"The Anaesthetized and Bewildered Present":
The Dislocation of Time in 1940s Modernist Texts

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Introduction – Blitzed Times

When, in *The Great Gatsby* (1925), F. Scott Fitzgerald writes how Gatsby must confront "the unreality of reality" (106), he cogently expresses a widespread feeling shared by many writers at the beginning of the 20th century: that is, the realisation that the individual's conception of the world could be, in some way, 'unreal'. Several writers in the modernist period similarly voice a dissociation with the 'now': Ford Madox Ford, for instance, suggests that "the whole of life is really like that; we are almost always in one place with our minds somewhere quite other" ("On Impressionism" 203). This dissonance between physical and mental presence becomes especially topical in literature during and after World War Two. For example, in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941), situated on the brink of the Second World War, one of the protagonists senses the "future disturbing our present" (51); while in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), the heroine remarks that at times she feels "the past and the future pressing so hard on either side that there's no room for the present at all" (334).

Indeed, many works of the late modernist period are claustrophobic in the sense that there seems to be hardly any 'room for the present'. This appears most forcefully in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Demon Lover and Other Stories* (1944), Rosamond Lehmann's *The Ballad and the Source* (1944), and Rose Macaulay's *The World My Wilderness* (1950), where the actual present strikes characters as unreal, because history seems overturned: past, present and future mingle erratically. Their setting, which is either the deceptively safe countryside, or bombed London, magnifies this process of temporal disorientation. With that, these modernist narratives weave themselves into current theories of the individual's perception of time. It will therefore be illuminating to examine these prose texts in relation to T.S Eliot's poetic commentary on the heightened ambivalent attitude to time, *Four Quartets* (1943), which was similarly written in part as a reaction to the writer's experience of the Blitz. This thesis will argue that under the pressure of the war and its aftermath, 1940s Modernist texts exhibit

repeated moments of stress that hinge on a heightened perception of time and the questioning of its linearity.

Sometimes it is nostalgia that impedes the present's potential, yet the past more often features as an inimical, or even predatory, force. In the shape of family history, the past palpably taints the lives of the protagonists in *The Ballad and the Source*; in Macaulay's *The World My Wilderness* the past haunts an adolescent girl who envisions post-war London as a place where the ghost of the Blitz still resides. T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* represents history as a winding, circular journey that grants the traveller views of both destruction and regeneration, of ghosts and new life. Elizabeth Bowen's short stories show characters haunted by memories that may not even be their own. For example, in "The Inherited Clock" time is used as a means to physically harm a girl. In "The Happy Autumn Fields", both the past and the present are portrayed as interchangeable dreamlike states. With that, these texts are the most resonant in their exploration of time that is out of order and the way that it bears on identity. The benefit of a present state informed by the past, as T.S. Eliot advocates it in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) –"a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence" – has made room for a confusion about what times have priority over others (27). In all of these texts, compressions and expansions of time obscure both the "anaesthetized and bewildered present", often in combination with a collapse of identity (Bowen 221). Indeed, Bowen's evaluation of wartime existence may be said to represent a commonly felt experience regarding a dispersion of the self: "[s]ometimes I hardly knew where I stopped and somebody else began" (218). Amidst boundaries disappearing in rubble and torn-down walls, the soul too becomes increasingly vulnerable to the ebb and flow of shared impressions.

However, the war, devastating as it may have been, did not only have negative consequences. Indeed, Michael North writes that "[p]articularly for civilians, the war itself

was a surreal event, violently disrupting ordinary life and juxtaposing incongruous sights and sounds, but this very disruption also carried with it, many observers agreed, new opportunities for social cohesion" (440). In addition, something of excitement transpires from Bowen's confessions of reporting and experiencing the war, in "a state of lucid abnormality"– it was a strange time, incredible, thoroughly painful, but also, perhaps, a shade adventurous (*Demon Lover,* 218). With everything at stake, the significance of the moment amplifies. The war provides an escape from dull routine life, especially for women, who were suddenly divested of their solely domestic tasks. Moreover, as nothing could be taken for granted any longer, people revisited their opinion of what was deemed 'normal' before. Everything that was thought beautiful and essential in Britain became a cause for protection.

The disruptions of war fed a recurring nostalgia for a visionary Britain, both for the purpose of propaganda, as well as for the psychological desire to establish continuities between past and present. A sign of longing to grasp this idealised Britain appears from the "Recording Britain" project, which initiated the painting of hundreds of watercolours in the years 1939-1945 to fix the old country in art, invoking patriotism and retrieving an already fading rural England (Harris 206-207). At the time, the landscape paintings resonated with historical as well as personal significance; the art of Paul Nash for instance, was founded on "the connection with the land" (129). A cinematographic example of such 'connections with the land' is Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's film *A Canterbury Tale* (1944), in which the countryside of Kent acts as an idyllic place, where war is but a children's game played out on gentle rivers and grassy slopes. All the same, the three main characters Bob, Alison, and Peter are continuously confronted with the change brought about by war. To them, it is mostly a revolution in their sense of the world: Alison, having said goodbye to her dull job as a shop girl in the city, realises how much she owes to the countryside and how sensitive she is to the ancient voices of a place. The two male protagonists, too, see places

with new eyes; climbing the hill that historically provided a first look at Canterbury to travelling pilgrims, the Londoner Peter admits he was not truly aware of there being a countryside at all before the war. The importance of a sense of history is advocated by the mysterious Mr Colpepper, whose excavations and lectures on the past of Kent only few take seriously. Yet perhaps through his intervention, Alison, Bob and Peter succeed in threading the traces of the past; arriving in Canterbury, they must first witness the brutal chasms caused by the blitz, before they each receive their own individual blessing. The film endorses a sense of mourning for the past, but eventually allows for optimism about the future, too.

Such optimism is scarce in the works of Lehmann, Macaulay, Eliot and Bowen; there is little belief in a return to a pre-war balance. Brimming with both nostalgia and painful memories, but also due to the looming presence of war, the texts under discussion are all in some way 'haunted' – by fear, by foreboding, by ghosts, and by other texts. Many critics have written about the impact of war on modernism; in *Modernism and World War II* (2007), Marina McKay investigates how the war influenced the end of Modernism, among other things writing about the significance of 'endings' in *Four Quartets*. In *Literature of the 1940s: War, Postwar and 'Peace'* (2013), Gill Plain categorises the forties into succeeding stages of processing the war, juxtaposing both canonical and popular genre writers of the era. Heather Wiebe's *Britten's Unquiet Pasts* (2012) investigates the role of music in post-war reconstruction, focusing in particular on Benjamin Britten's career, and touching upon the bridging of past and present in his exemplary work. Stuart Sillars's *British Romantic Art of the Second World War* (1991) and Alexandra Harris's *Romantic Moderns* (2010) both discuss how the threatening destruction of war brought about, or at least motivated a new wave of, Romantic tendencies in modernist art. The notion of place under threat emerges in Kitty Hauser's *Shadow Sites: Photography, Archaeology, and the British Landscape 1927-1955* (2007), which zooms in on the renewed interest in the archaeology of landscape in the middle

of the twentieth century, and foregrounds the visual side of bombed Britain.

