seem, in other respects, to be established” (373). Well-versed in both fields, who better than Rivers to call into question, criticize, and contest the tenets of empire? Rivers himself saw an essential connection between the two disciplines. His friend and fellow scientist, G. Elliot Smith, claimed that “Ethnology had no attractions for Rivers until his work in Psychology was responsible for drawing him into this field of investigation” (Smith x). And in the introduction to his two-volume study of Melanesian society, Rivers writes that “If, however, the two studies [ethnology and psychiatry] are thus to go on side by side, it is impossible that either can progress without making assumptions based on knowledge which belongs properly to the domain of the other” (*The History of Melanesian Society*, I, 7). Barker will make use of this intersection and overlap by having Rivers analyze and witness the soldiers’ war trauma, and recollect how he analyzed and witnessed the newly restricted lives of the colonized Melanesians. It will be Rivers’s awareness and realization of what is occurring in that particular moment of the British Empire—juxtaposed with his recollections of occurrences in the colonies a few years before the war—that Barker will employ in her trilogy.

When Barker originally conceived of her idea for a trilogy, she “hoped to write ‘an entirely noncombatant account’ of the First World War” (Morrison 80). This does not end up being the case, yet although the trilogy is focused upon the battlefield experiences of two soldiers and the doctor who treats them, Barker is able to give at least equal thematic weight to the changes that the war brings to the domestic front as well. As Anne McClintock argues, “...imperialism is not something that happened elsewhere—a disagreeable fact of history external to Western identity” (5); rather, British imperialism is specifically constructed in England. Barker thus balances her portrayal of the tribulations of empire’s frontlines—war and the colonies—with a portrayal of such dissolution beginning to occur at “home” in England itself. In *The Eye in the Door*, especially, Barker explores the effects of the dissolution of Empire at home³: her wartime England is a place where the vision of Empire’s panopticon is beginning to blur, and there is less distinction between the watcher and the watched. “Imperialist capitalism relied on rigid codes of expression and behavior at home as well as abroad” (Wachman 8), as did imperialism itself, and Barker shows how during the war, certain of these “codes” were more strictly enforced. She emphasizes the gender discrepancy that the war opens up: as the men’s hope and helplessness increase, so do the new wartime opportunities for women.

Barker also portrays how class divisions continue to create tensions both in England and at the front: as Billy Prior’s father remarks, “time enough to do summat for the Empire when the Empire’s done summat for you” (R 56). And perhaps most importantly, Barker repeatedly returns to the trials and paranoias surrounding issues of homosexuality. Much is continually being made of the rumored German list of 47,000

English homosexuals, and both civilians and soldiers closely follow the trial—the so-called Pemberton Billing affair—where the accusations of such a list are formalized. Barker makes the trial a frequent topic of conversation in the trenches. Whereas *Regeneration* begins with Sassoon's declaration against the war—which becomes the central theme of that novel—*The Eye in the Door* begins with Billy Prior first attempting his luck with a young woman, but eventually going home for a tryst with a fellow officer. Such affairs are repeatedly highlighted in the trilogy, and there is ambiguity surrounding the sexual orientation of *all* of the main characters. Barker uses homosexuality to illustrate how the empire is trying—and of course failing—to have control over all aspects of its citizens' lives.

Empire, Revised

Throughout the *Regeneration* Trilogy, Barker establishes the connections between war and empire by breaking down the pre-war/post-war binary, and by showing how smoothly the tenets of war extend from the tenets of empire. She thus is able to portray empire crumbling abroad in the war, and empire dissembling at home as a result of the war. But perhaps her most interesting and significant method for approaching the phenomenon of empire at this particular moment of the beginning of its end resides in the traits she gives to her three main characters. There are many ways in which these three characters—Siegfried Sassoon, Billy Prior, and W. H. R. Rivers—are linked. In *Regeneration*, for example, Sassoon and Prior are both patients of Rivers. Rivers develops relationships with both men that intrigue him enough to keep in touch with them

after they have been discharged from Craiglockhart. In *The Eye in the Door* and *The Ghost Road*, Rivers will continue to act in the role of therapist, both helping and learning much himself from Sassoon and Prior. The three men have other connections as well: they have friends and inclinations in common, and all three seem to share an awareness of the paradoxes and inanities of the war—to varying degrees, they know what is going on.

Barker also gives them symbolic associations: all are “doubled” in some way, and aware of a split in their lives. On a simpler level, too, the three men are always reflected, whether in the present or in past recollections. For example, Sassoon thinks of how “A memory tweaked the edges of his mind. Another glass, on the top landing at home, a dark, oval mirror framing the face of a small, pale child. Himself. Five years old, perhaps. Now why did he remember that?” (R 145). Perhaps because Rivers and Prior also recall significant moments in their childhoods where they sat on the top landing and looked at their reflection—in Rivers’s case a portrait of his namesake relative which scared him (and caused his stuttering), and in Prior’s a glass-fronted barometer which Prior used to escape from the sounds of his parents’ fighting. Rivers also sees other reflections of himself, in moments such as “Night had turned the window into a black mirror. His face floated there, and behind it, Siegfried and the rumpled bed” (E 233). And in the beginning of *The Eye in the door*, Prior, in Manning’s house, looks about him and sees that “Everything was under dust-sheets except the tall mirror that reflected, through the open door, the mirror in the hall. Prior found himself staring down a long corridor of Priors, some with their backs to him, none more obviously real than the rest” (E 10). These reflective reflection moments are not a matter of narcissism: rather they act as a clue to how the reader can choose to *see* the trilogy. In addition to serving the

plot, Barker reflects Sassoon, Prior, and Rivers in such a manner that enables the reader to see them as mapping a way for the Great War to speak about the British Empire's beginning dissolution, as well as what that means to the contemporary reader. Sassoon ultimately is a character of his times, a modernist who cannot transcend modernist anxieties; Billy Prior is the postmodern character "sent back" to the Great War to do things right; and Rivers acts as the hearer of testimony, the one who can model how to analyze, synthesize, and come to terms with historical events.

Barker emphasizes Sassoon's need to see and experience both sides. He is a warrior and a pacifist, yet is not comfortable being either: he seems to need to switch back and forth and hover in-between, and is himself troubled by this need. In contrast, both Prior and Rivers accept that a certain amount of duality is a necessity in the modern world. Rivers admits that he is "a deeply divided man" yet thinks this division helps in his professional life (*E* 141); Prior's divisions seem to help him—they double his skills. But Sassoon struggles against the duality that he is constantly acting out. Rivers sees him as a man "striving for consistency, for singleness of being" despite the fact that his "internal divisions had been dangerously deepened by the war" (*E* 229). In *The Eye*, Barker has Sassoon claim, "I keep thinking how big it is, the war, and how impossible it is to write about" (220). Yet of course, Sassoon is known for his writing about the war; he is one of the most prominent of the Great War poets. Barker very much presents Sassoon as a *writer*; it is important that in the midst of all the general turmoil of the war and Sassoon's particular turmoil of declaring himself against it and suffering from shell shock and related hallucinations, Sassoon remains, prominently, a writer—and a working writer at that. (Fittingly, too, Rivers was known to have "encouraged the writing of

poetry as therapy” (Tylee 61).) It was at Craiglockhart that the real Sassoon met the real Wilfred Owen and helped him with his poetry. Using the manuscripts that exist of Owen’s poetry covered with Sassoon’s comments, Barker fictionalizes these working sessions and devotes several chapters to creating these rather unusual writers’ workshop scenes. Despite his claim of the “impossibility” of writing about the war, Barker portrays a Sassoon who is determined to do just that.

In *Testimony*, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub write that witnessing the Holocaust has been an “as yet unresolved *crisis of history*, a crisis which in turn is translated into a *crisis of literature* insofar as literature becomes a witness, and perhaps the only witness, to the crisis within history which precisely cannot be articulated, witnessed in the given categories of history itself” (xviii). Although the Holocaust of course has its own unique horrors, the trauma experienced by soldiers in the trenches make Felman’s theories applicable to aspects of the Great War as well. This is why Sassoon—a writer in real life—is so useful for Barker. In her trilogy she writes overtly about war while also addressing the issue of war as the beginning of the end for the British Empire. In *The Ghost Road* she tackles this directly by interspersing Rivers’s recollections of the empire abroad with war moments at the front. In *Regeneration* she prepares for this by having Sassoon the writer continually attempt to document the trauma he witnesses and experiences. Sassoon is the one who translates the “crisis of history” (unresolved at this point as to what it will mean for empire) into a “crisis of literature.” Sassoon is the witness of the experience of trench warfare, but he is also a “witness” in a larger sense of a heretofore unarticulable crisis.

Sassoon, as the character who is in many ways the representative of his times, is also constrained by them. He does not seem able to gain the kind of larger-picture awareness that Billy Prior and Rivers can glean. He approaches the war as the war and wrestles with it on the terms with which it has been presented—which are often the propagandistic binaries which he is able to see through. For Sassoon, then, “Telling thus entails a reassertion of the hegemony of reality and a re-externalization of the evil that affected and contaminated the trauma victim” (Laub 69); he writes to make things right again. Felman explains that:

Both [psychoanalysis and literature], henceforth, will be considered as primarily *events of speech*, and their testimony, in both cases, will be understood as a mode of *truth's realization* beyond what is available as statement, beyond what is available, that is, as a truth transparent to itself and entirely known, given, in advance, prior to the very process of its utterance. The testimony will thereby be understood, in other words, not as a mode of *statement of*, but rather as a mode of *access to*, that truth. (15-6)

This intersects with what Barker is doing in *Regeneration*: she uses Sassoon's writing and Rivers's psychoanalysis as a first step towards explicating the significance of the Great War as Empire's first major twentieth-century ailment, which led directly to its precipitous decline. She devotes several chapters to showing Sassoon in action as a writer, both to establish his writing as this “mode of access to” the truths of the war, and as a symptom of its ailment.

When Sassoon and Owen meet at Craiglockhart, Sassoon is already a poet of some fame, whereas Owen is just beginning his brief career as poet. Owen is familiar with Sassoon's work and is rather star-struck by him; he is flattered when Sassoon shows interest in helping him revise his poems. In most of the workshop scenes that Barker creates, Sassoon is helping Owen with his “Anthem for Doomed Youth.” Sassoon, to a

certain extent, seems overly preoccupied that Owen gets it “right,” that the poem works not only as art but as art that tells—and documents—the truth. He does not at all want to see the war glorified, and criticizes with an “Owen, for God’s sake, this is War Office propaganda” (R 141). By their next workshop session, Owen has revised much and Sassoon admits that the poem is “transformed” (R 157). Sassoon is still worried, however, that there are too many inherent contradictions in Owen’s poem, and comments that “I just don’t like the idea of...making it out to be less of a horror than it really is” (R 157). Before both men are discharged from the hospital, they meet for one last workshop. This time they meet in the lounge, and Barker writes that “They had the room to themselves, except for one other member, and he was half hidden behind the *Scotsman*” (R 217). As they read and revise their poetry out loud, then, they already have a listener, someone who—perhaps—is taking note of their testimony. When their goodbyes have been said, and Sassoon has left the lounge, Barker once again mentions this third man, writing that “the unseen listener had gone” (R 219). She thus emphasizes the role that writing is to play in *Regeneration*; it is “a mode of access to” (Felman 16) the crisis of empire to which she is using war as an entry.

In contrast to Sassoon, Barker creates a completely fictional character, Billy Prior, who in many ways is quintessentially postmodern. He is a product of hindsight; this is not to say that Billy Prior is unbelievable, but that he is a man who would be quite at home in the second half of the twentieth century as well. Barker gives Billy an almost uncanny awareness of the tensions surrounding the war: he understands the war’s upheaval. One of the methods Barker uses to portray Billy’s many transformative talents is to make him always two things at once. Whereas Sassoon is not comfortable being one

way or the other and hovers between in a manner that is annoyingly noncommittal, Billy Prior can fit both sides of a binary almost perfectly. When he first appears in *Regeneration*, he is suffering from mutism. He cannot or will not speak, yet when he writes notes to Rivers on a pad, he prints all in capitals because it is "CLEARER" (R 42). He refuses to communicate normally, while simultaneously making sure that what he does communicate will be immediately understood. This paradox fittingly introduces Prior's character, for throughout the entire trilogy Prior crosses all lines skillfully.

Several times Rivers notes how Prior seems both large and small, weak and strong. When Rivers hears Prior speak for the first time, he notes that "Hearing Prior's voice for the first time had the curious effect of making him *look* different. Thinner, more defensive. And, at the same time, a lot tougher" (R 49). To Rivers, Prior almost always seems to appear just as easily one way as he does the other; he reminds Rivers "of a toddler clinging to his father's sleeve in order to be able to deliver a harder kick on his shins" (E 76). He is dependent and independent, needy and ferocious. When Prior's parents come to visit him at Craiglockhart and introduce themselves to Rivers, Prior's duality becomes more explicable. On the one hand his father tried to toughen Billy as a child, forcing him to stand up for himself and fight the kids that teased him; his mother, on the other hand, tried to keep him inside, encouraged him to study and rise out of the class into which he was born. Mr. Prior blames Billy's double identity on his wife, telling Rivers, "He's neither fish nor fowl, and she's too bloody daft to see it" (R 57). He tells Rivers that Billy is aware of his double identity and "underneath doesn't thank her for it" (R 57). While perhaps not thankful for this ability, Billy does take full advantage of it. He frequently changes his accent and mannerisms to become the epitome of whatever

class the situation calls for. His viewers are always fooled. When Prior first meets Sarah in a café, she thinks that he is of the officer class he is dressed to be. When he tells her his name is Prior, “She burst out laughing. ‘Don’t you lot *have* Christian names?’ ‘Billy.’ He wanted to say, and I’m not ‘you lot’” (R 89).

Civilians are led to believe that class issues do not matter at the front, that the army is all one big happy family, and that the only divisions are between the British and the Germans. Prior, ever observant, knows of course that this is not true. He sees the divisions and is angered by them. He grumbles to Rivers, “The only thing that really makes me angry is when people at home say there are no class distinctions at the front. *Ball-ocks*. What you wear, what you eat. Where you sleep. What you carry. The men are pack animals” (R 67). It is perhaps in order to defy these distinctions then, that Prior so easily acts one class and then the other. He changes class appearance any time and in any situation. While liaising with Charles Manning, an officer who solicits Prior in London, he realizes that Manning would be more at ease if Prior seemed more working class. No problem—he simply takes off his shirt, spikes up his short hair, hangs a cigarette from his lip and “roughens” his accent: “He’d transformed himself into the sort of working-class boy Manning would think it was all right to fuck. A sort of seminal spittoon. And it worked” (E 11). Echoing Prior’s father, Manning later thinks, “All the same, the basic truth was the man was neither fish nor fowl nor good red herring. *Socially*. Sexually too, of course, though this was a less comfortable reflection” (E 20).

Although Prior can act the part of the upper class officer, his loyalties remain with the lower class. He and Manning have many skirmishes regarding class and the assumptions that are connected with it. Prior often loses his temper and apologizes, but

usually with qualifications that are not voiced. For example, after a particularly heated argument over class issues, Prior says to Manning, “I’m sorry too.... You’re right, of course. Class prejudice isn’t any more admirable for being directed upwards.’ Just more fucking justified” (*E* 203). Prior is troubled by how his ability to seem to belong to both classes is viewed by those he respects. He can ignore his father’s comments, but when his friends say similar things, he cannot dismiss them as easily. Although effortless, his switches from side to side are consciously performed. When his childhood friend, Mac, tells him that he does not trust him because he is in the “Officers’ mess one night, back streets of Salford the next. Equally at home or...Equally *not* at home, in both,” Prior is defensive, yet is prepared to argue his reasons clearly, pointing out to Mac that the binaries Mac constructs of good vs. evil, proletariat vs. aristocrat, are not so cleanly and admirably constructed. For Mac is a conscientious objector, and Prior instructs him: “Well, let me tell you, Mac, the part of the proletariat I’ve been fighting with—the vast majority—they’d string *you* up from the nearest fucking lamp-post and not think twice about it” (*E* 110). The binaries are a construct, and Prior will not hesitate to cross their false borders.

Even the binary of sickness and health is one that Billy Prior will not “respect.” He is sent back to England from the front originally because of mutism caused by shell shock. He goes to Craiglockhart to be cured by Rivers, and *is* more or less cured while there. However, the asthma which he had tried to hide flares up, and when he has his medical boards at the end of his Craiglockhart stay, he is given a London desk job because of it. Prior says, “I’m only asthmatic *part* of the time” (*R* 65). He is only anything “*part* of the time” and sick and healthy is just one of the many binaries he

fudges. Prior and Rivers act as each other's double in many complex ways throughout the trilogy. When they meet at the hospital, the first way that their roles cross is a result of Prior not being content with being solely the patient: he wants to be the doctor as well.

In one of his first sessions with Rivers after he gets his voice back, Prior says:

'I don't see why it has to *be* like this anyway.'

'Like what?'

'All the questions from *you*, all the answers from *me*. Why can't it be both ways?' (R 50)

Prior studies Rivers just as much as Rivers studies Prior. He reads Rivers's book, *The Todas*, and often immediately asks Rivers whatever question Rivers has just asked Prior. Prior tells Rivers that he does not "agree with the treatment" Rivers is using on him (R 5). He suggests to Rivers that Rivers try hypnosis. Rivers is frequently frustrated with Prior's role-switching, and one time retorts, "'You know one day you're going to have to accept the fact that you're in this hospital because you're ill. Not me. Not the CO. Not the kitchen porter. *You*'" (R 97). Prior cannot stand to be so classified and role restricted.

Barker intends Prior to be versatile so that he can cope with the anxieties and tensions of the war and empire's dissolution; it is almost as if she sends Prior back to do everything right. As I have already mentioned in my introduction, one way of seeing Prior's sophistication is to compare him to another literary shell-shock victim: Virginia Woolf's Septimus Warren Smith. Although suffering from the same war-induced disease as Septimus, Billy reflects the fact that Barker wrote her novels seventy years after Woolf wrote *Mrs Dalloway*; shell shock is no longer a half-inexplicable condition. Whereas Septimus's trauma is only sketched, Billy's is analyzed fully. Cathy Caruth describes how "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not*

known in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4). For Septimus, this trauma is his experience in the war, in general, but more specifically his witnessing of the death of his best friend, Evans. Woolf writes that “when Evans was killed, just before the Armistice, in Italy, Septimus, far from showing any emotion or recognizing that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably. The war had taught him. It was sublime” (130). We witness here how Septimus has not been able to “assimilate” the traumas of the war. As a survivor, Septimus is continually haunted by images of Evans, yet he does not consciously *know* how he has been affected by Evans death.

In contrast, Billy Prior understands exactly what he is going through—although such knowledge does not necessarily give him control over his mental state. Where Septimus’s attraction to Evans is just hinted at—they are “two dogs playing on a hearth-rug” and “They had to be together, share with each other, fight with each other, quarrel with each other” (Woolf 130)—Billy Prior is fully aware of his bisexuality. Billy is also aware of the *game* of sex and doesn’t hesitate to play it as needed. As mentioned previously, in *The Eye* he goes from Myra to Manning and then switches his class appearance to make Manning more at ease. His lovemaking to Sarah, his fiancée, is tender, yet he is also quite capable of using sex as a humiliation—as he does with the class snob Birtwhistle. As he explains to Rivers later when discussing this episode, Birtwhistle “happens to represent everything in England that *isn’t* worth fighting for. Which made him a rather bracing companion” (*G* 101). Billy is attracted to his fellow soldiers, and is honest to himself about that fact and about the tensions it causes. He worries about the possible sadism involved in being attracted to those whom one can

order about and control, thinking “This doesn’t matter with a lover, where it’s just a game, but here the disproportion of power is real and the nakedness involuntary” (G 175). He later muses how “soldiers’ nakedness has a quality of pathos, not merely because the body is so obviously vulnerable, but because they put on indignity and anonymity with their clothes, and for most people, civilians, most of the time, the reverse is true” (G176). Towards the end of the war, having moved into a French town that the Germans have just been forced to abandon, Billy has a liaison with a French adolescent who first thinks that Billy is German and speaks to him in that language. Billy writes, “I suppose it should have disgusted me, but it didn’t. In fact it had the opposite effect” (G 247); he does not shy away from examining truthfully his own inclinations and urges.

Halfway through *The Ghost Road*, Barker has Billy, like Sassoon, pick up a pen and begin to write his testimony. Ever aware, one of Billy’s first entries is about how many people in his tent are writing: “And not just letters either. Diaries. Poems. At least two would-be poets in this hut alone” (G 115). He then analyzes it a bit in his characteristically flippant manner: “Why? You have to ask yourself. I think it’s a way of claiming immunity. First-person narrators can’t die, so as long as we keep telling the story of our own lives we’re safe. Ha bloody fucking Ha” (G 115). Billy’s entries, although in the form of letters back from his time to ours, more often read like letters from our time to his. Billy analyzes the war:

I think what you’re saying is basically a conspiracy theory, and like all conspiracy theories it’s optimistic. What you’re saying is, OK the war isn’t being fought for the reasons we’re told, but it *is* being fought for a reason.... I think things are actually much worse than you think because there isn’t any kind of rational justification left. It’s become a self-perpetuating system. Nobody benefits. Nobody’s in control. Nobody knows how to stop. (G 143-4)

He ponders the relationship between language and power:

Only the names meant anything. Mons, Loos, the Somme, Arras, Verdun, Ypres....But now...I realize there's another group of words that still mean something. Little words that trip through sentences unregarded: us, them, we, they, here, there. These are the words of power, and long after we're gone, they'll lie about in the language, like the unexploded grenades in these fields, and any one of them'll take your hand off. (G 257)

Billy realizes the power inherent in a binary. Later, he defends his own sympathy for the "other": "The man I bayoneted. What worries me is that he was middle aged. Odd really—it's supposed to be golden youth you mourn for. But he was so obviously somebody who should have been at home.... And yes, you *could* see all this in his face—with some people you can. Some people do look exactly what they are. *Fuck it*" (G 218). Billy's awareness does not just begin with his journal writing, for in *Regeneration* and *The Eye* his comments are always wryly astute. He seems to be the only patient of Rivers who knows of Rivers's ethnological past and works. In *The Eye* he wonders "whether there aren't periods when people *do* become aware of what's happening, and they look back on their previous unconscious selves and it seems like decades ago. Another life" (100). Billy is a World War I soldier with the benefit of post-World War II expertise.

Barker rewrites the Great War and the beginnings of the dissolution of empire with a postmodern character who *can* cope with the occurring historical crises. She makes him aware of what is going on in a way that is soothing to the reader; for Billy, the trauma *is* known as it happens, so it is never a trauma quite. Barker sends Billy back in time to analyze the event from all sides as it happens, thus thwarting the surprise of the trauma of the war and negating the "compulsion to repeat" (Freud 21). But she leaves it to Rivers to hear Billy's testimony and synthesize it with all the other testimonies he has

heard throughout the war. Billy writes that “It’s interesting, well, at least it interests me, that we’re still afraid in this irrational way when at the same time we’re surrounded by the worst the twentieth century can do: shells, revolvers, rifles, guns, gas” (G 242), and he will die before being able to see that there is worse yet to come. In a final attack, Prior is wounded so that he can’t reach his gas mask and then is poisoned by the gas. He is lying in a water-filled ditch, and as he dies he “gazed at his reflection in the water, which broke and reformed and broke again as bullets hit the surface” (G 273). Always at home on both sides of a binary, and seemingly of two times, Billy loses consciousness and then dies only when he can no longer see his reflection in the water. As a modern and a postmodern character, Billy cannot be one thing: when he loses sight of his double in his reflection, he—as one—must die.

Although heroic, Billy is not a super-hero: he needs help recovering from and synthesizing what he learns and observes. Once again, it is W. H. R. Rivers to the rescue. In *Testimony*, Felman and Laub write of the importance of testimony to Holocaust survivors. They use Freud and his theory of traumatic neurosis to show how such survivors need to speak and to testify to their horrific experiences, and that it is only with a witness to this testimony that the experience can be processed, externalized and put in the past. Billy Prior and Rivers’s other patients are also trauma survivors, and it is Rivers who acts as their witness and hears the testimony of their experiences. This is an essential role, for as Felman suggests, the truth is not necessarily available to those who experienced it. Prior needs Rivers, as witness, to synthesize what he has undergone, for “the speaking subject constantly bears witness to a truth that nonetheless continues to escape him, a truth that is, essentially, *not available* to its own speaker” (Felman 15).

Rivers himself points out to Prior in a therapy session that remembering is not enough, that “there has to be a moment of...recognition. Acceptance” (E 249). Or as Laub describes,

Bearing witness to a trauma is, in fact, a process that includes the listener. For the testimonial process to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of an *other*—in the position of one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude. The witnesses are talking *to somebody*: to somebody they have been waiting for for a long time. (70-1)

Prior, like his name, has to have the experiences *prior* to Rivers becoming a witness to them. But Rivers as the hearer of testimony is the one who can synthesize, analyze, and cure. It is Rivers who must come to terms with the war and with what the war signals about empire’s demise. Rivers also functions as Barker’s—and the reader’s—proxy; as Rivers draws the parallels between war and empire in *The Ghost Road*, and thus retroactively reveals the war to be, amongst other things, a harbinger of the dissolution of empire, he prepares the reader for what is to come by negating the surprise.

In many ways, Barker’s choice of using Rivers as a character who will bear witness to the testimony of others is a perfect one, for the real Rivers was very much a Freudian at a time when most doctors did not accept Freud’s theories, if they were aware of them at all. Dr. W. H. R. Rivers was an “-ology” renaissance man. Born in 1864, Rivers became ill with typhoid and missed his final year of public school, thus preventing him from following in his family’s footsteps and attending Cambridge. Since he could not go to Cambridge, he decided to study medicine instead, and at the age of 22 became the youngest medical graduate of the University of London (Slobodin 9). He spent several years as a ship’s surgeon, before getting a position at the National Hospital, where he remained until 1892, when he went to Germany to study neurophysiology and

psychology. In 1893, he became a Fellow at St. John's College, Cambridge, and presided over a successful psychiatry laboratory there. At Cambridge, he met the zoologist, biologist, and anthropologist, A. L. Haddon, who convinced Rivers to go on the "Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits," which he was organizing (Slobodin 21). At first resistant to the idea, Rivers finally capitulated and joined the expedition; it was on this trip that Rivers became "seduced" by the field of ethnology.

Right from the beginning, Rivers would intersperse psychiatry with ethnology. He spent 1901-2 "among the Todas of the Nilgiri Hills in southwestern India," and his "resulting ethnography, *The Todas*, has long been regarded as a classic" (Slobodin 28). While studying the Todas, Rivers "carried out psychological tests at the same time" (Slobodin 30). After 1902, he divided his time between the study of ethnology and the study of psychology, while also performing the well-known neurophysiological experiments with Henry Head that Barker refers to in *Regeneration* (and uses for her choice of its title). In the years leading up to the war, Rivers "had gotten psychology started as a distinct academic discipline" at Cambridge" (Slobodin 37), and also spent considerable time in Melanesia, working on his two-volume study of Melanesian society. This was an extraordinarily productive time in Rivers's life, yet interestingly, "Many of his friends felt that 'it was not really until the war that Rivers 'found himself'; that through his work in treating psychoneuroses he achieved an emotional fulfillment that had been missing in his laboratory research at Cambridge, and even in his teaching and anthropological field work" (Showalter 183). As Rivers himself wrote in his 1919 essay, "Mind and Medicine," "Perhaps the most striking feature of the war from the medical point of view has been the enormous scale upon which its conditions have produced

functional nervous disorders, a scale far surpassing any previous war..." (128). But it seemed that for Rivers, *all* of his fields of study both expanded during the war and came together. Rivers seemed particularly able to apply the insights he gained observing the war's wreckage to all facets of his work. His biographer, Richard Slobodin, observes that "the bulk of Rivers's writing in the postwar years was in the area where psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and ethnology converge" (74). It is this convergence—and the awareness that it implies—that makes Rivers an ideal character for Barker.

Foucault, as previously observed, writes that psychoanalysis and ethnology both "form...a perpetual principle of dissatisfaction, of calling into question, of criticism and contestation of what may seem, in other respects, to be established" (373). Barker uses Rivers's well-known abilities as a psychoanalyst and an ethnologist, then, to elucidate the dissatisfaction of empire's dissolution and the ensuing loss of identity. According to Foucault, ethnology and psychoanalysis "are directed towards that which, outside man, makes it possible to know, with a positive knowledge, that which is given to or eludes his consciousness" (378). This is precisely what Barker has Rivers do in the novels, by both hearing the testimony of the shell-shocked soldiers, and then drawing parallels between their experience and the colonized Melanesians. Rivers's friend, Elliot Smith, writes that Rivers was eager to be a war-time psychiatrist because "he found that the measures taken to discover the causes of the soldier's mental disabilities were so similar to those he had been using in Melanesia to probe into the social and magico-religious problems of peoples of lowly culture.... For he now began to integrate the processes of psychology and ethnology into one discipline" (Smith xvii-xviii). What Rivers learns from the war enables him to decrease the distance inherent in the vantage-point of empire and war's

primary binary: us/them. That Rivers did view psychology and ethnology as “one discipline” is evident in his post-war writings, such as this essay in *Psychology and Politics*, in which he suggests,

In the first place, we believe that if we succeed in discovering the historical processes by which human activity has produced the existing cultures of the earth, we shall then be provided with a mass of material by the study of which we can formulate the laws which direct and govern the activities and fate of those groups, whether we call them *tribes, nations, or empires*, into which the peoples of the earth are divided, as well as the laws which determine the growth of the social customs and institutions of mankind. (my italics) (*Psychology and Politics* 132-3)

Barker’s choice of W. H. R. Rivers is strategic. As ethnologist, anthropologist, sociologist, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, neurophysiologist, and Freudian, the fictional Rivers will have the time to synthesize what the real-life Rivers—who died suddenly in 1922 at the age of fifty-eight—did not.

That Rivers championed Freudian analysis—albeit critically—also makes him suit Barker’s project. Felman writes that, “In contrast, it is by stepping in his turn into the position of the patient, and by acknowledging an interchangeability between doctor and patient...that Freud creates the revolutionized clinical dimension of the *psychoanalytic dialogue*, an unprecedented kind of dialogue in which the doctor’s testimony does not substitute itself for the patient’s testimony, but *resonates with it*, because, as Freud discovers, *it takes two to witness the unconscious*” (15). When *Regeneration* begins, we see Rivers reading over and discussing Sassoon’s medical file, preparing for such a psychoanalytic dialogue. Throughout the rest of the trilogy, Rivers is shown talking with his patients, asking and answering questions, his insight indeed “resonating” with their testimony. And Barker makes sure to show that he is aware of his role in the dialogue, that there is a method behind what many of his colleagues see as a coddling kind of

madness. We see Rivers maneuvering around the defenses put up by a shell-shocked patient, who, as a doctor himself, “had some knowledge of Freud, though derived mainly from secondary or prejudiced sources, and disliked, or perhaps feared, what he thought he knew” (R 31). We see Rivers frequently analyzing his own dreams, revealing that he is not afraid to practice what he preaches. In *Eye*, Rivers thinks: “he was in the state of fatigue and illness that favours the development of an anxiety neurosis, and behaving in the way most likely to bring it about. He was doing exactly what he told his patients not to do: repressing the awareness of fear” (E 66). This is precisely how Rivers is “at the same time a witness to the trauma witness and a witness to himself. It is only in this way, through his simultaneous awareness of the continuous flow of those inner hazards both in the trauma witness and in himself, that he can become the enabler of the testimony—the one who triggers its initiation, as well as the guardian of its process and of its momentum” (Laub 58). Rivers uses his own methods on himself. We also see Rivers using the Freudian terminology that Felman and Laub use in *Testimony*: he talks of traumatic neurosis, and he works on a paper entitled “The Repression of War Experience,” which he will present to the British Medical Association (R 173). Rivers is primed to be a hearer of testimony.

It is certainly true for Rivers that, as Felman and Laub write, “The professionally trained receivers of the testimonies which bear witness to the war atrocities...cannot fulfill their task without, in turn, passing through the crisis of experiencing their boundaries, their separateness, their functionality, and indeed their sanity, at risk” (xvii). As Rivers works as therapist and hears the testimony of his shell-shocked patients, trying to cure their various neuroses, he frequently finds his own mental and physical health

wavering. This is proof of the processing that Rivers is doing: he is not just hearing about these experiences, but also serving as witness to them. Rivers becomes, for example, “as changed by Sassoon as Sassoon was by Rivers” (Showalter 187).

Furthermore, after finally getting his patient, Burns, to speak of his particular trauma which involved a very decomposed body, Rivers admits that “his own sense of the horror of the event seemed actually to have increased” (R 184). Experiencing insomnia one night, Rivers feels himself “getting all the familiar symptoms” (R 139). When he goes to see his doctor friend, Bryce, the next morning, Bryce asks him ““What do *you* think’s wrong?” and Rivers replies, ““War neurosis...I already stammer and I’m starting to twitch”” (R 140). When Rivers visits his brother and sister-in-law for a short vacation away from Craiglockhart, his sister-in-law, appalled by his poor health, treats him like the common Victorian female hysteric and makes him do nothing but eat: “Rivers still staggered away from the table feeling that he’d been force-fed” (R 150). Rivers’s own maladies ease the divide between doctor and patient, making him a more sympathetic witness.

Rivers’s own experience, which comes closest to those that trigger traumatic neurosis in his patients, occurs when he visits Dr. Yealland—also a historical figure—and a London psychiatrist who treats his patients in a manner that is the direct opposite to Rivers’s own methods. Dr. Yealland is very similar to the Doctors Holmes and Bradshaw in Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*. Yealland’s patients—like Septimus Warren Smith—do not stand a chance at regaining true mental health. Right from the moment Rivers enters the hospital, he becomes anxious and sees the place as being akin to his patients’ wartime surroundings: “This deserted corridor in a hospital he knew to be overcrowded had

something eerie about it. Uncanny. Almost the feeling his patients described, talking about their experience of the front, of No Man's Land, that landscape apparently devoid of life that actually contained millions of men" (R 223). Rivers meets up with Yealland and begins to follow him as he performs his morning rounds. Whereas Rivers is always portrayed as a listener, in contrast, Yealland is described as a watcher (and perhaps thus aligned with those who are unduly monitoring their fellow citizens): "In conversation he did not merely meet your eye, but stared so intently that you felt your skull had become transparent" (R 224). As Rivers will soon realize, however, Yealland's vision is dark: he sees electroshock treatment and bullying as being the only sure way to cure his patients. On this particular day, they finally reach the last patient in the ward, a soldier named Callan who is suffering from mutism. Yealland tells Rivers that part of his past treatment of Callan has been "lighted cigarettes to the tongue" (R 227); Rivers is understandably shocked. Today, however, Yealland is going to use electroshock therapy on Callan. With Rivers observing, Yealland brings Callan into a room, pulls down the blinds and locks the door. The room was dark except for one small light, which was focused on Callan; the scene, as Rivers realizes, is akin to a torture chamber. Yealland tells Callan that "Remember *you must talk before you leave me*" and begins administering a series of severe shocks (R 230). The "treatment" takes hours, and Rivers, identifying with the patient, is exhausted by the end. As Yealland slowly makes Callan speak, "Rivers had to stop himself trying to make the sound for him. He was himself very tense; all the worst memories of his stammer came crowding into his mind" (R 231). At the pinnacle of the treatment, Yealland proclaims, "*You must speak, but I shall not listen to anything you have to say*" (R 231). If there was any doubt before, this moment completely establishes

Yealland as Rivers's doppelganger; Rivers witnesses Yealland not listening. From that point on Rivers will more than ever strive to hear and to witness the testimony of his own patients; he knows and accepts that "*it takes two to witness the unconscious*" (Felman 15).

Regeneration, the first book of the trilogy, gets its name from an experiment that Rivers performed with a fellow scientist and friend, Henry Head. As Barker writes, "Head had volunteered himself as the subject of the proposed experiment, and Rivers had assisted at the operation in which Head's radial nerve had been severed and sutured. Then, together, over a period of five years, they had carted the progress of regeneration" (R 46). Rivers acts as a witness to this regeneration, just as he is witness to the regeneration of his patients suffering from the war. He will hear a patient's testimony and gradually convince him "to abandon his hopeless attempt to forget, and advising him instead to spend some part of every day remembering" (R 26). Barker intends for Rivers to instruct the reader to do the same. Felman queries, "Is the testimony, therefore, a simple medium of historical transmission, or is it, in obscure ways, the unsuspected medium of a healing? If history has clinical dimensions, how can testimony *intervene*, pragmatically and efficaciously, at once historically (politically) *and* clinically?" (9). By witnessing the testimony of the war, like Rivers does, and by connecting the problems of the war to the problems of empire—also as Rivers does, the reader can understand the war as the beginning of empire's end. In *The Ghost Road*, Barker writes that "Rivers wondered whether Sassoon and Harrington had been *too* much in the forefront of his mind while he was listening to Wansbeck. At best, on such occasions, one became a conduit whereby one man's hard-won experience of self-healing was made available to another" (G 229). This indeed seems to be Rivers's central task in the trilogy: to act as a

“conduit” for the testimonies of the war, and then to process these testimonies in terms of empire.

Empire. Abroad

In *The Ghost Road*, Rivers thinks to himself, “Before the war...but one must beware of attributing everything to the war. The change had started years before the war” (225). This is a point that Barker frequently has her characters voice. In contrast to the notion that the war was an about-face turning point, Barker instead emphasizes that the tenets of war are the same as the tenets of empire; war exposes these tenets, but they have been in play all along. Barker’s method is to first call attention to the binaries of war—the us/them good/bad mentality that becomes such a central part of wartime language and propaganda—and then to systematically mock and transgress it. The binaries become one of her main targets, and this notion of the war being a sudden, unexpected eruption is Barker’s starting point.

Regeneration, *The Eye in the Door*, and *The Ghost Road* are all set in the last two years of World War I, a time when it was even more imperative than ever to adhere to the dichotomies of the war. War demanded this kind of mind-set: to question was to falter, and to falter was to harm the empire—the “good” and “us” which was exactly what the British army was both trying to safeguard and perpetuate. As Barker writes, “The casualty lists were too terrible to admit of any public debate on the continuation of the war” (R 211). Debate was not encouraged: the supposed uniqueness of the Great War called for simple adherence to the decisions of the nation state. Especially in its last

years when the horrible facts of trench warfare were coming to light, the Great War was presented as an anomaly and thus separate from anything that had come before; to make it through such devastation demanded allegiance. Although she will ultimately deconstruct this notion of the war as “an event which could be said to mark the beginning of the modern world” (Fussell 11), Barker begins by establishing how prominent it was in the discourse of the times. People insisted upon seeing the war as the beginning of something new. The Great War was a time when “the mode of gross dichotomy came to dominate perception and expression” (Fussell 79). Besides demanding and feeding on binaries, it was an interval which emphasized this separation between times. For years afterwards, time was divided into pre-war or post-war categories. The Great War “reversed the Idea of Progress”; it pared down abstractions into basic right and wrongs (Fussell 8). No matter what complex order of things the soldiers may have thought they knew, in battle it was made clear to them that in the “reality” of war, everything was simply this or that. As Fussell writes, “The innocent army fully attained the knowledge of good and evil at the Somme on July 1, 1916” (29). They learned that “one thing [was] opposed to another, not with some Hegelian hope of synthesis involving a dissolution of both extremes...but with a sense that one of the poles embodies so wicked a deficiency or flaw of perversion that its total submission is called for” (Fussell 79). The Germans were evil—they were “them”; everything about them was “other”. British soldiers in their trenches even had a binary view: they could either see the earth walls of the trench, or blue sky (Fussell 51). As one soldier said, “On this side of our wire everything is familiar and every man is a friend, over there, beyond the wire, is the unknown, the uncanny” (Gilbert & Gubar 267). Barker emphasizes this binary mentality in *The Eye in*

the Door, when she prints a copy of “Haig’s April 13th Order of the Day”: “There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man: there must be no retirement” (E 6). In Haig’s view there was no middle ground, no room for negotiation—only losing or winning, no matter what the consequences. Part of Pat Barker’s project is to show the dangers of such simplicities.

In his section on the binaries of war, Fussell points out that “One of the legacies of the war is just this habit of simple distinction, simplification, and opposition. If truth is the main casualty in war, ambiguity is another” (79). It is exactly this lack of ambiguity which often leaves Barker’s characters exposed in a no-man’s-land with nowhere to take cover. As Barker develops how the binaries of war extend naturally from, and are interchangeable with, the binaries of empire, she makes it clear just how difficult it is for her characters to reconcile themselves with such a lack of ambiguity. In an either/or world, one is forced to contort. Barker reveals the impossibilities of acquiescing to these binaries by having so many of her characters live a variety of “double lives.” In doing so she shows that a thinking person cannot fit into the small space that war propaganda allows; although her characters will often try to toe the line, so to speak, they simply cannot comfortably remain in the one allotted binary side; they begin to experiment with both sides: they double or split. Such double lives range from the mundane to the extreme. For example, Rivers experiences a split between his emotions and his intellect, and realizes how he has been so split for most of his life: “Still, he had been, throughout most of his life, a deeply divided man, and though he would once have said that this division exercised little, if any influence on his thinking, he had come to believe it had determined the direction of his research” (E 141). Rivers

has made it his career to bridge the two sides: in the trilogy he will attempt to do this with all binaries.

The character Charles Manning lives a double life with regards to his sexuality. Manning is an officer who, after being wounded at the front, now works in the home office in London. His family has gone to live in the country, so he has the space to devote time to both sides of his desires. When in the country, he is a traditional family man, husband, and father; when in London, he frequently has trysts with other men. In fact, *Eye* begins with Billy Prior picking up Manning in the park and returning to Manning's London house for a rendezvous. As is usually the case in *Eye*, however, someone is watching Manning go from side to side, and Barker writes that "For somebody like Manning, profoundly committed to living a double life, the revelation that both sides of his life were visible to unknown eyes must be like having the door to the innermost part of one's identity smashed open" (*E* 155). The binaries of sexuality become even more enforced during the war, as I will discuss in greater detail in the second section, and thus Manning feels it is even more imperative that his double life not be exposed: following the mindset of the war, he is supposed to give up any ambiguity and only inhabit one side of any given binary.

Siegfried Sassoon is another character who has to split himself and inhabit both sides of the binary in order to survive. The very first words of *Regeneration* are Sassoon's declaration against war which lead to his being sent to Craiglockhart hospital. In his typical desire to be on both sides, he titles it "A Soldier's Declaration," thus claiming both viewpoints—soldier and pacifist—as his own. Sassoon, as we come to see, is both against the war, and wants to return to fight in it; it is Rivers's job at

Craiglockhart to try to reconcile these two positions. Everyone seems aware of this duality in Sassoon, including Sassoon himself. He tells Rivers in analysis that he was fragmented even before the war, and that he was three people:

'I mean, there was the riding, hunting, cricketing me, and then there was the...the other side...that was interested in poetry and music, and things like that. And I didn't seem able to....' He laced his fingers. 'Knot them together.' (R 35)

Here he defines only two of his "selves"; the third one is the self hovering between the two. Sassoon is used to his own kind of separate versatility; he cannot be one thing only for the sake of the war. He thrives on visiting all sides of a binary, and will not commit to just one.

Sassoon is homosexual, but in the trilogy he will never come out and come out. He and Rivers are constantly having conversations where both men circle around Sassoon's sexuality, alluding to it indirectly, and then moving on quickly to another topic. This is important in part because it illustrates Rivers's own sexual ambiguity and attraction to Sassoon; however, it also reveals Barker's emphasis on the hesitating quality of Sassoon's personality. With the Wilde affair not too long in the past, in one sense it is wise of Sassoon not to reveal openly that he is gay; but the hedging happens so often that it seems to imply something more. Sassoon peppers his conversations with Rivers with such statements as: "My intimate details disqualify me from military service" (R 70). In a longer conversation he tells Rivers that he really identifies with Edward Carpenter's idea of an "intermediate sex" (R 54). He is attracted to notions of in-between.

This fragmentation becomes even more extreme once the war begins, and once there is even more pressure to be on one side only. Sassoon continually hops from one side of the binary to the other. He becomes renowned for being a "Happy warrior one

minute. Bitter pacifist the next” (*R* 74). Sassoon eventually returns back to active service, comforting himself with the paradox that “I’m not going back to kill people. I’m only going back to look after some men” (*E* 229). At the front where binaries are the only law of the land, Sassoon finds it hard to keep up his intermediate stance. In a manner that Billy Prior will later take to an extreme, Sassoon develops a kind of warrior double, a self so separate that everyone notices and comments upon it. Yet after becoming one side for a time, he immediately writes a poem which incorporates both sides; he returns to the middle ground. In *The Eye in the Door*, Charles Manning says regarding Sassoon: “You know he’s a tremendously successful and *bloodthirsty* platoon commander, and yet at the same time, back in billets, out comes the notebook. Another anti-war poem” (158). Later on in the novel, Rivers thinks that “Siegfried had always coped with the war by being two people: the anti-war poet and pacifist; the bloodthirsty, efficient company commander” (233). Sassoon’s final war wound is a result of trying to surmount the basic binary of war: not content with believing simply that the other side is evil and should be considered simply that, Sassoon walks into a trench occupied by the Germans. He does this not to kill, but to see. He tells Rivers, “*I just wanted to see. I wanted to see the other side*” (*E* 231). Fussell points out that for the real Sassoon, “workmanship means...the application of binary vision everywhere, even in the smallest details” (104). Barker has Charles Manning tell Rivers that a poem of Sassoon’s “uses the experience of the platoon commander, but it never uses any of his attitudes. And yet for once, in that *one* poem, he gets both versions of himself in” (*E* 158). Barker’s Sassoon explains the Sassoon of the poems; he can’t shake the binaries of war and is not content being wholly one way or wholly the other. By making Sassoon’s place be in-

between, Barker is able to subvert the accuracy of the wartime binaries. It is, of course, not as easy as us/them good/bad pre-war/post-war, for the war is not an aberration but a culmination of the policies and mindsets of empire, which have themselves thrived on such binaries and what they mask. Sassoon's splitting and hovering expose the false borders of binary thinking; Billy Prior's doubling will take such subversiveness a step further.

Billy Prior is another of Barker's characters who experiences a doubling of self. In contrast to Sassoon, who can't seem to inhabit either side of a binary fully, Billy Prior has the ability to inhabit all sides comfortably. However, he often uses hate to get himself to be fully one thing or fully the other; by making hate what fuels Billy, Barker calls into question the motives behind binary thinking. When Prior has sex with the prostitute Nelly in *The Ghost Road*, he remembers what it was like when he was young and was paid for sex by Father Mackenzie. This memory comes at an inopportune moment, and Prior thinks, "The only way not to be her was to hate her. Narrowing his eyes, he blurred her features, ran them together into the face they pinned to the revolver targets. A snarling, baby-eating boche" (G 41). In a moment when a separated binary is a necessity, where he has to not be able to feel compassion for her side of the affair in order to complete the act, Prior uses hate to become one thing, to know his side only—that of the payer—and not hers, the payee. Significantly, he uses hate to become singular. As *The Eye in the Door* progresses, we learn that this is also how Prior survived the horrors at the front. In a kind of mockery to the binaries that war demanded—that he had to only know and empathize with "us" and not "them," with good and not evil, Prior—who does not follow those divisions, whose entire life has consisted of crossing all sides and playing all

roles—becomes a caricature of a prize warrior. This Prior is fully one way: singularly rotten. He is a “warrior double, a creature formed out of Flanders clay” (E 245). This double tells Rivers, “I was born two years ago. In a shell-hole in France. I have no father’” (E 240). He is a better fighter than Prior, because he feels no pain or remorse; he is demanding—he leaves Prior a message saying, “*Why don’t you leave my fucking cigars alone?*” (E 191); he makes deals with Spragge, a former Ministry of Munitions spy who is responsible for putting the innocent Beattie Roper in jail; and he betrays Mac, his best friend from childhood. This double follows the wartime ideal to the letter, yet he is frightening, not admirable. The odiousness of Prior’s double mocks the ideal of adhering to one side of a binary.

Since the us/them binary is central to both war and empire, it is crucial to Barker’s project. However, as she demonstrates, the problem with the us/them construct is that it tends to multiply from within, resulting in a bevy of us/thems within the original “us”. The “us” splinters and antagonisms abound. In her trilogy, Barker spotlights two major divisions in particular: the division between civilians and soldiers, and the class division that exists between soldiers themselves. The division between civilians and soldiers was understandable, since the civilians often just did not know about the horrors that the soldiers were experiencing. There was no place for the realities of trench warfare in the glories of war that the propaganda was still espousing: civilians were being fed their dose of binaries as well. Thus, to a woman civilian handing out white feathers, if a man was of age and not in uniform, he was a coward, point blank. There was no place for in-betweens, such as Barker’s character, Burns, discovers, while recuperating from shell-shock and haplessly wearing civilian clothes while in London. The gap between the

perceptions of soldiers and civilians ultimately become a “divide which yawned between, on the one side, the civilian...aware of and almost inured to, colossal slaughter, but oblivious to the real tortures, physical and mental, of trench warfare, and on the other the soldier who was enduring them” (Marwick 28). Barker’s Sassoon reveals his resentment towards civilians by describing the two middle-aged men who are sharing his train compartment as “both looking as if they’d done rather well out of the war” (R 5). Billy Prior “was made physically sick by the sight and sound and smell of civilians” (E 7) and begrudges their misuse of military vocabulary: “Like going over the top, he thought. No, it wasn’t. Nothing was like that. Civilians seemed to use that expression all the time now. I went a bit over the top last night, they said, meaning they’d had a second glass of port” (G 13). With such resentments, it is hard to feel unified.

Billy Prior, always the one to be on both sides of a binary, has a mixed class background: his father is working class, whereas his mother is slipped middle class with upper class pretensions. He was thus raised with an awareness of the customs of both, and can switch back and forth, first passing as one and then the other, “equally not at home in either” (E 116). This is augmented by the fact that he becomes an officer, while his roots are from northern England. It is thus Billy, attuned to class differences, who often makes observations about these differences and tensions. In *Eye*, Barker writes about Billy:

One of the ways in which he felt different from his brother officers, one of the many, was that *their* England was a pastoral place: fields, streams, wooded valleys, medieval churches surrounded by ancient elms. They couldn’t grasp that for him, and for the vast majority of the men, the Front, with its mechanization, its reduction of the individual to a cog in a machine, its blasted landscape, was not a contrast with the life they’d known at home, in Birmingham or Manchester or Glasgow or the Welsh pit villages, but a nightmarish culmination. (E 115-6)

These different viewpoints matter a great deal at the Front. Billy tells Rivers that “It’s made perfectly clear when you arrive that some people are more welcome than others. It helps if you’ve been to the right school. It helps if you hunt, it helps if your shirts are the right colour” (R 66). Later in *The Ghost Road*, Billy complains about a particularly snobbish officer who remarked about the lower classes that “Of course one can’t rely on them. Their values are totally different from ours. They’re a different species, really. The WCs” (G 100). Such sentiments coming from that particular officer are easy to dismiss, but Sassoon, who is portrayed sympathetically, makes similar observations in *Regeneration* about the platoon he leads: “He recalled his horror at their physique.... None of the three had been more than five feet tall. You put them alongside an officer—almost any officer—and they seemed to be almost a different order of being” (R 143). And the sentiment goes both ways. Billy Prior’s working class father thinks Billy was crazy not to use his asthma as a way out of the war: “The weedy little runt would at least have been behaving like a *sensible* weedy little runt, refusing to fight in ‘the bosses’ war’” (G 6). Such class antagonism is one of the many ways that Barker dismantles one of the war’s main binaries; all the conflicting “us’s” complicate the intended simplicity of the wartime us/them binary.

Barker has still another method for ridiculing the wartime binary, and that is to foreground an equal—if not greater—number of the paradoxes produced by the war. Such paradoxes, she thus implies, are the war’s true legacy. Rivers often feels constricted by the need for everything to remain streamlined and simple during the war. He “found himself plagued by questions that in Cambridge, in peacetime, he might have wanted to pursue, but which in wartime, in an overcrowded hospital, were no use to him

at all” (R 19). He knows that in wartime he has to stick to his own particular assigned binary of sick/healthy; he has to make soldiers fit to return to the front—which is a twisted reason for fitness at best. As Billy Prior will later point out in *The Ghost Road*, as he looks around at his fellow rehabilitated soldiers: “We are Craiglockhart’s success stories. *Look at us*. We don’t remember, we don’t feel, we don’t think—at least not beyond the confines of what’s needed to do the job. By any proper civilized standard (but what does *that* mean *now*?) we are objects of horror. But our nerves are completely steady. And we are still alive” (G 200). Rivers has done his job so that the soldiers can return to do theirs: but all are aware of the ironies of the situation. Rivers, however, remains quite conflicted about his job. He wants to make sure that the contradictions of his position are known by the soldiers he is treating as well—he wants the paradox to be above-board. After meeting with Sassoon for the first time in *Regeneration*, Rivers tells him that he does not think Sassoon is particularly sick, and that he does not even seem to have a “war neurosis,” the ailment most of Craiglockhart’s patients are suffering from.

Barker writes:

Sassoon digested this. ‘What have I got, then?’
‘You seem to have a very powerful *anti-war* neurosis.’
They looked at each other and laughed. Rivers said, ‘You realize,
don’t you, that it’s my duty to...to try to change that? I can’t pretend to be
neutral. (R 15)

Sassoon will often be the impetus that causes Rivers’s thinking to switch from the comfortable binary to the more prickly paradox. Intellectually, Rivers agrees with Sassoon’s declaration against the war; but this agreement makes his task of “curing” Sassoon, so that he can go back to the front to be killed, even more difficult. Rivers knows that “as soon as you accepted that the man’s breakdown was a consequence of his

war experience rather than of his own innate weakness, then inevitably the war became the issue" (R 115), yet as an army doctor Rivers cannot let the war be "the issue": he has to ignore this quandary and just keep in mind the binary of healthy/sick. Rivers has to keep such dilemmas to himself, and in the meantime say to his patients: "Go on...cry. It's all right to grieve. Breakdown's nothing to be ashamed of—the pressures were intolerable. But, also, stop crying. Get up on your feet. Walk" (G 96). Elaine Showalter claims that the real Sassoon's therapy with Rivers was "a seduction and a negotiation; his return to France, an acknowledgment of defeat" (187). She sees Sassoon's anti-war stance—which Rivers has to convince Sassoon to renounce—as being the sane and intelligent response to the experience of trench warfare. Barker thus uses Sassoon to reveal aspects of Rivers's complicity with empire and those in control of it. Rivers can see the paradoxes in his work, yet in the time-span of the trilogy, he remains officially aligned with empire's stances.

There are other paradoxes connected to the war besides those surrounding illness and breakdown. Barker writes that "One of the paradoxes of the war—one of the many—was that the most brutal of conflicts should set up a relationship between officers and men that was...domestic. Caring" (R 107). The trench aspect of the war was also paradoxical; the men were said to be mobilized, yet "they'd been *mobilized* into holes in the ground so constricted they could hardly move" (R 107). Barker uses the complexities of these paradoxes to highlight the false simplicities of the war binaries. Wartime propaganda insisted that people see all conflicts in terms of black and white with no questions asked, when in reality the war created situations which required even more penetrable deciphering than usual. Billy Prior, aware as ever, points out another such

paradox when he ponders over how much he should tell his fiancée about the real conditions at the Front. He thinks, “Men said they didn’t tell their women about France because they didn’t want to worry them. But it was more than that. He needed her ignorance to hide in. Yet, at the same time, he wanted to know and be known as deeply as possible. And the two desires were irreconcilable” (R 216). While both Billy and Rivers are struggling to untangle the paradoxes that have come their way, Barker shows how some eagerly use the paradoxes to augment the powers that have been given them. As we have seen, Dr. Yealland is a psychiatrist who is Rivers’s London counterpart. While Rivers treats his shell-shock patients with analysis of the new, Freudian, variety, Yealland’s methods are the extreme opposite. He uses a kind of electroshock therapy treatment that Barker portrays as being torture, pure and simple. In contrast, then, to the methods that Rivers uses to get mute soldiers to talk, Yealland is shown locking a mute patient in a room and shocking him for hours until he is forced to speak. As the shocks continue, Yealland triumphantly proclaims his newly created paradox: “*You must speak, but I shall not listen to anything you have to say.*” (R 231). To Yealland the situation is simple: the soldier he is treating is pretending to be mute so that he, a coward, will not have to return to the front; the coward, then, must be made to cross over to the other side of the binary and be brave. War begets paradoxes while flying the banner of the binary.

Many of the binaries of war—such as the us/them binary—are also the binaries of empire, so when Barker has characters question or deviate from the war binary, they often will apply their disgruntlement to issues of empire as well. Several characters express an awareness of the inequities of empire: as we have seen, Billy’s father remarks that there is “time enough to do summat for the Empire when the Empire’s done summat

for you" (R 56). And when people speak to Billy's old friend, Hettie Roper, of saving "gallant little Belgium," she reminds them what "gallant little Belgium got up to in the Congo" (E 85). When her listeners protest, she facetiously says that "I was only doing it to compare a *bad* colonial regime with the splendid record of our glorious Empire" (E 85). Barker will frequently have her characters make this connection between war and empire. It is W. H. R. Rivers, however, who Barker uses most prominently to first make clear the connections between war and empire, and then to dismantle the tenets on which they both stand. Throughout the trilogy, Rivers recalls his experiences as an ethnologist doing the work of empire in colonized Melanesia; he constantly makes comparisons and draws parallels between this work in Melanesia observing the societies of the people there, and the work he is doing observing his shell-shocked soldier patients. In Melanesia, he was an instrument of the imperial panopticon: like a good orientalist, he observed, he documented, he wrote a book. In the war, as explained previously, his job is to "heal" the soldiers so that they can return to the front—where they will probably be killed. In both situations, he is the instrument of empire; thus, when he begins to deconstruct the idea of the before the war/after the war divide, among others, Rivers can see that this war is not an aberration, but an extension of the hegemonic order of empire.

In the trilogy, we see Rivers as a physician treating patients with psychological disorders caused by the war. Rivers very much sees himself, however, as primarily an ethnologist, claiming that "it was his Melanesia self he preferred" (E 235). His recollections of his life and work in Melanesia are indeed touched with nostalgia; however, as John Kirk writes: "Nostalgic memory, however, can be a response to a range of complex needs and desires, and its articulation can construct a variety of values and

ideals to contest dominant ideological positions” (606). This is precisely how Barker has Rivers *use* his nostalgic memories of Melanesia; he views them in the context of empire in general, and empire’s Great War in particular. Rivers uses the knowledge he gained from his privileged experience in Melanesia to break down the theoretical foundations on which empire rests. Rivers puts his “nostalgic memory” to use by making comparisons between then and now, making connections such as the following: “The condensation and displacement one encountered in the dreams of patients here—might not these mechanisms also be at work in the myth and ritual of primitive people?” (R 186). Rivers’s habit of continually making comparisons between the customs of the English and the customs of the Melanesians has the pointed effect of unraveling the us/them binary. If colonization is the left hand of empire, than the Great War is the right: he is willing to look on both enterprises as empire’s work. For example, in *The Ghost Road*, Rivers has left Craiglockhart Hospital and is working at the aptly named Empire Hospital in London. His landlady’s son has died in the war, and whenever he passes through her part of the house he sees, “the portrait of her dead son that hung above the mantelpiece, with flowers beneath it and candlesticks on either side” (G 116). After noticing this tribute,

Rivers thought about what he’d just seen: the portrait, the flowers. A shrine. Not fundamentally different from the skull houses of Pa Na Gundu where he’d gone with Njiru. The same human impulse at work. Difficult to know what to make of these flashes of cross-cultural recognition. (G 116-7)

This is not a difficulty for the reader, however, for Rivers will persistently recognize the parallel.

One of Rivers's recollections is of a Melanesian ceremony in which he participated, where the ghost of the recent dead was conjured back and given an opportunity to "speak" through the conjurer. This particular ghost had asked questions, and Rivers, looking back in hindsight "reflected that the questions the ghosts had asked had all been questions the living people wanted answered" (G 211). At this point, Rivers is once again treating a wounded Sassoon, who is seeing ghosts of his own. Of course, Rivers makes the connection: "The ghosts were not an attempt at evasion, Rivers thought, either by Siegfried or by the islanders. Rather, the questions became more insistent, more powerful, for being projected into the mouths of the dead" (G 212). When Sassoon had been troubled by ghosts in *Regeneration*, Rivers had comforted him by admitting to his own experience of hearing ghosts in a ceremony on the Solomon Islands (R 188). When Rivers spends the night in the hospital so that he can be closer to the ailing Sassoon, "for some reason the situation reminded him of sleeping on board the deck of a tramp steamer traveling between the islands of Melanesia" (E 234). While Rivers is visiting an ex-patient who is now living at the English seaside, he goes to a pub and treats his evening there as ethnology field work. He gets an old man named Clegg to speak with him about the local folklore, and concludes that "By closing time, he was convinced Clegg was possibly the most unreliable informant he'd ever had. For sheer imaginative flights of fancy none of the Melanesians came anywhere near him" (R 174). In the midst of the war, Rivers begins doing ethnology studies of the imperial "us".

One of the techniques Barker uses to emphasize this war/empire connection in *the Ghost Road* is to alternate passages where Rivers is recollecting his stay in Melanesia with Billy Prior's first-person journal account of his return to the front. She does this

both with form and content. For example, often Rivers and Prior will use the same language to describe their experiences. Rivers looks at a young boy kidnapped by the headhunters he is living with and studying, and notes that the boy “stood alone at the center of the throng, his eyes like black bubbles that at any moment might burst” (G 191). On the next page, Prior echoes Rivers’s language: “Two bubbles break here” (G 192). Barker will shift from Billy Prior on board a ship on the way to France, writing, “People playing cards below deck, but there’s quite a heave on the sea, and I’d rather be out here watching it” (G 112), to Rivers’s recollecting that “On the *Southern Cross*, on the voyage to Eddystone, he’d stood on deck, watching the pale green wake furrow the dark sea, reluctant to exchange the slight breeze for the stuffy heat below deck” (G 118). Likewise, she will also shift from Rivers’s being in a tent on the beach in Melanesia to Billy’s similar tent accommodations in France.

The setting is not the only similarity emphasized. Describing how the British treated the lands and peoples they colonized, Rivers can make it seem more horrible than the propaganda stories of what the Germans did when they invaded Belgium. Barker also highlights the irony that surfaces when making a comparison of the colonization of Melanesia with the Great War. For example, the British have forbidden the headhunters to hunt heads, so to speak. If they do so anyway, the colonizers react with “a gunboat off the coast, villages on fire, trees cut down, crops destroyed, pigs killed. Screaming women and children driven into the bush” (G 185). Rivers’s observation clearly makes this appear like a great savagery in response to a small savagery. Rivers notes with irony that the headhunters he lived with were “a people perishing from the absence of war” (G 207). Then comes another journal entry from Prior, in which we see people perishing from the

presence of war. The paradox of empire was that it was forcing men not to fight, while simultaneously forcing other men to do just that.

Rivers is critical of empire in its role both at home and abroad. In England he thinks to himself that,

The sheer extent of the *mess* seemed to be forcing him into conflict with the authorities over a very wide range of issues...medical, military. Whatever. A society that devours its own young deserves no automatic or unquestioning allegiance. (R 249)

And while in Melanesia he notes that “the impact of western culture had been particularly devastating” (G 118). Rivers’s critique expands to include both genders. He visits his ailing sister, Kath, and notes how since she was female, “the whole course of Kath’s life had been constriction into a smaller and smaller space” while his own life expanded (G 91). In Melanesia, Rivers had witnessed the near-death of a woman, Emele. Emele’s husband had died, and the custom was that she had to sit wedged in a stone “tomb” until a head was collected from another island. Only when that head was obtained as a trophy could she move from her tomb. Since the British colonizers did not allow heads to be hunted, Rivers worried that Emele would die. Later he dreams of visiting Emele’s “tomb” and finding Kath there. The observations Rivers has made of Melanesian society and the restrictions it places on women enable him to view English society and its restrictions in the same critical manner.

Although Rivers is constantly evaluating and questioning the empire he participates in, he does experience one realization in particular which seems to be an epiphany of sorts and is mentioned in each book of the trilogy. This is a recollection of a moment when he was conversing on the boat to Melanesia with some of the Islanders by asking them standard ethnological questions, such as “what would you do with it if

you earned or found a guinea? Would you share it, and if so who would you share it with?" (R 242). After a while, the people he is questioning ask him the questions right back. They find his own responses so strange that they begin to laugh, and Rivers experiences this laughter as being extremely *freeing*. He says that "I felt as if a ton weight had been lifted.... It was...the *Great White God* de-throned" and "suddenly I saw not only that we weren't the measure of all things, but that *there was no measure*" (R 242). It is this realization, perhaps, that enables Rivers to be the character who consistently sees the greater picture, for in *The Ghost Road*, Barker has Rivers again reflect upon this incident. He thinks,

No bearded elderly white man looked down on them, endorsing one set of values and condemning the other. And with this realization, the whole frame of social and moral rules that keeps individuals imprisoned—and sane—collapsed, and for a moment he was in the same position as these drifting, dispossessed people. A condition of absolute freefall. (G 119-20)

The British Empire is in many ways built on its having been given moral authority to colonize et al by such a "bearded elderly white man." Rivers at this moment realizes that the emperor is not wearing any clothes, that the emperor indeed could just as easily not be wearing any clothes as be a "bearded elderly white man," that Melanesian constructs were as valid as English, that in both societies—English and Melanesian—"the same human impulse [was] at work" (G 117). Rivers comments that he and his fellow ethnologist, Hocart, did not bring weapons to Melanesia, not even a knife or a machete (G 232). Their weapons, however, were the discourse of empire they were perhaps unwittingly carrying with them. Hocart and Rivers were collecting knowledge which would be used by the empire to continually classify the Melanesians as "other," to strengthen "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and

cultures” (Said 7). The stupidities and horrors of World War I enable Rivers to continue this line of questioning started years ago in Melanesia. War reminds Rivers of all that he dislikes about empire.

In contrast to Dr. Yealland’s electroshock “therapy” treatment given to his mute patient, Rivers often practices a form of therapy that has more in common with the methods of Njiru, a “witch doctor” he followed and observed in Melanesia. Rivers uses the treatment of empire’s “them” to cure the mental wounds inflicted on empire and war’s “us”. In fact, Rivers learns a lot from Njiru—who both respects Rivers and rightfully resents his invasive presence as an observer of his home and customs—and has a bonding experience with him that is not unlike the bonding that the soldiers are experiencing (in parallel fashion in *The Ghost Road*) at the front. Njiru takes Rivers to the highest cave on the island, a place where—according to tradition—spirits reside. Njiru and Rivers walk farther into the caves than the rest of their party, and in the innermost recesses they end up unwittingly disturbing a multitude of bats who rise up and fly past them in cloud after cloud of black whirr. Rivers and Njiru grip hands during the exodus, and once silence and stillness have returned, Rivers feels “not dazed, dazed was the wrong word. The opposite of dazed. Almost as if a rind had been pared off naked, unshelled, lying in contact with the earth” (*G* 167). He can see clearly in a way that he feels he has not done before; after this moment he, more than before, can communicate with Njiru as an equal and not only as colonizer to colonized, us to them. He and Njiru each experience in the cave “a *compression* of identity into a single hard unassailable point: the point at which no further compromise is possible, where nothing remains except pure naked self-assertion. The right to be and to be *as one is*” (*G* 170). This point is Rivers’s war “front”,

and it confirms his epiphany regarding the absence of the “bearded elderly white man.” It is the healing moment that will enable him to later heal others. Rivers’s experience as an ethnologist will facilitate his skill as a psychoanalyst; both abilities make Rivers the right character for Barker to use to “heal” the traumas of war and empire.

Empire at Home

In *The Eye in the Door*, the second novel of the trilogy, Billy Prior, on his way back to active military duty, laughingly proclaims that ““There’ll always be an England”” (E 276). But after reaching the end of this novel, one cannot help remaining un reassured by Billy’s comment. For in *The Eye in the Door*, Barker portrays an England which is on the verge of self-imploding. Barker continues to address the paradoxes of war and how war is an extension of the tenets of empire, but she also makes sure to devote time to exploring how the beginnings of the dissolution of the British Empire unfold in England itself. In *The Eye* we see how everything is being turned askew: the citizens become “them” to the “us” of the state, and are constantly under watch in a panopticon manner, sexuality is monitored almost as a political act, gender roles fluctuate, the patriarchal line shows signs of great strain, and all of the state institutions reflect the particular, tense characteristics of the Great War. So by the time Billy Prior remarks that “There’ll always be an England,” Barker has made this seemingly simple statement complex by hinting at the differences that a postimperial, post-war England will actually have to process and incorporate.

The lower classes in England were often depicted as being as “other” as the colonized. In *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock notes that “urban explorers” would write “travel books” about venturing into urban slums. She avers that “Drawing on popular images of imperial travel, these urban explorers returned from their urban jaunts with a primitive accumulation of ‘facts’ and ‘statistics’ about the ‘races’ living in their midst,” and that “the analogy between slum and colony was tirelessly evoked, as was the presiding figure of imperial discovery” (120). It is not surprising, then, that when the empire is under siege, it increases its surveillance of the lower classes. Barker’s character, Billy Prior, is from the working classes, and in *The Eye in the Door*, he sees the effect that such increased surveillance has on, for example, Beattie Roper, a woman who helped raise him. McClintock also explains in her book how the cult of domesticity is a central component of imperialism. By focusing on domestic upheaval, then, Barker is thus able to simultaneously suggest the beginnings of empire’s upheaval as well.

As mentioned previously, the minor character, Ruth Head, experiences a feeling during the air raids that “the...*crust* of everything is starting to crack” (R 164). The war is creating chasms that reveal the underbelly of the institutions of empire. It is not so much that things are changing, as that there is a growing awareness of how things functioned in the first place, and how this old status quo led naturally to the many upheavals of the war. Barker demonstrates this by making frequent connections between the war and the family unit. For example, in *The Eye*, Billy Prior is put on home duty because of his asthma. He begins to experience moments where he blanks out—only to return to himself hours later with no knowledge of where he has been or what he has done. He is still seeing Rivers as a therapist, and together they work out that during these

blanked-out moments, Billy's "warrior double" takes over—a kind of disassociated state. While trying to discover the origins for such a Jekyll/Hyde maneuver, Rivers traces this behavior back to when Prior was a young boy and his father would come home drunk and abuse his mother. Prior would get out of bed and sit on the top of the stairs, listening helplessly to the abuse occurring down below. Prior reveals that first he would "'sit on the landing, going PIG PIG PIG PIG.' He made as if to pound his fist" (E 247). Then, he would stare at the reflection of light on the glass of the barometer hanging on the wall. He would be hypnotized by this light, and would "go into the shine on the glass" (E 248), and become someone else. Rivers connects this to Prior's reaction in France: "I think you found out how to put yourself into a kind of trance. A dissociated state. And then in France, under that *intolerable* pressure, you rediscovered it" (E 248). The war in France, then, works as a kind of extension of the "intolerable" patriarchal tensions that Prior had to deal with as a young boy. As the officer in charge of gas drills in France, Prior has to make sure his officers perform the steps correctly. In his journal, he writes regarding these drills, "You're settling down for the night...and *wham!* Rattles whirl, masks are pulled on, arms and fists pumped, and then the muffled hollow shout GAS! GAS! GAS!" (G 180). From muttering PIG PIG alone to leading the cries of GAS GAS: the situation is really not that different. Billy has to withdraw from both—into this double of himself—in order to survive.

Having grown up in a working class community in Northern England, Billy will often see the war in terms of an extension of the experiences he witnessed as a child. He recalls at one point the beatings that the teachers at his school administered to the often undeserving kids. He remembers how he thought, "*Bastard...*as Horton's [the teacher's]

arm swung. ¶Years later, after witnessing the brutalities of trench warfare, he still thought: *Bastard*" (E 253). Compared to home life then, the war does not necessarily have the ability to shock. A similar connection occurs in *The Ghost Road* when Billy is writing of how so often soldiers at the front have a peculiar expression on their faces which he characterizes as a "rabbit-locked-up-with-a-stoat look" (G 173). He continues,

I've only ever seen that expression in one other place, and that was the Royces' house. Family of four boys in the next street to us. Their father used to make them line up every night after he'd had a few pints, and lift their shirt-tails. Then he'd thrash them with a ruler on their bare bums. Every night without fail. One of them asked once, 'What's it for, Dad?' And he said, 'It's for whatever you've done that you think you've got away with.' But my God they could fight. (G 173-4)

Once again Barker is having Billy undermine the before/after divide of the war; the war's atrocities, although certainly horrible, are not new to the war: the disenfranchised or disempowered have already experienced horrors in everyday ordinary patriarchal life with the naturalized violence of the family. Billy watched the Royce boys fight at home as he would later watch soldiers fight at the front: a seamless transition.

While living in London and working at the Ministry of Munitions, Prior does note that "All winter, it seemed to Prior, an increasingly frenetic quality had been creeping into London life" (E 6). And after Haig releases his order stating that England will fight to the death, Billy comments that "Whatever the effect the Order had on the morale of the army, it had produced panic among civilians" (E 6). What Billy experienced as a poor child in Northern England is now being felt by all Londoners, rich or poor. The war is evening the distribution of empire's more traumatic affects. Empire's other side is bleeding into home life, and now all of the institutions of the state seem to have an overt war connection. When Billy visits a friend in prison he "was puzzled by a sense of familiarity

that he couldn't place. Then he remembered. It was like the trenches. No Man's Land seen through a periscope, an apparently empty landscape which in fact held thousands of men" (E 30). As Rivers walks down the corridor of the hospital he thinks how "he never failed to be depressed by the long narrow passage with its double row of brown doors and the absence of natural light. 'Like a trench without the sky' had been one patient's description, and he was afraid it was only too accurate" (R 17). War comes to London and likewise, London also comes to the war. Billy sees this as he

walked along the pavements, looking at place-names: Marble Arch, Piccadilly, Charing Cross, Tottenham Court Road. All these places had trenches named after them. And, gradually, as he walked through the streets of the night city, that other city, the unimaginable labyrinth, grew around him, its sandbag walls bleached pale in the light of a flare, until some chance happening, a piece of paper blown across the pavement, a girl's laugh, brought him back to a knowledge of where he was. (E 192-3)

He could be in either place; the border between home and the front has cracked and the traffic of imagery now goes both ways: the "home-front" takes on a new meaning. On another one of Billy's night walks he has a similar experience. He is walking and then falls into a deep hole, which he gradually realizes is a play trench: "Boys played here. Street gangs. They must have been digging for months to get as deep as this. But then probably the trench was years old, as old as the real trenches, perhaps. He clambered out, over what he suspected was No Man's Land, and there, sure enough, were the enemy lines" (E 117). It has been easy to incorporate the war into childhood, for its framework is familiar and homey.

To a certain extent the disarray of the war seems to fall along class lines. Having experienced depravities in his childhood, Billy is often able to take some of the horrors of the war in stride. Another character in the trilogy, the poet Wilfred Owen, is also from

the working classes. Billy and Owen were at Craiglockhart hospital at the same time, both suffering from shell shock, and are also back at the front together in *The Ghost Road*. Billy observes Owen one night and writes, "I always felt, watching Owen at Craiglockhart, that there was some kind of fantasy going on, that he was having the public-school education he'd missed" (G 215). For someone with such a background, there are elements to a wartime hospital that are a relief not only from the war but from pre-war life as well. In contrast, the patrician Siegfried Sassoon has the opposite experience at Craiglockhart. Rivers sees this and has the "fear that Craiglockhart had done to Sassoon what the Somme and Arras had failed to do" (R 221). Approaching the war with different experiences of the benefits of empire, Owen and Sassoon react in opposite ways to empire's upheaval.

With the war signaling the beginning of the dissolution of empire, those in power begin to get paranoid. As a result of the war "cracking the surface," suspicion and surveillance increase: the citizens become "them" to the "us" of the state, and are constantly under watch. Barker makes this panopticon aspect of empire under duress a central theme of *The Eye in the Door* by constantly having her characters watch each other and be observed by those that work for the state; everyone is a potential spy, everyone a potential traitor. Nothing goes unseen. This watching begins with the prison that Billy Prior visits to see Beattie Roper, a woman who acted as his mother many times in his childhood when his own mother was sick. Beattie Roper is in jail as a protestor of the war, and Billy visits her both as a friend and as a worker for the Ministry of Munitions. When he walks into the prison, he sees everything in terms of eyes seeing himself and others. The windows are "like little piggy eyes" (E 28), the small-talk he

makes with the prison warden all concerns who can see whom and when. The prison itself is a very model for Foucault's panopticon: "The high walls were ringed with three tiers of iron landings, studded by iron doors, linked by iron staircases. In the center of the pit sat a wardress who, simply by looking up, could observe every door" (E 29). When Billy is ushered into Beattie's cell, she reveals to him that the worst part of prison is feeling like she is being watched all the time. She gestures to the door closed behind him and Billy sees an eye painted on it, with the pupil of the eye the peephole in the door (E 36). Billy cannot ignore the eye:

Facing it was intolerable, because you could never be sure if there were a human eye at the center of the painted eye. Sitting with his back to it was worse, since there's nothing more alarming than being watched from behind. And when he sat sideways, he had the irritating impression of somebody perpetually trying to attract his attention. (E 40)

This eye torments Billy for the rest of the book—long after he has left Beattie's prison cell. He begins to have nightmares about it which are far worse than the debilitating nightmares about the front from which he suffered while being treated for shell shock (E 58-9). Barker uses this notion of surveillance and the panopticon to convey that the dissolution of empire has as stressful an effect on England's home shores as it does at the front in France.

The surveillance of and by the state has increased in general, but in *The Eye in the Door* one thing in particular that Barker portrays as being especially monitored is the sexuality of its citizens. In a discussion on pacifism, Billy's childhood friend, Mac, makes the comment that "In the end moral and political truths have to be proved *on the body*, because this mass of nerve and muscle and blood is what we are" (E 112). In *The Eye*, Barker is proving "on the body" empire's increasing paranoia and need for control.