The modernist preoccupation with time has also been discussed at length. Yet for instance Ronald Schleifer's *Modernism and Time: The Logic of Abundance in Literature, Science, and Culture, 1880-1930* (2000) fails to incorporate the tumultuous years of the forties. Similarly, Ricardo Quinones' study *Mapping Literary Modernism: Time and Development* (1985) – while analysing a wide but canonical array of writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann D.H. Lawrence, and T.S Eliot – stops short of mentioning Bowen, Macaulay, and Lehmann in this context. Nicola Humble's *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s* (2001) makes an effort to 'feminise' the history of modernity, by tracing the domestic discourse in the years surrounding the second war, but does not tap into the theme of temporal disorientation. The female writers discussed in this thesis have previously been approached from, mostly, a feminist or psychological angle: Nicola Darwood's *A World of Lost Innocence: The Fiction of Elizabeth Bowen* (2012) draws on the themes of psychological conflicts and sexual identity, and the scarce research into Rosamond Lehmann comprises for instance Jungian readings (Kaplan, 1981). While Rose Macaulay has received slightly more attention, with feminist readings, psychological analyses, and attention directed at the urban experience of war (Anderson, 2007), it is not with the same enthusiasm for the time-mind as T.S Eliot has elicited with *Four Quartets* (Fussell 1955; Rees, 1969; Clark, 1974; Soud, 2014). Indeed, there remains a great deal to be said about the modernist's experience of time around and during the war. Moreover, a comparison of relatively central writers such as Eliot and Bowen with less researched authors like Macaulay and Lehmann can shed new light on the dominant views.

By the time of the 40s, two global conflicts had increased the modernist's bewilderment with reality. This goes both for the conception of familiar places, as well as time. In her investigation of "Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939-1945", the critic Amy Bell

reveals the striking alterity of London during the Blitz: "[t]he landscape of wartime London, stripped of familiar land marks and after 1940 damaged by bombs and studded with surface and subterranean shelters, became imbued with fears of imminent individual and collective destruction" (157); and Gill Plain's *Literature of the 1940S: War, Postwar and 'Peace'* shows to what extent the war overflows understanding: "the ironic interchangeability of war and peace has disturbing implications, and underlines the extent to which the Second World War cannot be contained within the temporal limits of 1939–45. Psychologically, the war far exceeds these boundaries" (185). Indeed, this also appears from such essays as Bowen's "The Forgotten Art of Living" (1948) – after being uprooted from her native Ireland, and receiving her education during the Great War, she finds continuity in anxiety:

> [t]he world is bad now, but it was bad before. We may think we dread mass extinction; what we dread more is vacuum. It is the possibility of breakdown in our inner, rather than in our outer, world that troubles us. (391)

Bowen's characters avoid this potential vacuum by revisiting locales of the past, or imagining an alternative design of the world; Macaulay lets her characters experience the breakdown of the outer world only, showing how the post-war situation neglects care for psychological well-being. Lehmann's characters come closest, perhaps, to the 'idyllic' countryside of *A Canterbury Tale*, but they dwell excessively on a mistakenly nostalgic past. Eliot's speaker entertains the possibility of a positive development through time, but often gives in to its cynical antithesis of regression, eventually reconciling both options in a cyclical view of history. The texts I mean to engage with explore the idea of simultaneity, a multiplied presence here and now: but they also bespeak a disbelief in an independent present, one untainted by the past and future. Reality remains unresolved; the truth is only semi-tangible, "half-spectral" (Lehmann 19), diaphanous, and uncanny, in particular in Elizabeth Bowen's short stories. While the war "radically altered book culture" and made libraries

vanish (Hepburn 17), the characters and speakers of these texts seek recourse in fiction; they betray a recurrent desire to find an analogue for one's experience in fiction or the visual arts. For Lehmann, Macaulay, Eliot and Bowen, the sense of the unreal and the impossible, as well as the overriding quality of memories contribute, on several layers, to a negation of the 'now'.

In *Modernism and World War II,* Marina McKay signals a surprising lack of research into modernist writing of the Second World War:

> despite tremendous recuperative work by recent surveys of this long neglected period, little of the war's literature has ever fully registered on the critical field of vision, and even now the final wartime work of canonical writers like Eliot and Woolf is read comparatively little (5).

This is why an analysis of Bowen, Macaulay, Lehmann and Eliot should prove especially fruitful. My methodology will be based on close reading, focusing on the formal aspects of the texts under consideration; this will be complemented by connections to the cultural-historical contexts in which these texts are situated. By doing so, I hope to untangle the pattern of pressured moments that places and displaces the characters of these narratives in terms of time. In order to frame my argument, in the first chapter I will examine contemporary influential philosophical approaches to time, namely Henri Bergson's *Time and Free Will* (1889) and *Matter and Memory* (1896), and John Dunne's *An Experiment with Time* (1927); the second chapter discusses the invasive quality of the past in Lehmann's *The Ballad and the Source* and Macaulay's *The World My Wilderness,* especially the role of memories and nostalgia*;* the third chapter considers T.S. Eliot's confrontation of time and the timeless in *Four Quartets*; and the fourth chapter treats the uncanny disengagement with the present in Bowen's *The Demon Lover and Other Stories*.

Chapter 1 – Displaced in Time

"Place after all is replaceable, in turn held by many people and successive generations. It is turned up and over, whereas time is once and only – hence it is the most distinctively human and individual commodity", writes Ricardo Quinones in *Mapping Literary Modernism: Time and Development* (237-238). In the Modernist novels of the twentieth century, the conventional views of objective time become subordinated to subjective experience. These discarded conventional views largely rest on the "classical Newtonian models", where "time is 'objective', self-same, and simply a surrounding 'ether' to events" (Schleiffer 6). It is individual, particular moments that receive the momentous weight of history: "[i]n Conrad as well as Yeats, in Joyce as well as T.S. Eliot, there is a sense of arrested time – aesthetic time – captured in discourse reduced to image" (ibid). Not everybody was in favour of the focus on time: in the eyes of Wyndham Lewis the experimental modernist novels were obsessed with a "time-cult" (Lewis 5). Elizabeth Bowen criticises the tyranny of the clock in her essay "The Forgotten Art of Living", "we are clock dominated. It is terrible to hear oneself say: 'I will now relax for an hour.' How can one relax if one is thinking about the hour?" (396). Charles Tung, too, talks about the "well-worn modernist 'time obsession'", and even suggests that Modernism itself, as a result of its new ways of approaching and reflecting time, functions as a kind of time machine (97; 94). In his *Time and Western Man* (1927), Lewis laments the influence of Bergsonian philosophy on literature, for the reason that it would negatively privilege time over space (5). To shed light on the discourses of time that frame the temporality of Modernist and Late Modernist texts, this chapter investigates the philosophy of Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and one of his British successors, John W. Dunne (1875-1949).