As empire begins to lose its grip abroad, it tries to gain more control over its own citizens at home. The us becomes riddled with smaller divisions of us and them. The shift to focusing on issues of sexuality is foreshadowed in *Regeneration* at a moment when Rivers is having a tiresome dinner conversation at his club in London. He is listening to the elderly Major Huntley rant on and on about the empire and what is going wrong with it; Huntley is very concerned with matters of class and he says to Rivers that “it was often the better type of woman who chose to limit the size of her family, while her feckless sisters bred the Empire to destruction” (211). The elderly Majors and Captains in *The Eye* seem to have taken this crazy concern one step further: they become preoccupied with homosexual citizens who are not “breeding” at all. Homosexuality, then, is portrayed not only as a “crime,” but as an unpatriotic act. As Greg Harris comments: “The most public home-front battles were waged against pacifists and homosexuals, whose actions were correlated by direct charge or innuendo or both. Homosexuality and pacifism were punishable as crimes against country and crimes against nature” (302). Sexual preference becomes conflated into an anti-war stance and “country” becomes identified with nature.

Whereas *Regeneration* begins with Sassoon’s anti-war declaration, *The Eye in the Door* begins with a tryst: Prior does not get lucky with Myra, a new acquaintance, so he then propositions Charles Manning on a park bench. They return to Manning’s large, boarded-up townhouse for the first of what will be many such rendezvous throughout the book. In *Eye* there are more of these moments, and discussion of the issues surrounding them, than there is of the war. Barker even shows how Sassoon’s attentions have switched. In *Regeneration* the conversations between Rivers and

Sassoon were always laden with not-so-subtle allusions to Sassoon's sexuality. The allusions remain indirect, because it seems as if Rivers is attracted to Sassoon, yet has kept his own homosexual tendencies repressed. So Sassoon will say "My intimate details disqualify me from military service" and Rivers will smile and reply, "I know" (R 70-71) and then later catch himself thinking of Sassoon's physique admiringly. Rivers's main task, however, is to reconcile Sassoon with the necessary disavowal of his anti-war declaration. In *The Eye*, Rivers once again becomes Sassoon's doctor when Sassoon gets a head wound. Now in this novel Sassoon's preoccupation is not so much the pros or cons of the war, but with his own desire to stop living a double life. He tells Rivers that he wants to go to Sheffield to work in a factory, "Because it's close to Edward Carpenter" (E 259), the author of *The Intermediate Sex*. Sassoon protests "Why not? I did everything anybody wanted me to do. Everything you wanted me to do. I gave in, I went back. Now why can't I do something that's right for me?" (E 259); but Rivers sees this as "yet another hare-brained scheme, because this was another protest, smaller, more private, less hopeful, than his public declaration had been, but still a protest" (E 260). Yet in the context of *The Eye*, such a protest seems necessary; to the reader, if not to Rivers, it is obvious that Sassoon's "small protest" is a protest against the constrictions and surveillances with which the book has been primarily concerned. Sassoon, here, is right on target.

There is another moment in *Regeneration* where Barker can be seen preparing for what will be the main theme in *The Eye*. Rivers and Sassoon are once again having a therapy discussion, and Rivers explains,

After all, in war, you've got this enormous emphasis on love between men—comradeship—and everybody approves. But at the same time

there's always this little niggle of anxiety. Is it the right *kind* of love? Well, one of the ways you make sure it's the right kind is to make it crystal clear what the penalties for the other are. (R 204)

Rivers then goes on to mention the Pemberton Billing affair—a matter of great importance in *The Eye*. For in *The Eye*, Charles Manning is being stalked by someone who is aware of the double life that he leads with his wife and kids in the country and his trysts with men in London. This stalker keeps sending Manning specially printed news reports of the Pemberton Billing affair, a debacle in which it was said that an MP, Mr. Billing himself, claimed “to know of the existence of a German *Black Book* containing the names of 47,000 eminent people whose *private lives* make their loyalty to their country suspect” (R 204). Several articles purportedly written by Pemberton Billing claimed that because of this list, the Germans would be able to control those on it who were afraid of being exposed. A second article soon followed that, as Pat Barker explains in an endnote, “suggested that the list of subscribers to a private performance of Oscar Wilde’s *Salome* might contain many names of the 47,000. Maud Allan, who was to dance the part of Salome, sued Pemberton Billing for libel, since the paragraph clearly implied she was a lesbian” (E 279). At the trial, Pemberton Billing defended himself and claimed that he did not write the articles nor make the accusations. It was discovered that the actual writer was the star witness, a Captain Harold Spencer. Spencer, who ranted on at the trial about “women who had hypertrophied and diseased clitorises and therefore could be satisfied only by bull elephants” (E 279) was eventually declared insane.

The trial, however, had repercussions for many; Lord Alfred Douglas, of Oscar Wilde fame, used the trial as an “opportunity of pursuing his personal dispute with Robert Ross, Oscar Wilde’s devoted friend and literary executor, identifying him as ‘the leader of

all the sodomites in London” (E 279-80). Ross died a few months later of a heart attack. The whole affair was prominently publicized and followed; Barker taps into this event by having Manning rumored to be one of the 47,000. Manning even attends the showing of *Salome* and has an encounter with the crazed Harold Spencer in the men’s room. Spencer is mumbling about diseased clitorises and bull elephants and says suggestively to Manning, “Didn’t I see you in the box with Robert Ross?” (E 81). “Looking him straight in the eye and loading every word with significance” Manning replies “I am from the Ministry of Munitions” and walks out trembling (81). But being a part of the empire power-structure will not necessarily save Manning, since the empire seems to be crumbling within as well as without. Later in the novel, Manning will frequently see Spencer across the street or leaning against lamp-posts, always watching. Spencer seems symbolic of the old empire: he is losing his grip, and so he becomes preoccupied with what he sees as the “deviations” of his fellow citizens. If war can “be understood as a *gendering* activity, one that ritually marks the gender of all members of a society, whether or not they are combatants” (Higonnet et al 4), then we can see Barker’s use of the Pemberton Billing affair as a way of showing how homosexuality seemed, to the paranoid powers that be, to represent a loss of control, since homosexuals could not be so simply “marked”. The struggle all takes place “*on the body*” (E 112).

Barker also signals that there is discord between those in power in empire’s hierarchy and those who will eventually inherit this power. There is a breaking down between fathers and sons and the passing of the baton between the two. W.H.R. Rivers is the father figure to most characters in the trilogy, and it is a role that troubles him. For it is Rivers who thinks that “A society that devours its own young deserves no automatic or

unquestioning allegiance" (R 249), and he believes that that is precisely what the war has caught English society in the act of doing. At least twice in the trilogy Rivers thinks of the story of Abraham and Isaac and how it is "*The bargain...on which all patriarchal societies are founded*" (R 149). The problem, as Rivers sees it, is that "we're breaking the bargain, Rivers thought. All over northern France, at this very moment, in trenches and dugouts and flooded shell-holes, the inheritors were dying, not one by one, while old men, and women of all ages, gathered together and sang hymns" (R 149). After here connecting the Abraham and Isaac story to the war, in *The Ghost Road* Rivers puts the Abraham and Isaac story into more of an empire context. He compares it to a custom on the island of Vao, where an illegitimate child would be raised by an adoptive family and treated as a son, until one day, unwittingly, he would be sacrificed (G 103). Rivers reflects that the Abraham story and the Vao story "represented the difference between savagery and civilization, for in the [Abraham] scenario the voice of God is about to forbid the sacrifice, and will be heeded" (G 104). But being in the midst of the Great War, Rivers becomes uncertain about the reality of this difference. In his role as military doctor, he feels too close to the Abraham whose hand is not staid and who thus carries out the bloody sacrifice.

In the trilogy many of the men have issues with their fathers. The majority of soldiers seem to have fathers who, like Burns's father, are "a great believer in the war" (R 171) and thus cannot understand their sons' reluctance, shell shock, etc. Rivers himself often recollects the disagreements he had with his own father, a speech therapist who tried to help Rivers with his stutter (R 155). Billy Prior—always the exception to every rule—has a father who thought it was stupid of Billy to go and enlist; again different,

where all the other patients tend to view Rivers as a father figure or “father confessor” (*E* 228), Prior sees Rivers as being more like his mother (*R* 210). But it is also Billy, ever attuned to the behind the scenes truths, whose subconscious creates a warrior double who, because of being the Isaac sacrifice in his war experience, claims that “I was born two years ago. In a shell-hole in France. I have no father” (*E* 240). Just as Rivers feels guilt over his Abraham role, Billy feels anger over his Isaac role. As Harris writes, “Barker examines how patriarchal constructions of masculinity colonize men’s subjectivity in ways that, especially in wartime, prove oppressive, repressive, and wholly brutal in their effects on the male psyche” (303). Billy resists this colonization.

In contrast to the frequent splitting that occurred between fathers and sons, women found the war experience to be generally unifying. In fact, Barker often emphasizes how the genders were affected differently by the war, with frequent reversals in role. She has Rivers think about how so much of the shell shock his patients suffered from could be traced back to their immobility in the trenches; he comments that “the Great Adventure—the real life equivalent of all the adventure stories they’d devoured as boys—consisted of crouching in a dugout, waiting to be killed. The war that had promised so much in the way of ‘manly’ activity had actually delivered ‘feminine’ passivity, and on a scale that their mothers and sisters had scarcely known” (*R* 107-8). It makes sense, then, that the soldiers’ shell shock was often so similar to female hysteria, and Rivers makes the point that the two have to be linked: “Any explanation of war neurosis must account for the fact that this apparently intensely masculine life of war and danger and hardship produced in men the same disorders that women suffered from in peace” (*R* 222).

Whereas, as Claire Tylee writes, “What men and women did share were the cultural myths and the behavioral inhibitions of their society. They suffered equally from the repression of their memories of traumatic experiences, and from a common vulnerability to the myths of imperialism” (187), it is also true that men and women experienced the war differently. Lizzie, a munitions worker in *Regeneration*, comments that when war was declared, as far as she was concerned, “Peace broke out” because her abusive husband went off to France (110). The division the war created between men and women is summarized in a conversation Prior has with his friend, Hettie Roper. Hettie says that her friend pointed out during the excitement of an air-raid that “for women, this is the first day in the history of the world,” and Prior replies, “And the last for a lot of men” (E 101). Barker, of course, is not the first to make this observation. Many critics have written about how war was often empowering for women. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar claim that this is why there was often tension between the men at war and the women at home: “Ultimately, this barely veiled hostility between the front and the home front, along with the exuberance of the women workers who had succeeded to (and in) men’s places, suggested that the most crucial rule the war had overturned was the rule of patrilineal succession, the founding law of patriarchal society itself” (279-80). Whereas not going so far as to say that these rules were “overturned” by the war, Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield aver that “Both wars put conventional views about sex roles under strain. Women were after all working long hours next to men, learning new jobs, and earning better wages than they had before (1). They also assert that “For many women, the war offered the chance to escape—from home, or from hated jobs” (58). And, “As David Mitchell observes, ‘when the time came for demobilization,’ many women ‘wept at

the ending of what they now saw as the happiest and most purposeful days of their lives” (Gilbert 204). Anne McClintock contends that “The metaphoric depiction of social hierarchy as natural and familial—the ‘national family,’ the global ‘family of nations,’ the colony as a ‘family of black children ruled over by a white father’—depended in this way on the prior naturalizing of the social subordination of women and children within the domestic sphere” (358). By showing the women with newfound power, Barker indicates that the power of the old order is collapsing.

Barker has Billy Prior recognize that things have changed between men and women. When Prior first meets Sarah Lumb, who will eventually become his fiancée, he is momentarily confused by her confidence: “He didn’t know what to make of her, but then he was out of touch with women. They seemed to have changed so much during the war, to have expanded in all kinds of ways, whereas men over the same period had shrunk into a smaller and smaller space” (R 90). Rivers will later echo these words when he thinks of how his sister’s life before the war had been a “constriction into a smaller and smaller space” while his own life expanded” (G 91). The war has overturned this discrepancy. When Prior goes on leave back home to the North of England, he notices how the women have changed there as well. Whereas before the women would spend their evenings on the front stoops, now “Prior saw deserted doorsteps. Women were out and about, but walking purposefully, as if they had somewhere to go” (E 95). Not only are these women going out, but they are going to what formally had been a man’s bastion: the pub. Prior sees “two married women going out for a drink together. Unheard of. And in his father’s pub too” (E 96). The new role women have achieved gains the status

of myth, too, when a rumor begins circulating that zeppelins were piloted by women (*R* 222); during wartime, at least, there are no limits to what women can do.

Of course, this fact had many people worried. Billy's dad is convinced that where women are concerned "This war's the Trojan horse, only they're all too so-and-soing daft to see it" (*E* 93); he is convinced that when the war ends, the women will not be returning to their domestic lives. Billy, too, has moments where he seems to agree with his father, noting that "nothing puts a woman in her place more effectively than a chivalrous gesture performed in a certain manner" (*E* 27). Sarah Lumb's mother also resists the new changes; she thinks that "in *her* world, men loved women as the fox loves the hare. And women loved men as the tapeworm loves the gut" (*R* 195). Barker also makes it clear that despite some upheaval, the old-boy network was in many ways still going strong. For example, Billy's friend Beattie Roper is in jail for being pro-peace. As she says, "I told the *truth* in court. The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.' She laughed. 'Bloody fatal, that was'" (*E* 33). For doing so, Beattie is now languishing and sick in a prison cell; this stands in marked comparison to *Regeneration's* Sassoon, who had friends and colleagues in high places bending over backwards to make sure that he did not go to jail for expressing the same beliefs as Beattie. In *Regeneration*, too, we witness Sarah's friend Lizzie being berated by a doctor for wanting an abortion; it is left up to Beattie in *The Eye in the Door* to point out that "You know, killing a baby when its mother's two months gone, that's a terrible crime. But wait twenty years and blow the same kid's head off, that's all right" (*E* 102). Changes are occurring—albeit slowly—amongst the genders in the British Empire's home base; signs are evident of the dissolution of the old order.

At the end of *The Ghost Road*, Barker has Rivers muse, "There was a real danger, he thought, that in the end the stories would become one story, the voices blend into a single cry of pain" (G 229). Rivers, however, will not let this danger come to pass. When Hallet, the soldier who Billy Prior rescued, dies in Rivers's hospital ward, he dies moaning "shotvarfet" which Rivers is able to translate as "It's not worth it" (G 274). The other patients join in with the chant, creating a horrible tension and noise: "Rivers was aware of a pressure building in his own throat as that single cry from the patients went on and on. He could not afterwards be sure that he had succeeded in keeping silent, or whether he too had joined in" (G 274-5). Rivers, however does not let this voice remain the single voice of war. As he slumps exhausted into a chair, he sees a vision of Njiru, his Melanesian counterpart. Through Njiru, "advancing down the ward of the Empire Hospital," Rivers is once again able to indict empire along with war. With Rivers's help, Barker will lay the ghosts of empire and war to rest. Njiru chants, "*There is an end of men, an end of chiefs, an end of chieftains' wives, an end of chief's children*" (G 276): and so there is also an end of empire.

CHAPTER IV

“THE GREAT ADVENTURE INTO NOWHERE”: POSTIMPERIAL TRAUMA AND THE NEW PASSAGE EAST IN MARGARET DRABBLE’S *THE GATES OF IVORY*

“The nation dies, says Mme Akrun. It is sad, but what can one do? One must learn to begin again” (335). So proclaims a character in *The Gates of Ivory*, the third volume of Margaret Drabble’s trilogy. Mme Akrun makes this statement from a refugee camp across the border of Kampuchea: almost everyone she knew in her pre-Khmer Rouge life has been murdered, including her husband; her eldest son disappeared years ago; a daughter was traumatized into imbecility by her refugee experience; and she has had to raise her three remaining children in the no-man’s-land of the camps.

Understandably, Mme Akrun wants to move on. For years Mme Akrun tried to find Mitra, her missing son. She told the story of the night he disappeared to anyone who would listen, moving one English photo-journalist who heard her appeal to take an award-winning picture of her that would become the front page of a Kampuchean Refugee Aid brochure. When the above statement is made, however, Mme Akrun has accepted the disintegration of her country and the rearrangement of her life. She does not want to analyze it or even mourn it: again, she wants to move on.

Liz Headleand, an Englishwoman in her fifties who has come to the camps on a search of her own, cannot understand this change in Mme Akrun. Drabble muses: “Something has snapped in Mme Akrun, or time has healed her. How can Liz know

which? Is it the same thing? She cannot read this woman" (336). Liz is the main character of the trilogy, and Mme Akrun's seeming nonchalance regarding the "death" of her country is juxtaposed directly against the feelings of Liz—and her two long-time college friends, Alix and Esther—about England's twentieth-century diminishment. In all three novels, Liz, Alix, and Esther are constantly confronted with the consequences of England's imperial decline; in fact, the rise and fall of empire seems something that cannot be escaped or passed by. Alix melodramatically thinks, "Why must it go on for ever and ever, death and destruction, tragic empire after tragic empire, Tamburlaine, Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, and the Stars and Stripes planted upon Mars as the imperial contamination spreads like a cancer through interstellar space?" (438). In Drabble's London, the remains of empire are coliseum-sized: Liz, Alix, and Esther have to incorporate this nostalgia and shame for empire into their everyday lives, as well as figure out how to make some kind of a habitable reconciliation with it.

Margaret Drabble *has* figured this out. In *The Radiant Way* and *A Natural Curiosity* she portrays 1980's England with all its postimperial pitfalls and quandaries: her characters question how to come to terms with their—and England's—new place in the world order. And in *The Gates of Ivory*, her characters begin to answer these questions, which lead to the questions of this dissertation: If it is generally accepted that in the age of imperialism novels produced empire, what do they now, in this historical moment, produce in its stead? What new form of the power/knowledge connection does "Orientalism," for instance, serve in the aftermath of empire? How do shame and nostalgia for empire and the trauma of empire's dissolution coexist in the postimperial, postwar novel?

Curiously, Drabble's critics have tended to miss these issues in her texts. When any sort of acknowledgment is made that empire is a subject Drabble explores, it is done so in a rather anachronistic manner. For example, even the blurb on the back of *The Gates of Ivory* describes the novel as if it were written sixty or so years ago as a companion to the novels of Conrad and Forster. Drabble, it claims, is "[j]uxtaposing the acutely observed London society of her earlier novels with the alien and terror-ridden landscapes of the East...." This, I claim, is precisely what Drabble does *not* do: her trilogy portrays a world where the old East/West dichotomy is no longer the order of things; she examines the effect that the dissolution of empire has had on everyday life in England, and establishes how literature plays a central role in both bandaging and assuaging this trauma.

The connection between empire and the novel has been firmly established. For instance, the significance of empire to the eighteenth and nineteenth-century novel has been thoroughly researched and analyzed, with studies such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* leading the way; Said's reading of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, for example, in which he establishes how Austen "synchronizes domestic with international authority," shows how the pervasive, if understated imperialist references in a nineteenth-century novel are crucial to the creation and depiction of a seemingly provincial England (87). Similarly, critics such as Simon Gikandi have shown how the "moment of English modernism, in spite of a certain canonical insistence on its ahistorical and hermetical character, was generated by a crisis of belief in the efficacy of colonialism, its culture, and its dominant terms" (161). Gikandi writes that "modernist narratives are about failure...but they also derive their

authority from the staging of this failure in the colonial space,” thus showing the codependency that exists between empire and the modernist text. The postmodern narrative was not supposed to share these same concerns. More recently, however, the “divide” between modernist and postmodern texts has been questioned. In his introduction to *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*, Seamus Deane writes that to accept without question “the postmodernist simulacrum of pluralism” is “surely to pass from one kind of colonizing experience into another” and is itself a kind of “concealed imperialism” (19); and in her study of the primitive in modernist texts, Marianna Torgovnick cautions that “We have become accustomed to seeing modernism and postmodernism as opposed terms marking differences in tone, attitude, and forms of economic and social life between the first and second halves of the twentieth century. Yet with regard to views of the primitive, more similarities exist than we are used to acknowledging” (9). I will argue that the same holds true “with regard to views” of empire.

The *postcolonial* status of such texts as Margaret Drabble’s *The Gates of Ivory* tends to be given the benefit of the doubt; with such extensive studies written on the integral role empire has played in literature of previous eras, however, it seems incredible and improbable that empire—so intertwined with the novel form—could just dissolve after World War II and immediately be disassociated from literature. Again I will turn to Simon Gikandi who, in his *Maps of Englishness*, I think best describes how the contemporary cultural identity crises experienced by the English in the past two decades can be traced back to the dismantling of the culture of colonialism. In *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism*, Gikandi writes of how in the

1980's he began to notice that "the cultural identity crisis" kept surfacing as a theme of forums and books analyzing the state of the nation; after researching this theme and its origins, he came to the conclusion that "the crisis of Englishness in the present period is symptomatic of the incomplete project of colonialism, for it calls attention to the fate of powerful cultural categories forced—by decolonization and the demise of empire—to exist outside the historical conditions that made them possible" (9). To prove his point, he studied and wrote about identity issues in texts from those by Carlyle and Mill to nineteenth-century travel writing to the specific problems facing modernist writers such as Greene and Conrad. Using such texts to answer a question about the present day is logical, claims Gikandi, because "it is still within the incomplete colonial project that the postcolonial moment must be located and interrogated" (49).

Gikandi continues on to make the point that whereas the crisis of colonialism was anxiety-producing for modernist writers, this same crisis "presented postcolonial writers with a productive cultural space" which he terms the "postimperial aporia"—a moment between the end of colonization and the beginning of an (often equally stifling) nationalism (194). He uses the writings of Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, and Joan Riley to show how this postimperial aporia can be used positively: the migrant's potential empowerment by being of several worlds, and being able to draw upon varying myths of origin, are two such creative moments. It is crucial to note here, however, that at this point Gikandi is looking to narratives from the "decolonized polis" and by migrant writers in the "English metropolis" for these productive "new stories of Englishness" (xiii). He asks and answers the central question, "How do postcolonial writers represent identity when the empire is dead but the long shadow cast by the culture of colonialism

continues to haunt them in the name of modernity and the new nation?" (191). I agree with and admire Gikandi's thesis and argument; however, I think that by focusing exclusively on writers like Rushdie, Kureishi and Riley—writers from the former colonies or diasporic writers—Gikandi perpetuates the notion that England and white English writers can be disassociated from the postcolonial situation. This leads me to ask: why is it that postcolonial readings are immediately done of a Rushdie book situated in London—his London *must* contain imperial referents—and not of a Drabble book situated in the same London? What does it mean that Drabble is "allowed" to be past empire?

Postcolonial readings have of course been done of many twentieth-century British novels: the amount written about the works of some authors, even, has escalated into a comfortable industry. Such attention is usually given, however, to authors who write overtly about empire—like Paul Scott—or authors who have overt connections to empire—like, as mentioned above, Salman Rushdie. In his book on marxism and the colonial and postcolonial novel, *Colonial Power, Colonial Texts*, Keith Booker aptly writes that the

view of 20th-century history as the story of the decline and fall of the empire often shows up in British literature as a desire to awaken from the nightmare of history. This ambivalence (even horror) toward history can best be seen in a postcolonial work like Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet*, which centers on great historical events like World War II and the end of the Raj but ultimately seems to challenge the very notion of historical change (129).

No doubt: but as Said has shown with his reading of Austen's *Mansfield Park*, and as critics like Jenny Sharpe have explained with readings of Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, the seemingly insular, "hometurf" novels are often revealed to have an empire underbelly.

As I have discussed in chapter two, the issues and worries of empire are everywhere in an English text such as Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*; the same can be said of the novels of Margaret Drabble.

There seems to be a history of critics classifying Drabble's writing as having different aims from those of her postcolonial and postmodern peers. For example, in a book that aims to define and study the postmodern novel, Patricia Waugh argues that Drabble eschewed most stereotypical postmodern novel characteristics and instead returned "to the traditional preoccupations of the psychological and domestic novel, but self-consciously from the perspective of writing as a woman" (24). Perhaps Drabble would agree with this, but in a speech she gave to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in May of 1997, she interestingly classified her writing and its goals as being similar to that of Salman Rushdie. Complaining first about the new abundance of nostalgic, historical novels, she queried, "But who, one begins to wonder, is tackling the present? Have we abandoned it, despaired of it?" (*Threepenny* 23). She went on to champion Rushdie, claiming that "Rushdie grapples both with the historical and the contemporary.... He confronts the contemporary world and the urban world with a courage and an invention that outrun those who pursue him. So it can be done" (23). Drabble then briefly outlined the novel she was working on (*The Peppered Moth*), with its plot overtly Rushdiesque in scope. I believe that Drabble's most recent novels—the trilogy in particular—already share many components of a Rushdie novel: they too are "historical and contemporary" and deal with the empire as it is now—defunct—and not as it was in its "glory days". So when Drabble concluded that "The past can move us into the future, in a way that has nothing to do with nostalgic retreat into the pastoral" (23), I

claim that in her novels Drabble has already used the past in such a way. Let me explain how.

Such an explanation must begin with a certain trope that appears continually in English cultural commentary from the 1980's on: a trope of malaise, ennui, and general illness. I have already catalogued these references in the introduction, but they bear repeating. Writing about the return of the British Raj in the Thatcherite 1980's, Salman Rushdie, in his essay "Outside the Whale," declares that "the refurbishment of the Empire's tarnished image is under way," that many British "turn their eyes nostalgically to the lost hour of their precedence" and that "Britain is in danger of entering a condition of *cultural psychosis*, in which it begins once again to strut and to posture like a great power while, in fact, its power diminishes every year" (my italics) (91-2). In a similar fashion, this chapter's favorite critic, Simon Gikandi, asks in his *Maps of Englishness*: "And how are we to make use of a past whose practical and theoretical consequences were often negative and destructive—a past that casts such a long shadow over our present moment that many of us still reel from its trauma?" (21). Christopher Lane debates whether or not "Britain's situation would appear closer to melancholia than mourning" (232); Benedict Anderson points out that a nation's narratives are affected by "all profound changes in consciousness, [which] by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias" (204); Edward Said asserts that "We must take stock of the nostalgia for empire" (*Culture and Imperialism* 12); and Fredric Jameson has claimed that imperialism appears in Western literature as "formal symptoms" (64). While for some, the dissolution of the British Empire enabled a creative "postimperial aporia," for others empire's dissolution had the opposite effect. Again, this is not a call to pity for the

“poor” colonizers; nor is it an attempt to posit the English as victims: however, analyzing empire’s demise as a trauma, because of the ensuing and parallel demise of the traditional English cultural identity, goes a long way towards explaining such recurrent references of malaise and dis-ease.

In her book, *Unclaimed Experience*, Cathy Caruth examines Freud’s theory of “traumatic neurosis,” writing that it is “the unwitting reenactment of an event that one cannot simply leave behind” (2). If, as Gikandi claims, English identity or “Englishness” “had been produced by a continuous conflict between the center and its Celtic and colonial peripheries” (xvii) then it can be assumed that the loss of the use of these peripheries as mirrors which reflected back a certain perception of England and the English must have profoundly affected the construction of cultural identity. By including so many references to empire and how England has changed because of empire’s dissolution in her trilogy, Drabble addresses what these constant illness references are indicative of: the cultural need to re-live the trauma of the end of empire as a working out of the question central to a traumatic neurosis—namely, “what does it mean to survive?” (Caruth 60). In *The Radiant Way, A Natural Curiosity*, and especially in *The Gates of Ivory*, Drabble addresses just what it means to “survive” empire and its dissolution, and portrays a new, postimperial, world order.

If the dissolution of the British Empire can be said to be experienced by the (colonizing) culture at large as a trauma, then to explain why it is logical to search for the reverberations of this dissolution in novels written fifty to sixty years after the event, I will turn again to Cathy Caruth and her *Unclaimed Experiences*. Caruth, referencing Freud, claims that “Traumatic experience, beyond the psychological dimension of

suffering it involves, suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness” (91-2). In chapter three, I have shown how this concept intersects with the sudden popularity of World War I novels, films, and histories in general, and Pat Barker’s World War I trilogy in particular. The same claims can be made regarding cultural trauma and the “Raj Revival” of the Thatcherite 80’s, as well as how empire is reflected and used by seemingly “domestic” contemporary novelists like Margaret Drabble. In her essay, “Narrative Witnessing as Memory Work,” Irene Kacandes reminds us that “literary texts can be about trauma.... But texts can also ‘perform’ trauma, in the sense that they can ‘fail’ to tell the story, by eliding, repeating, and fragmenting components of the story” (56). And, I would continue, literary critics can “perform trauma” by then insisting on interpreting a text in a certain way. It is only recently that critics have begun to read Drabble’s novels as other than “psychological” and “domestic”. Roberta Rubenstein has written of how “Margaret Drabble has noticeably shifted her emphasis from an earlier concentration on the moral and domestic dilemmas of her female characters to narratives that reflect—and reflect upon—a problematic, violent, and arbitrary universe” (136); and Pamela Bromberg has pointed out that “By decentering and fragmenting her characters’ life stories Drabble resists the ideologies inscribed in what could have been constructed as stories of falling in or out of love, of marrying and divorcing, or stories of education, growth, and success or failure” (17). Still, most critics have ignored how much of Drabble’s portrayal of the new “arbitrary universe” is a specifically postimperial portrayal. Drabble tries not to “fail” to tell the story of empire’s demise and its effect on English social culture. In the Author’s

Note to the second book of the trilogy, *A Natural Curiosity*, Drabble explains that it is the sequel to *The Radiant Way*, and at the end of the note states that “At the moment of writing this, I intend to write a third but very different volume which will follow the adventures of Stephen Cox in Kampuchea.” I do not think *The Gates of Ivory* is as different from the first two books as Drabble might claim: it just continues overtly about matters of empire’s demise, with much of its action taking place in the East, whereas the first two novels are more covertly about empire in that they concentrate on the impact the end of empire has had and does have on England’s social culture. Ernst Van Alphen writes that “Memory is not something we have, but something we produce *as individuals sharing a culture*. Memory is, then, the mutually constitutive interaction between the past and present, shared as culture but acted out by each of us as an individual” (37). Drabble has the individual characters of *The Gates of Ivory*—together with her narrative voice of the text itself—react to and confront empire’s decline in ways that serve as a specific response to how empire has been represented in and produced by novels written throughout the long history of British imperialism. She confronts the topic on three of the most firmly entrenched literature/empire fronts: trauma and war, the symbolic and metaphorical use of women, and the complicit role of literature, itself.

Trauma

“‘Britain is poor country,’ she informs him. ‘Post-industrial country. You import from Japan, from Korea, from Thailand. You no more manufacturing. You cooling, we heating. You protectionist now. You senile now.’” -- Miss Pornip

In *The Gates of Ivory*, the characters on occasion will go to have a pint in a pub called the Spoils of War (30). Even in moments of leisure, it seems, there is to be no

escape from the hauntings of empire's ghosts. Drabble continuously returns to what in the eighties and nineties seems to be always waiting around the corner: the realization of the demise of Britain's imperial identity and the necessity of forming a new, postimperial English identity. In *Beyond The Pleasure Principle*, Freud writes of how a person suffering from a traumatic neurosis experiences a "compulsion to repeat" and will continually re-experience the trauma, often in dreams and hallucinations. The traumatic neurosis forms, in part, as a result of not being prepared for the trauma, and thus not having built up the requisite anxiety which "protects its subject against fright and so against fright neuroses" (11). Such explanations can be applied to why in the last two decades of the twentieth century, empire's demise has become a troubling substitute for the use of the 1857 Mutiny at the beginning of the century: where the Mutiny was an imperialist rallying myth, the demise of empire has become a tolling bell. It is a culturally traumatic moment that is compulsively returned to in order to build up the anxiety that will eventually serve as a passage to a state of acceptance and acclimation to postimperial life. Margaret Drabble addresses this trauma in intricate ways in *The Gates of Ivory* by having the trauma within the text interact with the trauma of the text. I will begin with an explication of the trauma within.

The new world order that Drabble portrays in her novel can best be explained using the terms and framework Arjun Appadurai sets forth in his essay, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy". Appadurai argues that the "new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models..." (6). Instead of the old model of nation states with their distinct national cultures, and instead

of the self/other, us/them dichotomies, he describes a new order made up of a series of porous and inter-related “-scapes”; then, global interactions “occur in and through the growing disjunctures between ethnoscaples, technoscaples, finanscaples, mediascaples and ideoscaples” (11). Appadurai emphasizes that “the global relationship between ethnoscaples, technoscaples and finanscaples is deeply disjunctive and profoundly unpredictable” (8); citizens of the twentieth century are going to have to discover new ways to cope with such disjunctures, and in *The Gates of Ivory*, Drabble frequently has her characters do just that.

Adjusting to and coping with the new disjunctures of the global cultural economy is something Drabble’s characters are shown doing on both a small and a large scale. For instance, she often has them notice how their cultural landscape has changed; her characters are consciously registering such changes. While eating at a restaurant, Liz Headland looks out the window and rather drowsily sees “the enshrined Campden Hill dignitaries to the west, the Bayswater backwaters to the east: the brutal and grand dwellings of Czech and Soviet and Indian diplomats: the Peking Ducks and Pizza Parlours of Queensway...” (14). London now does more than allow the other within it; Drabble portrays it as a place transformed. A new character, Hattie Osborne, who directly addresses the reader and speaks in the first person, mentions how in the correspondences of the Cambodia-traveling Stephen Cox, she is referred to by her initials as “HO”, which is sometimes confusing, since this is also how Stephen refers to Ho Chi Minh City. The packet from Stephen Cox around which the novel centers is mailed to Liz with Kampuchean stamps that commemorate the wedding of Charles and Diana—“A

slightly oriental Prince Charles and Princess Di” (116). Liz and her friends are becoming inured to such an amalgam of cultures.

However, England’s postimperial status and the new global cultural economy are topics that Drabble’s characters always return to: the scab will itch. For example, Liz’s friend, Alix Bowen, who in this book is preoccupied with her husband’s cancer, often includes issues of empire in her everyday musings. Rubenstein claims that “Through Alix Bowen, Drabble raises complex questions about competing social and political forces in contemporary British life and about the inner forces of the individual personality” (101), yet in *The Gates of Ivory* the questions Drabble raises through Alix often concern empire. In a melancholy moment of reflection on London Bridge, Alix’s train of thought begins with her husband’s illness and gradually travels to the figurative “Gates of Empire at Heathrow” (294). She then thinks of the chain of peoples who have reflectively looked at the Thames, “the No-people, the Celts, the Belgae, the Romans, the Angles, the Saxons, the Normans, the Huguenots, the Dutch potters, the refugees from the pogroms of Russia and Poland, the survivors of the Final Solution, the Hungarians, the Turks, the Indians, the Pakistanis, the West Indians, the Africans, the Cypriots, the Vietnamese, the Cambodians” (293–4). That there has been a history of a multitude of peoples in London reassures Alix about the inhabitants of London today; perhaps the present is not so completely divorced from the past. When Drabble changes the scene, she leaves Alix on this bridge thinking of Rushdie and the Ayatollah’s fatwa—a moment where postimperial England rightly came to the defense of “the other within.” Alix’s feelings about contemporary England vacillate, but that a character’s thoughts can elide smoothly from personal trauma to aspects of England’s postimperial condition reveals an

uneasiness about the repercussions of this new condition. Drabble uses the personal trauma—which is easily recognizable as trauma—to register the larger trauma of the postimperial condition.

Drabble makes it clear that the global cultural economy is, indeed, global. Traveling in the east, Stephen Cox frequently comments on the international aspect of his surroundings. Wherever he goes, his fellow travelers are quite a mix; he is often noting “the motley of hotel guests. Japanese, German, Thai, American, Korean, French, Swedish” (52). In addition, he experiences many moments of cultural amalgam, such as when he is traveling in Aran, Thailand, and is invited to join a small village family who are gathered around their TV watching an old movie about Mary Magdalene (171). Stephen is not, however, completely at ease with this: with a friend he discusses “the notion of progress and the cycles of history and its tragic empires rising and falling” (119); he often muses fondly about the state of buildings and monuments during the colonial era (226). Stephen is slightly ambivalent as to how postmodern his passage to the east should actually be: he almost seems to regret that his passage to the East does *not* land him in a completely alien and “other” world. Appadurai writes that “It is in this fertile ground of deterritorialization, in which money, commodities and persons are involved in ceaselessly chasing each other around the world, that the mediascapes and ideoscapes of the modern world find their fractured and fragmented counterpart” (12). Stephen, not that modern, is definitely unsettled by the fluidity of this world. Whereas in a previous era he would have been able to comfortably ignore and not question what his English money allows him to be and buy in the East, he now is confronted with the fact that everything is for sale, and the buying and selling go in both directions: from west to

east and from east to west. In the first hotel Stephen stays at in Bangkok, he reads a notice stuck in the mirror of his room which “inform[s] him that if he wishes to purchase any of the room’s fittings, the prices are as indicated.... Each item is priced, even the grimy and slightly torn shower curtain in the bathroom. Door knob, 150 baht” (44). Stephen’s surroundings are changing at such a rate that they can even be bought out from under him.

Although the main characters in the trilogy think of themselves as being progressive and open-minded, their children, as is often the case, are less bothered by how things are now. In long conversations with his stepmother, Liz’s stepson Alan will often try to get Liz to update her views a bit. This is an age-old situation, but what is perhaps peculiar to these conversations is that so often Alan is trying to help Liz accommodate England’s postimperial role. During one conversation, Liz asks Alan, a sociologist and political theorist, “what is the population of the world? ¶Alan laughs and tells her she is mad, he is not a calculating machine, why on earth does she think he might know? And anyway, would she want it in European billions, or American billions?” (147). Such statistics—such Kipling ways of knowing the world—are passé in Alan’s opinion, and the answer itself would have a kind of fluidity, depending on which measurements were used. Alan ends that same conversation with “I sometimes think we should revise our concepts of national identity, don’t you? Bye bye, ma, thanks for ringing” (148). Hattie Osborne, who eventually has a relationship with another of Liz’s stepsons, is also portrayed as flourishing in this new global cultural economy. Whereas Hattie’s father fought and died in Malaya and “was as racist as they come,” Hattie is convinced that she has not inherited her father’s opinions and that “the worst I got from

him was a mild dose of ladylike masochism, a taste for a bit of harmless fladge and bondage” (308). Hattie’s days are a mishmash of cultural commodities: when she goes out on dates, she sees foreign movies (259); on the way home from work she gets Chinese take-out and spills it on her Indian skirt (27); when Liz first asks her if she has heard from the missing Stephen, Hattie “had a feeling that somebody I knew had bumped into him within living memory in either Singapore or Bangkok, but I couldn’t for the life of me remember which or who, or when, or what they’d said” (29). Hattie, a representative of the next generation, is quite at home in the new world, only six degrees separated from everyone and everything else.