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Henri Bergson's innovative approach to time was highly popular. In his *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* [*Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*] (1889), Henri Bergson

criticises the prevailing representation of time. In order to comment on the existence of free will, his original goal, the French philosopher first deconstructs the way man tends to think in external concepts. This mechanism, he finds, complicates a true understanding of the nature of things. He reveals that the way man views time is flawed, because the temporal has become tied up with the spatial. There are, Bergson argues, two different ideas of time, one of which is conventional time, which has been spatialised and is therefore measurable for scientific but also social purposes, the other is the personally experienced “true duration” [*la durée*] (90). However, to be able to think of time in a concrete way, this subjective, ‘true’ duration generally becomes spatialised as well, which constitutes a problematic process: “by invading the series of our psychic states, by introducing space into our perception of duration, it corrupts at its very source our feeling of outer and inner change, of movement, and of freedom” (74).

The necessity of externalising, and thereby spatialising, inner states also accounts for the confusion of quality and quantity. Bergson goes so far as to say that this process results in “two different kinds of reality”; a heterogeneous one, pertaining to the interior world of feelings, and a homogeneous one, which we need to function in the external world – that is, the reality called space (97). True or pure duration is succession, states merged and folded in on one another: but to be able to think about them representatively, we juxtapose these states, which creates a space-driven conception of time (101). The external world, in fact, knows no succession, only points in space: it is our consciousness that remembers the points’ previous positions and thereby connects space with succession (108-109). Bergson compares this to motion: a movement made with closed eyes will be just a qualitative sensation, since the distance covered is invisible and therefore irrelevant. Although the successive positions have a reality outside of us, their synthesis into duration is only created by our consciousness (112). That the movement of the limb has a beginning and an end constitutes its status as a motion:

in a way then, “this localising of a progress in space” means that “the past co-exists along with the present” (112)

Bergson on the one hand asserts that our lives as social beings require the externalisation of true duration as spatial time; but on the other hand, he argues that we thereby depart from the “fundamental self”, because it is as the “shadow of the self projected into homogeneous space” that we live our lives, and see reality indirectly, “through the symbol” (128). Indeed, Bergson makes an effort to alert his readers to the deceptive nature of language as well, as he points out that a feeling, as a “perpetual state of becoming”, when it is worded, gets then replaced by a petrified external concept (130). This, too, contributes to a self that deviates from the authentic individual: we are forced to represent our feelings as separated, textual entities that no longer have anything to do with the myriad of things in developing state that were originally felt (138).

Having said all his about quality and quantity, duration and space, Bergson proceeds to his central cause: the matter of free will. Acts are truly free when they are not automatic reflexes such as standing up in the morning, but when they arise from one’s complete personality, and when these acts in turn may be said to embody that personality (172). In the existing discourse on free will Bergson detects a fallacy: both defenders and opponents claim that free will can be measured by the prediction of an action. They compare a course of action with a line in space, a path, which according to the defenders can take any direction, but according to the opponents has only one determined course (181-182). Bergson defeats this line of reasoning by rejecting the metaphorical path: to try and foresee an action mistakenly confuses time with space (191). It is wrong to try and externalise free will, since the voluntary act happens in “time flowing”, that is duration, and not in “time flown”, which can be represented by space (221). Because most of the time we live as spatial and social projections of ourselves, we hardly obtain a glimpse of our inner states; yet only when we do so can we

be genuinely free (231).

Although Bergson uses his theory of time to argue about free will, his readers focused rather more on the sweeping rethinking of the relations between the dimensions of time and space (Gillies 10). The interaction of the temporal level of life and the spatial level, on which the temporal one gets reconstructed, has been an important element of thinking in the 20th century (15). Indeed, as Charles Tung argues, the support for Bergson's durations versus the "spatialized, uniform, and detemporalized simultaneities" formed a reaction against "the threat of the public clock, its regulated instants, and their unyielding pace" (116). E.P. Thompson writes that public clocks have been present in cities and large towns from the fourteenth century onwards (63). Yet it was not until the division of labour that the sense of time truly changed: rural societies were used to a casual, even negligent, measuring of time that Thompson calls "task-orientation", but the division of labour changed the sense of time, transforming it into a "currency" (60-61). Industrialisation and a puritan mindset gradually incorporated "time-thrift" in its dominant ideology, imbuing people with their "own interior moral time-piece" (87). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the presence of public clocks had come to symbolise "capitalist discipline, bourgeois values", and "modernity itself" (Tung 104). The alternative of a subjective, enduring time appealed to many, especially writers and artists, since, as Quinones puts it, "through uniformity time ha[d] become changeless extension, and this thought [was] maddening" (85). Bergson's influence can also be seen in his "expansion of the realm of aesthetics", the aim to see art in any aspect of life – just as those proponents of modernism set out to do in the early 20th century (Gillies 20).

The individual's processing of time past inevitably leads to the matter of memories. Speaking for the newly developing field of Memory Studies, Roediger and Wertsch signal how slippery the term 'memory' is: "[t]he problem is that the subject is a singular noun, as though memory is one thing or one type, when in actuality, the term is almost always most

useful when accompanied by a modifier" (10). Henri Bergson, however, had rather a definite idea about it. In a later work, *Matière et Memoire* [*Matter and Memory*] (1896), he meditates on the distinction between body and spirit, two concepts that he proves to intersect in the shape of memory (xvi). In this book, Bergson shows how dominant memories are: "[w]ith the immediate and present data of our senses we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience" – he even suggests that these memories often take the place of the actual perceptions (24). Memories control the input of our senses: they condense a series of "external moments into a single internal moment" (25). Memories, he argues, come in two forms: as habits, the "motor mechanisms" which have been conditioned by the past; and "personal memory-images", recollections which record in detail past events (103). Here, Bergson's earlier thoughts on time are elaborated: he speaks of "the body as an ever advancing boundary between future and the past […] always situated at the very point where my past expires in a deed" (88). He insists on the fleeting evanescence of the now: "what I call 'my present' has one foot in my past and another in my future" (177).

In the 5th century St Augustine of Hippo voices a similar idea, meditating on the nature of past, present, and future in his *Confessions*. Taking the recital of a psalm as an example, he writes: "thus the life of this action of mine is divided between my memory as to what I have repeated, and expectation as to what I am about to repeat": the present is the mind straddling remembrance and anticipation ("Book XI", np). Bergson extends this to the body as a whole: the body is made of images, a part of representation and perceptions (196). Perception is always mediated through the past: "[e]very perception fills a certain depth of duration, prolongs the past into the present, and thereby partakes of memory" (325). Especially relevant to this thesis is the notion that the past is intrusive: it "will act by inserting itself into a present sensation of which it borrows the vitality" (320). By putting it this way, Bergson almost lends time a kind of volition.

As mentioned, Bergson became intensely popular in the first decades of the twentieth century, even if his fame declined in the 30s (Gillies 25). It was at this stage, too, that Wyndham Lewis tried to deflect the temporal mindset. He condemned Bergson's psychological time as being essentially "romantic" (21), and his theory in general as being 'pretentious': "[t]ime for the bergsonian relativist is fundamentally sensation; that is what Bergson's *durée* always conceals beneath its pretentious metaphysic" (23). According to Lewis, many features of modernism, such as the stream-of-conscious technique, endangered a linear view of time as well as the sovereignty of the present, which was discarded in favour of ruminations on the past and speculations about the future (Dootson, np). He accused James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), for instance, of imposing "a softness, flabbiness and vagueness everywhere in its bergsonian fluidity" (Lewis 96). Fluidity here is only associated with its directionless, amorphous connotations, rather than positive, inclusive flexibility. Nevertheless, in 1927, just when Wyndham Lewis published his scornful commentary on Bergsonian time, a certain John William Dunne made an appearance with a work that modifies, and builds on, the work of the French author.

In his *An Experiment with Time*, Dunne proposes a new theory of time, which he terms 'Serialism', a theory that was sparked by a large number of apparently prophetic dreams he had had over the course of his lifetime:

> I was suffering, seemingly, from some extraordinary fault in my relation to reality, something so uniquely wrong that it compelled me to perceive, at rare intervals, large blocks of otherwise perfectly normal personal experience displaced from their proper positions in Time. (55)

In part 2 of his book, 'the Puzzle', Dunne relates how on several occasions he dreams about incidents that only happen later; somehow he has visions of experiences that he has not yet consciously apprehended. For instance, one night he dreams about a volcanic disaster – an

event he does not hear about until the next day, when he reads a news item on it.

Although critical, Dunne sees nothing peculiar in his dreams other than their curious position on a time-frame: “No, there was nothing unusual in any of these dreams as dreams. They were merely displaced in Time” (50). Avoiding the realms of the occult, he tries to connect his findings to physics. First, he engages with other proponents on the subject of time, such as Bergson – yet Bergson’s claim about undivided time conflicts with Dunne’s findings, who sees himself confronted with “parts of Time clearly transposed” (56). His dreams, and the story of a friend who had a similar experience, lead him to the supposition that dreams allow one to see both past and future experience. Seeing that the classical theory of Time was “already in the melting pot”, Dunne finds himself obliged to postulate “precognition as a working hypothesis” (75): there must be some mechanism that allows people a four-dimensional perspective on the world.

In “The Experiment”, he also asks other people to write down their dreams as soon as they wake up, and see if they encounter events that resemble these dreams. He instructs them to pay attention to past events that recur in dreams as well: Dunne hypothesises that both past experiences, as well as future ones, feature in equally vivid ways in dreams – not only his own, but of those of everyone. Indeed, he refutes the notion of a “supernormality” view (which posits that “precognitive” dreams arise out of a stronger faculty than the one that produces “retrospective” dreams); he is entirely in favour of the “normality” view, which entails that dreams of both past and future can be accounted for by the same faculty (79). In fact, he finds that dreams of both kinds occurs in equal proportions. If he was amazed at his dreams before, he is now quick to claim that “[g]ranted the dreaming attention ranges about the associational network without paying heed to any particular ‘present’, there is nothing astonishing in its lighting on an image many years ‘ahead’”(96). To see whether this truly goes for dreaming mode only, Dunne ventures on a successful waking experiment: even

without dreaming, the mind appears to be receptive to impressions from the future.

After his experiments, Dunne sets out to formulate a new theory of time. Extending the popular view that time can be seen as the fourth dimension, alongside the three visible extensions (extension means having length) of Space, he builds on C.H. Hinton's writings. In Hinton's view, the fact that we experience change is relative: in fact, "the past and future 'co-exist'", and it is but the beholder who moves through time (qtd in Dunne, 117). Like Hinton, and like Bergson, then, who indicated that our perception of movement implies a confluence of past and future, Dunne searches for an alternative to linear time. Dunne even refers to H.G. Wells remark in his *The Time Machine* (1895), that time is "Duration" (qtd in Dunne, 119). What Dunne brings to the argument is the idea that "anything which moves in Time must *take Time* over its movement" [sic] (121). Dunne sees Bergson's distinction between duration and scientific time as an unwilling recognition of his own theory; of a "Time embracing Time… a series of Times" (130). Perhaps, though, Dunne's expanding series of time were themselves inspired by Bergson's model of "different stories of Memory" (*Matter* 129).

Because time moving needs time for its movement, Dunne argues, time itself must have several dimensions. There are, so to say, layers or 'terms' of time: there is a fifth dimension that stands on a higher plane with regard to the fourth dimension of time: this is what Dunne means by serial time. Consequently, the person proceeding through time has a serial counterpart as well: as soon as you note yourself moving through time, you become an extraneous – or serial – observer. Dunne finds here an explanation for the precognitive dream phenomenon: the dreaming mind can access an external dimension of Time that allows one – involuntarily, haphazardly – to roam back and forth along the length of the fourth-dimensional Time (171). Indeed, Dunne addresses the reader with these perplexing words: "you, the ultimate observing you, are always outside any world of which you can make a coherent mental picture" (189). This ties in with one of Bergson's remarks on people's

obliviousness to the act of spatialising: "[b]ut how can they fail to notice that, in order to perceive a line as a line, it is necessary to take up a position outside it, to take account of the void which surrounds it, and consequently to think a space of three dimensions?" (*Time* 103). Layers imply an outsider, an onlooker, and following Dunne's theory, the series of time dimensions with its concomitant beholders appear to be endless. But since we are so used to a unified view of ourselves, it is difficult to accept this idea without seeming to reject what science and everyday experience teaches us.

In the wake of his publication, 'Dunne dreams' was used colloquially as a term for dreams that predict experiences from the future (Inglis, np). The novelist, playwright and essayist, J.B. Priestley was a strong admirer of Dunne's, and laboured to introduce his ideas to the general public through a series of plays, whose ideas about time were greatly indebted to Dunne (Matz 324). Priestley believed that Dunne's philosophy could be put to social use, capable of changing people's attitude for the better (334). Despite his denunciation of the occult and mysticism, Dunne's theory of Serialism could not win the approval of scientists, and instead reinforced the idea of clairvoyance among the general public, thereby standing diametrically opposite Dunne's own intentions (Inglis, np). His ideas nevertheless find echoes in Modernist and Late Modernist works: Lewis's repudiated 'time-cult' was stimulated by the likes of Bergson and Dunne, and perpetuated by Modernist writers, with their own "designs upon time" (Matz 323). Dunne's writing still fits in with the vogue for re-evaluating time in the early decades of the twentieth century. According to Michael Levenson, while time could be taken as a "cultural signature" in the first decade after the Great War (197), "time lost its aura" after the twenties, and "was absorbed back into history" (216). However, the following chapters will show that by the end of the Second World War time had still not released its grip on writers.