Despite the nonchalance of the next generation, the main characters of Drabble’s trilogy are often insecure and feel displaced by the boundary-less contemporary world. In his discussion of the new global cultural economy, Appadurai often characterizes it as being “deeply disjunctive and profoundly unpredictable” (8); Liz Headleand and her friends are confronted with this uncertainty while navigating the unknown contours of a new national and cultural identity, one that does not have the colonial other as a looking glass. Drabble begins *The Gates of Ivory* by questioning the old boundaries—both of the novel itself and of nation. She writes, “This is a novel—if novel it be—about Good Time and Bad Time” (3). Instead of the “good” countries and “bad” countries of imperial times, Drabble proposes a more porous dichotomy. She instructs:

Imagine yourself standing by a bridge over a river on the border between Thailand and Cambodia. Behind you, the little town of Aranyaprathet, bristling with aials and stuffed with Good Time merchandise, connected by road and rail and telephone and post office and gossip and newspapers and banking systems with all the Good Times of the West. Before you, the Bad Time of Cambodia. You can peer into the sunlit darkness if you wish. (3)

There is an air of sarcasm about this opening paragraph—one half expects to see Glinda the Good appear to battle it out with Pol Pot. Drabble, here, pointedly ridicules the us/them binary so crucial to empire, by demarcating them so distinctly.

However, she is not willing—or perhaps not able—to relinquish the binary completely; instead, the old East/West binary appears in *The Gates of Ivory* in a more malleable, less identifiable, and thus a more threatening form. Her conclusion of the first section of the book introduces the complications of this new binary-lite, which I will also quote at length:

The dead and dying travel fast these days. We can devour thousands at breakfast with our toast and coffee, and thousands more on the evening news. It would be easy to say that we grow fat and greedy, that we thrive on atrocities, that we eagerly consume suffering. It is not as simple as that. We need them as they need us. There is a relationship between Good Time and Bad Time. There are interpenetrations. Some cross the bridge into the Bad Time, into the Underworld, and return to tell the tale. Some go deliberately. Some step into Bad Time suddenly. It may be waiting, there, in the next room. (4)

Drabble signals that the way in which England used to be able to be culturally insular and cordoned off has now been replaced with an almost “wrinkle in time” quality: blink once and you will end up a them. Whereas the old binaries, in the service of imperialism, worked for consumerism, but for consumerism dressed up in the clothes of empire and its supposed moral and civilization benefits, the new binary-lite is stripped clean of all of that and is thus left with just the bald materialism of the consumer showing. There also exists in this passage the sinister insinuation that there is a visceral need for those in Good Time to vicariously consume the suffering of those in Bad Time. Interestingly, Appadurai uses a similar “cannibalism” metaphor to describe the erasure of binaries in the new world order: he writes that “the central feature of global culture today is the

politics of the mutual effort of sameness and difference to cannibalize one another and thus to proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin Enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly universal and the resiliently particular” (17). Drabble revises her image of the binaries—by first stating that Good Time consumes Bad Time and then changing that to a more “mutual” interpenetration—in such a way that coincides exactly with Appadurai’s elaboration of the global cultural economy. Her revision itself performs the hesitation over adapting to a new national and cultural identity which many of her characters will share.

In marked contrast to Clarissa Dalloway’s London of *Sirs and Ladies*, Liz Headland’s upper middle-class London is a whole new world. This can be seen in particular in a section towards the beginning of the novel. At this point, Liz has already received the mysterious packet from Stephen Cox that will soon cause her to set out on her own passage to the east to discover Stephen’s fate. In the meantime, she agrees to go to a dinner with her ex-husband—a man who is very much a contemporary version of Richard Dalloway—and this dinner serves as a microcosm of the novel in that it spotlights characters whose varying viewpoints are representative of the dynamics of postimperial England. To begin with, no one quite understands just exactly what or whom the dinner is for—they are just “sure” that the cause is a good one. The speaker at the dinner is the King of Bandipura, and his speech an amalgam of chic, international issues: “He speaks eloquently and in excellent English of his country’s great architectural heritage. He speaks about international tourism and the protection of the environment and the forests. He alludes to the Olympic Games which will shortly take place in Korea and delicately regrets the closed frontiers of North Korea, Burma,

Kampuchea and Vietnam” (67), etc. After the speech, Liz finds her seat at a table with her old friend, Esther. Her dinner companions are all representatives of different stereotypical specimens. There is Sir Robert Oxenholme, Esther’s beau, who is an old-fashioned Orientalist. He collects eastern art, has several degrees, and has had a privileged Orientalist past. He thinks of his revelry at Angkor Wat with Prince Sihanouk when they both were young men (70), and he wonders if he should tempt Esther to accept his marriage proposal with “a honeymoon in Egypt, with pyramids and with Petra and Palmyra and the pleasures of ruins?” (68). He cultivates bonsai trees and is smart—and contemporary—enough to realize all that he does not know and to be self-deprecating about this: “I am a small person in a small country, thinks Robert Oxenholme” and Drabble ironically defends him in a parenthetical aside with statistics—like those used by Orientalists of yore— that miss the point: “(He is in fact over a foot taller than Sihanouk, and a not unprominent figure in a country with a population more than ten times that of Cambodia, give or take a million or two dead)” (73).

Sitting next to Robert is an old-school colonialist, who exclaims, “What a wonderful country! What a tragedy! Such a peaceful country Cambodia had been then, such a quiet, sweet, gentle, good-natured people! Nothing was too much trouble for them! Such simple people, but so kind!” (69). There is a French woman at the table who is forced by this man’s reminiscences to deplore the “legacy of colonialism and the brutalization of native populations” (69). There is an Indonesian Cultural attaché and an Indian shipping magnate who, a world traveler, gives travel tips to the others at the table, letting them know of small paradises “not yet upon the tourist itinerary of the world” (70). Despite the celebratory nature of the occasion, however, the overarching mood of

most of the participants at this dinner is one of troubled annoyance. Everyone's views seem to be at odds with their neighbor's:

The Brazilian-born wife of an American conglomerate thinks she will die of boredom if her neighbour does not stop talking about the ecosystem. A Scottish laird informs a pretty Dutch archaeologist that his son is dying of drug abuse in a hospice. A New Zealand animal rights activist harangues a Korean airline operator about the eating of cats and dogs. (75)

In addition, immediately after this passage, Drabble breaks down the text into one of her lists of world facts and possibilities—an example, as I will explore later, of how the text itself enacts the effects of traumatic neuroses. The “global cultural processes,” as termed by Appadurai, may be fashionable, but they are definitely anxiety-producing.

The significance of such anxiety is made more explicit by the conclusion of this party scene, when everyone returns home to fall asleep satiated, yet dreaming international dreams of trauma. Drabble makes a direct link from the new global cultural economy as portrayed in the party interactions to these anxiety dreams by having the dreams of the party-goers contain fragments of the topics discussed at the party. Karen Knutsen claims that “Dreams are also illusive, and in keeping with Freudian discourse, Drabble uses series of dream descriptions to show us how the characters' daytime preoccupations invade their nightly dreams” (586). What is revealing here, however, is that the preoccupations that make it into the characters' dreams usually have something to do with empire and trauma. The dreams are thus not only “in keeping with Freudian discourse” but in keeping with Freudian notions of traumatic neurosis. The dreams reveal a cultural anxiety caused by the disjunctures and fractures of postimperial English life. Freud writes that “dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from

which he wakes up in another fright” (11). The dreams of the party-goers fit this bill.

For example, Liz Headleand

dreams of temples and monkeys and tigers, of chattering and screeching,
of jungles and ruins and an ambush on an ill-made road.

Esther dreams she is drowning in the Seine in a large limousine.

Robert dreams that he is traveling through India in an old
fashioned wagon-lit with his first wife Lydia and her second husband Dick
Wittering, eating chicken sandwiches.

Charles Headleand dreams that a large blue life-size Chinese
ceramic horse is standing in his office.... (77-8)

There is something amiss in all of these dreams, and in each case the problem is connected to another country. Freud continues on to explain the odd phenomenon of dreams repeating the trauma or aspects of the trauma: “These dreams are endeavouring to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis” (36-7). To have anxiety about a trauma before it happens, is a way of preventing traumatic neurosis from forming. After the onset of traumatic neurosis—or in this case a kind of cultural traumatic neurosis—anxiety dreams work as a post facto “preparation,” that not so much soothe or assuage but act as symptoms which reveal the troubled state.

Such dreams in *The Gates of Ivory* function as evidence of a cultural traumatic neurosis in an additional way as well. The dreams are often linked to—or lead to—war, which is the other main way that trauma appears *within* this text. To build up the anxiety to get over the cultural traumatic neuroses brought on by empire’s demise, Drabble focuses on war in Cambodia. Immediately after relating the dreams of the party-goers, as quoted above, Drabble writes that “The dreams of the world suffuse and intermingle through a thin membrane” (78). She goes on to write of the dreams of Khieu Ponnary and her husband, Pol Pot. She then continues: “all over Kampuchea the bereaved and

the survivors (and all who survive are bereaved, all) dream of the thud and the skull, the blood and the brains, the corpses by the wayside, the vultures and the crows" (78).

Whereas in this scene Drabble connects the dreamers in England to the dreamers in Kampuchea, most of the dreams that we the readers are privy to are the dreams of Liz Headland, Stephen Cox, and Pol Pot. These dreams, too, are not just random productions of the subconscious; instead, they are connected to history and to the traumas of twentieth-century history, in particular. They both extend this history and are themselves extensions of it. For example, while the Kampuchean survivors are dreaming of "spade on skull," Drabble has Pol Pot, perhaps not surprisingly, dream of his Swiss bank account (78). But when Liz reads about Kampuchean refugees, she thinks of how they were all escaping "the dreams of Pol Pot" (24), and because dreams are used so frequently and strategically in the text, dreams, here, become more than just a synonym for Pol Pot's ambitions. When Stephen dreams in Cambodia, his "[d]reams of the tourist mausoleums of Auschwitz and Jerusalem, of film-footage from the liberation of the death camps, of the unfilmed atrocities of Tamburlaine, mingle with Cambodian images..." (226). And, "in the morning, he is purged. He has made a small recovery. He is well enough to venture out to verify some of his dream images" (226). The dreams of night play an active role in the adventures of day. When Liz is sick in Cambodia, upon falling asleep she "enters the Bad Time of Dream Time" (408). Dreaming is directly connected to the easy permeability that now exists between nations. She dreams of the "Belgian Congo" and of "trenches and minefields and piles of skulls"; her dreams are "*tableaux vivants* of death from the dark places of history" (408-9).

It is not insignificant that the English characters here who are dreaming so often of the trauma of war have never experienced it. Drabble makes it quite clear that when it comes to war, both Stephen and Liz are naïfs. She writes that “Stephen has never seen a war, never heard a shell explode” (46), and that Liz “did not even know what a shell was. She would not know one if she saw one. She would not know one if one hit her on the head” (345). By focusing on the Cambodian war which they have not experienced, the characters make it an extension of twentieth-century traumas in general, and use it to build up the anxiety needed to assuage their own cultural traumatic neuroses regarding the end of the British empire—and try to do so indirectly, without having to delve into the particulars of their empire’s decline. In *Unclaimed Experience*, Cathy Caruth argues that “trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4). It is thus logical that the demise of the British Empire in the first half of the twentieth century is appearing, only now, in the literature of the second half of the twentieth century. Drabble’s characters travel to Cambodia because there the scars of war are overt, in contrast to the disjunctions of postimperial England. However, Drabble’s characters also travel to Cambodia because there they can work out their traumas relatively guilt-free: that is, Cambodia, not being an ex-colony of the British Empire, is not England’s “fault”.

Indeed, choosing Cambodia might be a sign of Drabble’s own unease over the dissolution of empire. For in the frequent moments when the traumas of the twentieth century are listed or referred to, England’s complicity is often strangely absent and unnoticed. In *The Gates of Ivory*, Pol Pot is often seen as an extension of Hitler: for

example, his psychological and biographical background is compared to Hitler's (12), and in a list of questions about twentieth-century catastrophes, questions about Pol Pot's deeds follow questions about Hitler's (174). Yet when Pol Pot is compared to an English figure, instead of being compared to, say, General Dyer, the British general who ordered the Amritsar Massacre, he is compared to the fictional character Paul Whitmore—a psychokiller who is featured in the first two books of the trilogy, and is just a small—and apolitical—crazy. Furthermore, when the atrocities of empire are mentioned, it is usually the Belgian Congo horrors that are elaborated upon—and often in great detail (140). During the memorial service for Stephen, Liz's friend Alix thinks: "Why must it go on for ever and ever, death and destruction, tragic empire after tragic empire, Tamburlaine, Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, and the Stars and Stripes planted upon Mars as the imperial contamination spreads like a cancer through interstellar space?" (438). Incredibly, Alix proceeds from Mongolia to Germany to Russia to Cambodia to America—without once including the British Empire in this list! I believe it is a significant absence.

Drabble portrays the English as needing to vicariously experience trauma, of "devour[ing] thousands at breakfast with our toast and coffee, and thousands more on the evening news" (4). The way that trauma has become the main focus of the media and is processed as a media event is related to the cultural traumatic neurosis caused by the dissolution of empire: working through someone else's pain and suffering is, perhaps, a safer—albeit less successful—way of working through one's own pain and suffering. Caruth writes that "Through the notion of trauma...we can understand that a rethinking of reference is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding, that is, at precisely permitting *history* to arise where *immediate understanding* may not"

(11). Drabble has her characters use Cambodia in precisely this way; they “resituate” their own feelings of loss into the chaos of Cambodia.

A primary example of such a resituation can be seen in how all the characters relate to Mme Akrun, a Cambodian refugee who has lost her husband and son and is forced to live a wretched life in the camps on the border. First, Konstantin—a character from an earlier novel of Drabble’s and in this novel quite a “Kim” figure—takes a picture of Mme Akrun asking for help finding her missing son, Mitra, which becomes an award-winning photo and the cover of an aid-requesting pamphlet. Mme Akrun does her best to survive in the camps and to move on and away from her tragedies. Drabble writes, “She is blessed in the freedom of her mind and the rich store of her memory. But she has to take care. Some roads are dangerous. Some memories can kill. Some memories are mined” (131). Stephen and Liz both meet Mme Akrun at different times, and both are rather careless and callous when it comes to Mme Akrun’s landmine-like memories. When Stephen meets her, Mme Akrun tells him about her son and how she lost him, and asks him for help. But “Stephen is not interested in the story of her son. He wants her to tell him about her own survival, her escape across the border. He wants her to flesh out the dry bones” (152). When Liz meets Mme Akrun, she too is strangely disappointed, and thinks that “she looks less sad. Liz had half expected her to recite her sad story, but she does not. Time has moved on, even here. She has other things on her mind” (334). And later, “There is a resignation in Mme Akrun, a stoicism. Liz recognizes them. But there is something missing, something she does not find. Where is the obsessive, grieving mother, whose image she had constructed from the photograph...?” (335). Liz and Stephen both want—and need—to be witnesses to the testimony of Mme Akrun. In

Testimony, Shoshana Felman writes that “The testimony will thereby be understood, in other words, not as a mode of *statement of*, but rather as a mode of *access to*, that truth” (16). Getting access to Mme Akrun’s “truth” will enable them to be prepared for the truth of their own cultural trauma. “The testimony to the trauma thus includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time” (Laub 57); thus, hearing Mme Akrun’s story will make Liz and Stephen participants in it, in such a way that they can use.

Hearing and sharing stories of trauma is an exchange that occurs frequently in *The Gates of Ivory*, right from the very beginning of the novel when Liz receives the package from Stephen Cox, which contains, among other scraps and fragments, a finger bone. In describing the bone to Alix, they begin to discuss other gruesome rumors (again, tellingly, these rumors all involve *other* countries and nationalities): “They discussed jokes about finger bones found in soup in Chinese restaurants, about greyhounds discovered in the deep freezes of curry takeaways. And were there not stories, Alix wondered, about American soldiers in the Vietnam War collecting bags full of Viet Cong ears and sending samples back to their appalled girlfriends?” (10). Liz protests that these are just “atrocities stories,” but as the novel progresses we see how many of the characters—including Liz—keep returning to such atrocity stories. Felman writes that,

To seek reality through language ‘with one’s very being,’ to seek in language what the language had precisely to *pass through*, is thus to make of one’s own ‘shelterlessness’...an unexpected and unprecedented means of *accessing reality*, the radical condition for a wrenching exploration of the testimonial function, and the testimonial power, of the language....
(23-9)

Liz and others “access” the reality of their own postimperial situation through the telling and hearing of these atrocity stories.

In fact, one of Pol Pot's main functions in the novel is always as a factor in a story. Stephen Cox uses Pol Pot in perhaps the traditional Orientalist way: he travels to the East for artistic inspiration, and he is going to use the story of Pol Pot as a take-off point. Stephen explains the intent of his trip to Cambodia as being "to see if he could find out what had happened to the dreams of Pol Pot. Out of curiosity. To write a play, about the Rise and Fall" (14). The "Rise and Fall" of Pol Pot is, perhaps, a safe substitute for the rise and fall of the British Empire. When Liz had asked Stephen why Pol Pot, Stephen explained that "He had a great project, you know.... He was going to take Cambodia out of history, and make it self-sufficient. He was going to begin again" (13). Stephen admires the supposed impetus of Pol Pot: the desire to have control over the story of his country. Stephen first, and then Liz, view Pol Pot in terms of literature. Pol Pot is referred to as "the principal protagonist...of the Cambodia tragedy" and is then frequently compared to Western literary figures. He is Macbeth (50), he is Heathcliff (365), and perhaps he could be played by Marlon Brando in a movie version of his life (248). Pol Pot is, here, "a *crisis of history*, a crisis which in turn is translated into a *crisis of literature* insofar as literature becomes a witness, and perhaps the only witness, to the crisis within history which precisely cannot be articulated..." (Felman and Laub xviii). Stephen Cox sets out to learn and witness the traumas of post-Pol Pot Cambodia; in doing so, he expects to resolve some of the disjunctures caused by the *post-* of his own nation: its late twentieth-century postimperial situation. Pol Pot and his Cambodian war—a war stripped of heroics and creating just victims and refugees—is one of the central ways through which Drabble addresses the cultural trauma of the dissolution of empire.

In conjunction with the trauma that appears *in* the text—the disjunctures of the new global cultural economy and the war in Cambodia—there also exists the trauma of the text, trauma which is both internal and external. For just as Fredric Jameson claims that “the structure of imperialism also makes its mark on the inner forms and structures of that new mutation in literary and artistic language to which the term modernism is loosely applied” (44), so too can the dissolution of imperialism be seen to make its mark on postmodern texts. Appadurai warns that we need to “begin to think of the configuration of cultural forms in today’s world as fundamentally fractal, that is, as possessing no Euclidean boundaries, structures, or regularities” (20); such fractal forms are represented in Drabble’s novel by various breaks in the narrative itself. “A fragmented, self-aware society may require disrupted, self-reflexive narrative forms to represent it,” and Drabble has devised such a form (Bromberg 6). All three novels of the trilogy contain metaleptic moments, as well as moments where the narrative breaks down into lists of statistics and facts. However, as anxiety over the results of empire’s demise builds, these breaks evolve in such a way that corresponds with the arc of the trilogy itself.

In the first novel, *The Radiant Way*, Drabble makes it clear that Liz, Alix, and Esther’s London is a postimperial place. When the novel begins, Liz is hosting a 1979/80 New Year’s Eve party. While looking around at her guests, she makes seemingly insignificant observations such as the following: “None of us, thought Liz, is wearing a dress made in England. Moroccan, Chinese, Indian. I wonder what that means...” (22). Such musings prove to be only the tip of the iceberg. After several chapters of this rather grand party with its wealthy and educated revelers, Drabble moves on to other parties in other, less affluent, parts of the nation, with asides such as, “Meanwhile, up in Northam,

that figurative northern city, the New Year had also advanced, ignored by some, welcomed by others, bringing surprises to some, and a deadly, continuing tedium to others. The Other Nation, less than two hundred miles away, celebrated in its own style” (44). England is a divided nation—and the political turmoil of the early eighties is frequently interspersed (and less frequently intersects) with the lives of the main characters.

This pattern is oft repeated. Drabble will write—

On a more public level 1980 continues. The steel strike continues, a bitter prelude to the miners’ strike that will follow. Class rhetoric flourishes. Long-cherished notions of progress are inspected, exposed, left out to die in the cold. Survival of the fittest seems to be the new-old doctrine (163)—

and then have a character, Liz’s former husband, Charles, be worried about this in bed at night, while waking up the next morning oblivious and happily off to his powerful job. Alix’s husband, Brian, who teaches at an Adult Education Center, is in danger of having the funding for his class cut (176). Middle class English life is described as “the heart of nothingness” (189). One long section begins, “These were the years of inner city riots, of race riots in Brixton and Toxteth, of rising unemployment and riotless gloom: these were the years of a small war in the Falklands (rather a lot of people dead), and of the Falklands Factor in politics” and continues on to mention the AIDS crisis, the proliferation of McDonald’s and the fast food ethos, and the numbing effect of television (215). Although Drabble’s characters are not immune to these events (and Alix in particular is often directly affected by them), towards the end of the novel she does not always bother to connect one of these current events riffs to what has been happening to a character or to what a character has been thinking. Instead, she interrupts a section with

crises in list form, such as: “¶The miners pawned their wedding rings and their silver photo frames. ¶The miners ate well in soup kitchens, on food parcels from rich Marxists in the Home counties. ¶The babies of miners suffered acute malnutrition” (325). The troubling state of the nation overwhelms the narrative, thus interrupting with a barrage of statistics. As Rubenstein writes, “By means of such catalogues or litanies that express but refuse to mediate the tension between hope and sorrow, possibility and misfortune, the knowable and the unknowable, Drabble expresses the shattering of human lives through war and through individual or collective atrocity” (148-9). With these lists, her text performs this cultural fragmentation.

A Natural Curiosity also has these list moments, although they appear less frequently—and perhaps self-consciously so, for in an aside Drabble claims that Alix “is not here provoked into much political thought about the nature of the north and How Britain Votes, and you may be spared her occasional reflections on these themes, for this is not a political novel” (193). The lists that do appear, however, foreshadow how Drabble will use lists in *The Gates of Ivory*. They are lists of atrocity stories all reported on the evening news (207), as well as lists in which Drabble presents possible actions for her characters to take, and facts about characters that Drabble could concentrate on but will not. When Drabble presents lists of the possible actions of Pol Pot in *The Gates of Ivory*, her apolitical claims become naught.

The fractures in *The Gates of Ivory* appear in three different varieties: lists of statistics, lists of possibilities, and fragments of Stephen’s writing that are sent posthumously to Liz. The majority of the lists of statistics have to do with Cambodia; in this way they are rather Orientalist in nature, and Stephen and Liz use them to try to *know*

the country. The statistical lists, however, are overtaken in number by the possibility lists. Caruth claims that “it is at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet” (3); it is in these moments, when the text breaks down into possible outcomes that are not known and only proposed and speculated, that trauma is performed via the format. Drabble proposes possibilities for Pol Pot—“Pol Pot lurks in his tent in the Cardamom mountains. ¶Pol Pot lies ill of cancer in a Chinese hospital. ¶Pol Pot waits like a fat tiger in a suite in the Erawan Hotel in Bangkok” (75); possibilities for Pol Pot’s cohorts—“Ta Mok has lost a leg. ¶Son Sen is in charge of the armed resistance. ¶Sihanouk plans the menu for the dinner in Jakarta” (130); possibilities for Mme Akrun’s missing son, Mitra—“Mitra works as interpreter and resettlement officer in a refugee hostel in the Yorkshire Dales. ¶Mitra is dead and has been dead for ten years” (160); and possibilities for Konstantin, yet it is only Konstantin’s situation that is ever resolved—and this is perhaps because, as Drabble herself points out in a dear reader moment, Konstantin and his mother “belong to a different world and a different density. They have wandered into this story from the old-fashioned, Freudian, psychological novel, and.... There is not time for them here” (461). In “old-fashioned” novels, resolution is possible; in postimperial novels, anxiety does not allow for such tidy, pithy, endings.

Still another internal “formal symptom” of the trauma of the changes wrought by postimperialism can be seen in Drabble’s many dear reader moments. Such metalepses are, perhaps, the scabs of empire, for as Rubenstein has claimed, “Drabble’s disruptions of traditional narrative form to expose its fictionality parallel her narrative expression of

disruptions within the social world that traditional fiction represents" (141). Dear reader moments were a staple of the Victorian novel, disappeared, for the most part, in modernist texts, and reappeared with a vengeance in postmodern novels. Drabble's tendency towards the dear reader moment is yet another characteristic she shares with Salman Rushdie. Both writers take the dear reader moment beyond its Victorian function as a wink or an appeal to the reader, and instead use it to draw the reader in and make the reader complicit, often by making a connection to issues in the reader's world and to issues in the author's world. Sara Suleri is mistaken when she argues that in Rushdie's *Shame* "Its narrative self-consciousness suggests a deep embarrassment at the idea of political discourse, a nostalgic will to create apolitical pockets in the garments of such language" (174). On the contrary, I would argue that Rushdie's dear reader asides are not moments of evasion, but instead instances where he is making a connection between the fictional world he is creating and the "real" world inhabited by both himself and the reader. Also, by bringing autobiographical details into the dear reader moments, Rushdie performs how the reader, too, should interact with the text. As Robyn Warhol claims about certain female Victorian writers, in her book *Gendered Interventions*, "the engaging narrator's frequent appeals to the reader's imagination, her earnest requests to the reader to draw upon personal memories to fill in gaps in the narrative, prompt the actual reader to participate in creating the fictional world itself, just as he or she should actively alter the real world after finishing the reading" (36). This is quite obviously one of the functions that Drabble's dear reader moments fulfill. In *A Natural Curiosity*, Drabble interrupts her list of the possible facts she could have told us about the character, Cliff Harper, to say, "If we could grieve for every sorrow and every life, we would never

stop grieving. We would never be able to get up in the morning, we would never be able to feed the cat or water the pot plants. The air would be loud with lamentation. It is better not to know” (243); in doing so, she connects our everyday (and its underlying traumas) with the small traumas of Cliff’s life that she is not going to relate to us. Drabble continues on a few pages further by stating that Cliff’s story “could tell you all these things. But you know them all. You may know more about them than this story is able to tell” (245). The “speaking subject constantly bears witness to a truth that nonetheless continues to escape him, a truth that is, essentially, *not available* to its own speaker” (Felman 15). As the witnesses, we, perhaps, have access to more. When Drabble later is writing of Cliff’s wife and Liz’s sister, Shirley, she comments that “Shirley’s behaviour for the past month has been highly unlikely. It astonished me, it astonished her, and maybe it astonished you. What do *you* think will happen to her? Do *you* think our end is known in our beginning, that we are pre-determined, that we endlessly repeat?” (251-2). By reminding us that this text intersects with a small part of our own experiences, and by inviting us to respond, Drabble is able to emphasize how, as Shoshana Felman proposes, “literature is the *alignment between witnesses*” (2). We are witnesses to the repetitive compulsion of her characters.

So many of the dear reader moments in *The Gates of Ivory* have to do with issues of memory—a working component of traumatic neuroses. Drabble corrects her characters’ memory—“Memory is treacherous. How could they have discussed Alix’s murderer and his mother? At that stage he had not been Alix’s murderer at all” (15); she fills us in on Cambodian facts that Liz does not know (20); and she faults her own memory along with her characters’—“Her memory of this conversation is vague and

defective, and so is his, and so is mine, but it had nevertheless taken place, and it lingers on in both their recollections and in the limbo of my old Amstrad word processor like a formative shadow” (84). In one significant dear reader moment which lasts for two pages, Drabble writes of what her novel is and what it is not—and her explanations remind us that *The Gates of Ivory* is a story of a cultural trauma. She first explains that she could have chosen to focus in on characters who could have enabled her to end the novel happily, with “perhaps, even, a wedding?” (138). She says that with a bit of somewhat incredulous maneuvering and coincidence, this could be done. But then she weighs in with, “But such a narrative will not do. The mismatch between narrative and subject is too great. Why impose the story line of individual fate upon a story which is at least in part to do with numbers? (138). And, most tellingly, she concludes,

Perhaps, for this subject matter, one should seek the most disjunctive, the most disruptive, the most uneasy and incompetent of forms, a form that offers not a grain of comfort or repose. Too easily we take refuge with the known. Particular anguish, particular pain, is, in its way, comfortable. Unless, of course, it happens to be our own. (138)

Therefore, she shifts to the pain of Cambodia, which, as we have seen, her characters use to try to assuage their own nation’s unease. Dear reader moments allow for her to remind us of the trauma within the text, and of it: “The breakage of the verse enacts the breakage of the world” (Felman 25).

As previously discussed, in praise of Rushdie, Margaret Drabble proclaims that he “has made a virtue of mutation. His characters and his narratives free themselves from gravity, they spin in space and time, in a tumbling turbulence, together with the debris of twentieth-century travel” (23). Drabble’s trilogy, while encompassing worlds, travels in a more orderly fashion. There is a progression in the three novels that gradually works

towards an acceptance of the global cultural economy of which England has had to become a member instead of a ruler. In *The Radiant Way* Drabble portrays an England that is looking inward and forced to deal with its various national problems. She introduces her three main characters, the former college friends Liz Headland, Alix Bowen, and Esther Breuer. Although Alix is on the left politically, Liz has become financially part of the upper middle class and is shown to be somewhat removed from the turmoil outlined in Drabble's lists: "Liz loved the house, she loved the neighbourhood. It gave her great delight to see her children and Charles's, here, thus, in the centre. Her own childhood had been lived on the margins; she had wanted theirs to be calm, to be spared the indignities of fighting unnecessary territorial and social wars" (17). When Drabble's characters think about national social and political issues, they keep their focus narrow and avoid consciously acknowledging the greater reasons and concepts involved. In *The Radiant Way*, the East is not the direct and/or acknowledged "other". When they compare England to another country, they do so to Italy; their literary point of reference, here, is to *A Room With a View* rather than *A Passage to India*. On one of her many research trips to Italy, Esther thinks, "Ladbroke Grove, the wrong end, is really remarkably ugly, by any normal urban standards. Somerset is remarkably beautiful. Bologna also. Beautiful, ugly. Dangerous, safe" (183). And later, when her Italian companion "asks how things are in England. Esther says, which England?" (184). The characters in this first novel of the trilogy are troubled by present-day England, but do not necessarily take the logical next step and examine the greater picture.

Although when any traveling is done in *A Natural Curiosity*, it is to Italy and France that the characters escape, national troubles are linked more directly in this novel

to the fact of England's decline as an empire. The characters begin to tenuously raise the issue of empire. When Liz wonders why none of her five children have started a family or made a permanent home for themselves, she worries, "Something had put them off family life and babies—her own behaviour, their father's behaviour, the overcrowding of Britain, the violence of city life, the nuclear threat, the decline of Empire?" (21). Drabble as narrator later comments that "It all seems a little unreal, but then, the country at large seems a little unreal too. It is hard to tell if it is ticking over or not. Are we bankrupt or are we prosperous?" (53). Where London is complained to be "a replica of itself, a spitting image of itself" (239), Liz's sister, Shirley, watches the stream of people on the streets coming and going and finds horror in their stark reality: "Is this the human race, or are these shadows, ghosts, lingering afterthoughts? This cannot be what is meant" (129). Liz's ex-husband, Charles, marries an aristocrat, Lady Henrietta, who in a previous novel would have been a heroine; here, her behaviour on a safari in an ex-colony is aptly ridiculed and caricatured. The old way of thinking about empire will clearly not do. The stage is set for *The Gates of Ivory*, which as we have seen, has England's postimperial condition as its main theme.

All three novels end with Liz, Alix, and Esther traveling together, or making plans to do so. The progression of the three trips mirrors the progression of the novels themselves. At the end of *The Radiant Way*, the three friends travel in England in June 1985 to Esther's country retreat in Somerset. The scene set is stereotypically pastoral: "The green hill slopes up behind them to the brilliant azure. Large pink lambs, surreal, tinted from the red earth, stand outlined on the hill against the blue. An extraordinary primal timeless brightness shimmers in the hot afternoon air" (375). The women chat,

snooze, and picnic. As they walk home at the end of their picturesque day, Drabble writes that “The sun is dull with a red radiance. It sinks” (376). Perhaps the women are going to be forced to acknowledge that the sun does now set on the British Empire. But no! –for Drabble continues, ending the book with: “Esther, Liz, and Alix are silent with attention. The sun hangs in the sky, burning. The earth deepens to a more profound red. The sun bleeds, the earth bleeds. The sun stands still” (376). Empire’s dissolution, in this novel, is still a fact submerged.

A Natural Curiosity ends with a May 1987 trip to visit Esther, who is now living in Italy. The women are branching out, although still to known territory. They speak of England and tell stories about what has happened to them in the past year. Liz protests that “England’s not a bad country”, and Alix responds: “‘No, England’s not a bad country. It’s just a mean, cold, ugly, divided, tired, clapped-out post-imperial post-industrial slag-heap covered in polystyrene hamburger cartons. It’s not a bad country at all. I love it’” (308). All are amazed at how their lives have begun to move outward, and Esther voices it, saying “Odd, isn’t it, the way new prospects continue to offer themselves? One turns the corner, one climbs a little hill, and there is a whole new vista. Or a vista that seems to be new. How can this be?” (306). And finally, in *The Gates of Ivory*, after Liz has had her passage to the east and returned to tell the tale, the women decide to go on a walking tour in England—an England which they can now, perhaps, accept and understand. Drabble writes that “the summer of ‘89 will bring them blue skies and unclouded sunshine, an unimagined and unchanging radiance. They will be rewarded, as they walk along the green ceiling of the limestone and by the singing river, with the glory of Paradise” (460). As they stop to drink at a fountain, they will be

“watched by a lonely young Oriental furnished with a rucksack and a pair of binoculars” who is perhaps a “Japanese Brontë scholar or a Korean ornithologist” (460). Drabble writes that “One might expect it to be Alix who will wish to take pity on his solitude, but in fact it will be Liz, who, briefly, will meet his eye and smile: for she will still be subconsciously searching, will indeed forever search, for the lost Mitra Akrun” (460). Whereas once, regarding Mme Akrun, Liz had complained that “She cannot read this woman” (336), she now has become aware enough to align herself with Mme Akrun’s traumas instead of just “devouring” them.

Women

“Now is new story. Now is success story of the woman, the independence of the woman. Is New Plot.” -- Miss Pornip

Stephen Cox, during his old-fashioned passage to the East, looks at his friend, Konstantin—a character not unlike Kipling’s Kim—and observes that “beyond Konstantin rose the green flanks of forest. The little clearing in the valley was deep, small, lost: a fold, a cleft, a private place” (357). Following in the tradition of all the many amateur orientalist, colonizers, and adventurers who came to the East before him, Stephen feminizes the Eastern landscape. To do so coincides well with the original intent of his passage: the hope that Cambodia will be a muse and inspire his next novel or play. However, to do so also aligns Stephen with an aspect of imperialism which has been well documented: how “global politics, the dance of colonizer and colonized, becomes sexual politics, the dance of male and female” (Torgovnick 17). There have been many book-length studies done of the literal, metaphorical, and symbolic role of women in/and colonialism. As Gikandi points out, “More attuned to the slippages in the categories that

defined colonial culture, women and colonial subjects existed both inside and outside Englishness, committed to ideas of the dominant culture but also aware of their tenuous emplacement in it" (228). Women were "other" in ways similar to the colonized other: "As figures of difference, women are connected with sexual insatiability, class instability, natives, the colonized, and the potentially threatening, unassimilable other" (Brown 19). In *Domestic Fictions*, Nancy Armstrong shows how it can be seen in nineteenth-century literature that "the female was the figure, above all else, on whom depended the outcome of the struggle among competing ideologies" (5); and in *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock focuses on the ideology of imperialism in particular and how "gender dynamics were, from the outset, fundamental to the securing and maintenance of the imperial enterprise" (7). Jenny Sharpe shows how English women were the "absent center around which a colonial discourse of rape, race and gender turns" (8). Partha Chatterjee concentrates on Indian women and how they were used as the battleground by both English and Indian men. He explains that "By assuming a position of sympathy with the unfree and oppressed womanhood of India, the colonial mind was able to transform this figure of the Indian woman into a sign of the inherently oppressive and unfree nature of the entire cultural tradition of a country" (118). Using Indian women, the English often tried to disguise imperialism under the improbable cloak of chivalry. "[W]omen become the proxies for men, object and agent of accumulation are reversed, and thus the female figure is made to bear responsibility for empire" (Brown 16). Imperialism's use of the female figure is not one that Drabble ignores. She has two formidable strategies for portraying this women/empire nexus in postimperial times: Miss Porntip and menstruation.

Margaret Drabble, too, creates a female figure that is a symbol of the East, but this figure—Miss Porn-tip—is nobody’s proxy. Miss Porn-tip is very much the new East, the postimperial East—she is an East that leaves the West in the dust. Fittingly, Miss Porn-tip first appears in *The Gates of Ivory* once Stephen Cox has boarded the plane that will begin his passage to Cambodia. His plane is about to take off—indeed, it is ferrying to the runway—when Miss Porn-tip appears, “invading and claiming his space” (40). East invades West: right away we know that Stephen’s passage will be an altogether different beast from E. M. Forster’s. Stephen, always somewhat nostalgic when it comes to the relations between East and West, immediately eroticizes Miss Porn-tip in the traditional way. In his mind, he calls her “Lust,” and “Lust” or “Petite Lust” is what she is called until she finally introduces herself, at the end of the in-flight dinner (41). Giving her the once-over, what Stephen sees in her is what he needs to see—what to him makes up her otherness: her many jewels, her lizard-skin shoes, her tininess, her musk. When they begin to converse, however, Miss Porn-tip does not hesitate to whip the rug out from underneath Stephen’s imperial clichés. She points out that Stephen’s travels are a bit displaced, since Indochina “Is not for the English. English did not fight there. No English missing soldiers to collect” (42). Stephen reveals that he is a writer and is going to stay in a hotel that was once great but has since become shabby. Miss Porn-tip “treated his remark with the contempt it deserved” (42); a representative of the new East, she will not romanticize the past.