Chapter 2 – "Beloved Ghosts": Living Memories in *The Ballad and the Source* and *The World my Wilderness*

Published in 1944, Rosamond Lehmann's *The Ballad and the Source* is set in a pre-war world, but the menace of two world wars permeates the novel. Although its protagonist Rebecca grows up sheltered, by becoming an intimate witness of an ongoing family tragedy she must confront the harm people can do to each other. In Rose Macaulay's post-war novel *The World my Wilderness* (1950), in contrast, the heroine Barbary grows up anything but sheltered: instead she returns again and again to the rubble and physical scars left by the Blitz. Lehmann's family tragedy unfolds itself through a series of shared memories; Macaulay shows how private memories inform an adolescent's reading of unfamiliar terrain. Memories in *The Ballad and the Source* relegate direct experience to the background and conjure up idealised ghosts, whereas memories in *The World my Wilderness* create a wilderness in a civilised world and continue the presence of war in the characters' minds. The writer of a 1946 review on the role of women in fiction states that "[t]he women of today's stories have, to a large extent, broken away from the past"; yet the heroines discussed here do not try to break away from the past at all (Ludlow 188). In both novels, the past is undeniably invasive, hardly leaving room for the present. Focusing on memories, this chapter will analyse the attitude to history, as well as the shapes that anticipation and reflection on war assume for adolescent women.

In *The Ballad and the Source*, memories have taken possession of Mrs Jardine, Tilly, and Maisie: what is more, they *demand* to be spoken. In order to further the discussion below, I shall provide a brief summary of the plot. One summer, Rebecca and her sister Jess become acquainted with the elderly Mrs Sibyl Jardine and her husband Harry. They befriend Mrs Jardine's grandchildren Maisie, Malcolm and Cherry, whose mother Ianthe left them when they were very young. Complacency seems to preside over that summer, but gradually,

through the stories of her nurse Tilly, Mrs Jardine, and later Maisie, the tragedy of Ianthe unfolds before Rebecca. Left by her own mother, and subsequently corrupted by her overly protective and perverted father, Ianthe's fragile mental health has made her unfit for a stable family life. The reports of the past alternate with scenes of seemingly careless play on the estate in summertime. When her son-in-law dies, Sibyl claims the responsibility over the orphans. It seems as if she desires to compensate for the lack of control she has over her own child, whose shadowy, mythical presence constantly hovers over the scene, and whom she has never been able to let go. Eventually, after the war has killed Malcolm, and Cherry has succumbed to a severe illness, the orphaned Maisie tells Rebecca how she unexpectedly encountered her mother again whilst staying with the Jardines in their house in France. Unpredictable and struggling with what looks like schizophrenia, Ianthe does not recognise her daughter. Maisie tries to help her when she undergoes fits of hysteria, caused by the sight of an unfinished memorial for Cherry and a likewise rudimental bust of Sibyl. The sculptor, a protégé of Sibyl, must witness how his art is destroyed by the raging madwoman. Instead of informing Sibyl, Maisie lets things get to a head when the three generations confront each other near the ominous river, where Ianthe tries to commit suicide. Although the sculptor rescues her, she withdraws from the world forever to spend the remainder of her days in a convent. Ultimately, Maisie proves to be more resilient than her mother, but she refuses to assume the role of motherhood and in that way to participate in a next generation of family life.

Rebecca, as the narrator of the framework narrative, gives an account of her own memories of what in turn already are recollections. This framing ties in with the overall quality of the novel; because of their indirectness, the stories assume a layer that transcends the real. Words like "diaphanous" (Lehmann 6), "half-spectral" (19), and "phantasmagoric" (269) riddle the text and draw attention to the fantastic element of the tragic family history of

the Thomson children – 'fantastic' in the sense used by Tzvetan Todorov, "a hesitation common to reader and character, who must decide whether or not what they perceive derives from 'reality' as it exists in the common opinion" (41). In that sense, the book fulfils its generic premise, as it starts with an almost fairy-tale like quality, when Rebecca and her sister Jess are invited to come and pick primroses on the hill of their illustrious neighbour Mrs Jardine. The hill looks like "a child's drawing", and "green and smooth as a goose-girl's hill in a fairy story" (8). Rebecca at this point is inclined to see the romantic in everything. She dreams of "drama and revelation" (10), but receives more than she bargained for. Initially though, she is delighted to hear Mrs Jardine's memories of her grandmother, who imbues the story of her ancestors with magic: "[i]n that lost land it was always midsummer" (13). Indeed, as Lehmann presents things, the fact that the story commences in summer, too, adds to its remoteness from the everyday – the holiday season contrasts markedly with the other times of year, and there is hardly a sense of time passing: 'it was *always* midsummer'.

Rebecca is only a child when she becomes the confidante of the extravagant Mrs Jardine; later, she fulfils the same role with her nurse Tilly, Auntie Mack, and her friend Maisie. Apparently, something about Rebecca's presence triggers the commanding powers of memories, which at certain points come across as compulsive confessions. They are, indeed, very strong. Initially, Rebecca is unaware of the "poisons" from the past that are "corroding" Mrs Jardine (42); she does notice, however, when she listens to Tilly, how detrimental past experiences can continue to be: "I saw memory strike at her, then pour all through her" (58). The metaphor suggests that memory is like a snake; it is an active malevolent force, releasing toxic matter in the human mind. Sybil Jardine's existence seems indeed poisoned by her past, and this she has passed on to Tilly. Other metaphors underline the almost physical blockade of memories, such as "the blank, stiff shutter of memory" (51), and the way Tilly relates how Mrs Jardine seems to have "cut the whole past clean away from her" (86). Her daughter

Ianthe has "too many memories" that trouble her to function in a normal way (298). Over the course of the text, memories gain an independent existence, capable of intruding into people's lives, thereby chiming with Bergson's assertion that the past can enter "into a present sensation of which it borrows the vitality" (*Matter* 320). Mrs Jardine's stories affect Rebecca to such an extent, that they start to inhabit her mind as if it were her own experiences: "I can but think that she was projecting from her own vision on to mine" (150). In a way, Mrs Jardine doubles the process of recollection: the poison of her own serpentine memories is infectious.

Of course, Rebecca's representation of the events could be influenced by the fact that she is still very young and naïve. The text self-consciously hedges and highlights the process of remembrance and mediation. As David James points out, scenes are often focalised through Rebecca as a young child, only to be remediated by an adult voice: it "shifts to the adult narrator's retrospection, a shift that activates a wider vocabulary" (55). The novel traffics in retrospection. As a child, according to the text, time is differently experienced:

> Looking back into childhood is like looking into a semi-transparent globe within which people and places lie embedded. A shake—and they stir, rise up, circle in inter-weaving groups, then settle down again. There are no dates. Time is not movement forward or backward through them, but simply that colourless globe in which they are all contained. Adolescence coalesces in a separate globe; heavier, more violent and confused in its agitations when shaken (Lehmann 27).

The phrase 'Time is not movement' may be said to correspond to the Bergsonian conception of non-spatial time, the 'duration' discussed in chapter 1. Although I have not found any evidence that Lehmann was directly influenced by his philosophy, experiences of the past and of 'the now' certainly intermingle in this story after a casual Bergsonian model. That both past and future are 'all contained' suggests a way of thinking similar to John Dunne as well:

as with his layered Serialism, Lehmann subordinates chronology to experience. This not only happens in the self-confessed manner of the younger Rebecca, but does so throughout. As Henri Bergson described in his *Matter and Memory*, memories, to the characters, tend to supplant actual perception. For instance when Maisie tells Rebecca of her early childhood, the dark surroundings make it impossible to deflect the association with the past: “in a way, I’m in this dark room, and back in the night nursery, both at the same time. I’m split” (289). The text endorses a cyclical view of history – at least family history, as the consecutive generations follow identical patterns: “it seemed like this thing went on and on, like a curse” (82). The individual seems at times to struggle with the priorities of time; what is more important, the past or the present?

But the characters also struggle with the quality of their memories: for if the novel sets out with a pleasantly reminiscent atmosphere, the events gradually become more sinister and more troublesome. The nostalgic tone proves difficult to sustain, because, as Randall Stevenson notes, the very title of the novel suggests the existence of “a primal source” troubling the “idyllic space”, from which spill the problems that besiege the present (135). The fairy-tale summer of the beginning finds a negative double in the “midsummer madness” that at the very end characterises Maisie’s report of her encounter with her mentally deranged mother (Lehmann 275). While reminiscing is often a pleasurable activity, memories can be involuntary, even traumatic. Maisie suffers from the act of recalling: when she listens to her, Rebecca sees “memory struggle, brace itself to deal with its too heavy burden” (270). The memories are fraught with mourning, as death has put his stamp on the family. The pattern of losing one’s child and mother repeats itself. Mrs Jardine has lost her daughter Ianthe to the world; Ianthe herself has lost her baby; and in the present day of the story, Mrs Jardine loses her grandchildren Malcolm and Cherry. Death announces itself casually but meaningfully at the beginning: when Jess and Rebecca are too early for their visit to Mrs Jardine, they go into

the graveyard nearby to kill the remaining time.

Death, or rather loss, upsets the experience of time – when Cherry dies, Sibyl writes that it seems only "[a] moment ago" and yet at the same time: "[*a*]*eons* ago" (210). Bereavement intensifies the subjective experience of time; the event seems at once incredibly close, and at the same time enormously distant. In a way, the instantaneous disruption of life is paradoxically made to last. A similar sentiment is voiced in Charles Williams' contemporaneous *All Hallows Eve* (1945): "[t]he most lasting quality of loss is its unexpectedness" (28). The contrast with Malcolm's death, however, is shocking: Rebecca's sister Jess mourns him in a perfunctorily way, and his death is passed over casually, almost in parentheses, like the deaths of the young adults in the section 'Time Passes' of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Although written in the last years of the Second World War, the reality of war is suppressed, contrasting markedly with Rose Macaulay's world, as we shall see. Before the actual war of 1914 breaks out, Maisie feels as though she has already survived one. Her experiences in France have left their own scars, rendering her shockingly unsympathetic to the plight of those suffering in 'the real war': "'[w]hen I think about it now I feel as if the war started then—all roaring armies marching against one another and land mines bursting under everybody. When the real war started and every one else was in a state of chaos, it seemed to me a mere rumble on the horizon" (Lehmann 258). The confrontation with her mother, to her, is more far-reaching than the battle between anonymous faces.

Losses due to illness and insanity generate the growing sense of disillusionment that pervades the novel and clashes with its nostalgic tone. The land where it was always midsummer is 'lost' (13). Likewise, Rebecca's childhood friend Maisie has undergone a "radical change", since the Maisie she remembers "had gone into the past, irrecoverable as the halcyon weather in which she first appeared before me" (203). 'Halcyon', as a synonym for peaceful, leaves a bitter aftertaste in the face of the circumstances that surrounded Maisie and

her siblings' youth. And now, Maisie's future is "the undesired inevitable unknown", while Rebecca and her sisters can assuredly rely on a "continuity" of time (203-204). The Thompsons are symptomatic of the fact that in Modernism, "along with the concept of temporal linearity, the values of family and continuity through children – linearity – must also suffer" (Quinones 53). Continuity is what Rebecca searches for as she listens to the account of the women around her; she tries to piece the stories together and find missing links: dictated by Mrs Jardine's approach, she treats life like fiction. Indeed, the real lives are encased in the coloured versions of Tilly, Mrs Jardine, Maisie, and Rebecca herself. Mrs Jardine, so angelic and motherly at the outset, turns out to be narcissistic, and her care is stifling, resultant in death. The individuals that enter the scene seem hollow; even Mrs Jardine herself recognises that at some point. She says, about her daughter marrying Thomson, "I see it as an attempt on the part of a person with no true centre to try out yet another character with which to face the world" (Lehmann 174).

Unsurprisingly, Rebecca comes to think of Ianthe as an unreal persona: "all the Ianthes, represented and imagined, were equally fantasy figures" (206). Mrs Jardine, but also the young Maisie, and Rebecca herself, idealise people. Maisie shows Rebecca a picture of the 'perfect' mother, and Mrs Jardine talks of a sculptor who had "a radiance of life, a chrystalline quality" (215). The adolescent Maisie, then, is sensitive to the fact that people may assume certain roles; perhaps, with a mother like Ianthe, she is overly suspicious. Mrs Jardine wants people to assume roles: she treats life like a performance. She wants people to "play the part she had appointed" (18). Unrelenting in her admiration of Mrs Jardine, Rebecca nevertheless realises that perhaps she is but one in "a long shadowy series of confidential audiences" (110). Mrs Jardine becomes a "dual figure" (65): indeed, Sydney Janet Kaplan compares her not only to the benevolent and archetypal mother Demeter, but also to the monstrous Medusa (138). Her relation to time is also twofold: constantly facing the past, yet

with a name, Sibyl, that identifies her with a prophetess. The story as a whole contains not just recollections of past events, but also insists on a haunting sense of foreboding: Mrs Jardine is compared to a statue, and seems to have "unearthly" connection with the statue of Apollo in her garden (Lehmann 112). Later on, statues and sculptures become especially significant as the focus points of Ianthe's destructive insanity.