Miss Porn-tip thrives in the new global cultural economy, and once she and Stephen land in Bangkok, in a reversal of the imperial roles, *she* becomes *his* caretaker. Stephen soon realizes that she is “a woman of the world,” and it is a world where both

East and West intersect. She is known and recognized in the Western-style hotels in Bangkok, as well as in small Thai restaurants that they reach only after traversing “dark narrow streets” and “a backwater, a hidden way, a secret canal” (55). At this restaurant, a place which Stephen cannot even discern whether it is inside or out, Miss Pornpip orders the food, and Miss Pornpip has already arranged the bill. They share backgrounds, but Miss Pornpip will not let herself be used as fodder for Stephen’s writing—she insists that the exchange be equal: “‘Is my life first, then yours,’ she says” (56). Whereas thus far in Drabble’s trilogy, the story of her English characters has included some kind of resistance or reluctance to acclimate to the new world order, Miss Pornpip’s story is one of gradual triumph and thrive. After she hears Stephen’s story, Miss Pornpip proclaims that “‘Britain is poor country,’ she informs him. ‘Post-industrial country. You import from Japan, from Korea, from Thailand. You no more manufacturing. You cooling, we heating. You protectionist now. You senile now’” (61). And later, “‘You conserve, you in old country,’ she tells him. ‘We make money. Is our turn now’” (79). As a “New Woman of the East,” Miss Pornpip makes it clear that her story is of the present and future, and not of the past:

‘We make new history,’ she tells him, grandly. ‘In old days, was only one story for woman in Thailand. Is called Village Maiden to Beauty Queen. Sometimes tragedy story, sad lover lost, massage parlour, ruin, return to village, sometimes ill, sometimes crippled, sometimes disgrace.... Other story, same story, but happy story. Beauty Queen, much riches, fame, glory, TV-star, Hollywood, bridal Western style with seven-tier cake and white icing. Now is new story. Now is success story of the woman, the independence of the woman. Is New Plot’ (79)

Although a champion of the new global cultural economy, Miss Pornpip is not necessarily portrayed as a champion in general. As Karen Knutsen has pointed out, Miss Pornpip is a cheerleader for and a major player of the capitalist game, in ways that one

cannot help but be wary of. Stephen becomes disenchanted with this side of Miss Porntip, for reasons that are politically complicated. He considers himself to be rather leftist, and thus is often frustrated by Miss Porntip's business bent—her vast economic empire, and her vast collection of and obsession with gems. Much of his frustration, however, also seems to originate from the old-fashioned impetus of his passage East: Stephen is very much in the East as Orientalist. He wants to look around and see a Conrad landscape—and thus does not appreciate the scoffing he receives from Miss Porntip when he tries to view her world through such dated lenses. He becomes friends with Konstantin—a young man originally from England who knows Indochina in the way that Kipling's Kim knew India. He “maps” the East by photographing it, often selling his photos to *National Geographic*-type magazines. Konstantin “seems to be a holy innocent, without side or guile. People gaze without fear into his lens and speak secrets to his receiving ear. Unlike Miss Porntip, he is a good listener” (97). Miss Porntip does not like that she is losing Stephen (the lover she has added to her list as the British Novelist) to Konstantin. “She appeals to his better nature by demanding English lessons,” but when Stephen teaches her English by having her read Conrad, Miss Porntip protests that “Conrad is racist sexist swine...aligning herself firmly and problematically with Chinua Achebe and other literary intellectuals” (100).

Stephen finally decides to leave Bangkok and proceed to Cambodia with Konstantin. In the final argument he has with Miss Porntip, Stephen reveals how he has been traumatized by the new world order. Tellingly, he agonizes:

‘I can't stick it all together,’ he said. ‘Sex, politics, the past, myself. I am all in pieces...the gaps are so *great*. I am hardly made of the same human stuff. The same human matter. There is no consistency in me. No glue.

No paste. I have no cohesion. I make no sense. I am a vacuum. I am fragments. I am morsels...I seek simplicity. (105)

Ever intelligent, Miss Porntip is able to identify the subtext underneath his text: she sees he is traumatized about the past-ness of the past. She tries to help him, by saying:

'Is no simplicity. Is only way onwards. Is no way back to village. No way back to childhood. Is finished, all finished. All over world, village is finished. English village, Thai village, African village. Is burned, is chopped, is washed away. Is no way backwards. Water find level. Is no way back.' (105)

Stephen is not appeased: "But it is heart-rending, heart-rending... All this waste. All this wasted possibility. All this suffering. All these dreams. All this cruelty. All these dead'" (105-6). Miss Porntip continues to argue the new world, but in the midst of an old-world passage, Stephen cannot remain in Miss Porntip's "New Plot".

Whereas Stephen could not believe in Miss Porntip's ideology, Liz Headleand at first does not even believe in Miss Porntip. Liz first reads of her in some of the writing fragments that arrive in the mysterious packet of Stephen's miscellany. Hattie Osborne, who finds the first reference to her in Stephen's writings, thinks she must be "some kind of erotic fantasy of poor old Stephen's" (48). When Hattie and Liz have gathered friends to try to help them figure out a plan of action for finding Stephen, Hattie mentions Miss Porntip, and all who are there "laugh merrily at the notion of Miss Porntip, and decide that with a name like that she cannot but be a figment of the imagination. A fiction, a bad joke. Had Stephen not realized that foreigners were no longer funny, that racial stereotypes were out?" (269-70). Yet when Liz makes her own passage East to find the missing Stephen, she, too, is taken under the wing of Miss Porntip, and proves to be an easier convert. Unable to withstand the commands and entreaties of Miss Porntip, Liz finds herself agreeing to go shopping for gems and jewels —Miss Porntip's favorite

hobby. The shopping excursion reads like the stereotypical engagement ring-buying scenario: Miss Porntip is the fiancé to Liz's fiancée—"by the time she [Liz] tried on her seventh jewel, she was hooked" (370). But Miss Porntip is of course about more than bejeweled decoration: her influence is also more worldly. It is only with Miss Porntip's much-appreciated help that Liz is able to attain the visas necessary for her to travel to Saigon and Cambodia to continue the search for Stephen. Liz and Miss Porntip collaborate, and "Miss Porntip works wonders. Doors open for her, men in uniform leap to attention, documents write themselves for her in magic ink" (375). With Miss Porntip, Drabble has created a female figure who is a symbol of postimperial times; she is not the old link between East and West, but a hybrid who at Concorde-speed easily navigates—and finds nothing disjunctive about—the new global cultural flows.

With Miss Porntip, Drabble creates a postimperial woman for the postimperial world; however, she has an additional strategy for updating the woman/empire nexus, one in which she embraces—yet reclaims—the old connection. Previously, as we have seen, women were often just the battleground—the third point of a homosocial triangle—used for the power struggle between colonizer and colonized men. As part of her reclamation project, Drabble, too, uses women—but does so differently from how women were represented during imperial times: instead of using the female body in terms of its interest to men, Drabble uses the female body in terms of its everyday life concerns of women, themselves. In *The Gates of Ivory*, the female body bleeds.

To begin with, Drabble's inclusion in *The Gates of Ivory* of many references to, and discussions of, menstruation is itself unusual and thus a call for interpretation. These references range from the casual aside—Miss Porntip has "plans to launch a new Asian

mini-tampon” (79)—to the more direct and detailed account: Mme Akrun thinks of how she had to deal with menstruation while on the run from Poi Pot. She thinks of the irony that “Here, ten years later, in the camps, sanitary protection of a sort is once more available, but she had no longer any need of it. She stopped menstruating prematurely, at the age of thirty-nine. Her daughter Sok Sita has never started” (153-4). After all the trauma experienced in Cambodia, many women, in an act presented rather like a rebellion, “choose to cease to menstruate” (153). Hattie Osborne runs into an acquaintance of hers in the tampax aisle of her local market; her loquacious acquaintance, Polly Piper, informs Hattie that she’s left her old job “and had taken up a career in sanitary protection” (155). The references continue: menstruation is mentioned in many of the quoted passages that are copied in Stephen’s hand and sent in the mysterious package to Liz. One is a quote from a Vietnamese author who mentions what his sisters had to do while both menstruating and hiding during a bombing raid. Another is a quote from a nurse working in Viet Nam which begins: “Every nurse’s fear was being taken prisoner and not having any Tampax. You couldn’t count on being in the jungle and using a leaf, because the jungle was defoliated.... We packed money, a camera, and we packed Tampax. My flak jacket was so full of Tampax that nothing could have penetrated it” (159). Here menstruation is both an anxiety and a protection; at any rate, it is a real—and not merely symbolic —anxiety and issue that real women had to deal with throughout the times when empires shifted and warred.

Drabble’s most interesting tactic regarding menstruation concerns her main character, Liz Headleand. At the time that Liz makes her passage to the East to search for Stephen Cox, she is in her early fifties and “has not menstruated for nearly five

months, and for three years before that only intermittently” (376). In England, she is menopausal. In the East, however—the destination of so many English before her, who made the passage hoping to find the Orient as stereotypically sensual and lush and “other” as they had heard—Liz becomes fertile again. Liz is “appalled” and unprepared. She thinks, “She had assumed all that was over and done with. Why now?” (376). Why indeed? The answer can be found both in how Drabble is using the symbols of the female figure specifically differently to coincide with the differences of the postimperial times, and also, perhaps, as Liz’s physical response to the cultural traumatic neuroses over the dissolution of empire and England’s changed, “over the hill,” state. Liz’s passage East temporarily rejuvenates her—the overt war scars of the East begin the healing process of the more covert empire scars of the West. At any rate, this may all be well and true, but Liz has a real problem on her hands. She is in Hanoi, does not speak the language, and is temporarily without the resources and help of Miss Pornpip. Liz searches through her huge handbag, and after taking all the legions of clowns out of the compact car, she finds “two Tampax and one little pink-packed plastic-backed Sanipad,” squashed and rather the worse for their long sojourn in the handbag (379).

Liz continues on with her plans, which consist of meeting with various officials to try to find out how to go about tracing Stephen’s steps. Liz, however is “worrying not about death but about leakage”:

She cannot take in what is said to her, she cannot follow her interpreter. She is bleeding.... The entire male world of communism, Marxist-Leninism, inflation, American imperialism, rice production, exchange mechanisms, statistics, hostages, the CIA, the SAS and the KGB, the Chinese, the KPRLF, Sihanouk, and Hun Sen, war, death, and Ho’s marble mausoleum dissolve and fade before the bleeding root of her body, impaled on its grey-white stump. Woman-being, woman-life, possess her entirely. Shames and humiliations, triumphs and glories, birth and blood.

Let armies fight and die, let peoples starve. She hopes that the seat of her skirt will not be stained when she rises. (379)

The shift has been made from the symbolic woman to the personal. This personal moment is also the impetus for a turmoil through which Liz will have to struggle to come out alive; and the struggle itself becomes emblematic of the cultural trauma being suffered over the loss of imperial identity. Liz begins to feel ill and suspects that she has toxic shock from the old tampons she used. This “shock”—which is, when used in another sense, the cause of a traumatic neurosis—causes Liz to be hospitalized and to go through a period of delirium during which she dreams and hallucinates images of war and empire. She dreams of “the Belgian Congo and a tally of severed arms. She dreams of babies born without arms or eyes, victims of Agent Orange. She dreams atrocities...*tableaux vivants* of death from the dark places of history” (408-9).

In the midst of her nightmares, Liz thinks of how she is “afflicted with one of the most new-fangled of feminist disorders, while Stephen Cox has died in a field hospital of old-fashioned malaria or dengue” (400). This is fitting: Stephen’s passage East was in the old style; Liz’s is something different. While in the hospital, Liz receives many visitors whom she has met during her passage. These visitors seem compelled to tell Liz their life stories. As a psychiatrist, Liz is used to this, but she does find the timing of it strange. She wonders, “Is her professional identity so powerful that people will struggle to tell her their secrets even as she lies dying? Do they wish to transmit their messages through her to the other world?” (402). Liz is bearing witness to the woe caused by empire; she is hearing the testimony and, as hearer and witness, “is the vehicle of an occurrence, a reality, a stance or a dimension *beyond [her]self*” (Felman 3). This testimony, along with Liz’s dreams, will bring her through her crisis of empire. Felman

inquires, “Is the testimony, therefore, a simple medium of historical transmission, or is it, in obscure ways, the unsuspected medium of a healing?” (9); here, Drabble shows that it is both.

After bearing witness to a testimony, Liz is “brought back into significance” by her ex-husband Charles Headleand—who throughout the trilogy has functioned as a representative of England. “Charles brings her news from England,” and it is this news and gossip that heals Liz. Drabble writes that “Liz listens to this harmless gossip with rapture. How good to know that the Old Country still ticks over as it always did! She is particularly interested in the luncheon with the Queen” (411). Liz is not Miss Porntip, and is not a creature of the new: she finds solace in the old trappings of empire. However, Drabble makes it clear that the next generation will adapt even further, and then the next after that. For once Liz and Charles are safely on the plane home, they begin to talk about their son Aaron, and his news that Hattie Osborne is pregnant with their grandchild. Drabble moves on, then, to one of Hattie’s first-person narratives. Liz might be returning to an older England, but the future resides with Hattie, her forthright voice, and her new Headleand child. Hattie ends this monologue—her last of the novel—with “Rum business, really. Women’s lives. Eggs, blood and the moon...” (416). In postimperial literature, Drabble has a different use for “Women’s lives”.

Literature

“Look, I just sort of assume that you know all about Conrad, that you know a damn sight more about him than I do, because I can’t bear to spell it all out, right? Short cuts, right? You with me so far?” -- Hattie Osborne

It becomes quite clear, in *The Gates of Ivory*, that Drabble is aware of—and emphasizing— literature’s role in the production of empire. Regarding the abundance of nostalgia for the imperial past in the literature of today, Drabble has queried, “But who, one begins to wonder, is tackling the present? Have we abandoned it, despaired of it?” (*Threepenny* 23). I have shown above how depicting the “present” is a main goal of Drabble’s trilogy; now I want to concentrate on how Drabble emphasizes the complicity of literature and empire by first connecting *The Gates of Ivory* to the English literature that produced empire, and then by making her novel interact with empire’s remains. That Drabble means to explore the role of literature is evident right from the start of the trilogy, with her choice of the title of the first novel, *The Radiant Way*. *The Radiant Way* is England’s version of *Dick and Jane*—the primer used by children to learn how to read. It is also chosen ironically, by Liz’s (almost ex-) husband Charles Headleand, as the title for his television series in the sixties, a series “that demonstrated, eloquently, movingly, the evils that flow from a divisive class system, from early selection, from Britain’s unfortunate heritage of public schools and philistinism” (165). Charles’s series showed how the path leading out from literacy was more often than not the opposite of “radiant,” and Drabble parallels this fictional series by showing in her novel how England as a nation is not spectacularly backlit, so to speak, the sun having set on its imperial “splendor”. No matter the ultimate destination of the way: Drabble places emphasis on reading as the map.

As the significance of empire’s decline is brooded upon more openly in *A Natural Curiosity*, so is literature’s involvement. Alix, who divides most of her time in this novel helping out an old modernist poet and visiting in jail the murderer, Paul Whitmore, thinks

that “Maybe the teaching of the classics teaches us monstrosities rather than balance, wisdom, stoicism, reason” (167). Stephen Cox reveals that one of the facts that initiated his interest in Pol Pot was that Pol Pot’s wife and another woman high up in the Khmer Rouge leadership circles “studied English literature at the Sorbonne. Imagine, Stephen had said. Imagine them, discussing *The Mill on the Floss. Or Cranford*” (172-3). And Charles Headleand, traveling to Baldai to try to rescue a kidnapped journalist friend, stays with an ex-diplomat there, who “used to be out here with the British Council, and when they withdrew their presence he stayed on and privatized himself. He’s gone a bit native” (234); yet we discover that, perhaps in contrast to Conrad’s Kurtz, “going native” for this twentieth century diplomat means teaching English novels, and writing one himself. With such moments, then, in these first two novels, Drabble prepares the reader for the spotlight she will shine on literature in *The Gates of Ivory*.

Drabble connects *The Gates of Ivory* to both the overtly imperial British literary tradition, such as the novels of Conrad, as well as to novels like Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, where empire’s role in the English everyday is more subtly portrayed. As Roberta Rubenstein and Pamela Bromberg have shown in their essays, Liz Headleand is clearly drawn as the next generation’s Clarissa Dalloway. When *The Radiant Way* begins, Liz is preparing for her big New Year’s Eve party, in fine Clarissa tradition. As she dresses and puts on makeup, she sets the scene of the novel by introducing us to the main characters in her past and present, and at the end of the section, like Clarissa, we see Liz as “down the wide staircase she goes” to check on Deirdre in the kitchen (in the 1980’s a caterer, not a maid), and her husband drinking gin with the men. Drabble ends the trilogy as it began—with another of Liz’s parties. In contrast to her first party’s celebration of the

beginning of a new decade, this party is a memorial to the presumed death of Stephen Cox. Liz experiences the ups and downs of hostessing, as did Clarissa. At the beginning of the party we see Liz worrying whether the whole idea was not just a “godawful mistake,” yet by the end she “looks around her with pride and satisfaction. It has all gone off very well. She should give parties more often” (458), and “It had been, she considers, a triumph, of its kind” (461). There are also details added which make Liz’s party very much a party of the postimperial era. There has been an accident on one of the main highways, which causes many of the guests to be late. Drabble writes: “For this is one of those days, long awaited and by some gleefully predicted, when it seems that the whole system will break down. (And if the traffic can, why not finance, why not money markets, why not the machinery of the whole world?)” (446). Instead of just the personal worries of Clarissa, we are presented with the anxieties of a culture— anxieties over the new global cultural economy. In addition, Stephen Cox, who plays the Septimus Warren Smith role here, is the acknowledged “point” or impetus of the party, and not just a shadow double: where Septimus was suffering from shell shock as a result of the clashing of empires, Stephen—as a representative of his generation and how it is brought face to face with empire’s remains— sought out such chaos. Where Clarissa alone had to come to terms with the effect that Septimus’s death had on her—“He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun” (*MD* 186)—Stephen has an effect on all of the party-goers: “Stephen has reinforced their identities. They hold out their glasses for more wine” (446).

Drabble does not just reserve her Woolf parallels for Liz’s parties: throughout all three novels she continually aligns her women characters to Woolf’s. In *The Radiant*

Way, when Alix has just been to visit the creatively decorated squatter apartment in which her son and his significant other live, Drabble writes, “Domestic art, easel art—she thought of these contrasts, and of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell, as she descended the stairs” (228). Liz Headleand is a psychiatrist, which is reminiscent of Clarissa’s informal interactions with people and how she thinks of “a woman confessing, as to her they often did, some scrape, some folly” (*Mrs Dalloway* 32). In one instance Drabble portrays Esther Breuer, an art historian, as a kind of Lily Briscoe figure; when Esther tries to paint, her “hand trembled. How dare she speak of the paintings of others, when her own hand would not obey her? How timid her life had been, how unadventurous! She boldly swept an arc of emerald across the acid-free paper” (299). In her essay, “Margaret Drabble’s *The Radiant Way*: Feminist Metafiction,” Pamela Bromberg claims that the postmodern thematic of *The Radiant Way* itself, with its portrayal of the interconnectedness of three female characters, is “the story begun by Woolf in *A Room of One’s Own* with the utterly new glimpse of Chloe and Olivia, working together in their lab and liking each other” (9). Drabble’s characters are consciously Woolf’s characters, a couple of generations down the road.

Besides the Woolf parallels mentioned above, and the role that Conrad and Forster play, which I will mention below, Drabble fills *The Gates of Ivory* with literary references, writing of and quoting Mill, Proust, Shakespeare, Dickens, Dostoevsky, Rimbaud, Coleridge, Malraux, Greene, Auden, Mann, Maugham, and many others. Karen Knutsen writes that “Throughout *The Gates of Ivory* Drabble scrutinizes and questions metanarratives that, to a large extent, have become indelible parts of Western culture, thus reinforcing the culture that has created them” (580). However, Drabble is

not so much “reinforcing” Western culture as she is drawing attention to how Western literature has played a role in “reinforcing” Western culture. Although ultimately all serving to remind the reader of the complicity between literature and empire, these references function in a variety of ways. For example, Stephen carries a quotation from John Stuart Mill in his wallet, which points out some of the inadequacies and inequalities of England (83). Stephen is also a big fan of Rimbaud’s and during his travels often makes comparisons to Rimbaud’s travels. He “thinks of Malraux and Rimbaud. Men of letters playing at being men of action” (165), and worries that he will meet with some of their same pitfalls. Fittingly, when Stephen speaks of Rimbaud to friends who are younger than he—who are of the next generation—they confuse Rimbaud with Rambo. Drabble writes that “They unravel the misunderstanding, and speak of fame and the global village. Rimbaud, Rambo, myth-makers both. Which of them will live on beyond the millennium?” (163). Stephen’s literary touchstones—like his passage—are old-school, yet Drabble’s use of them signals a more contemporary awareness. As Rubenstein writes, Drabble’s “literary references signal her revisionist argument with previously canonized Western texts in the glare of postcolonial awareness of global complexity—a world that can be neither understood nor represented through a single moral code or vision” (145-6).

One of Margaret Drabble’s favorite ways to remind her readers that she is working within a specific literature/empire nexus is to include brief sentences such as, “They stand where Conrad stood” (55) and “This is the gorgeous East. Conrad was here” (47). Her characters often tread the same route as Conrad and his characters—yet Drabble herself does not. By making each of her characters have quite different reactions

to Conrad's works, Drabble paints an arc of opinion that traverses the same route of thought necessary to come to terms with England's postimperial state. Stephen and Liz have different responses to Conrad's novels, and their responses to Conrad are indicative of what they need from the East; furthermore, the critiques of Conrad voiced by Liz's stepson, Alan, and Hattie Osborne are evidence of how the next generation is a step removed from the trauma of empire's demise.

Stephen Cox loves Conrad. He travels to the East because Conrad did: he is in search of the old-fashioned Eastern adventure; once he has experienced it, Stephen plans to turn his trip into a Conradian yarn. Drabble writes of how much Stephen admires Conrad, and that "Stephen, like Conrad, had nourished his boyhood dreams with travel books, with Mungo Park and Marco Polo and Captain Cook and Pierre Loti and Gide in the Congo. Dreams of escape, dreams of distance. He had wanted to see, before he died, the whole wide world" (45). Conrad is not "just" a fellow novelist; instead, he represents a way of life—which Stephen envies and tries to emulate, even though Conrad's world has passed. It is Stephen who, as he travels, thinks of how "Conrad was here." When he helps Miss Porntip with her English, Stephen has her read Conrad novels for practice. When Stephen is on his trek into Khmer Rouge country—a trek from which he will not emerge alive—he thinks of his journey in terms of the *Heart of Darkness*. Despite being politically left, Stephen parallels his journey to Conrad's without irony, and in a near-death epiphany he "feels an intense happiness. It is a vision, and he has seen it. It is the heart of darkness, it is the heart of light. It is beyond irony and beyond parody. It is doomed, but he has seen it" (367). Although aware of its futility, Stephen insists on searching for Conrad's ghost.

Liz, on the other hand, is not a member of the Conrad fanclub. Liz knows enough about Conrad to recognize the allusions to him in Stephen's writing, but she does not at all share Stephen's enthusiasm. When Drabble has Liz read a fragment of writing sent to her in the packet of Stephen's, she writes, "It continued in portentous but lyrical style for a page or two, describing an oriental landscape, a broad river, and a young man on a boat traveling upstream into the heart, she supposed, of darkness. Liz found it rather boring, though she did not like to say so, even to herself" (18). Liz is not compelled by such Conradian parallels. As Liz becomes more and more involved with the mystery of Stephen's disappearance, she becomes more vocal about her Conrad aversion: "'I hate Conrad,' says Liz, with some exaggeration.... Liz then asserts that she cannot face rereading the whole of Conrad just to see what Stephen had on his mind while he was writing his diary" (146-7). Yet as the novel progresses, this is exactly what Liz finds herself doing. And as Drabble has Liz read, she makes her a more postimperial reader of Conrad than Stephen is. Liz recognizes Conrad's racism and finds that "the violence both of the language and the action is extreme. How can the gentle Stephen have admired this sort of stuff?" (238). Liz's opinion of Conrad is the middle opinion, falling in between the admiration of Stephen and the dismissal of Alan and Hattie. She will not enjoy Conrad, but she will read him. Drabble explains:

She is forcing herself to read Conrad's *Victory*. ¶It would not be fair to say that she is hating every word of it, but she is not deriving much pleasure from it either. She has never liked Conrad. Twice she has made herself read *Heart of Darkness*, and she still has no idea, on the simplest level, of its plot. What actually *happens* in it? Who is going where, and why? She never discovered. (237)

When Liz meets up with Miss Pornpip during her search for Stephen, they think of the passage East of the male authors: "They have all been out there—Conrad, Somerset

Maugham, Paul Theroux, William Golding. They have ventured into the dark spaces of the globe and the white tracts of the heart, and returned to this triumph. So it goes” (349). With that “So it goes,” Drabble makes it quite clear that neither Liz nor Miss Porntip are included. They might search out the details of such passages, but they will not be compelled to enact the same.

When Hattie, an ex-actress, thinks of Conrad, she thinks of the movies made of his works, or the movies that *could* be made and have not yet. She knows that *Victory* has not been made into a movie yet (though she thinks it would make a “bloody good movie”), and is aware that *Lord Jim* was filmed in Angkor Wat (310). Drabble makes Alan Headleand’s opinions of Conrad a product of the times in which Alan grew up. She writes that

Alan, an enlightened child of his enlightened, post-modern, relativist times, does not believe that primitive man is full of unmitigated savagery. He does not hold with descriptions of things that are vague, uncontrollable and repulsive. He does not believe that the dark-skinned races are by nature more savage than any others. He suspects Conrad of racism. (174)

Alan is a scholar and is willing to study Conrad’s novels, as well as analyze and deconstruct them. However, to Alan, Conrad’s novels are more of a historical curio than a way of life. Reading *Victory* or *Heart of Darkness* is not going to compel Alan East.

In a speech she gave to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Margaret Drabble proclaimed, “I do myself see it as the artist’s duty to confront the way we live now and to avoid the deceptions of the tourist brochure” (23), and in her trilogy she succeeds on both counts. When she has first Stephen and then Liz travel to Cambodia, their journeys are not for the purpose of spicy foods and relaxation in an exotic locale. Instead, Drabble carefully connects the trips to the literary tradition of the imperial

“passage” East, yet because these are postimperial times and she wants to “confront the way we live now,” the realizations and epiphanies of Stephen and Liz while in Cambodia are such that enable them to better understand and come to terms with their role as citizens of England, now a postimperial nation.

Although Conrad is mentioned throughout *The Gates of Ivory*, Kurtz is not Stephen’s only literary forebear: there is an underlying Forster element to Stephen’s passage East, so that whereas he ends up, perhaps, a Kurtz, he begins an Adela Quested. If Conrad works as the 1857 Mutiny in this text, then Forster is the Jallianwala Bagh, with the end of the kind of passage East represented in his novels more what Stephen seems to be unconsciously mourning. Stephen never mentions Forster—it is Conrad whom he tries to emulate—yet his reactions in moments of crisis are voiced in Forster’s terms. He hears the “boum boum” which was the sound of nothingness confronting Adela in the Marabar Caves; and although lying sick in the jungle, his experiences are aligned with Adela’s when he thinks, “Why try to describe the real thing? It was not even very real. It was a shadow of a shadow on the wall of a cave” (356). Drabble has Stephen describe himself as an “*old-fashioned* book person,” and his passage East reflects this. In a postmodern way, however, Stephen is aware of his anachronisms. While at a border camp waiting to begin his journey into Cambodia, Stephen looks around at his various fellow-travelers and thinks, “Were they out of step with their age, all of them, a ragged hangover from the past, emotional cripples, nostalgic dreamers of dreams, born out of their true time?... Have they been unable to adapt to the eighties?” (124). Drabble writes that “Stephen Cox hangs between two worlds. He is a go-

between” (275); yet Stephen also seems to “hang” between two eras, the imperial and postimperial.

In *The Radiant Way*, Stephen Cox appears several times as a minor character, who is friends with Liz and Alix and is working on a play about Pol Pot. Towards the end of the novel, Drabble writes— seemingly in passing—that “Stephen Cox has gone to Kampuchea. Alix hopes he is all right” (372). In *A Natural Curiosity* Liz mentions Stephen every now and then to wonder what has happened to him, for his postcards have trailed off. She tells a friend about him and tries to explain why he chose to travel to Cambodia, first mentioning inspiration for a play, yet then falling back on “The fatal curiosity. That’s what he said it was.... I think he wanted to see if the atrocity stories were true. To see for himself” (172). In *The Gates of Ivory*, Stephen often elaborates on his reasons for his passage East. In *Testimony*, Shoshana Felman writes that what is surprising is “the witness’s readiness, precisely, to *pursue the accident*, to actively pursue its path and its direction, without quite grasping the full scope and meaning of its implications, without entirely foreseeing where the journey leads and what is the precise nature of its final destination” (24). This is what Stephen seems to be doing; for although there are personal reasons—such as artistic inspiration—among his reasons for going, his explanations always circle back to being a witness for the death of a nation. Witnessing this occurrence in Cambodia will enable Stephen to understand the changes undergone in his own country; it all comes back to nation. Stephen’s friends seem to realize that the reasons for his passage lie underneath the stated reasons of artistic inspiration. Alix’s husband, Brian, thinks that Stephen “had thought the Orient might jog his failing creative powers, as Rome had jogged Goethe’s. And the Cambodian theme was a grand one. The

death of a nation, the death of communism, the death of hope. It had not yet been written to death" (16), and thus has not yet been known. It still is a place where "knowing and not knowing intersect" (Caruth 3). Stephen's fellow traveler, Akira, "defines Stephen as a man who has for ever lost his faith, who has come here to the graveyard of his own past" (229). And Stephen himself thinks at one point that "it was not the Fighting Men, nor the tanks and trucks of the Fighting Men, nor the Death of Communism, nor even the colonnades of Angkor or Angkar that he had come to find, but the forest itself" (276). He is reverting back to a "heart of darkness" mode and the initial meeting between the East and a powerful West.

When Stephen is on the plane about to take off on his journey East, he hears an announcement that the pilot of the plane is a "Commandant Parodi"; Drabble writes that "Stephen was pleased by this. Who better to fly one into the unknown? We live in the age of parody, reflected Stephen" (40), and there is an element of parody which hovers around Stephen's journey throughout, for he is very much on a quest with no destination, no consistently articulated point. As we have seen, Stephen spends some time in Bangkok with Miss Porn-tip, before moving on to Saigon and then across the border into Cambodia with Konstantin and Akira. After a few days of journeying into Cambodia, they meet up with some Khmer Rouge militia, who shoot Akira and then bring Stephen, who is now quite ill, and Konstantin to a hill village. The soldiers leave, as, eventually, does Konstantin, but Stephen is now in a life and death struggle with malaria. He is delirious and hallucinates, and experiences these hallucinations as epiphanies regarding his passage East. Although seemingly satisfactory to himself, Stephen's epiphanies do not make much sense to the reader, or even, perhaps, to Drabble. Stephen thinks that

“even as he lay there, he felt a small pride in having got to the other side. It was an end in itself” (355). This “other side” is vaguely constructed: it is unclear whether it is the other side of life, the other side of the world, or the other side of an obstacle in Stephen’s thinking. Drabble questions, “So, is he any the wiser now than he had been then, in that suburban drawing room? Has he learned anything about the lost years of this country?” (365). Because his passage seemed to be an anachronism in the first place, any answers he might discover do not match up with the questions asked.

However, it is important to note that the language Stephen uses in his epiphany is literary; his realizations occur to him via how his experiences relate to the experiences he has read about in novels. For instance, when he is lying sick and “breathing laboriously,” he thinks of “those French writers of his youth” and how “They had brought him to this pass. They had inspired him, and now they withdrew their breath” (365). The writers were the impetus for Stephen’s journey, yet what he has discovered is not what they portrayed. What is made clear to him is the commodity aspect of books and writing. He thinks of how “Gide had sold the Congo. Malraux had sold the spoils of Angkor. This was what writers did. They seemed to purvey messages, but in truth they sold commodities. Art was nothing but a trading speculation” (357). Stephen, a Booker prize-winning author, feels complicit in this relation between novels and the world. He thinks, “Could it be that he had written all those books, had turned out those crude pseudonymous action-packed thrillers, those fastidious teasing tableaux of historical pastiche? He cannot do it any more. The gods have left him” (362). Stephen was an “old school” writer, his passage East was an “old school” passage, and with this realization he is left in a kind of limbo in a small hill village in Cambodia. He is pleased

to be out of the global cultural economy and is proud that “One thing at least he had achieved: a world without money. It is a small triumph” (363). This is not Stephen’s world, however, and the small hill village of the East regurgitates Stephen back into the West, into a clinic run by Western-trained doctors. The reader last witnesses Stephen alive as he is setting off on a forced passage back to the West. Liz later hears secondhand of the account of the Doctor who cared for Stephen at the clinic, where he died of malaria and infection. The Doctor relates in broken English: “Very nice man. Good discussions. History, politics, democracy. Very sad” (393). The meaning of Stephen’s passage is here reduced to three words.

The reaction of Stephen’s friends to his passage East is revealing. To begin with, it takes a long time for his friends to realize how long it has been since they last heard from him. When the novel begins and Liz has just received the mysterious package of Stephen’s writings, “Neither Liz nor Alix found it easy to remember exactly when Stephen had departed” (11). Despite the contemporary global cultural flows between the East and the West, Stephen’s passage—with its old-fashioned intents—seems removed from the current. Upon receiving the packet, Stephen’s journey threatens those at home back in London. His passage East brings the East to them, but in a reverse kind of way; they are not mapping the East, but being pulled into it. Drabble writes,

But from now onwards their lives are and will be different. Stephen has altered them. He has posted Cambodia to them, and now its messages are everywhere. Like a cancer, like the Big C itself, it spreads. They may not yet have caught the disease, but their cells are predisposed to receive it. They seem to hear the mysteriously self-transforming name of Cambodia-Kampuchea-Kambuja-Cambodge wherever they go. (65)

Stephen’s passage is unsettling in ways that are indicative of the nature of the postimperial times—the easy permeability between “Good Time and Bad Time”. In the

opening of the novel Drabble writes that “Some cross the bridge into the Bad Time, into the Underworld, and return to tell the tale. Some go deliberately. Some step into Bad Time suddenly. It may be waiting, there, in the next room” (4). Stephen’s passage and disappearance creates an unwanted link between them and “Bad Time.” They are not eagerly anticipating the story of Stephen’s escapades.

After not being able to discover anything about Stephen from London, Liz decides to go look for him in Cambodia, and sets off on her own passage East. Her passage begins like Stephen’s, in that she initially adopts an old-fashioned Orientalist approach. She “tried to do some homework before she set off to the East...so Liz studied books on the history of Cambodia and the Vietnam war and the rise of Pol Pot” (277). She models her itinerary closely after Stephen’s, flying into Bangkok and staying at the same hotel. But at this point, Stephen and Liz’s passages diverge. Where Stephen found himself feeling nostalgic about the colonial past, Liz embraces how Bangkok is now. With the help of Miss Pornpip, she is shown the same Bangkok as Stephen was, yet it is enough for her. Liz does not feel the desire to follow the path of Conrad. Where Stephen had left Miss Pornpip and “set out into the wilderness” to the “Promised Land, from which no traveler returns” (121), Liz acquiesces to Miss Pornpip’s suggestions and goes jewel-shopping with her. When Liz prepares to make an excursion to the Cambodian border, she plays the anti-Great Game and accepts her ignorance:

Liz gives up. She understands nothing. She understands nothing the next day as she does her round of various government offices, collecting pieces of paper covered in a script that means nothing. And, as she sits in the back of a hired car, traveling along the Red Road, she fears that when she finds what she is looking for, she will not understand that either. She may not even recognize it. (332)

It is in doing so that she is ultimately able to achieve the goal of her quest and discover Stephen’s fate. When Liz talks to Mme Akrun at the Border Camp, she knows when to

listen and when to say nothing. And whereas Stephen was an “old-fashioned book person,” Liz reaches her goal via new-fashioned “book” people—a movie crew who, in attempting to film a search for the missing Akira, stumble upon information about Stephen, and decided to film his life instead. Liz meets the film crew at her hotel in Saigon, and by combining their information they are able to piece together the events of Stephen’s final months. As already discussed, Liz suffers from toxic shock and experiences a period of delirium and hallucination that parallels Stephen’s; with her “new-fangled disease” and her modern approach to the East, however, Liz’s passage takes her to a new state of mind from which she will have a clearer view of both the East and, ultimately, England.

Stephen’s old-school Forster/Conrad passage has killed him; Liz’s passage ultimately sends her happily back to England, gossiping with her ex-husband about the Queen; and the representatives of the next generation, such as Hattie, Aaron, and Alan, give no hint of future travels. How enticing, then, can novels about postimperial passages be? When everyone is accustomed to England’s status as a postimperial nation, which direction will the English novel take? In *The Gates of Ivory*, Margaret Drabble reveals some ambivalence about the role of the postimperial novel. Indeed she begins it by calling its novel status into question: “This is a novel—if novel it be--about Good Time and Bad Time” (3). As the novel progresses, then, Drabble portrays the role of literature in equal parts with its traditional role and status on the one hand, and being overtaken by more popular forms of media on the other. Such ambivalence is really an accurate portrayal of the state of the novel today.

When Stephen Cox was in the midst of his delirium in the hill village in Cambodia, and thinking of how his journey originated because of his love for certain novels, Drabble interrupts with a dear reader moment in which she writes, “Beware what you read when young. Beware what you feed upon. It may bring you to this shore, this brink, this bridge” (356). She is emphasizing, in a traditional twentieth-century way, the power of the novel. The novels Stephen read shaped his psyche, and there is no hint at this point that such power of the novel has in any way diminished. However, such moments are usually connected to the characters in *The Gates of Ivory* who are representative of a more imperial mindset. For example, when Stephen stays at the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok, he discovers that there is an author’s lounge where the drinks available are named after famous authors. The Oriental Hotel, however, complete with its significant name, is a place that has remained a kind of monument to when the East was—in Western eyes—the “Orient.” It is a place of nostalgia. When Stephen’s friend, Konstantin, reappears at the end of the novel after having narrowly escaped Stephen’s fate, he is said to be in “a nowhere place. This is the end of the world. This is Paradiso, on the Island of Flores” (422-3). While reading a rarely attainable British newspaper, Konstantin catches the attention of another young Englishman, a sailor named Matt. Matt is working for a rich couple, and helping them to sail around the world on their yacht. He and Konstantin start chatting, and Matt agrees to give Konstantin passage on the yacht, so that Konstantin can make it to an airport in time to fly home for Stephen’s memorial service, which he has just read about in the paper. As they sail, Konstantin tells his guilty story to Matt, relieved to have a witness to his testimony. Once Konstantin is finished, Matt ventures, “I say, my friend,’ he says, and falters,

diffidently” (427). Konstantin thinks that Matt is going to tell him his own sea-story, yet when Matt finally gets up the nerve to speak, he says:

‘I say,’ he pursues, with some embarrassment, ‘you wouldn’t have any books with you, would you? I’m not much of a reading man, but you kind of get driven to it, don’t you? I’ve been right through Bob’s set of *Swallows and Amazons*. You haven’t got a spare paperback to see me on my way? I’d do you a swap. I’ve got a Graham Greene in the cabin. *The Tenth Man*. It’s a bit short, but it’s quite good.’ (427)

For the traveling English, at any rate, literature is still a lingua franca—a currency, of sorts. However, Konstantin and Matt are both throwbacks to another era—they are Kipling and Conrad, still able to be at “the end of the world.”