The novel itself is partly realist, but allusions to other texts alert the reader to its status as a report of a report of reports, in effect, its enhanced fictionality. When Rebecca is at a party, she sees everything "in a flickering surrealist film sequence" (231): her own narrative contains other texts, other media, other genres even. This aspect taps into a wider trend that Nicola Humble detects in her study on the middlebrow novel[1], where "[l]iterature and life become inextricably intertwined, and experiences are understood in terms of the literary events they recall" (53). The characters are doubly textual, for instance Tilly, whose "reality belonged entirely to the Dickens world" (Lehmann 14). The fantastical element, the dreamlike quality, gets more pronounced by referencing *Alice in Wonderland*: Rebecca compares her governess to the imperious Queen of Hearts. Mrs Jardine, a writer herself, is described in terms of a book: "[i] the vacant light she had a paper face, scored with criss-cross lines, thumbed here and there into shallow smudged concavities" (159). She is made out of her own stories and obsessed with them. After deserting her children and tramping the country, Ianthe wants to write an autobiographical book as well. The repeated pattern is explicitly highlighted when Maisie says, "[f]unny how writer's blood will out" (298). Maisie herself emphasises that the scenes strike her as far from life-like: her mother's attempt at suicide takes place in "a painted landscape", and the people are "figures scuttling silently across an empty stage: not real at all" (305). That the girl who has insight into the destructive attitude of her mother is called Maisie cannot be accidental, and the name's reference to Henry James's *What Maisie*

[1] Humble defines the middlebrow novel as "one that straddles the divide between trashy romance or thriller on the one hand, and the philosophically or formally challenging novel on the other: offering narrative excitement without guilt, and intellectual stimulation without undue effort" (11).

Knew (1897) reinforces the possibility of an unreliable narrator.

The heroine of *The World My Wilderness* is closer in character to Maisie than to Rebecca: Barbary, too, has her own painful memories to deal with and chooses to live the life of a social outcast. In this novel, the Second World War has already ended, but the protagonists Barbary and Raoul are still stuck in a wartime perception of the world: their growing up amidst a band of resistance fighters in France, called the 'maquis', stays with them when their mother sends them to London. Trained by the maquis, who "still waged their war" (Macaulay 40), they are not used to peace. What is more, London, emblem of civilisation, has no meaning for them, who have grown up in wild and raw ways: "[u]rged by a desperate nostalgia, they could barely endure the meaningless grey city streets, the dull, respectable, smoke-dark houses" (50). Urban designs have no significance, contain nothing legible to them. Barbary, in particular, with a name that echoes the adjective 'barbaric', cannot adapt to urban life: Raoul is "nearer to civilisation, as if it might one day catch hold of him and keep him, whereas the girl would surely be out of the trap and away, running uncatchable for the dark forest" (14). As a consequence, Barbary tries to find a kind of surrogate wilderness within the city. She fails to recognise the laws and social codes of London, as she goes around shoplifting and steals from her own family. The maquis to her is both a people and a place that she continues to inhabit. It is a multifarious and key concept: "[a]s a spatio-temporal, psychic-physical ruin-habitat, the *maquis* is both past and present, memory and projection, nightmare and nostalgia, prison and home" (Pong 106)

When she moves from her bohemian mother in France to her respectable father in England, Barbary confronts her opposite: whereas she herself embodies the wild, her father personifies the city, with its quiet, conventional ways: "[h]is clever, cultured, law-bound civilisation was too remote" (Macaulay 84). It means that they have not just geographically been separated, but also mentally. As a consequence, she does not allow her dad to become a

true father figure to her. Ironically, however, Sir Gulliver's home is also a fantasy of the past: as K.L. Anderson points out, the Adelphi terraces, where he lives with his new family, were actually torn down during the Blitz (19). Where Sir Gulliver represents the wish to smooth over of the scars of war, Barbary's behaviour is a way of tugging at the sutures. Because Barbary's youth with the maquis implicated danger and suffering, to her the only real life is one that leaves scars: places that are whole and smooth do not mean to her as broken things do. When she finds a new kind of maquis, "a wrecked and flowering wilderness", near Noble Street, it feels like "their spiritual home" because "[i]t had familiarity, as of a place long known; it had the clear, dark logic of a dream; it made lunatic sense, as the unshattered streets and squares did not; it was the country that one's soul recognised and knew" (Macaulay 57; 61). The word 'lunatic' ties up human madness with architectural brokenness, just as Lehmann's Ianthe smashing sculptures and breaking windows has a 'dark logic'. A broken thing may be imperfect, but at least it has a visible history. When, later, they try to imagine the place before it was bombed, Barbary admits that she prefers the ruined state: "[o]ne belongs more" (181). London is unreal, though "solid", it seems "improbable", whereas the "waste land" appears "natural" (74). Writing about photographs of the Blitz ruins, Kitty Hauser points out how the bombed buildings create "uncanny images, like something seen in a dream, where what was once a door is now a wall or a flood of rubble, and what was once an inhabitable building has been rendered unheimlich, or unhomely indeed" (234). However, Barbary proceeds to make the 'Unheimlich' homely again.

Barbary rejects the safety of the everyday for the past she knows. She recasts her new environment as her old world: the pilferers that Barbary and Raoul meet become stand-in maquis. To Barbary, the British police is like the Gestapo, and the maid Cox, who she feels has betrayed her, is a "collabo" (Macaulay 191). These new, unfamiliar characters she wants to fulfil the same old roles, not manipulatively, like Sibyl Jardine's puppeteer tricks, but in a

desperate attempt to forge continuity. By dancing a Provençal dance and singing a French fisher's song with Raoul, she invokes their life in France – even though the bells of St. Paul's cue the outburst. The singing establishes a subtle parallel with the maid Barbary in Shakespeare's *Othello,* who died from a broken heart, singing a song about a willow. This Barbary, too, chants her own past into being, while it is other people's memories that lure Rebecca. Rebecca is overly sympathetic, absorbed by other people's experiences, whereas Barbary's focus is predominantly egocentric: introverted, she gravitates to anything that approximates her comfort zone. Places that are broken become malleable to her nostalgic fantasies. Yet it is not just nostalgia that fills Barbary; she has her own demons as well. It is not a pleasant and innocent childhood that she persistently falls back upon; her past harbours traumatic incidents. The ruins of Noble Street are frequently referred to as 'shells', which suggests that the houses are hollow(ed), empty, but it also recalls France, as fishing and swimming formed a large part of the children's pastimes. The word becomes especially meaningful when associated with the cause of the place's ruination: wars leave shells – and shellshock. Like the consuming remembrances of Mrs Jardine, Macaulay shows how memories fossilise trauma.