The other way that Drabble portrays literature in *The Gates of Ivory* is of being overtaken by movies and television. As an author, “Stephen is a member of a threatened species. He is unnecessary” (108). Hattie, a representative of the next generation, is an agent and thus is always looking to buy the movie rights of a book. We’ve seen above that what she knows about Conrad, for instance, is all connected to the movies of his works that have been made or that she thinks possibly could be made. She is nominally Stephen Cox’s agent, and when she hears that he is missing in Cambodia and that he might have been working on a novel while there, she sells herself the rights. She thinks: “And now I began to see real possibilities. English writer disappears into jungle. English writer captured by Pol Pot. English writer turns native in Killing Fields. English leftie forced to eat his own ideology. It had potential, this idea” (247). Fantastic though it may seem—Hattie selling the rights to Stephen’s possible story to herself—she is already too late. For when Liz travels to the East to find Stephen, she meets up with a film crew who are already in the process of filming Stephen’s story. While staying at a hotel in Saigon, Liz, on her way up to her room, passes a woman who she notices is reading a novel of

Stephen's. Later, while having a drink in the hotel lounge, she runs into friend of hers, who, as it turns out, is part of the afore-mentioned film crew. The woman who Liz saw reading Stephen's novel is a part of the film crew, and was reading the novel purely as a means of researching the film project (390). These days, novels are passages into films. Drabble often portrays media folk as the new colonizers of the East. Media employees are the new clientele of the old "Oriental" Hotels. In the new global cultural economy, East and West overlap, but so does fact and fiction. For example:

Stephen Cox meets a Kampuchean refugee who is playing the role of a Kampuchean refugee in an American semi-fictionalized documentary about Kampuchean refugees. He meets extras who have worked on *The Killing Fields*, some of them survivors of the killing fields. He meets a cameraman who worked on *Apocalypse Now*. He meets a man in the Press Club who knows a man who knows Marlon Brando. (103)

Dori Laub, writing of how important it is for a trauma victim to tell her or his story, claims that "Telling thus entails a reassertion of the hegemony of reality and a re-externalization of the evil that affected and contaminated the trauma victim" (69). But what Drabble is portraying so frequently in the media moments of *The Gates of Ivory* is a compulsion to tell and "transmit" someone else's trauma story. Such a vicarious testimony seems to be an example of capitalism spun out of control, as well as a perhaps revealing compulsion that is connected to the change from an imperial to a postimperial world.

As all the scrambling goes on to search for the tenuous existence of Stephen's Cambodia novel, it gradually becomes clear that what Stephen wrote are the fragments and quotations sent in the package to Liz. These are what Stephen has discovered on his passage East: empire's remains. However, Drabble uses these beginnings of stories and moments of observation as a postmodern text around which the text of *The Gates of Ivory*

coalesces. Empire—in its postimperial condition—is the framework upon which her entire novel is based.

At the end of *The Gates of Ivory*, Liz and her friends hold a memorial service for Stephen Cox, which also seems to be, under the surface, a memorial for empire. The readings chosen for the service are a mixture of old and new: Rimbaud—one of Stephen's favorite poets, a poem by a Cambodian poet called "Requiem for a Generation," as well as a few hymns carefully selected by Alix. When the hymn singing begins, Drabble includes a few key verses:

Earth might be fair and all men glad and wise,
Age after age their tragic empires rise,
Built while they dream, and in that dreaming weep

and then interrupts the verse with: "Alix sobs" (438). However, Alix does not think of Stephen and sob, she thinks of empire and sobs. This is the moment of her empire passage which I have quoted earlier, that begins, "Why must it go on for ever and ever, death and destruction, tragic empire after tragic empire" etc. Alix cries for several pages, and she is unsure why, yet her thoughts keep returning to empire. The hymn ends on a note of hope, which Drabble as narrator extends to the world:

'Earth shall be fair, and all her folk be one!' conclude the choir and congregation, with a faltering unpractised note of heartbreaking optimism, extended equally to the toiling billions of China, to the Indian subcontinent, to the Americas, to the fragmenting empire of the Soviet Union, to the Iranians and the Inuit.... (440)

The list goes on, and Alix appears to have worked through her trauma; she "feels a sudden, terrible impatience. What are they *doing* here, in a *church*, for God's sake, at this point in time? Why can't we get on with the *next* thing?" (440). Significantly, Alix

worries, here, that she has been reading too much “popular scientific theory” and that perhaps “Chaos and string have unhinged her mind”; chaos theory is what Appadurai uses to explain the effect that the global cultural economy has on its participants, claiming that the disjunctures he writes of “will have to move into something like a human version of the theory that some scientists are calling ‘chaos’ theory. That is, we will need to ask how these complex, overlapping, fractal shapes constitute not a simple, stable (even if large-scale) system, but to ask what its dynamics are” (20). Drabble’s characters have been performing this question throughout *The Gates of Ivory*, and in this final memorial scene are bidding farewell to both Stephen and an imperial England. At the end of the service, a “pale, Swinburnian young man, theatrically dressed in a suit of the palest grey, with a silver waistcoat embroidered with scarlet dragons”—England marked by the East—arises to sing the final song. Fittingly eunuch-like, this symbol of England is a counter-tenor, and sings his song beautifully, albeit in a sophisticated falsetto. Yet his is not the last word; for after the service comes Liz’s Clarissa Dalloway-esque party, where East and West will continually intersperse. In working through the cultural trauma of the dissolution of empire, Drabble has reached a place where she can mourn properly, and then move on by celebrating England’s new, truly postimperial, passage forward.

CHAPTER V

"THE THEATRE OF WAR" VS. "MEMORIES OF RIOTS" IN TWO NOVELS BY AMITAV GHOSH

"...[N]othing really important ever happens where you are. Nothing really important? I said incredulously. Well of course there are famines and riots and disasters, she said. But those are local things, after all -- not like revolutions or anti-fascist wars, nothing that sets a political example to the world, nothing that's really remembered" (102).

"All riots are terrible, Malik said. But it must have been a local thing. Terrible or not, it's hardly comparable to a war. But don't you remember? I said. Didn't you read about it or hear about it? After all, the war with China didn't happen on your doorstep, but you remember that. Surely you remember -- you must remember?" (216).

When the narrator of Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is eight, his uncle and idol, Tridib, explains to him that "Everyone lives in a story...my grandmother, my father, his father, Lenin, Einstein, and lots of other names I hadn't heard of; they all lived in stories, because stories are all there are to live in, it was just a question of which one you choose" (179). This statement—although in its immediate context meant merely to mollify the narrator—becomes the key which unlocks an important aspect of Ghosh's text: that which shows that to create the story of one's own life is to do so in the midst of a *mélange* of overlapping and contradictory stories of history, literature, nation, and family. As the narrator gets older, however, he realizes that where some stories are concerned, the element of choice is not an option. An avid collector of the life stories of

certain of his family members, the narrator discovers stories with missing parts, stories with loudspeakers, stories that hover like a fog, stories that transcend borders and stories that enforce them, stories he pursues and stories he cannot escape: it gradually becomes clear to the narrator that to successfully navigate one's way in the postcolonial world is to also try to hear the stories that no one has been telling.

In *The Shadow Lines*, filtering stories is very much a postcolonial project. Born in the early fifties, and a member of a middle class, well-educated family, the narrator—his name a part of the story the reader never hears—knows stories of England as well as stories of India. A close friendship had developed between the narrator's family and a British colonial administrator, Lionel Tresawson, and his family. This friendship and connection to England has continued through to the next generation, and its importance is emphasized with the very first sentence of the book: "In 1939, thirteen years before I was born, my father's aunt, Mayadebi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib" (3). The stories of England, which Tridib later tells to the narrator, become practically indistinguishable in the narrator's own mind from events that he has actually experienced or witnessed: they are that real to him. It is no coincidence, either, that Tridib finds himself in an England that is on the verge of a World War; for as I have explained previously in my dissertation, the machinations of empire tend to become uncloaked during war, and by telling wartime stories, Ghosh has ready access to the fissures that lead to the present-day empire remains. Ghosh takes this one step further, however, by using war to show that one of the more insidious remnants of empire is how the events of western history are prioritized over the events of eastern history. In "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?", Dipesh

Chakrabarty writes that “‘Europe’ remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories, including the ones we call ‘Indian,’ ‘Chinese,’ ‘Kenyan,’ and so on” (1), and it is this theme that Ghosh develops in his novel by having his narrator slowly realize how the wars of the west and stories of it have displaced his own experiences of riots.

The riots the narrator is concerned with were a result of the tensions that exploded during Partition—tensions which it was indeed part of the British colonial policy in India to escalate—yet the riots remain local news, mentioned in the back of the newspapers, if at all, and rarely reaching the history books. The narrator realizes how significant it is that “There are no reliable estimates of how many people were killed in the riots of 1964. The number could stretch from several hundred to several thousand; at any rate, not very many less than were killed in the war of 1962” (225). By making such a point, Ghosh raises several important questions: What is remembered and what gets to be remembered as history? Why isn’t Partition part of the crisis of western and European consciousness? In the oft-used dichotomy of global versus local, why does “global” so often equal the western local? How can one keep these dominant narratives from overtaking the narratives of one’s own life? Such questions will also play a role in Ghosh’s later novel, *The Glass Palace*. Although more comprehensive and epic in scope than *The Shadow Lines*, *The Glass Palace* features this same conflict between war and riots when Ghosh has one of its main story-lines trace the trajectory of a young man proudly rising through the ranks of the British army in India, to his gradual questioning of such an allegiance, which leads to his eventual defection to the Indian National Army during World War II. Having this character, Arjun, be directly involved in both war and the military allows Ghosh to address in more detail and in a different setting the questions that the narrator of

The Shadow Lines experiences in libraries and from stories and hearsay: Arjun acts out what *The Shadow Lines*'s narrator theorizes.

The narrator of *The Shadow Lines*, as the protagonist of a postcolonial bildungsroman, tries to find his place in the world by grappling with the stories that create it. Ghosh specifically uses the art and issue of story-telling to bolster the questions he sets out to ask and answer about the narratives of war versus the narratives of riots. While his focus is on how the narratives of war are used to create the idea and concept of a nation, he also demonstrates how these narratives inevitably rub shoulders with narratives of different subjects. For example, it is not only stories of history that get indicted in *The Shadow Lines*. Since the complicity of literature in producing empire has often been elucidated, it thus follows that Ghosh will also use literary stories to make his points. Ghosh borrows the title of his novel itself from Joseph Conrad's novella, a literary sea shanty about the shadow line one crosses over from childhood to adulthood. In the postcolonial world, such shadow lines take on additional meanings; they are also the lines between (and within) nations, and Ghosh shows how the formation of contemporary identities can involve multiple crossings. More importantly, however, Ghosh revisions the quintessential twentieth-century British colonial text, E. M. Forster's *A Passage To India*; *The Shadow Lines* begins, as we have seen, with an Indian family making the "reverse" passage from India to England. Ghosh thus highlights the fact that whereas Forster's *A Passage* portrayed aspects of the colonial world, *The Shadow Lines* will be dealing with the new, postcolonial, order. Ghosh's May Price travels to India like Adela Quested did before her, and, like Adela, unwittingly ends up in the center of a conflict. Whereas in Forster's novel the conflict only served to solidify the opposing

mindsets of both the Indians and the English, and thus sent each side back to their corner of the ring, so to speak, Ghosh's narrator tries to de-code all the intricacies of the events set off by May's visit; it is one more postcolonial story that the narrator will use to read his world.

Many of the narrator's dilemmas concern his not knowing how to arrange his English stories along side of, or behind, his Indian stories. He is so used to having English stories of England and English stories of India occupying a central position in his psyche, and thus dominating his view of the world. As a child, listening to and telling stories is the narrator's main hobby and talent. The narrator has grown up listening to Tridib's stories, as well as being coached by Tridib on just *how* to listen to stories: what to find interesting in a story, what to doubt, what to inquire about further, how to discern the subtext, as well as how to make out the silent story lurking in the shadows of the main story. The stories he hears and requests most frequently are Tridib's accounts of living in London during World War II. When the narrator begins to see cracks in the façade of these stories, and when he travels to London as a young adult and finds that he knows—and prefers—the London he has created in his mind from Tridib's stories, he is forced to re-order what he knows, and to try to fit together what he has been told with what he sees and understands now. It is thus stories which eventually become the catalyst for what the narrator realizes about East and West. This subtext of learning through stories, and having the narrator's reality be a jostling between eastern and western stories that contradict and overlap each other, works to further support the point Ghosh makes about western war and eastern riots: the emphasis he places on story-telling reveals the importance of what gets told, and the framework used to tell it. Ghosh

shows how India, using the western concept of the nation, is “forced” to use the building blocks of that narrative of nation as well—whether or not these fit in with the reality of India. The British Empire may have been dismantled, but the detritus left behind is still a stumbling block; and once again, it is war that is used to reveal the remains. In this chapter I will show how Ghosh uses the narrator’s focus on stories and story-telling to uncover the prioritization of war over riots. Such a prioritization is inextricably connected to the nation being a western concept constructed by western narratives. When the narrator comes to the realization that he and his classmates know about minor wars and nothing about major riots, Ghosh portrays this as an aspect of empire that has yet to be defeated. The narratives of war position India similarly to how colonial narratives—both historical and literary—positioned India; therefore, the connections between war and nation have to be severed or revisioned to more accurately reflect a truly postcolonial nation. This is a dilemma that Ghosh raises and develops to a great length in *The Shadow Lines* and returns to in *The Glass Palace*.

Pierre Nora, in “Between Memory and History,” establishes memory and history as opposing forces⁴, claiming that one of history’s main functions is to decimate memory, especially all memory that might try to contribute a different kind of story to history’s narrative. He suggests that history has consumed memory, and that it “is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it” (9). In *The Shadow Lines*, this opposition falls along old empire fault-lines in a debilitating way. Suvir Kaul writes of how the central question in *The Shadow Lines* is “Do you remember?” (125). The narrator has grown up hearing his family’s stories in great detail,

and thirsting to hear them over and over. Whenever he had a spare moment, he would seek out his Uncle Tridib to hear his stories, and Tridib would occasionally oblige, and “would begin to hold forth on all kinds of subjects—Mesopotamian stelae, East European jazz, the habits of arboreal apes, the plays of García Lorca...” (9). The narrator wants to hear everything, although his favorite stories are the ones Tridib tells of living in England during World War II. The narrator learns war-time London in such detail, that when he finally travels there in his twenties, the map of London that he has in his head is more detailed than most native-Londoners’—despite the fact that his map is peppered with the bombings and rubble of war. Already at this point, then, the narrator is personifying a postimperial conflict between East and West: events in western history are treated as standard, universal knowledge, facts that one will know and be well versed in if one is educated, whereas the same standard does not hold true in reverse. Events of history have displaced remembered events in the narrator’s mind.

Dipesh Chakrabarty claims that “Third-world historians feel a need to refer to works in European history; historians of Europe do not feel any need to reciprocate” (2).⁵ Other critics have written about this inequality in terms more specific to Partition in particular: Gyanendra Pandey writes that “Partition was, for the majority of people living in what are now the divided territories of northern India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, *the* event of the 20th century—equivalent in terms of trauma and consequence to the First World War for Britain or the Second World War for France and Japan” (31); and yet, when it comes to studying or discussing Partition, there has been an “erasure of memory”—and this is in the subcontinent itself; for the majority of the West, chances are, the mentioning of “Partition” would not even conjure up any historical event (31). John

Thieme makes the case that it is Ghosh's intent to have "World War II function...in the text as a European fracturing experience that parallels the South Asian experience of Partition" (64). The narrator gradually begins to realize that there is, perhaps, a sinister side to the multicultural collection of stories that he has grown up hearing, imagining and learning. It is through stories of war—and their displacement of stories of riots—that the narrator becomes truly aware of the implications of the dominance of the western historical narrative.

The narrator's Grandmother, whom he calls Tha'mma, is a character whose life showcases the struggle for primacy between the western narratives of war and the eastern narratives of riots, as well as how inextricably fused nation is with war and its stories. Tha'mma's evolving views reveal how she uses war to understand her changing nation, yet in doing so she is forced to interpose a western—in particular, an English—framework on India. To make such a framework fit, she has to alter which of her own memories she champions; as her priorities shift from ridding India of the British colonial presence to helping India come into its own as a nation, she also shifts from admiring the clandestine tactics of the resistance to acquiring a fervent, and rather delirious, belief in the all-out tactics of western war. For Tha'mma, India cannot exist successfully as a nation until India has had the war experiences of the west. War is the nation's action story; without it, a nation is not a nation, quite.

Tha'mma is, to begin with, one who greatly admires strength; in the first few pages of the novel we see her connecting personal strength to national strength: "You can't build a strong country, she would say, pushing me out of the house, without building a strong body" (8). She also admires her nephew, Robi (who is the same age as

the narrator) because he is strong. When Tha'mma's sister complains about Robi getting into a fight, Tha'mma replies, "Of course Robi had to fight him, she said with a dismissive flick of her fingers. What else could he have done? Maya ought to be proud of him. *I'm proud of him; but then, he's like me, not like Maya*" (36). Perhaps it is that the narrator associates this kind of strength and "heroics" with western ways (and thus more indicative of his own West/East opinions), but when this incident with Robi prompts his grandmother to reminisce about her student days and resisting the British, the narrator is astonished. Tha'mma thinks back to her college days when a lecture was interrupted by British colonial officials. When the narrator asks if she was frightened, Tha'mma replies, "not very much; we were quite used to police raids in those days. There were raids all the time in the colleges and the university. We'd grown up with it. ¶For a brief moment I thought she was joking" (37). Although quite familiar with most of his grandmother's stories, the narrator has never heard about resistance to the British, or even, it seems, the many negative aspects of the British presence —such as these "interruptions". These moments have not become part of the history that the narrator hears. The narrator asks for more information, and since his grandmother hesitates, it is Tridib who at this point jumps in and describes "the terrorist movement amongst nationalists in Bengal...the home-made bombs with which they tried to assassinate British officials and policemen; and a little about the arrests, deportations and executions with which the British had retaliated" (37). Tha'mma smiles "at the growing astonishment on my face as I tried to fit her into that extraordinary history" (37).

The narrator's surprise here seems twofold: first, he is surprised that his school-teacher granny was involved in such activities; but second, he is surprised to hear that

such activities existed. Already an avid scholar, himself, he seems to be unfamiliar with such resistance; this aspect of Indian history has been “erased”. Pandey writes that “the history of India since the early nineteenth century has tended to become the biography of the emerging nation state. It has also become a history in which the story of Partition, and the accompanying Hindu-Muslim and Muslim-Sikh riots of 1946–47, is given short shrift” (29). I would argue, however, that Pandey’s “also” is misplaced: it is precisely *because* the history of India “has tended to become the biography of the emerging nation state” that Partition and its riots are glossed over; a nation state is traditionally comprised of narratives of war and not narratives of riots. Conceiving of India as a nation in the traditional, western, model automatically utilizes India’s (minor) war experiences while shelving India’s (major) riot experiences. Additionally, since western narratives have a more established framework and tend to have a louder voice in the world, it is no coincidence that the narratives of this time of resistance that have been privileged as history are the peaceful resistance narratives of Gandhi, the Congress, Nehru, etc. To a certain extent it seems that these narratives would be most palatable for the British to swallow: after all, a narrative in which the British Empire was pushed out of India by a few resistance fighters is not a narrative the English would want to perpetuate. As the narrator’s grandmother continues on to describe the student the British officials arrested—a small, skinny, bespectacled youth who Tha’mma had never suspected was a terrorist—the narrator is hearing such details for the first time. Interestingly, Ghosh writes that Tha’mma “was fascinated, long before that incident, by the stories she had heard about the terrorists.... *Ever since she heard those stories* she had wanted to do something for the terrorists” (my italics) (38). The grandmother was apparently told

resistance stories that inspired her and shaped her consciousness; but she has not chosen to pass these stories on to her grandson. This section ends with Tha'mma telling the narrator that if she had known who the terrorist was, she would have helped him kill the British magistrate: "I would have been frightened, she said. But I would have prayed for strength, and God willing, yes, I would have killed him. It was for our freedom: I would have done anything to be free" (39). This part of his grandmother's life has not before made the round of the narrator's requested stories.

Tha'mma remains hawkish throughout *The Shadow Lines*, but it is significant that her sensibilities move away from this kind of resistance and towards the "heroics" of war. When the narrator is older, and his beloved cousin, Ila, is living in London, his grandmother claims that Ila has not earned the right to be there. She states,

It took those people a long time to build that country, hundreds of years, years and years of war and bloodshed.... They know they're a nation because they've drawn their borders with blood. Hasn't Maya told you how regimental flags hang in all their cathedrals and how all their churches are lined with memorials to men who died in wars, all around the world? War is their religion. That's what it takes to make a country. Once that happens people forget they were born this or that, Muslim or Hindu, Bengali or Punjabi: they become a family born of the same pool of blood. That is what *you* have to achieve for India, don't you see? (76)

Tha'mma, here, believes that western-style war is the only thing that can make a nation out of India. Her ranting in this speech, however, is not as off-the-cuff or even delusional as it might at first glance seem. The sentiments voiced in this speech can be connected directly to trauma Tha'mma witnesses in riots she experiences in a visit across the border.

Tha'mma's outspoken war sensibilities arise, in part, from her experience returning to her childhood home of Dhaka—which is, at the time of this journey, part of East Pakistan. Her sister Maya's husband has been given a diplomatic post there, and

Tha'mma is convinced to make the visit by the idea of "rescuing" her long-lost (and estranged) uncle, Jethamoshai, who she has lately learned is living in their old, large, family home, along with the Muslims who have occupied it post-Partition. The narrator claims that "her eyes grew misty at the thought of rescuing her uncle from his enemies and bringing him back where he belonged, to her invented country" (134). Tha'mma is going to accompany Tridib and May Price (Lionel Tresawsen's granddaughter) by airplane, and the narrator and his father become amused when they discover Tha'mma's beliefs about the border between India and East Pakistan. She asks if she will be able to see the border from the plane, saying: "But surely there's something —trenches perhaps, or soldiers, or guns pointing at each other, or even just barren strips of land. Don't they call it no-man's land?" (148). When her son explains that there is nothing to see, and that the "border" is in the airport, she queries,

But if there aren't any trenches or anything, how are people to know? I mean, where's the difference then? And if there's no difference, both sides will be the same; it'll be just like it used to be before, when we used to catch a train in Dhaka and get off in Calcutta the next day without anybody stopping us. What was it all for then—Partition and all the killing and everything—if there isn't something in between? (148-9)

Part of Tha'mma's struggles, here, have to do with the framework she is trying to fit her experiences into: she is using images from World Wars One and Two, with their trenches and no-man's-land and the like. Her experience of being safely out of the country during Partition, and then having it result in her birthplace all of a sudden becoming another country with herself as the enemy, is something she does not know how to reconcile; she cannot fit it into the stories she knows—as it does not fit into the available war narratives. War should bring a nation together and separate it from its enemies; it thus follows that if two nations have separated with hostility, then there

should be left these traces and vestiges of war. Tha'mma returns to this notion in her speech to the narrator about Ila living in England; when she mentions that "they've drawn their borders with blood" (76), she reminds the reader of her earlier disappointment that the borders between India and East Pakistan seemed so insubstantial.

Once in Dhaka again, Tha'mma has difficulty meshing the city she sees around her with the city in her mind. She is taken to the diplomats' section of Dhaka and when she says, "But this is for foreigners; where's Dhaka?" Tridib replies, "But you *are* a foreigner now, you're as foreign here as May—much more than May, for look at her, she doesn't even need a visa to come here" (191). Ironically, the English May has access to East Pakistan—still part of "the Commonwealth"—while the Dhakan Tha'mma is estranged. This makes her all the more determined to rescue Jethamoshai, who, as it turns out, is senile and does not want to be rescued. Mirroring some of Tha'mma's statements about Dhaka, Jethamoshai mutters, "I don't believe in this India-Shindia. It's all very well, you're going away now, but suppose when you get there they decide to draw another line somewhere? What will you do then? Where will you move to?" (211). Jethamoshai's disbelief in borders he cannot see is a disbelief that Tha'mma shares. He states that he was born in Dhaka and will die there as well; and, as we soon shall see, he does.

At the time that Tha'mma travels to Dhaka, riots have been igniting all over the subcontinent—in Calcutta where the narrator is, and in West and East Pakistan. On the day that everyone goes to find Jethamoshai, there has been temporary calm. But Jethamoshai does not want to leave with Tha'mma, and is finally talked into going only if the Muslim man who has been taking care of him will drive him in the rickshaw. They

set off, with May, Tridib, Tha'mma, and driver in a car, and Jethamoshai traveling behind. As it turns out, an angry crowd (alerted to their presence by the fancy car) has been waiting for them and attacks. The windshield is broken, and the driver hurt, yet he is able to take a gun out and fire in the air, scaring the rioters off. At this moment, however, the rickshaw catches up to them, and the crowd attacks the rickshaw, killing Jethamoshai and the rickshaw-walla. May jumps out to help, and starts running to the crowd, despite the fact that Tha'mma tells her that she will get them all killed. When May later tells the story to the narrator, she explains: "I didn't listen; I was a heroine. I wasn't going to listen to a stupid, cowardly old woman. But she knew what was going to happen. Everyone there did, except me. I was the only one who didn't" (245). May, a child in London during World War II, might know war and its signs, but she does not know the signs and rules of riots. This ignorance, which Tha'mma at this point rightfully berates, is an ignorance that Tha'mma later, post-trauma, will imitate and embrace. At any rate, at this point Tridib, who also knows the signs of riots, for a variety of reasons needs to impress the English May; he follows her, and of course, gets pulled into the mob and killed along with the other two men: May, an Englishwoman, does not get touched.

This story of what happened in Dhaka is most definitely not one that Tha'mma ever shares with the narrator. In fact, the narrator's father specifically requests the narrator not ever to mention or inquire about Tridib's death, and it is not until May tells him years later as an adult that he finds out the details of what happened. This trauma has a curious effect on those who witnessed and survived it. May returns to England, but responds to her experience by living a life in which she embraces her version of the East. May has a successful career as an oboist in a symphony, but her passions are the

organizations she works for in her spare time: Amnesty International, Oxfam, and other relief agencies that help the third world. Although she has a large bed in her studio apartment, the narrator discovers that she sleeps on the floor. When the narrator asks why, she explains that “After all, this is how most people in the world sleep. I merely thought I’d throw in my lot with the majority” (155). The narrator also discovers that on Saturdays May fasts “because it occurred to me a few years ago that it might not be an entirely bad idea to go without something every once in a while: who knows what the future has in store for me—or you, or, for that matter, the human race?” (158). The narrator then accompanies her to her Saturday job, collecting money out in the crowds of Oxford and Regent Streets for her various causes. This is not to dispute the worthiness of her work and causes, but there is an element of penance to this aspect of May’s life. In her own way she is trying to erase the differences she witnessed between the two nations.

Robi, Tridib’s much younger brother and a first cousin of the narrator’s father, was also a witness to Tridib’s death. He is the same age as the narrator, yet has a totally different sensibility—part of which Ghosh suggests might be a reaction to the trauma of the riots. Like Tha’mma, Robi after the riots fashions an outlook that in many ways turns to the West. Where the narrator sees a multiplicity of possible interpretations, Robi sees black and white. He is not an unadmirable character—he is always loyal, upright, and fearless—yet his mindset is one that gets him a successful career in the Indian Administrative Service (23), “running a district” and motivating policemen to search out terrorists and the like (241); with such a mindset he is, perhaps, empire’s progeny, as he turns towards the concrete facts of nation-building. The narrator attends university with him and there observes how “he had no hesitation in making judgments—because there

were whole domains of conduct with which he would not admit the possibility of argument” (81). Robi’s tendency to keep stories out ultimately limits and constricts him.

In contrast to Robi’s silent type, Tha’mma is a talker; and although she does not tell about her riot experiences, as we have seen, she talks freely of her new-found beliefs in riot’s opposite: war. Once safely back in Calcutta, Tha’mma finds refuge in the idea of one nation united by war, which is in stark contrast to what she has just experienced—one nation divided into two and each still experiencing further fragmentations by riots between its peoples. It is thus significant that when Tha’mma lectures the narrator about war and England she claims that “War is their religion” (76). In Tha’mma’s view, war is the religion that unites England, whereas she sees religion as being what divides India and causes its riots. War and the idea of a stable, powerful, united, nation become inextricably connected in Tha’mma’s mind. Curiously, what Tha’mma is also enacting here is the time-honored tradition of finding refuge in the propaganda of war stories. Tha’mma, after all, turns to war in direct reaction against what she has just experienced in the riots, and embraces the propaganda aspect of war as glory and heroics. True war stories would of course rival the trauma of being a witness to Tridib’s and Jethamoshai’s deaths in the riots. So like the English before her, war to Tha’mma becomes “regimental flags” hanging in churches; as the English women did during World War I, so Tha’mma does when conflict begins between India and Pakistan, selling her gold necklaces to help the cause. As Tha’mma becomes more and more infirm, she becomes more obsessed with war, telling the narrator that “This is the only chance, she cried, her voice rising to a screech. The only one. We’re fighting them properly at last, with tanks and guns and bombs” (232). Because war is always a story to

her and not a lived experience like the riots, and because she associates war with a unified nation, Tha'mma becomes quite the war-monger.

Tha'mma is not the only militarist of the bunch, and she is not the only one who connects war to England and empire. Her sister, Maya, begins the novel by traveling to England in 1939 with her husband and son. Because her husband has to have an operation that cannot be done in India, they did not have much of a choice as to when they went. However, Ghosh portrays wartime in England—for those not on the “right” side of the us-and-them aspect of the British Empire—as being a rather opportune time for a visit. For who knows what will happen after the war? For the colonized, chances are, the change will be better, and this is reflected by Maya’s experience in London at this time. Maya and her family stay with the Prices—the newly married daughter of Lionel Tresawsen, her husband, and their new baby, May. Tresawsen himself remarks to Maya that she has “chosen an unfortunate time to come to England,” yet Maya respectfully begs to differ. While acknowledging some worry, Maya says that in many ways it is an ideal time to be here: “the atmosphere had changed so dramatically, even within the last few weeks. People were becoming friendlier; in the shops, on the streets...I’ve been lucky, I’ve been able to watch England coming alive. I wouldn’t have seen that if I hadn’t been here now” (64-5). About forty years later, the narrator echoes his Great Aunt Maya’s sentiments. He is measuring the bombed-out London in his mind (as described to him by Tridib) against the London before him now, and thinks that in many ways he prefers the London of his mind: “I wanted to know England not as *I* saw her, but in her finest hour—every place chooses its own, and to me it did not seem an accident that England had chosen hers in a war” (57). Raised on the stories he has heard on the subject

of England and empire and the “theatre of war,” it is not surprising that the narrator is such a western war aficionado.

The narrator has his own experiences of the trauma of violence, yet because they are not classifiable under the heading of “War,” he thinks he has no use for them, and they remain forgotten for about fifteen years, until triggered by a conversation with friends at his university. The riot in question occurred when the narrator was about ten—at the same time that his grandmother, Tridib, and May were visiting Dhaka. Muslim/Hindu violence has been sweeping across the country, yet the narrator has not (perhaps understandably, given his age at the time) heard of it. Ironically, the day begins with everyone talking about an India/England cricket match scheduled to take place later that afternoon. This overt East/West sports competition will get more news coverage than the riots that will occur at the same time; the “competition” between types of violence and between what gets remembered, remains under the surface. Discord—albeit athletic—between countries is an established and more acceptable narrative than discord *within* one country. The narrator heads off to the bus station, eager to see his friends to discuss the cricket match. Most of his friends, however, are not there, and when the bus arrives, it is practically empty. The few on the bus tell the narrator of a rumor about Muslims poisoning the neighborhood wells. Their morning classes are continually punctuated by strange sounds coming from the city outside. Again, whereas the narrator has heard the sounds of bombs described, and “knows,” for instance, that to hear the whistle of a bomb falling from the sky followed by a strange silence means the bomb is about to explode nearby, knows the sounds of demonstrations, and knows the sounds of a

roaring crowd, in contrast, he has never heard or, more importantly, *heard of* the sound of riots: “a torn, ragged quality; a crescendo of discords” (197).

School is let out early, and when the narrator gets back on the bus for the ride home, he sees that the school is surrounded by armed police. As the narrator looks out the window, he does not recognize the city he sees. He says that “The streets had turned themselves inside out” (199) and notices that a lot of streets have an abandoned rickshaw at the end of them: “there was something about the angle at which it had been placed that was eloquent of an intent we could not fathom: had it been put there to keep Muslims in or Hindus out?” (199). The narrator—who later navigates around London by recalling Tridib’s details about what was bombed and what was not—cannot “read” the signs of the riots in his home city of Calcutta. Remembering this bus-ride, the narrator tries to describe the fear he and his friends experienced, and cannot quite find the right words to use. He says that “It is without analogy, for it is not comparable to the fear of nature, which is the most universal of human fears, nor to the fear of the violence of the state, which is the commonest of modern fears”—in other words, it is not the fear experienced by, say, the English. It is not so much that what he felt was “without analogy,” but that it does not fit in with the kinds of discord he has read and heard stories about: again, the discord of “the violence of the state” and not the violence that might occur *within* the state (200). In *Indian Traffic: Identities in Question in Colonial and Postcolonial India*, Parama Roy questions that “If the nation has always to be coaxed into existence, if the idea of the nation is not native, is always imported, then who or what constitutes the national subject?” (85). This is the same question Ghosh is having the narrator experience during the riots, for the narrator begins to realize that the national subject he is

familiar with is the English and their national experiences. Even in families where stories of the riots of Partition *were* frequently told and explained, the narrative of India's nationhood that children from these families then learned in schools did not necessarily support what they were told at home. In the collection of Partition narratives assembled and analyzed in *The Other Side of Silence*, Urvashi Butalia emphasizes the effect of such a discrepancy, explaining how "someone [like herself] who had grown up on stories of it [Partition], stories that somehow did not match what we learnt at school, stories that, perhaps because of that, we discounted" (275). The narrator of *The Shadow Lines*—raised on family stories that are international, yet primarily western in bent, in which, when a nation struggles it does so in a war setting—is not able to put what he is now experiencing into any sort of known context; he does not even have the language to use, and continually describes these riots in the terminology of war, despite the fact that he is beginning here to realize how different this experience is from a "World" War, claiming that "It is this that sets apart the thousand million people who inhabit the subcontinent from the rest of the world...it is the special quality of loneliness that grows out of the fear of the war between oneself and one's image in the mirror" (200)—a "war," of course, which manifests itself via riots.

The narrator's recollection of this event is prompted by a discussion at university of the war against China. He and his friends remember the jubilation they felt, before India lost, swiftly: "we recalled how quickly we had taught ourselves to distinguish the shapes of their aircraft from ours, how our mothers had donated bangles and earrings for the cause, how we'd stood at street-corners, taking collections and selling little paper flags" (215). Take out the "bangles," and there is nothing to distinguish this depiction of

a moment in mid-century Indian childhood from a moment in mid-century English childhood. When his friends proclaim that this event was the most serious national event of their childhood, the narrator brings up the Calcutta riots, and discovers that no one knows what he is talking about. When the narrator claims that the riots were “terrible,” his friend Malik replies, “All riots are terrible... But it must have been a local thing. Terrible or not, it’s hardly comparable to a war” (216). Bhabha writes that “the language of culture and community is poised on the fissures of the present becoming the rhetorical figures of a national past” (294), and that is precisely what the narrator is witnessing here. The war against China fit nicely into the traditional rhetoric of the narratives of nation, and thus gets told and remembered as history; in contrast, the riots that the narrator experienced *fall into* these same fissures and become at best a “local” event remembered on a personal level, and at worst forgotten. Riots are cordoned off into the negligible category of “the local,” whereas in contrast, war gets to be a remembered national event. War will always be prioritized amongst the narratives of nation, whether or not war really is a central subject in the story of this particular nation. The narrator suddenly finds this unacceptable. Getting rather frantic, now, he counters with “But don’t you *remember*? Didn’t you read about it or hear about it? After all, the war with China didn’t happen on your doorstep, but you remember *that*? Surely you remember—you *must* remember?” (216). They do not. And so Malik, a good sport, accompanies the narrator to the library, so that the narrator can look up the newspapers from 1964 and prove that the riots occurred. At the library, Malik points out a certain shelf, which

was the section on the war of 1962. There were whole shelves of books on the war—histories, political analyses, memoirs, tracts—weighty testimony to the eloquence of war. He pointed out another set of shelves, smiling broadly: it was the section on the 1965 war with Pakistan.... But

after half an hour we still hadn't found anything on my remembered riots.
(217)

The narrator is literally experiencing here the sublation of "the local" by war—the grand narrative of the nation. This is the framework that enables war to ripen into history: the "histories, political analyses, memoirs, tracts" stored in the library to refresh and refashion what is remembered. Again, we see here what Pierre Nora claims: that one of history's main functions is to decimate memory (9).

At this point the narrator is getting upset that he "had lived for all those years with a memory of an imagined event" (218), and since the greater portion of the novel has consisted of the narrator thriving on his vicarious experiences which are, to him, "imagined events," his sudden distress makes the reader take note. Asha Sen writes that "The violence that erupts on both personal and political levels rescues *The Shadow Lines* from its colonial nostalgia and emphasizes the danger of identifying with the petrified images of the past" (55); what is significant here, however, is that it is not the violence alone that is making the narrator change his way of thinking, but the reporting and recording of this violence. He is beginning to discern how it is only certain events that get to be included in the narrative of nation. While writing about the work of Edward Said, Aamir Mufti shows the "exclusionary nature" of "national belonging," and how "it can be achieved only by rendering *certain* cultural practices, *certain* institutions, *certain* ethical positions representative of 'the people' as such" (239). What Ghosh is illustrating in *The Shadow Lines* is how closely connected these "certain positions" are to the certain positions privileged in and by nations of the west. It is an aspect of empire that has yet to be dismantled. The fact that the narrator's friends have never heard of these riots make

the narrator—who experienced them—question whether or not they ever happened. We see, here, the selectivity of national history at work.

Using Mufti’s essay on Edward Said’s secular criticism can further help elucidate the significance of what Ghosh has his narrator discover here. Mufti begins this essay by calling attention to Said’s creation and use of the construct “secular criticism”—which Mufti posits is as significant as other elements of Said’s work which have received the lion’s share of attention, such as Orientalism and contrapuntal reading. Mufti claims that Said’s use of “secular” has often been misunderstood as the opposite of religion, and thus has led to accusations of Said’s championing a kind of elite cosmopolitanism (232). However, “Said’s use of the word *secular* is therefore catachrestic, in the sense that Gayatri Spivak has given to the term—that is, it is a meaningful and productive *misuse*” (239), and as such is in opposition not to religion but to nationalism and its narratives. Furthermore, Said conceives of secular criticism as criticism that should always be “enunciated from *minority* positions” (239), which he envisions as potentially the only equitable place for power to originate. Mufti writes that secular criticism “means rescuing the marginalized perspective of the minority as one from which to rethink and remake universalist (ethical, political, cultural) claims, thus displacing its assignation as the site of the local” (Mufti 244). What is useful here for my reading of *The Shadow Lines* is how Said is also using “local” catachrestically. For Mufti explains that Said conceives of the minority position as encompassing the “local attentions” of all positions; the example he uses has to do with the Palestinians and Islamic identity: in that case “the ‘local attentions’ with which Palestinians combat their dispersed condition” would be seen in the context of secular criticism as “the ‘local attentions’ of *all* Palestinians to their

lives” (243), which could have the effect of “displacing fundamentalism’s sense of itself as a counteruniversal” (243). Such a need for all “local attentions” to be included in—and thus form a new—universal (which would also be a true counteruniversal to the western narrative of nation) is precisely what Ghosh has his narrator comprehend when he begins to uncover the local stature of riots as contrasted by the national status of war. In the nomenclature of the nation state, riots are local experiences and as such do not make it into the majority narratives of war. Ghosh’s narrator is at this moment beginning to realize that such narrative hegemony needs to be interrupted.

The narrator and Malik finally do find a reference to riots—only the reference they find is to riots that were occurring that same day in Pakistan: mirror-image riots with the majority Muslims attacking the minority Hindus. Malik leaves, while the narrator, stubborn and frantic, remains searching through the bound volumes of *Calcutta Dailies*. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson has written of how it was no coincidence that the western concept of the nation came into prominence at the same time as the novel and the newspaper (25). The narrator’s experience here illustrates that confluence: while searching for proof that the riots he remembers are not just imagined events, the narrator comes face to face with one aspect of how the story of a nation is cemented as factual history—that is, what events make it to the front page of the newspapers, triggering conversation and discussion the next day, and then existing in archives for people like Malik and the narrator to consult. What brings the narrator’s search to fruition, ironically, is his memory of that cricket match against England that was occurring on the same day. He finds the cricket match in the sports section, and is at first disappointed when he turns to the front page of that issue and sees that “the lead

story had nothing to do with riots of any kind, nor with Calcutta: it was about the 68th session of the Congress Party in Bhubaneshwar” (218). Ironically, this article quotes the party president who “had extended an invitation to everyone who had faith in the ideology of socialism and democracy to come together in the common task of building a new society” (218); the narrator then sees a small blurb on the bottom of the page mentioning riots, but as mentioned above these are the riots in Pakistan. It is not until Malik has already left that the narrator finds significant coverage of his riots in the paper from the following day—although the front page is split between coverage of these riots and coverage of the India/England cricket match. Too little, too late: his epiphany has already begun.

In his article “In Defense of the Fragment: Writing About Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today,” Gyanendra Pandey writes of how violence in India is treated, historically, as “*aberration* and as *absence*” and not part of “the ‘real’ history of India at all” (27). He explains that

The ‘history’ of violence is, therefore, almost always about context—about everything that happens around violence. The violence itself is taken as ‘known.’ Its contours and character are simply assumed; its forms need no investigation. (27)

But what Ghosh shows in *The Shadow Lines* is that the “aberration and absence” of the violence of riots is filled in by the forms and frameworks of the violence of war, whose surfaces and trappings *are* “known.” For example, when the war against China begins, the narrator’s father comes home and explains it all to the young narrator, who then follows its progress daily with his friends, waving flags, looking at maps, etc. His grandmother, as we have seen, sells her gold jewelry; people donate blood. When the riots occur half a year later, however, no one knows how to respond—there seems to be

no lexicon to use and no instructions to follow. This violence is “known” on a personal and local level, but is not investigated or archived on a national level; it therefore remains the absence which does not become part of the real and proclaimed history of India. The narrator’s favorite uncle, Tridib, is brutally killed in the riots in Dhaka, and all the narrator really knows about it is that Tridib died in an accident. His father makes the narrator promise that he will never speak of Tridib’s death to his friends at the park: “You know that Meshomoshai—Tridib’s father—is a very important man in the government? He doesn’t want people to hear about this—it has to be kept secret, so you mustn’t talk about it” (234). The narrator is perplexed, thinking “There was nothing to talk about: an accident was such a petty way to die” (234). What is significant about this moment are the restrictions placed upon the narrator’s *telling* of the incident; he is not to turn it into a narrative, because it has no place in the national narrative. Thinking it was just an accident, the narrator sees the cause of Tridib’s death as “petty”; what, then, would the narrator at this young age not consider to be a “petty way to die”? A heroic war death? Homi Bhabha writes of how the national culture always needs to be recited (303); the flip side to this, of course, is that what is not considered to be part of the national culture is then forced to remain silent. This is what Mufti claims that Said addresses with his call for secularism. Mufti argues that “To turn minority into the language and gesture of an affiliative community is to critique the filiative claims of majority; it is to interrupt the *narratives* of filiation through which the meanings of majority and minority are determined, fixed, and internalized” (252). To interrupt the narratives is the first step towards changing the perceptions of how things are, on which the power of the majority relies. The narrator’s meshomoshai, with his position of power

in the government, does not want to be connected to the riots, the narratives of which the nation state has no use for, no matter how they are constructed and told. What the narrator begins to realize as an adult, however, is what it means that these particular events are silenced, and that the fact that the nation has no use for these narratives reveals much about how the nation constructs itself and the origins of its innate criteria. The narrator is discerning exactly what Butalia concludes about the personal Partition narratives she has collected: “They illuminate what one might call the ‘underside’ of its history. They are the ways in which we can know this event. In many senses, they *are* the history of the event” (8).

Thinking back on the events as an adult, the narrator sees the importance—and the rather sinister technique—of such a silence. He realizes that “Every word I write about those events of 1964 is the product of a struggle with silence” (213), and then tellingly continues on:

All I know of it is what it is not. It is not, for example, the silence of an imperfect memory. Nor is it a silence enforced by a ruthless state—nothing like that: no barbed wire, no check-points to tell me where its boundaries lie. (213)

It is not, as he acknowledges, a lack of memory, but rather a memory on its own without the framework that is used to prop memory up: no newspaper article analysis, no street-corner discussions, no entries in the history books. It is no coincidence here that the narrator reverts—like his grandmother when talking of the borders between India and East Pakistan—to war imagery, for his memory is part of an absence because it is memory of a form of violence which does not fit into the traditional narratives of war. Pandey proposes that there is seemingly a paradox that violence creates, since violence “produces the necessity of evidence gathering...but violence also wipes out

'evidence'..." (35). There is a slippage to violence that appears inherent. In England, one way of masking such slippage has been the theatrics of war—Thammasak's regimental flags hanging in cathedrals, the jewelry-selling, the following of the war's progress with maps, etc.—and wartime propaganda. But again, for obvious reasons, the violence of riots cannot be treated similarly. In his oft-cited "What is a Nation?", Ernst Renan, writing in the 1880's, made the claim that "Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation" and that "the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things" (11). Good advice, perhaps, but Renan is referring to how French citizens, for example, need to have forgotten violent events in "the thirteenth century"; forgetting violence that took place only half a century ago, and which still reverberates causing violence today, is a more difficult matter. Urvashi Butalia reaches the conclusion that regarding Partition, one has to remember in order to eventually forget—that remembering functions as the beginning of a kind of healing (19). Aamir Mufti asserts that a Saidian critique "implies not proceeding as if Partition never took place, but rather rigorously examining what precisely it *means*" (249). The opinions regarding silence, then, are quite noisy. They do raise the question, however, of whether or not the silence that the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* has discovered is a negative thing. The narrator is not so sure. His silence is regarding violence experienced by a generation removed from Partition, yet it can be said to originate with Partition. Ghosh has him discourse about this silence at quite some length, alternately accepting it and raging against it. He reminds himself that he "grew up believing in the truth of the precepts that were available to me"—again, western precepts, and western meanings (214). Eventually, and perhaps

inevitably, the narrator's musing brings him back to the lexicon of nations and war. He relates, "I believed in the reality of nations and borders.... The only relationship my vocabulary permitted between those separate realities was war or friendship" (214); when confronted with violence *within* a nation, there is no model of response upon which he can rely.

Types of violence become prioritized, with war ending up "greater than" riots; and thus, even though the narrator begins to realize what is going on, he will continue to be confronted by the mindset which used to be his: an example of this is his argument with Ila which I used as the epigraph to this chapter, and in which she claims that war is an important event, one that becomes history and one that serves as an example for generations to come, where, in contrast, riots remain local events, "nothing that sets a political example to the world, nothing that's really remembered" (102). Such denial is going to have an effect on how India sees itself in comparison to other nations, for as Pandey writes, "the experience of violence is in crucial ways constitutive of our 'traditions,' our sense of community, our communities and our history" (41). The narrator gets a sense of the narrative contortions that need to be performed in order for Indian communities to achieve a "sense of community" and "history" that mirrors that of the west, when he hears Tha'mma's views on how England is a nation because of its wars, and Ila's views on how war is a historical event whose importance is worldwide; by analyzing the significance of such statements, he catches a glimpse of the slippage that exists between the stories that could make up India's history and the stories that actually are allowed to be that history. Cathy Caruth claims, "history, like trauma, is never simply one's own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas"

(24), but the point that Ghosh is trying to make here is that India's history is still too often more England's history than its own, and that additional trauma is formed by the silencing of the trauma of riots, which have no role in the nation-forming of the west. When the narrator realizes that "the memory of the riots vanished into the usual cloud of rhetorical exchanges" (225), he is experiencing an epiphany that is at the heart of Ghosh's novel: that violence that does not fit into the war framework must be analyzed on its own terms, for if it is seen only or primarily in western terms, silence tends to be the result. "The theatre of war, where generals meet, is the stage on which states disport themselves: they have no use for memories of riots" (226). Generals may not, but the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* must find a use for such memories and speak from the wings.

Throughout *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh constructs a meticulous framework that bolsters the narrator's growing realizations about the specific silences surrounding riots and the noises surrounding war. This is a framework that emphasizes and explores all of the facets of story-telling, including both its high and low moments, its fantasies, delusions, strengths, escapes and politics. Whereas Bhabha claims that "From the margins of modernity, at the insurmountable extremes of storytelling, we encounter the question of cultural difference as the perplexity of living, and writing, the nation" (311), Ghosh's narrator is wrestling with the truths of nation that these "extremes of storytelling"—which he *is* trying to surmount—enable him to discover. It is what he realizes about the cultural differences of "competing" stories that really contribute to his knowledge of the implications of supposedly postcolonial nations. His special

relationship to story-telling ultimately allows him to acquire an insight that he could not have obtained otherwise.

Story-telling is a completely integral part of the character of the narrator, and in many ways, Ghosh establishes the narrator as being a kind of prodigy when it comes to stories. Everyone's lives are created from stories, and as the narrator has learned from Tridib, if you do not choose a story to live in, you are not choosing a blank slate, but rather unwittingly inviting in the versions and "interpretations" of others. The narrator's awareness of his relation to stories is distinguished in part by how Ghosh portrays other characters' relations to stories and story-telling. Ila, with whom the narrator is in many ways obsessed, has quite a different relation to stories than the narrator does; her method regarding stories is not portrayed with any redeeming features. Ghosh uses Ila to "expose the fictionality of colonial narratives of truth, freedom, and nation" (Sen 51), and thus, whereas at first the narrator sees Ila as a world traveler, and is envious of how she grew up living in cities all over the world, he comes to realize what has been evident to the reader all along: Ila lives in western stories while wearing blinders—she fits her life to these stories, no matter what the result. This difference between Ila and the narrator is evident even when they are children. The narrator, filled with Tridib's stories, tells Ila of how "I longed to visit Cairo, to see the world's first pointed arch in the mosque of Ibn Tulun, and touch the stones of the Great Pyramid of Cheops" (20). He realizes after a while that Ila is not listening to him and that she is "frowning with concentration"; finally, she "gave herself a satisfied nod, and said aloud, inadvertently: Oh yes, Cairo, the Ladies is way on the other side of the departure lounge" (20). Her guarded attention to mundane factual details contrasts with the narrator's more imaginative approach.

Ila “lived in a present which was like an airlock in a canal, shut away from the tidewaters of the past and the future by steel floodgates” (30). When she visits the narrator in Calcutta, she brings her yearbooks and tells of her adventures in her international school—adventures that are rather cardboard tales of popularity and swashbuckling blond admirers, and which the narrator eventually discovers never happened, for Ila was, in reality, shy and an outsider. When they are both in their twenties, the narrator always tries to reminisce with Ila, and to get her to remember some of their childhood moments together, but Ila will not acquiesce. These stories do not fit into how she sees her life, and thus the narrator “could not persuade her that a place does not merely exist, that it has to be invented in one’s imagination; that her practical, bustling London was no less invented than mine, neither more nor less true, only very far apart” (21). This inability of Ila’s is very much portrayed as her greatest shortcoming.

Until Tridib’s tragic death, it was Tridib’s stories that the narrator heard, liked, and learned from the most—claiming on the first page of the novel that they were such a part of his life that they were like tying his shoes or brushing his teeth (3); they were, in other words, part and parcel of his routine. Tridib was well-educated and observant, and told stories about everything; however, it was his stories about his stay in England that caught the narrator’s fancy. Tridib was in London at the beginning of World War II, and his family was staying with the Prices, a family known to Tridib’s family through their active participation as colonial administrators for the British Empire in India; it is therefore inevitable—and significant—that stories of war and empire become interspersed with the stories in the narrator’s personal “collection.” Tridib is eight and his mother is twenty-nine when they make their first passage to England; the narrator tells

us on the first page of the novel that he himself is eight and Tridib is twenty-nine when he first begins to hear Tridib's stories. Tridib is therefore positioned as the narrator's intellectual father figure; the narrator wants to please Tridib and to follow in his footsteps. He cannot picture what Tridib looked like at eight, so "[i]n the end, since I had nothing to go on, I had decided that he had looked like me" (3). The narrator has chosen his mentor well, for Tridib is portrayed as being an excellent teacher in many ways. He is very knowledgeable and teaches the narrator factual information, but he is most effective in teaching the narrator *what* to hear when someone tells a story, and that what is emphasized is not necessarily what is important. For example, the narrator is with Tridib at one point when Ila and her family are visiting. Ila's mother tells a story of an incident that just happened to Ila while living in Sri Lanka: in short, she begins by describing their house and yard and then segues into the story of a huge monitor lizard (a thala-goya) who had adopted their backyard as its new habitat. They were terrified of it at first, but their servants, who were local, convinced them that it was good luck and a welcome neighbor. One day Ila was reading a book outside and had an unfortunate encounter with a poisonous snake; the snake is about to bite Ila, when the thala-goya comes lumbering over and chases away the snake. Ila's mother asks the narrator what he thinks of this story, and the narrator "glanced instinctively towards Tridib" and saw that Tridib "was waiting to hear what I'd have to say, and I didn't want to disappoint him" (28). The narrator, after giving it some thought, asks Ila's mother "whether the snake was of the species Boidae or Elapidae" and immediately sees that Tridib is disappointed. As they leave a bit later, "Tridib said to me casually that, if one thought about it, there was nothing really very interesting about snakes—after all, if I saw one in the lake, for

example what would I do? I'd come back home and tell everyone and then forget about it" (28). The narrator suspects that Tridib is "leading up to something else" and eventually Tridib asks, "Did you notice that Ila's house had a sloping roof?" (29). Tridib leaves and the narrator at first remains completely confused:

But later that evening, and for many evenings afterwards...I puzzled over what Tridib had said, and in a while I began to imagine the sloping roofs of Colombo for myself: the pattern they made if one wheeled in the sky above them, how sharply they rose if one looked at them from below, the mossiness of their tiles when one saw them close up, from a first-floor window, and soon I felt that I too could see how much more interesting they were than the snake and the lizard, in the very ordinariness of their difference. (29)

In this way Tridib instructs the narrator to be a discriminating listener. As such, it is logical that the narrator, as listener, will be the one to notice the "one note" quality of the stories of war.

Tridib, in this example and in numerous others, does not just tell stories to the narrator: he teaches him how to survive on them and how to actively use them. The narrator does learn from other family members as well. He combines his grandmother's version of the Dhaka of her youth with Robi's contemporary version of it, making it "a part of my own secret map of the world, a map of which only I knew the keys and the coordinates, but which was not for that reason any more imaginary than the code of a safe is to a banker" (190-1). But, as the narrator explains, "Tridib had given me worlds to travel in and he had given me eyes to see them with" (20). Tridib teaches technique to the narrator. Nivedita Bagchi claims that "This, then, is the narratorial task of Ghosh's novel—to examine every narrative, establish its credibility...and, finally suggest the veracity of one narrative over other narratives" (195). But "suggesting the veracity of one narrative over other narratives" is what Ghosh has the narrator gradually realize is the

problem; such prioritizing is a habit the narrator has acquired after Tridib's death, and it is a habit he has to unlearn. After a fight with Ila in London, the narrator wonders "whether I was alone in knowing that I could not live without the clamor of the voices within me" (88); he has learned that a multiplicity of stories is necessary, and is beginning to learn how to clear space for the quieter voices—the voices which tell of riots instead of war, passages *from* India, the gradually realized interest of sloping roofs instead of the immediate gratification of tales of snakes and lizards.

The narrator's close association with viewing the world through a multitude of stories throws into relief the silence surrounding the riots that he and his family experienced in the early sixties. Once he realizes that the silence is there, the narrator simply cannot treat it lightly or as an oversight: it is a particularly loud silence that threatens to overwhelm the "clamor of the voices within me" which he knows he cannot live without (88). The narrator thus apprehends that the silence itself is significant, yet equally so is what has been talked about instead: the war with China, the war with Pakistan—all these events which his friend Malik so confidently termed "the most important thing that happened in the country when we were children" (214). An aspect of the narrator's rapport with stories that closely connects to war usurping the narrative place of riots is how central a role England plays in the majority of the stories that he hears and scrutinizes. Ghosh is not merely exploring how some stories are more powerfully articulated than others, but rather he is expressly dissecting the phenomenon of English stories displacing Indian stories as a way that the still-functioning arm of empire continues to exercise a stranglehold on its former colonies. As the narrator realizes what is occurring on a political level with war and riots, he simultaneously is

reaching the conclusion that the same thing is occurring on a personal level with the stories of his own psyche.

In Rosemary Marangoly George's book, *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction*, she compares and contrasts the construction of the idea of home with the construction of the idea of the nation, arguing that whereas the case for the connection between novel and nation has already been made, a similar, yet heretofore neglected, case can be made that "The search for the location in which the self is 'at home' is one of the primary projects of twentieth-century fiction in English" (3). George challenges and expands the traditional definition of "home"; she is not using it in the kitchen sampler sense. For George, home encompasses "a pattern of select inclusions and exclusions. Home is a way of establishing difference...Home...long with gender/sexuality, race, and class, acts as an ideological determinant of the subject" (2); therefore George claims that "homes are not neutral places. Imagining a home is as political an act as is imagining a nation" (6). This is also true for the stories in which the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* is at home. For example, in a reversal of the Great Game, the narrator learns Tridib's stories so well that he also learns a map of London; when he later visits London for the first time, he is able to navigate perfectly by using what Tridib has described to him as a guide. As a young adult, however, these stories begin to lose their luster a bit: the narrator tells his beloved relation, Ila, that he is not free, "at least in London" (31), and that he is trapped by all the stories and images in his head. He is conflicted, for he both wants to escape these stories while at the same time preferring them: "I wanted to know England not as I saw her, but in her finest hour—every place chooses its own, and to me it did not seem an accident that England had chosen hers in a

war" (57). However, is this "choice" that he mentions really England's choice, or is it the narrator's own? And if so, what are the implications? It seems apparent that at least on one level, the narrator—like his great aunt Maya before him—might enjoy London during a war more than the native Londoners might, and that this enjoyment is connected to what the war means for the British Empire. The Empire-at-war and on the precipice of decline, is emblematic of a bevy of nascent possibilities for those from the soon-to-be former colonies. The narrator's continued return to this moment in England's past shows an at least unconscious awareness of what this specific time could potentially be opening up for him. The seed has been planted here for all the major awakenings the narrator is on the verge of experiencing regarding the stories he lives by.

One of the ways Ghosh addresses the issue of a conflict existing between the articulation of the western concept of the nation and the eastern reality is to make *The Shadow Lines* an explicitly postcolonial response to the colonial novel. *The Shadow Lines* contains characters who are postcolonial versions of specific recognizable types that populated colonial novels, and Ghosh frequently has his novel correspond in reverse to E. M. Forster's *A Passage To India*, the touchstone English colonial text. As mentioned previously, he does this right with the first sentence of the book. The reader is immediately confronted with the fact that the passages in this novel are from east to west, and that a new world order is coming into being. There are more details which establish that this novel has connections to *A Passage*, yet is set on the other side of 1947. Like *A Passage*, *The Shadow Lines* has an Englishwoman travel to India: Forster's Adela Quested makes the journey to see if she could stand marrying an English colonial administrator and becoming part of the colonizers' community there, and Ghosh's May

Price makes her journey to see if she wanted to further a romantic relationship with Tridib, as well as to witness the damage that England did to India. Forster's Mrs. Moore becomes agitated and perhaps a bit senile after her trip to the caves, while Ghosh's Tha'mma suffers similarly after her experience in the riots in Dhaka. Both elderly women speak words of wisdom about relationships in the midst of some rather shocking ranting and raving.

And then there are the obvious differences: as Robert Dixon writes, "The characters in Ghosh's novels do not occupy discrete cultures, but 'dwell in travel' in cultural spaces that flow across borders" (4). This is in stark contrast to the English in India in *A Passage*, who try to create pockets of England in India and who want to "share nothing with the [Indian] city except the overarching sky" (Forster 8). Ghosh also makes sure to portray a marked difference in outlook between travelers in his novel versus travelers in Forster's. In contrast to the very first page of *A Passage*, where Forster conveys the English viewpoint of India as being "The very wood seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving" (7), Ghosh's narrator is thrilled to be in London—to such an extent that he frequently embarrasses the more experienced Ila. The narrator tells of how when Ila would suggest going out somewhere, the narrator "would jump to my feet and, before I knew it, I would cry: Yes, let's go, let's go on the *Underground*" (21). His excitement irritated Ila, who would eventually remark, "For God's sake stop carrying on like a third-world tapioca farmer—it's just the bloody *Underground*" (21). The narrator's obvious, and perhaps somewhat colonial, excitement over finally being in the London he has heard so many stories about is tempered by the postcolonial Ila's blasé attitude to the city. The new porosity and multicultural aspect of nations and cities, especially London,

is also something that is emphasized and stands in contrast to Forster's world. At one point the narrator comments on how "the experience of hearing Bengali dialects which I had never heard in Calcutta being spoken in the streets of London was still replete with unexplored ironies" (236). These differences strikingly add to the effect of the realization the narrator makes regarding war and riots, for they emphasize how different the postimperial world has become. Bengali dialects in London! The world travels of the narrator and his family! All contribute to the narrator's surprise that empire's influence is in no way completely dislodged.

In addition to including allusions to E. M. Forster's colonial text, *A Passage To India*, Ghosh creates a character, Nick Price, who functions as a colonial anachronism in the postcolonial world, and thus as one of the tools of the narrator's burgeoning consciousness. Nick Price is an Englishman who was born about one hundred years too late. He is the much younger sibling of May Price, and thus comes from a family with a history of serving the Empire in India. In contrast to May, who thinks the British Empire performed atrocities in India, Nick regrets empire's demise. Ghosh makes Nick Price the sort who seems to have grown up reading the boys' adventure stories that prepared their readers for a role in empire, and thus, when he comes of age in the postimperial world, he is unable to adapt. Fifty years ago Nick could have been one of the Administrators in Forster's Chandrapore: racist and entitled. With the dissolution of empire, however, Nick is left with nothing to do. When Nick was a boy, he always said he wanted to be like his grandfather, Lionel Tresawsen; but we learn—via the narrator's many stories—what Tresawsen was like, and he was the exception to the rule of empire, with his thirst for travel, his treatment of all people as equals, his kindness, intelligence, and open mind.

Nick, in contrast, is the opposite of all these qualities. When May is in India and spending time with the young narrator, the narrator asks May many questions about Nick, who he knew of through his cousin, Ila. May tells the narrator that when Nick is finished with school, “He’s going to join a firm of chartered accountants, and once they’ve trained him he’s going to get a nice job with a huge salary—preferably abroad, not in England. England’s gone down the drain, he says” (52). Nick, then, will work outside of England to escape its downfall, and not to perpetuate its domain.

Nick is portrayed as a cowardly buffoon who cannot achieve success in the contemporary world. He does work as an accountant in Kuwait for a few years, and when the narrator meets him in England, he has just returned from there—supposedly having quit his job, although May later implies that Nick was fired because of embezzlement. Nick seems in no hurry to get a new job, and during a Christmas dinner which Ila and the narrator also attend, Nick proclaims drunkenly:

Now Grandpa Tresawsen had a good time. How wonderful it must have been to go around the world like that: like some great Dickensian show on a stage. There’s never been anything like it before and there’ll never be anything like it again.... And what did *I* get? he said. Bloody old Kuwait. That’s what comes of being born too late. (106)

Nick clearly feels disenfranchised by the loss of the availability of the role he might have performed in colonial times. However, Nick does get what the narrator wants: Ila and her love. Nick and Ila marry, which solves Nick’s job problem, since Ila’s rich parents then begin to finance Nick’s ventures. Asha Sen insightfully points out here how “Nick’s financial dependency on him [Ila’s father] suggests a reversal of roles whereby the would-be imperialist becomes dependent upon the postcolonial middle-man his own country helped create” (49). But Ila later learns that Nick—perhaps as a kind of twisted

statement against such dependency—has lovers who are all from former colonies. She tearfully tells the narrator that “He said he just likes a bit of variety; it’s his way of traveling” (185). Nick Price is an example of the colonial mind in postcolonial times: he is Forster’s Turton or McBryde, yet the only “passage” he can make is sexual.

The narrator himself has a complex relationship to Nick, at least in his own mind, due to the stories Ila, who temporarily lived with the Prices in London as a child, told to the narrator when they were young. Briefly attending school in England, Ila as a ten year old is struggling to deal with the racial taunts and bullying she is subjected to daily at the school. The slightly older Nick, who attends the same school, does *not* give Ila any help; yet when Ila tells the narrator her thinly disguised woes, Nick Price figures as the hero of the story—a dashing blond rescuer who saves her from the attacks of the other children. The narrator compares himself to this blond hero, and comes up lacking. In colonial fashion, he makes this false image of Nick into a kind of mirror double against which he magnifies what he sees as his own shortcomings.

In Conrad’s *The Shadow Line*, Conrad writes of how “the time, too, goes on—till one perceives ahead a shadow-line warning one that the region of early youth, too, must be left behind” (4). Before Ghosh’s narrator can cross *his* shadow line, he needs to learn what stories he should “leave behind”. While Conrad’s narrator is dealing with the defining event in his life—the event that will push him over the line—he looks into the mirror and sees his “double,” a man who “had his place in a line of men whom he did not know, of whom he had never heard; but who were fashioned by the same influences” (53). This is exactly what Ghosh’s narrator does, at first, with his creation of his mirror double, Nick Price. After hearing Ila speak of Nick, he states that:

After that day Nick Price, whom I had never seen, and would, as far as I knew, never see, became a spectral presence beside me in my looking glass; growing with me, but always bigger and better, and in some ways more desirable.... (49)

Growing up hearing stories of England, the narrator's double is an English boy against whom he constantly measures himself and comes up short. The narrator has to rearrange how he has ordered the stories he has heard; he needs to shake this habit of a western comparison, and of seeing himself as the West's "other". May Price, Nick's sister, tries to help the narrator do this by hinting to him that "He's [Nick] not at all like us" and musing gently that "I wonder whether you'd like him" (52). To cross his shadow line, the narrator has to learn this for himself. Chakrabarty writes that "'Europe [is] constructed by the tales that both imperialism and nationalism have told the colonized" (18); if tales have constructed it, then tales can also dismantle its lingering dominance over the East. When Ghosh's narrator is confronted with the real Nick Price, and quickly sees and experiences his many shortcomings, the narrator is forced to look critically at the tales that have thus far been central in his life. In this way, what the narrator learns from Nick is a more obvious and easier lesson that parallels the complex discovery he is also making at this time regarding empire's still-existing influence over the remembering and processing of war and riots. What Nick exposes to the narrator prepares him for the role he has in the novel of exposing empire.

The narrator's need to create a mirror double or "other" in the first place is indicative of how he is a victim of still another tentacle of empire's western construction of the nation state. As referred to earlier, Rosemary George has proposed that fiction and the novel can work as an alternative to the dictates of nationalism, as one of the main projects of the twentieth century novel has been to create a "home" space or definition

that can contrast the definition of home put forth by nationalism. The caution that Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* adds to this theory, however, is that one has to be careful where one's fictional priorities and frameworks come from. And George herself acknowledges this danger when she points out that "to rephrase Robert Frost and David Sopher, home is neither where they have to take you in nor where they want to take you in, but rather the place where one is *in* because an other(s) is kept out" (26-7). Mufti concurs, "the experience of being at home can only be produced by rendering some other homeless" (239). One of the cogs of empire was its establishment of—and dependence on—the notion of the other. The empire's *us* had to have a *them* to govern. The narrator's need to see Nick as his double is thus a construction with imperial roots. He recognizes this once he comes face to face with Nick's true character. Likewise, the narrator must struggle to figure out just why the stories of war dominate and erase his own memories of riots, as well as to learn the significance of this dominance. His realization of the fallacy of the notion of the other and its connection to nation and empire allows him to form a hypothesis about what is occurring with war silencing riots: he sees how war is endemic to the concept of nation. By placing emphasis on the colonial ties to and postcolonial departures from the stories and story-telling the narrator creates his life amongst, Ghosh is able to convey how extensively empire still permeates; its stories still echo loudly.

In Amitav Ghosh's new novel, *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh creates two Indian-Burmese families and follows several of their generations from the late 1800s through to the present day. The novel is set mainly in Burma, and the backdrop is, once again, the

British Empire, as the novel begins with Rajkumar—a young Indian boy of twelve who has lived most of his life in Mandalay—witnessing the British invasion of Burma and the subsequent exile of the Burmese King and Queen to Madras. Rajkumar, in many ways following the example of the colonizing British, becomes prosperous in the teak trade; however, he cannot forget a brief encounter he had with Dolly, a servant or lady-in-waiting to the Burmese princesses, and eventually travels to Madras to find out what has become of her. Dolly, still a kind of handmaiden to these princesses, has befriended the Indian wife, Uma, of a Cambridge-educated Indian colonial administrator; Uma convinces Dolly to marry Rajkumar and return to a better life in Burma. It is then Dolly and Rajkumar’s family, as well as Uma’s family, whom Ghosh focuses on as they are confronted with the often-traumatizing events of the twentieth-century.

It is significant that once again Ghosh chooses to view these events through the lens of war—and, more specifically, what war reveals about empire. Right away, he creates an exchange between Dolly and Rajkumar that echoes many of the main themes he showcased in *The Shadow Lines*. Rajkumar has traveled to Madras to court Dolly, and he tells the story of when he first became infatuated with her during a minute-long encounter as she was being paraded with the royal family to the ship that would take them to their exile in Madras. Rajkumar had earlier been part of a mob that ransacked the palace once it became clear that the King and Queen were now under British command. Dolly objects strenuously to Rajkumar’s version of events:

Dolly clapped her hands over her ears. ‘It’s a lie. Every word of it. You’ve made it all up. Everything, every last word. There was not a line of truth in anything you said tonight. Min and Mebya [the Burmese King and Queen] were gods to the people of Mandalay. No one would have dared do the things you described... People cried when we were taken away.’

‘They did. That is true. But this too is true: the mob, the palace. I was there, and so were you. You must recall.... (127)

Once again Ghosh portrays a conflict over the kinds of violence that get to be remembered; as in *The Shadow Lines*, a character resists retaining the memory of a riot in the narrative of her past.

The commentary Ghosh is returning to regarding war as a tool of empire can best be seen by pairing two characters with opposite sensibilities: Uma and her nephew, Arjun. As a young teen, Uma made what was considered to be an extremely advantageous marriage to Beni Prasad Dey, a Cambridge-educated Bengali whom Ghosh portrays as a kind, intelligent, and politically aware man. Their marriage is rather inexplicably bad: Dey wants a western-style marriage of equal partners, and Uma does not appear to know what she wants or why she is dissatisfied. Eventually Uma makes the decision to leave the marriage, and Dey, who is also having problems with his British superiors, commits suicide. Uma, who inherits Dey’s wealth, sets off to begin a new kind of life, first by visiting Dolly in Burma, and then by traveling throughout the world. Reflecting upon her husband’s life, Uma sees the pressures of empire, and how “there seemed never to be a moment when he was not haunted by the fear of being thought lacking by his British colleagues,” despite the fact that he was renowned for his intelligence and skill and considered to be “a model for his countrymen” (161). Uma vows to find a remedy for the problems empire creates. The reader is privy to a few of the letters she sends Dolly over the years, but Uma remains a secondary character until she returns from New York to see Dolly in 1929 at the age of fifty. Dolly goes to greet Uma’s ship and is surprised to find there a cheering crowd which is also waiting for Uma’s arrival. Uma

explains to Dolly that in New York she had become an active member of the Indian Independence League. Uma had come in contact with a small community of Indians in New York who had settled there to “seek shelter from the surveillance of the Empire’s intelligence services,” and because of affordable education (191). While living amongst that community for twenty-three years, Uma has become an active politician. She is against the British Empire and its presence in India, particularly its military presence. Uma explains to Dolly that “In India, on the other hand, it was the military that devoured the bulk of public monies,” that as her colleague Lala Har Dayal pointed out, “India was, in effect a vast garrison and that it was the impoverished Indian peasant who paid both for the upkeep of the conquering army and for Britain’s eastern campaigns” (191). Uma preaches against Empire’s longevity, pointing out that “it was not they themselves nor even their children who would pay the true price of this Empire: that the conditions being created in their homeland were such as to ensure that their descendants would enter the new epoch as cripples...” (191-2). Uma has acquired an awareness of empire’s inequities; she is visiting Dolly on her way back to her home in Calcutta to try to work to defeat the British Empire and force its departure.

Uma’s visit to Dolly in Burma happens to coincide with some anti-Indian riots there; the Indians living in Burma had built a prosperous and wealthy community, yet because of such success were considered by the Burmese to be either working as an extension of the British Empire or as Indian colonizers of Burma. Uma and Dolly witness a gruesome riot, which fills Uma with dismay. These events remind her of those “that had preceded the outbreak of the Indian uprising of 1857” (213). She sees it all as being the fruits of Empire. Uma thinks:

The uprising and the means of its suppression were the culmination of a month-long nightmare: it was as though she were witnessing the realization of her worst fears; once again, Indian soldiers were being used to fortify the Empire. Nobody in India seemed to know of these events; no one seemed to care. It seemed imperative that someone should take on the task of letting the people of her country know. (213)

Uma returns to India aware and prepared to fight. “But she saw now that a popular insurrection, inspired by legend and myth, stood no chance of prevailing against a force such as the Empire—so skillful and ruthless in its deployment of its overwhelming power; so expert in the management of opinion” (222). The riots that Uma witnesses in Burma turn her towards Gandhi and his satyagraha; she sees that Empire will always trump riots, so once in Calcutta, she writes to Gandhi and joins his side.

At this point, however, Ghosh complicates his presentation of the issue by introducing Arjun, a character who initially serves as a contrast to Uma’s point of view. Whereas Uma formed her opinions about the British Empire in India while abroad (and ironically on travels financed by the fortune her husband made as a colonial District Administrator), Ghosh has Arjun learn about empire the hard way: in the belly of the beast, so to speak, as a soldier in the British military. Ghosh illustrates Arjun’s often painful trajectory from stereotypical middleman to a defector living on the run, proposing as he does so the limitations of war and its function as a mere projection of empire—no matter what one’s allegiances. Arjun, the handsome nephew of Uma, is a lackadaisical and rather aimless young man, until he applies and gets accepted to the Indian Military Academy as an officer cadet (224). Immediately upon entering the academy, he thrives on his newfound identity as a soon-to-be officer of the British military. Of course, Ghosh does not portray this as a good thing. To the reader, Arjun appears a dupe as he endlessly brags of the benefits and good deeds of the British Army in India, proudly proclaiming

that his new battalion, the 1/1 Jats, remained loyal to Britain even during the 1857 Mutiny (228). It becomes clear that the new identity which Arjun is so fond of is inextricably bound to British imperialism. Arjun's "vocabulary seemed now to consist mainly of jargon intermixed with assorted bits of English" (242); he becomes a player in the Great Game, finding "immense satisfaction in working on the details of plans that had been dictated by others—not necessarily people either, but manuals of procedure" (241); he has soldier friends wherever he goes in a way that clearly illustrates how he is part of the old-boy network (241); and he even has his own personal "other," his batboy, Kishan Singh, a military servant whom he describes as belonging to a class that is "very sentimental, these faujis, despite their moustaches and bloodshot eyes. It's true what the Britishers say: at heart they're very unspoilt; the salt of the earth—you can depend on them to be faithful. Just the kind of men you'd want by your side in a tight spot" (229). Ghosh is careful to show how Arjun has not just joined the military, but become part and parcel of the whole narrative of empire through this association with the military (which is about to fight for Empire). He and his friends have taken on specific Roles: "Hardy was the Spit-and-Polish Perfectionist, Arjun a Ladies' Man, another a Pukka Sahib and so on. These paper-thin portraits were part of the collective lore of their camaraderie" (242). They have become part of the story-telling of war and succumbed to the allure of its narrative. Emphasis is placed on the aspect of this narrative which portrays the military and the empire it represents as being a unifying force. This is in direct opposition to what will occur when the British Empire withdraws from India: the divisions and chaos of Partition. Arjun and his friends remark on how the military brings them all together—and at this point in the novel they still see this as benevolent:

Usually they were just ‘brothers,’ but at times they were also much more, even the ‘First True Indians.’ ‘Look at us,’ they would say, ‘Punjabis, Marathas, Bengalis, Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims. Where else in India would you come across a group such as ours—where region and religion don’t matter—where we can all drink together and eat beef and pork and think nothing of it?’ (242)

They can be “unified” if they adapt the habits and customs of the British military, and in disarray if they dare to step outside the lines of the imperial box.

Arjun’s twin sister Manju, with whom he corresponds and shares the tales of his new military life, admires his new viewpoints. His aunt Uma, now back in Calcutta and living in her half of the family home, is a much more discriminating listener, to put it mildly. Working for Gandhi, and with her mission being to get the British out of India, Uma disagrees with Arjun about everything. Uma and Arjun are brought together on the day of Manju’s wedding to Dolly and Rajkumar’s oldest son, Neel. They go on what is meant to be a quick drive to the market to pick up some last-minute items, and get held up by a large anti-war demonstration. Arjun had heard nothing about this demonstration, and his ignorance annoys Uma. She and Arjun, along with Dolly’s younger son, Dinu, discuss empire and the impending world war while stuck in the car. Dinu defends the war as being a fight against fascism, but Uma says the primary issue is one of empire. Claiming that the war is just a tool of empire, Uma argues: “Worse still, the Empire has become the ideal of national success—a model for all nations to aspire to. Think of the Belgians, racing off to seize the Congo—they killed ten or eleven million people there. And what was it they wanted, other than to create a version of this Empire? Isn’t that what Japan and Germany want today—empires of their own?” (255-6). This sets the three of them off, and a heady argument about Empire ensues—the kind of direct discussion that the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* is not able to have. In *The Glass Palace*,

Ghosh has his characters more directly confront and act out the conclusions that the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* ponders about empire and war.

Perhaps this conversation is responsible for sowing the seeds that will lead to Arjun's eventual disillusionment with his military role, for from this point onwards, each time we see Arjun he is accumulating awareness and knowledge which will change his perspective. When Britain joins the war, Arjun's 1/1 Jats immediately get called into action, although they are not sure which front they will be sent to. When the Jats are mobilized, Arjun is displayed as still being in full agreement with the empire; in fact, he is even preparing for the war by reading World War I texts which he exchanges with his English commanding officer: "Their tastes proved to be complementary: the CO introduced Arjun to Robert Graves and Wilfred Owen. Arjun lent him his copies of H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* and Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*" (271). Arjun first begins to notice the small injustices, such as the Indian officers not being allowed to use the club pool, and the grumblings of some of his fellow Indian officers including his best friend, Hardy; he also takes note of the comments made by the people of Malaya that he is just a mercenary for hire by the British. When the Jats are in the line of fire and are getting bested by the Japanese in Malaya, the discontent of Arjun's fellow officers becomes impossible for him to ignore. At camp one night a plane flies overhead and scatters pamphlets signed by Amreek Singh of the Indian Independence League, asking "*do you really wish to sacrifice your lives for an Empire that has kept your country in slavery for two hundred years?*" (337). Arjun burns the pamphlets, but he cannot stop musing over their contents. Arjun's friend Hardy takes Uma's role and tries to dissuade Arjun of his loyalties to empire. Such conversations

inevitably deal with what war reveals about empire: says Hardy, “Yaar, I sometimes think of all the wars my father and grandfather fought in—in France, Africa, Burma. Does anyone ever say—the Indians won this war or that one? It would have been the same here” (351).

Although Hardy soon defects to join the Indian National Army and fight on the side of the Japanese, it is the collapse of the hierarchy as represented between Arjun and his batman, Kishan Singh, that allows Arjun to really awaken to the meanings of his loyalties to empire. Arjun is wounded in an attack by the Japanese, and it is Kishan Singh who saves Arjun’s life. While hiding in a drainage pipe and waiting for the Japanese to pass through, Arjun, weak from his injury, sees Kishan Singh for the first time as his equal and desires to converse with him as such. However, he finds that “he did not know the right words in Hindustani; did not even know the tone of voice in which such questions could be asked” (370). Sounding just like the narrator of *The Shadow Lines*, Arjun wrestles with this disability: “There were things he did not know how to say. There was so much that he did not know how to say, in any language.... How was that possible? Was it because no one had taught them the words? The right language? Perhaps because it might be too dangerous?” (370). It is the toppling of Kishan Singh as “other” that frees Arjun to finally begin to understand—and reject—his role as “other” to the British.

Arjun’s entire adult identity was shaped around being a member of the military. When his loyalties to the British Empire are dismantled, his connection to the military and the military mind-set makes it very difficult for Arjun to adjust to a new mentality. He

joins Hardy and the Indian National Army and breaks with his British CO. Yet in many ways Ghosh portrays him as a man who is still “lost”. Arjun agonizes:

But who would claim his loyalty now? The old loyalties of India, the ancient ones—they’d been destroyed long ago; the British had built their Empire by effacing them. But the Empire was dead now—he knew this because he had felt it die within himself, where it had held its strongest dominion—and with whom was he now to keep faith? (380)

As a member of the Indian National Army, Arjun is recruited by Subhas Chandra Bose in 1943 and fights on. However, it is his refusal to sever himself from the ethos of war that ultimately defeats Arjun. Arjun’s family learns of his association with Bose, and his old friend Hardy informs his family that “Arjun was among those who had died a hero, Hardy said. And so had Kishan Singh. That was all they knew about Arjun’s death and they were content that it should be so” (414). Perhaps fittingly, Arjun’s family accepts his death under the terms of the most general of war narratives: he lost his life battling for the good of his soon-to-be new nation. Ghosh later provides the reader with the information that Arjun’s last few days were not as tidy as this, since they comprised part of a reality that did not fit into any war narrative. The reality of the violence of Arjun and Kishan Singh’s deaths is silenced and usurped by the more powerful narrative of war. Dolly’s younger son, Dinu, has one more encounter with Arjun towards the end of the war. Dinu meets Arjun and the remnants of his INA “battalion” in the Teak forests of Burma. Arjun, Kishan, and the rest are starving and ill—Dinu almost does not recognize them. Arjun tells Dinu, “We rebelled against an Empire that has shaped everything in our lives; colored everything in the world as we know it. It is a huge, indelible stain which has tainted all of us. We cannot destroy it without destroying ourselves. And that, I suppose, is where I am” (446). Kishan Singh tries to defect and return to his family, and

Arjun, still living by the rules of the military, shoots Kishan for his defection. Arjun explains, “Procedures. And we have to respect them. That’s how armies are run —that’s what makes them different from street gangs” (451). Ghosh is once again making the point that war cannot be disassociated from empire and its stigmas; Arjun realizes the evils of empire, but he does not realize in time how war is inextricably entangled with the priorities of empire; he cannot stop following the “procedures” of western war. Ghosh has Arjun reach some of the right conclusions, but because of his military persona he is not able to attain the knowledge that the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* achieves. To make this point even clearer, Ghosh ends *The Glass Palace* with Dinu living in present-day Myanmar, and struggling against its oppressive military dictatorship; Dinu, however, uses art as his method of struggle, and not military tactics. His photography will tell a different story from war.

Mufti writes that world history as a synthesis of human experience “can proceed only by means that appear limited, partial, and local” and that such a synthesis “does not depend on preexisting categories or at least is not a mere rearrangement of them. The point of such synthesis is precisely not to reify the whole” (238). Ghosh makes this clear in *The Glass Palace*, and it is also the epiphany of the narrator of *The Shadow Lines*: he has to learn how to hear equally the “clamor of the voices within” him (88). The narrator has been working hard to piece together the events of the riots of 1964 and how they intersected with his family and their told and untold family stories. It is only at the end of the novel, when he finally hears May’s version of Tridib’s death—an eyewitness version which he could not bring himself to request—that he is able to really see and understand

this chapter of his life. The narrator says that “I was glad too, and grateful, for the glimpse she had given me of a final redemptive mystery” (246). This “mystery” is a healthy silence, unlike the silences that have surrounded the narrator’s experience of riots; it is enabled by the narrator’s hearing still one more version of events, and thus the more versions the narrator is able to hear, the closer he gets to a true understanding of the events of his life.

Significantly, it is not only the narrator who has to learn how to discern and rearrange all the layers of a story. For Ghosh writes *The Shadow Lines* in such a way that we, as readers, must adopt the methods of the narrator: we must filter, rearrange, and prioritize as we read, as we gradually make the following discoveries: that the novel is not written chronologically, the same story will be told at different times by different characters, the location of the stories and of the narrator switches back and forth between India and England without preamble, and much of what we have been trained to think of as key pieces of information are withheld from us temporarily (Tridib’s fate) and permanently (the narrator’s name). Our mapping out of the novel itself parallels the narrator’s most important postcolonial project: his gradual realization that stories of literature and history still tend to produce western versions of events. The narrator--and the reader along with him--must learn to see the mechanism behind the prioritization of war over riots, for such a mechanism is the remains of empire.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said instructs that, "Imperialism did not end, did not suddenly become 'past,' once decolonization had set in motion the dismantling of the classical empires" (282). I have extended this idea in *Excavating the Remains of Empire* by proving that the connections between empire and the novel did not dissolve with this official "dismantling": on the contrary, empire still has a home in the novel. Novels written in the second half of the twentieth-century frequently further the preoccupations and anxieties surrounding empire that appeared in novels written at the beginnings of empire's end, such as E. M. Forster's *A Passage To India* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. At present, then, postimperialism and the novel are as intricately involved as was imperialism and the novel. The demise of empire, and the ensuing cultural changes such a demise has wrought, occupy empire's well-established space in the English novel.

There continues to be evidence that the relationship between empire and literature is not over yet, despite the "post" in postimperialism. In a recent edition of *The New Yorker*, Margaret Drabble's sister, the novelist A. S. Byatt, has published a story called "The Thing in the Forest" which can serve to re-emphasize the continued presence of empire as a subtext. Worded like a fairy tale or fable, Byatt's story begins with two young girls, Penny and Primrose, who are being evacuated out of London to escape the

bombing of World War II. They end up staying in an old English manor estate and there discover both that something is rotten in the state of Denmark, so to speak, and that there is something nasty in the woodshed. Stereotypical English pastoral life, it turns out, has a monstrous center. The two girls spy the literal beast that symbolizes this national decay in the woods; it is a smelly and horrifying mound of rot that engulfs what is in its path and trails bits and pieces of English domestic flotsam, such as “wire netting, foul dishcloths, wire-wool full of pan scrubbing, rusty nuts and bolts” (83). Penny and Primrose manage to escape from it, but a younger child who has followed them into the forest—Alys, a young, blond, winsome English thing—is devoured. Decades pass and both girls, now women, are leading barren and unfulfilling lives in 1980’s England. In 1984 they visit the old English manor to which they had been evacuated, and meet in one of the rooms. They confirm that they had, in fact, experienced the beast in the forest, and that it had ruined their lives: but they each react differently to this confirmation. Penny ends up returning to the forest and being killed by the beast, whereas Primrose finally is able to tell stories about it. She turns her experience into narrative. Once again, then, we have a narrative that is set in both war-time England and 1980’s England; once again, war reveals something monstrous at the heart of the nation that seems to be—or at least indict—traditional English life, and in particular, the aristocratic life financially and materially enabled by the spoils of Empire. One character succumbs to this rottenness at the core, and the other tries to appease her experience by narrating it. The pattern seems the same. Woolf, Barker, Drabble, and Ghosh all write about empire and access it via war. They use fiction to make sense of history, and do so in a way that reveals the continuing connection between imperialism and the novel.

It is war that enables Byatt's Penny and Primrose to have the occasion to meet the imperial "beast"; as I have demonstrated throughout my dissertation, this is not an unusual technique. For one sure way to be aware of the continued role of imperialism in novels is to take cognizance of how war is represented in these novels. Keeping vigil for war inevitably leads to the observation of how the author is using it to speak to issues of empire. As Said noted, "anti-imperialist resistance builds gradually from sporadic and often unsuccessful revolts until after World War One it erupts variously in major parties, movements, and personalities all over the empire..." (219). World War I signaled the end of the British Empire, and it made this end apparent to both the colonizers and the colonized. Thus it is that when Virginia Woolf writes a novel shortly after the war, this anxiety over empire surfaces repeatedly. It is also because of what this war discloses about empire that makes it the perfect setting for Barker to use to process some of the implications of empire's demise. Drabble chooses the Cambodian genocide as the background in front of which her characters come to terms with empire no longer being a passage to a different experience and view of life; and Ghosh begins with World War II and the contrast between how his English and Indian characters react to it, and then moves from the war against China in 1962 to riots that occurred at the same time, all the while having his narrator evaluate such violence in relation to what it proves about the remains of empire. For Ghosh and the other authors, war becomes an apt tool to excavate these remains: war begins as the symptom of the crisis of empire and ends up magnifying the workings of empire, as well as itself becoming empire's coliseum-sized relic.

In *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh writes that “The theatre of war, where generals meet, is the stage on which states disport themselves: they have no use for memories of riots” (226). War’s pageantry, then, is the language of nations, and the story of a nation has to be made to fit into the simplicity of war posturing. However, despite—or perhaps because of—the fact that the narrative of war consists of building blocks that are binaries, such narratives also have their own seductiveness and power. There is a familiarity to the ingredients of war that we can immediately access. As I have shown in my chapter five, Ghosh well captures this instant war fluency. When the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* is discussing the events of the early sixties with his friends, Ghosh writes that “Over our half-pots of tea in the canteen, we recalled how quickly we had taught ourselves to distinguish the shapes of their aircraft from ours, how our mothers had donated bangles and earrings for the cause, how we’d stood at street-corners, taking collections and selling little paper flags” (215). Everyone seems instantly to know by heart their roles in this “theatre of war”. Of course, this is the conversation that leads the narrator to realize that the war has been documented and remembered, whereas the stories and facts of the riots of the same time period have been silenced. He questions, “If they [journalists] knew, why couldn’t they speak of it? They were speaking of so much else, of the Congress conference, of the impending split in the Communist Party, of wars and revolutions: what is it that makes all those things called ‘politics’ so eloquent and these other unnamable things so silent?” (223). His narrator continues on to question why such a contrast exists between war and riots, and why it is that war and its elements are so dominant.

A related questioning occurred in England after World War I. In this war, the power of the war narrative, riddled with too much propaganda, eventually weakened. Trudi Tate emphasizes this shift when she writes first that “the Great War was the first to organize propaganda in a ‘scientific manner’” (41), and then points out how “Casualty figures were misrepresented; defeats were presented as victories; atrocity stories were invented; accounts of real suffering were censored; opposition to the war was suppressed” (43). Such manipulations, as she asserts “were much criticized after the war” (41). The facts regarding earlier military events—such as the Mutiny—were of course as distorted; but with the reality of the Great War closer to home, the curtain of the theatre of war was often too hastily raised, so to speak, revealing the discrepancies such manipulations were meant to disguise. It is the glitches in the war narrative, therefore, and the slippage that war, in the twentieth century, tends to reveal about the workings of power that make it a resourceful entry into issues of imperialism.

War is epic, and two of the four novelists I focus upon in my dissertation have written epic trilogies featuring it, yet it is the discrepancies of war that my authors explicate: the stories that war unwittingly drags into light, as well as the stories that war drowns out. Woolf, for example, shows the effects of war on a shell-shocked soldier, Septimus Warren Smith, and then makes this soldier, in all his so-called insanities, parallel an upper-class English housewife. Septimus’s trauma-induced hallucinations and anxieties often intersect with the anxieties that the war, the British Empire itself, and the social and cultural structures it produces and upholds, all create in Clarissa Dalloway. By having a psychiatrist intersperse his observations and treatment of shell-shocked soldiers with remembrances of his experiences and observations as an ethnologist in colonized

Melanesia, Barker uses war and its ruptures to highlight, and thus become accustomed to empire's demise. Margaret Drabble's characters are able to achieve enlightenment about their own new postimperial cultural identity by viewing the relatively new ravages of the wars and genocide of Cambodia; they use its postimperial chaos to assuage their own postimperial uneasiness. And Ghosh's narrator comes to see war and the power of its narrative as bullying and falsely postimperial: on the contrary, the prominence of war narratives recharges the flagging empire in detrimental ways.

One aspect of war that I have shown the novelists in my dissertation to be elucidating and contending with is the tendency it shares with empire of categorizing everything into one side of a binary. Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway tries to escape the constraints and restrictions of binary-thinking by in part complicating the traditional binary of male and female relationships. Her penchant for the more shifting dynamics that exist between three people is a way that Woolf herself reflects her own beliefs about the detriments inherent in always seeing aspects of the world as either this or that, and she frequently connects the inequalities of the gender binary to inequalities and injustices in the binaries of war and empire. Pat Barker has her characters confront the binaries imposed on them as soldiers fighting in World War I, as they constantly point out the more multifaceted reality: they show how the "us" that is England fighting the war contains a bevy of "thems" within it. There is no one good and no one evil. Her characters also try to cross the line between the binaries: Billy Prior, for example, becomes soldier and pacifist, upper and lower class, gay and straight, doctor and patient. He will not adhere to the simple falsity of one binary side. Margaret Drabble's characters travel East to escape the amalgam of end-of-the century London, only to find that the

East is no longer the West's "other". The old demarcation lines—used for creative inspiration, economic gain, and adventurous escape—are blurred in the new world order. Ghosh's narrator sees how much is left out of the either/or narratives allowed a nation today. He thinks of how "The only relationship my vocabulary permitted...was war or friendship.... And things which did not fit my vocabulary were merely pushed over the edge into the chasm of that silence" (214). He comes to the conclusion that new modes of archiving and documenting a nation's history need to be given space. Such binary vision and binary philosophy are still aspects of contemporary war and politics. One need only read a newspaper or listen to the news today to see how prevalent the binary mindset still is. Our president claims that you are either for terrorism or against it: there is no middle ground. His attorney general, Robert Ashcroft, is proud of being "serious about the binary nature of the universe, which for him is defined by right and wrong, good and evil, heaven and hell" (Toobin 54).

Furthermore, as I have consistently professed, where the binaries of war exist, the binaries of empire are sure to follow. This is still true today—as can be seen in a recent editorial in *The Nation*, in which Amitav Ghosh warns that empire seems to be making a comeback. He claims that "References to empire are no longer deployed ironically or in a tone of warning; the idea has become respectable enough that the *New York Times* ran an article describing the enthusiasm it now evokes in certain circles" (24). Ghosh asserts that in both the United States and in England, the idea of empire as an institution with current potential benefit has been bandied about. He contends: "The idea of empire may seem too antiquated to be worth combating. But it is always the ideas that appeal to both ends of the spectrum that stand the best chance of precipitating an unspoken consensus,

especially when they bear the imprimatur of such figures as the British prime minister. That is why this may be a good time to remind ourselves of some of the reasons imperialism fell into discredit in the first place” (24). In order to explain why empire is *not* a good idea, Ghosh himself has to resort to reminding his reader of the binaries inherent in all philosophies of empire. He writes, “To begin with, empire cannot be the object of universal human aspirations. In a world run by empires, some people are rulers and some are the ruled: It is impossible to think of a situation where all peoples possess an empire” (24). All empires have to have a “them” to set their own identity against. And finally, in a manner that comes full circle back to the starting point of my dissertation, Ghosh avers that, “Those who embrace the idea of empire frequently cite the advantages of an imperial peace over the disorder of the current world situation. This disregards the fact that the peace of the British, French and Austro-Hungarian empires was purchased at the cost of a destabilization so radical as to generate the two greatest conflicts in human history: the world wars” (24). The binaries of empire lead to the binaries of war; the simplicities of binary thinking are limiting, deceptive and ultimately destructive. Instead, one must resist shying away from the complex and turning it into a seductive yet false narrative of us and them, good and evil.

If, as I have proven, empire still exists in the postimperial novel in a mixture of shame, nostalgia, melancholia, and hopeful change, is the novel as a genre affected, and if so, how? In *The Gates of Ivory*, Drabble’s character, Liz Headleand, sees the novelist being replaced by a kind of new media hegemony. She is able to figure out what became of her novelist friend, Stephen Cox, on his old-fashioned passage East, because a film crew is filming the story of his life. Movies appear to be taking the place of the novel in

the English culture—and, of course, movies are dominated by the American influence. However, Drabble herself describes this movie takeover in a trilogy of novels that is well over a thousand pages long. In other words, the novel thrives as she proposes its possible demise. Furthermore, the new world order that her characters are gradually coming to terms with seems a perfect match for the novel's heteroglossia. Perhaps, then, it is time to turn to matters of form, since all of the novels I discuss integrate empire in ways that correspond with innovations in the form of the novel. Fredrick Jameson claims that "traces of imperialism" can be found in modernist literature, but that "they will be detected spatially, as formal symptoms, within the structure of First World modernist texts themselves" (64). It is logical, therefore, to extend these observations to postmodernist texts, for as Jameson himself contends: "it is in our time, since World War II, that the problem of imperialism is as it were restructured..." (47). For example, one of Virginia Woolf's modernist innovations was to write *Mrs Dalloway* as a stream of consciousness novel that flows throughout many consciousnesses; the reader will be in Clarissa's mind at the beginning of the page, and travel through the minds of people Clarissa passes on the street in a way that illustrates the connectedness of the psyches of the culture of one day in London, and how everything is interrelated and corresponds. It is because of this stream of consciousness form, however, that Woolf is able to show how the thoughts of the Londoners return so frequently to anxieties over the war and the state of the British Empire. We are able to see how people are beginning to worry about empire and its imminent demise. It is the format that allows the reader to see the prominence of the new anxieties over empire: we witness such worries appearing

threaded throughout everyday musings. Instead of references to it being abrupt or out of place, empire thus appears integrated into the thoughts of the people.

The points Pat Barker makes about empire are also connected to the choices she makes regarding some of the format elements of the structure of her trilogy. To begin with, in *The Ghost Road*, especially, Barker intersperses Rivers's reminiscences of his times as an ethnologist viewing the colonized Melanesians with Billy Prior's experiences in the war. By switching back and forth from the chaos that empire causes in the colonies to the chaos that the English themselves are experiencing in the war, Barker is able to emphasize all that war and empire share, as well as what war can reveal about empire. Another formal "symptom" of imperialism in Barker's postmodern novels is her use of historical figures alongside of fictional characters. Barker's choice of Sassoon as a character enables her to emphasize the role of the writer in the processing of empire's demise; Sassoon as writer is a witness to the chaos that empire brings about in the guise of war. Similarly, her use of Rivers, the well-known psychoanalyst and ethnologist, is also connected to her explications of empire and the acceptance of England's postimperial status. As a psychoanalyst and ethnologist, Rivers is equipped to hear the testimony of the writer and the soldier; he is able to serve as the reader's proxy, mirroring—from his ideal vantage point of observer of both empire and war—how to acknowledge and celebrate empire's demise. Barker's juxtaposition of fictional and factual characters enables her to more persuasively employ fiction to explain history, as well as perhaps assuaging and changing some of its effects.

All throughout Margaret Drabble's trilogy, she uses moments of metalepsis where her narrative will break down into lists of facts or possibilities, or where she will confront

the reader directly in a postmodern—and Rushdie-esque—dear reader aside. It is in *The Gates of Ivory*—the novel that has empire as its main theme—where these moments occur most frequently. The reader continually gets presented with facts about Cambodia, which very much appear to be “Great Game” facts—that is, the old way that England used to learn, know, and retain power over the East. These facts of course end up not being enough of a map of the East; her characters have to devise new ways of viewing the world, by discarding a lot of the “facts” they thought they could be certain of. Many of the lists of possibilities that Drabble makes—such as the possibilities of the fate of Mitra Akrun—end up being the only information about Mitra that the reader is given. We have to make what we will of these lists and decide which, if any, to believe. Towards the end of the novel we discover that many of these lists are all that exists of Stephen Cox’s postmodern novel of his passage East. His experience in the East—which in imperial times would have been linearly and concretely related—can no longer be turned into a narrative that would, in turn, be part of what the West used to produce its version of, and dominate, the East. His great Eastern novel is scraps and fragments that mirror the amalgam of the new world order. The reader has to process Stephen’s experience as a pastiche that cannot be relegated into—and simply explained by—binaries that continue the status quo of the old, imperial power structure.

Ghosh, too, structures his novel in a way that aptly reflects the main epiphany of his narrator. We do not know things we are used to knowing in a novel—such as the narrator’s name, and the various generations and connections between his family members—and thus we have to continually stop and align the various bits of information we are given. This is exacerbated by the non-linearity of the novel: Ghosh continually

switches from events in the narrator's childhood to events that happened before the narrator was born and that he has just heard about in stories, to events of the narrator's adulthood. As readers, we find ourselves rearranging and prioritizing what we are told by the narrator. Thus, when the narrator learns that there are some stories central to his childhood that have been silenced, our own assembling of Ghosh's novel gets indicted along with the narrator's positioning of the stories of his own life. We read the narrator's theorizing about what stories get silenced, and then can apply his own admonishments to how we have been reading the novel itself. Because of this structure, then, Ghosh is able to make his point about imperialism's stranglehold on multiple levels. Postimperialism in novels often coincides with the manipulations of the novel format; it is indeed manifest in "formal symptoms".

It thus is evident that shame and nostalgia for empire and the trauma of empire's dissolution *do* coexist in the postimperial, postwar novel. They are visible in the structural modifications of the novel format and as the content behind the "front" of war. For Woolf, the shame of war and empire were intricately connected; mentioning war leads to references of empire, and vice versa. Over sixty years later, both Barker and Drabble are still trying to appease the shame and thwart the nostalgia. Barker's approach to the shame of empire is to repeatedly draw parallels between the horrors of war and the horrors of empire, while Drabble's precise avoidance of the horrors of the British Empire by setting her novel in Cambodia—whose horrors are not directly connected to England, *per se*—speaks to this shame. In Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, shame and nostalgia for empire appear, but on a different axis. As Drabble's characters learn how to view and process their postimperial role, Ghosh's narrator is similarly navigating his way

amongst the remains of empire; what he discovers, however, is that the “imperial” in postimperial has not yet been completely de-fanged and disempowered. As Said asserts that the reader of, for example, Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*, needs to be aware of how the Bertrams finance their large English pastoral estate with their slave-worked sugar plantation in Antigua, so I assert that the reader of Woolf, Barker, Drabble, Ghosh, and other twentieth-century novelists should discern empire’s continued presence in their works. Empire and the novel are cohorts yet, and as readers, we should monitor and panopticon their continued relationship.

REFERENCE NOTES

¹ For example, when Fielding tries to defend Aziz, he is instructed to “Read any of the Mutiny records; which, rather than the Bhagavad Gita, should be your Bible in this country” (Forster 169).

² In *Virginia Woolf against Empire*, Phillips makes this case for many of Woolf’s novels. For example, she claims that in *Jacob’s Room*, “Jacob’s grounding in gender prejudice makes it easier for him to reduce other whole groups to a subhuman ‘enemy’” (xvi). Regarding *The Voyage Out*, she writes that “Woolf, from one end of her career to the other, repeatedly insists on just such a linkage between the relations of countries and those of men and women” (69). And about *The Years*: “Otway and Pargiter thus continue at home the tyrannies they have engaged in overseas, indicating the continuum between family and Empire insistently pointed out in Woolf’s books” (85).

³ I am using “empire at home” as synonymous with the English nation state, but also as such a nation state is considered, at least by its own inhabitants, to be the center of an imperial network: England is, therefore, more or less a metonymy for the British Empire.

⁴ “Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of

its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer..." (8-9).

⁵ His accusation is not limited to historians. In fact, the main example he uses is from literary criticism of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*: "Though Saleem Sinai narrates in English . . . his intertexts for both writing history and writing fiction are doubled: they are, on the one hand, from Indian legends, films, and literature and, on the other, from the West--*The Tin Drum*, *Tristram Shandy*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and so on.' It is interesting to note how this sentence teases out only those references that are from 'the West.' The author is under no obligation here to be able to name with any authority and specificity the 'Indian' allusions that make Rushdie's intertextuality 'doubled'" (2).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adam, Ian, and Helen Tiffin, Ed. Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1990.
- Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities. New York: Verso, 1983.
- Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." Public Culture 2.2 (1990): 1-24.
- Armstrong, Nancy. Desire and Domestic Fiction. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Bagchi, Nivedita. "The Process of Validation in Relation to Materiality and Historical Reconstruction in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*." Modern Fiction Studies 39.1 (1993): 187-202.
- Bal, Mieke, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer, Ed. Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999.
- Barber, Stephen. "Lip-Reading: Woolf's Secret Encounters." Novel Gazing: Queer Readings In Fiction. Ed. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. 401-443.
- Barker, Pat. The Eye In The Door. New York: A Plume Book, 1993.
- . The Ghost Road. New York: A Dutton Book, 1995.
- . Regeneration. New York: A Plume Book, 1991.
- Bazin, Nancy Topping and Jane Hamovit Lauter. "Virginia Woolf's Keen Sensitivity To War: Its Roots and Its Impact on Her Novels." Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth. Ed. Mark Hussey. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991. 14-39.
- Bhabha, Homi. The Location of Culture. London: Routledge, 1994.
- , Ed. Nation and Narration. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Bivona, Daniel. British Imperial Literature, 1870-1940: Writing and the Administration of Empire. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Boehmer, Elleke. Colonial and Postcolonial Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Booker, Keith. Colonial Power, Colonial Texts: India in the Modern British Novel. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997.

- Bové, Paul A, Ed. Edward Said and the Work of the Critic: Speaking Truth To Power. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Boyarin, Jonathan. Storm From Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Braybon, Gail and Penny Summerfield. Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars. London: Pandora Books, 1987.
- Briggs, Marlene A. "Veterans and Civilians: The Mediation of Traumatic Knowledge in Mrs Dalloway." Virginia Woolf and Communities. Ed. Jeanette McVicker and Laura Davis. New York: Pace University Press, 1999. 43-49.
- Bromberg, Pamela S. "The Development of Narrative Technique in Margaret Drabble's Novels." The Journal of Narrative Technique. 16.3 (1986) : 179-191.
- . "Margaret Drabble's The Radiant Way: Feminist Metafiction." Novel 24.1 (1990) : 5-25.
- Brooke, Rupert. The Poetical Works. London: Faber and Faber, 1946.
- Brown, Laura. Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Butalia, Urvashi. The Other Side of Silence. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Byatt, A. S. "The Thing In The Forest." The New Yorker 3 June 2002: 80-89.
- Cain, P. J. and A. G. Hopkins. British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688-1914. London: Longman, 1993.
- Caruth, Cathy. Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Cassidy, John. "The Blair Project." The New Yorker 6 December 1999: 116-125.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?" Representations 37 (1992) : 1-26.
- Chatterjee, Partha. The Nation and Its Fragments. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

- . Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- Clausewitz, Carl von. On War. New York: Penguin Books, 1968.
- Conrad, Joseph. The Shadow Line. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924.
- Das, G. K. E. M. Forster's India. New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977.
- Davis, Lennard. Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.
- Deane, Seamus. Introduction. Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature. By Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward W. Said. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990. 3-19.
- Deleuze, Gilles. The Deleuze Reader. Ed. Constantin V. Boundas. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Dirks, Nicholas B., Ed. Colonialism and Culture. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992.
- Dixon, Robert. "Travelling in the West': The Writing of Amitav Ghosh." Journal of Commonwealth Literature. 31:1 (1996) : 3-24.
- Donaldson, Laura E. Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender, and Empire-Building. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Drabble, Margaret. The Gates of Ivory. New York: Viking Penguin, 1991.
- . "Living in the Pastoral." The Threepenny Review (Fall 1997) : 22-23.
- . A Natural Curiosity. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.
- . The Radiant Way. New York: Ivy Books, 1987.
- Egerton, H. E. The War and the British Dominions. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914.
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke. Women and War. New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1987.
- Enloe, Cynthia. Does Khaki Become You?: The Militarization of Women's Lives. London: Pandora Books, 1983.
- Essame, H. The Battle For Europe, 1918. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972.

- Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub, M.D. Testimony: Crises of Witnessing In Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Forster, E. M. Selected Letters. Ed. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.
- . A Passage To India. New York: Harcourt, Brace & world, Inc., 1924.
- Foucault, Michel. The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences. New York: Pantheon Books, 1970.
- Freud, Sigmund. Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961.
- . Civilization and Its Discontents. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961.
- Fussell, Paul. The Great War and Modern Memory. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- George, Rosemary Marangoly. The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Ghosh, Amitav. The Glass Palace. New York: Random House, 2001.
- . "Imperial Temptation." The Nation 27 May 2002: 24.
- . The Shadow Lines. New York: Penguin Books, 1988.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. No Man's Land, Volume 1, The War of the Words. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
- . No Man's Land, Volume 2, Sexchanges. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Gikandi, Simon. Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Girard, René. Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure. Trans. Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965.
- Handley, William R. "War and the Politics of Narration in Jacob's Room." Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth. Ed. Mark Hussey. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991. 110-133.
- Hanley, Lynne. Writing War: Fiction, Gender, and Memory. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991.

- Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. Empire. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Harris, Greg. "Compulsory Masculinity, Britain, and the Great War: The Literary-Historical Work of Pat Barker." Critique 39.4 (1998) : 290-304.
- Harris, Michael. Outsiders and Insiders: Perspectives of Third World Culture in British and Post-Colonial Fiction. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1992.
- Hartmann, Heidi. "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union." Women and Revolution. Ed. Lydia Sargent. Boston: South End Press, 1981. 1-41.
- Henderson, Diana E. "Rewriting Family Ties: Woolf's Renaissance Romance." Virginia Woolf: Reading the Renaissance. Ed. Sally Greene. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999. 136-160.
- Herz, Judith Scherer. A Passage To India: Nation and Narration. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993.
- Higonnet, Margaret Randolph et al, Ed. Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. The Age of Empire, 1875-1914. New York: Pantheon Books, 1987.
- Hussey, Mark. "Living in a War Zone: An Introduction to Virginia Woolf as a War Novelist." Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth. Ed. Mark Hussey. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991. 1-13.
- Huyssen, Andreas. After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Hynes, Samuel. The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War. New York: A. Lane, 1997.
- James, Lawrence. Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Modernism and Imperialism." Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature. By Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward W. Said. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990. 43-66.
- . The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Joll, James. The Origins of the First World War, 2nd Edition. London: Longman, 1992.

- Kacandes, Irene. "Narrative Witnessing as Memory Work: Reading Gertrud Kolmar's A Jewish Mother." Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present. Ed. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer, Ed. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999. 24-38.
- Kaul, Suvir. "Separation Anxiety: Growing Up Inter/National in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*." Oxford Literary Review 16.1-2 (1994): 125-45.
- Keegan, John. The First World War. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.
- Kiernan, Ben. The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Kirk, John. "Recovered Perspectives: Gender, Class, and Memory in Pat Barker's Writing." Contemporary Literature 40.4 (1999): 603-626.
- Knutsen, Karen Patrick. "Leaving Dr. Leavis: A Farewell to the Great Tradition? Margaret Drabble's The Gates of Ivory." English Studies 6 (1996): 579-591.
- Lane, Christopher. The Ruling Passion: British Colonial Allegory and the Paradox of Homosexual Desire. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- Lanser, Susan Sniader. Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Levenback, Karen L. Virginia Woolf and the Great War. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1999.
- London, Bette. The Appropriated Voice: Narrative Authority in Conrad, Forster, and Woolf. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990.
- Lowe, Lisa. Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- MacDonald, Robert H. The Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880-1918. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994.
- Mackenzie, John M. Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986.
- Margaronis, Maria. "Blair's Cooled-Off Britannia." The Nation 4 June 2001: 19-23.
- Marwick, Arthur. The Deluge: British Society and the First World War. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1965.

- McClintock, Anne. Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Mepham, John. "Mourning and Modernism." Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays. Ed. Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy. Totowa: Barnes and Noble Press, 1983.
- Meyer, Susan. Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Morrison, Blake. "War Stories." The New Yorker 22 January 1996: 78-82.
- Mufti, Aamir R. "Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism, and the Question of Minority Culture." Edward Said and the Work of the Critic: Speaking Truth to Power. Ed. Paul A. Bove. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. 229-256.
- . "Secularism and Minority: Elements of a Critique." Social Text 14:4 (1995): 75-96.
- Neuman, Shirley. "Heart of Darkness: Virginia Woolf and the Spectre of Domination." Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays. Ed. Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy. Totowa: Barnes and Noble Press, 1983.
- Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Me Moiré." Representations 26 (1989): 7-25.
- O'Dair, Sharon. "Beyond Necessity: The Consumption of Class, The Production of Status, and the Persistence of Inequality." New Literary History 31 (2000): 337-354.
- Pandey, Gyanendra. "In Defense of the Fragment: Writing About Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today." Representations 37 (1992): 27-55.
- Perry, Donna. "Going Home Again: An Interview with Pat Barker." The Literary Review 34.2 (1991): 235-244.
- Peel, Ellen. "Subject, Object, and the Alternation of First- and Third-Person Narration in Novels by Alther, Atwood, and Drabble: Toward a Theory of Feminist Aesthetics." Critique 30.2 (1989): 107-122.
- Phillips, Kathy J. Virginia Woolf Against Empire. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994.

- Poole, Roger. "‘We All Put Up With You Virginia’: Irreceivable Wisdom about War." Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth. Ed. Mark Hussey. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991. 79-100.
- Prakash, Gyan, Ed. After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- Pykett, Lyn. "The Century's Daughters: Recent Women's Fiction and History." Critical Quarterly 29.3 71-77.
- Ray, Sangeeta. En-Gendering India: Woman and Nation in Colonial and Postcolonial Narratives. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Renan, Ernst. "What is a Nation?" Nation and Narration. Ed. Homi K. Bhabha. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Rivers, W. H. R. The History of Melanesian Society, Volume I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914.
- . The History of Melanesian Society, Volume II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914.
- . Kinship and Social Organization. London: The Athlone Press, 1968.
- . Medicine, Magic, and Religion. London: Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1927.
- . Psychology and Ethnology. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., Inc., 1926.
- . Psychology and Politics. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1923.
- . Social Organization. London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1968.
- Roy, Parama. Indian Traffic: Identities In Question in Colonial and Postcolonial India. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Rubenstein, Roberta. "Fragmented Bodies/Selves/Narratives: Margaret Drabble's Postmodern Turn." Contemporary Literature 35.1 (1992): 136-155.
- . "Severed Heads, Primal Crimes, Narrative Revisions: Margaret Drabble's A Natural Curiosity." Critique 33.2 (1992): 95-105.
- . "Sexuality and Intertextuality: Margaret Drabble's The Radiant Way." Contemporary Literature 30.1 (1989): 95-112.
- Rushdie, Salman. Imaginary Homelands. London: Granta Books, 1992.

- Said, Edward. Culture and Imperialism. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.
- . Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- Sassoon, Siegfried. Memoirs of an Infantry Officer. London: Faber and Faber, 1930.
- Scarry, Elaine. The Body In Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Schaefer, Josephine O'Brien. "The Great War and 'This Late Age of World's Experience' in Cather and Woolf." Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth. Ed. Mark Hussey. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991. 134-150.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Sen, Asha. "Crossing Boundaries in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*." Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies 5.1 (1997): 46-58.
- Sharpe, Jenny. Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman In the Colonial Text. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Showalter, Elaine. The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980. New York: Penguin Books, 1985.
- Silkin, Jon, Ed. First World War Poetry. New York: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Sizemore, Christine Wick. A Female Vision of the City: London in the Novels of Five British Women. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989.
- Slobodin, Richard. W. H. R. Rivers. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.
- Smith, G. Elliot. Introduction. Medicine, Magic, and Religion. By W. H. R. Rivers. London: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1927.
- . Introduction. Psychology and Ethnology. By W. H. R. Rivers. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., Inc., 1926.
- Smith, Susan Bennett. "Reinventing Grief Work: Virginia Woolf's Feminist Representations of Mourning in Mrs Dalloway and To The Lighthouse." 20th Century Literature 41.4 (1995): 310-327.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics. New York: Routledge, 1987.

- . "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." Race, Writing and Difference. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. 262-280.
- Suleri, Sara. The Rhetoric of English India. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Tate, Trudi. Modernism, History, and the First World War. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.
- Taylor, A. J. P. The First World War. New York: Penguin Books, 1963.
- Thieme, John. "Passages to England." Liminal Postmodernisms. Ed. Theo D'haen and Hans Bertens. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994. 55-78.
- Thomas, Nicholas. Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Thomas, Sue. "Virginia Woolf's Septimus Smith and Contemporary Perceptions of Shell Shock." English Language Notes 25.2 (1987): 49-57.
- Toobin, Jeffrey. "Profiles: Ashcroft's Ascent." The New Yorker 15 April 2002: 50-63.
- Torgovnick, Marianna. Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Trevelyan, Sir Ernest J. India and the War. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914.
- Tylee, Claire M. The Great War and Women's Consciousness: Images of Militarism and Womanhood in Women's Writings, 1914-64. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1990.
- Usui, Masami. "The Female Victims of the War in Mrs Dalloway." Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth. Ed. Mark Hussey. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991. 151-163.
- Van Alphen, Ernst. "Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory, and Trauma." Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present. Ed. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer, Ed. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999. 24-38.
- Wachman, Gay. Lesbian Empire: Radical Crosswriting in the Twenties. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001.
- Warhol, Robyn R. Gendered Interventions: Narrative Discourse in the Victorian Novel. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989.

- Waugh, Patricia. Practising Postmodernism, Reading Modernism. London: Edward Arnold, 1992.
- Winter, Jay. "Producing the Television Series *The Great War and the Shaping of the Twentieth Century*." Profession 1999. 15-26.
- Wolpert, Stanley. A New History of India. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Woolf, Virginia. The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 1, 1915-1919. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977.
- . The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 2, 1920-1924. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.
- . Jacob's Room. London: A Triad Grafton Book, 1922.
- . Mrs Dalloway. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1925.
- . A Room Of One's Own. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1929.
- . Three Guineas. London: The Hogarth Press, 1986.
- . "Thunder at Wembley." Collected Essays, Volume IV. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967. 184-187.