Just as the text conceals Barbary's past, Barbary represses certain memories. The reader never learns what exactly took place in those maquis years. Although the past in France seems her only reference point, as when she arrives in her room in London and "walked to the window, while the past came tumbling back at her, a ghostly dream" (41), parts of her past she refuses to remember. It is suggested that she suffers from trauma, described by Roger Luckhurst as something that "falls out of our conscious memory, yet is still present in the mind like an intruder or ghost" (499) – an accurate paraphrase of Macaulay's passage. The past is 'a ghostly dream'; death has made its marks. Raoul and Barbary have probably witnessed the death of their mother's new partner, Maurice. Yet "[i]t was as if Maurice, that

genial collaborator, of whom they had perhaps disapproved, had slipped out of their memories when he was drowned in Collioure bay, leaving a chill and haunting phantom in his place" (Macaulay 38). They will not admit anything to Helen, but at the same time this picture of memory re-enacts the event. It 'slips' like something in water, the 'phantom' left is 'chill' as a drowned body. Barbary fails to repress her painful memories completely. When she recalls experiences from those years, "[d]arkness roll[s] in on memory and mind, a confused, saving oblivion, swinging shut a door" (107). When she is in Scotland with her father, she again retreats to the "margin" (109), which prompts her uncle to try and interrogate her psychologically. She shrinks back from him, afraid that "[t]hings would be dragged up that must live for ever in the deep, secret pools of the sea" (110). She wants to cast away her traumatic experiences as easily as unwanted shells.

Moreover, prospect and retrospect prove equally distressing to Barbary: when her father talks about the following summer, she bursts into tears: the idea of more seasons to come, in addition to the "memory of other summers, autumns, winters, springs" upset her sense of time (138). She seems to feel most comfortable in what Bergson would describe as "time flowing", purely subjective duration (*Time* 221). Indeed, her relation to time is an eccentric one: Pamela, her father's new wife, accuses Barbary from never coming on time. It is but one indication of her living in a different time. "[e]ngulfed and assaulted by the resurrecting past" (Macaulay 42), her own past proves intrusive – but in addition she is also very sensitive to the past of a *place*. Sitting in the English maquis, she and Raoul are surrounded by the dead presences of its past inhabitants: "[s]till the ghosts of the centuries-old merchant cunning crept and murmured among weeds and broken stones, flitted like bats about dust-heaped, gaping rooms" (159). The dead have not ceased to be, but are noisy and bustling. The pair can hear the "anguished screams" from the "dark pits of the past" (169).

Taking Blitzed London as its central setting as well, Charles Williams' wartime novel *All*

Hallow's Eve focuses even more on the dead: it begins with a victim of a plane crash, Lester Furnival, who gradually realises that she is dead. Her husband, Richard, is still alive, and senses Lester's presence as something more real than himself: "[h]e felt, as he gazed, more like a wraith than a man, against her vigour of existence he hung like a ghost, and was fixed by it" (Williams 41). The dead 'fix' and steer the plot. Williams turns the city of London inside out, and it becomes a place mined for its historical wares. A demonic priest in search of control over both the dead and the living uses Betty, an innocent girl, to walk as an agent through "spectral streets" (62). This ghostly realm disrupts a chronological order; it is a city "in which all the times of London existed", and which "took this wanderer into itself, and provided the means to fulfil her errand […] she walked now through the altering months, to every day a step […] for here all things were happening at once" (66). The damage of war has enabled entrance into alternative worlds.

As in Williams, the ruined streets of *The World My Wilderness* claim a storyline of their own; they are overbearingly present in the later stages of the narrative. One evening, when Raoul returns from the periphery of the maquis to the centre of London, he leaves Barbary to stroll around, remaining detached from "that old pre-ruin world" (Macaulay 181). She becomes subordinate to a digression on the state of the ruins. The bombed buildings testify to a cyclical view of history: "[c]ommerce, begun in peddling and piracy, slinks down into peddling and piracy again, slinks guiltily among the shadows of the moon" (183). Contemporary piracy manifests itself on the next page, where a fellow pilferer steals Barbary's loot. Historical merchants appear on the scene as a team of police men try to catch Raoul and Barbary for theft: "[t]he ghosts of Noble Street and Addle Street crowded to their vanished windows to watch the chase" (193). The ruins, previously a safe haven, prove treacherous, insidiously swallowing Barbary up when she tries to escape from the police and nearly falls to her death. In Anderson's reading of the novel, "history may be viewed as a

continuum of destruction rather than of survival, a belief underscored by her [Macaulay's] palimpsestic readings of place" (14) – a line of argument with which B. Pong seems to agree, writing that the novel is "a kind of narrative that layers time upon space, history upon geography" (101). Palimpsest means something that has been overwritten; and indeed, if, as John Dunne supposes, time is a continuum, built up of layers, *The World* has, by means of its ghosts and its living history, several series of time acting and interacting simultaneously.

While Barbary clings to her wilderness, Richie, her half-brother and a soldier returned from the war, recoils from the "barbarism" he has had to endure (Macaulay 149). Just as her attitude clashes with her father's, the brother-sister relationship here also parallels the binary opposition of wild-civilised. Gill Plain explains these binaries: "*The World My Wilderness* is a dialectical novel, setting up oppositional characters to examine each individual's complicity in the collapse of social order" (195). If Barbary feels at home in broken buildings, Richie "hate[s] mess and smashed things"; instead he adores the culture, wealth and knowledge of the pre-war years: "it was towards these obsolescent things that Richie nostalgically turned, pursuing their light retreating steps as one chases beloved ghosts" (150). He laments the passing of time in a different way than his sister does. Where his sister rejects linear time, Richie thinks about historic churches "linking the dim past with the disrupted present and intimidating future" in a troubled but unified image (150). Yet he recognises unwillingly that the present is fragile: "but already the margins of the present broke crumbling and dissolved before the invading chaos that pressed on" (152). Studying at Cambridge, he reflects on the deleterious effects of the war upon "scholarship and the humanities" (24). As a student of arts, then, he can make the connection between the text and what in semiotics would be its "hypotext" (Genette 5).

As he walks along the ruins of London, Barbary's brother quotes T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land,* which also provides the lines of the novel's epigraph: "I think", Richie murmured, "we

are in a rats' alley, where the dead men lost their bones" (Macaulay253). *The Waste Land* offers a monument of fragmentation, of cultural and physical decline, and in this sense illuminates Barbary's penchant for the "jungled waste" (56) and "the ruinous twilight" (73) of her own "waste land" (74) Barbary has a dual relationship to the bombed site of Noble Street and Addle Street: she not only lives in the ruins, she also lives *off* them. She likes painting the bombed buildings, and sells them as postcards to Americans "wanting to convince their friends back in Maine or Philadelphia that they had really seen the scars of war" (170). She contributes to their transformation into commodified art, or what Kitty Hauser calls the "aestheticization of destruction" (231) – a process to which Macaulay subscribes with this novel as a whole. Like her brother then, and like Lehmann's characters, the uncultured Barbary dubiously seeks recourse in representation, in literature and art. So does the text itself, when it defines Barbary's yearning for oblivion in the words of John Keats, as "a drowsy numbness as though of hemlock she had drunk" (Macaulay 107). Most of all, Barbary's flight to the "the cratered landscape of the moon" (186) echoes Elizabeth Bowen's fictionalised place in "Mysterious Kôr", which itself references yet another novel: H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1886).

With constant references to another time, another place, the here and now appears irrelevant. Both texts choose France and England as contrastive settings, where place compounds the distance in time. Barbary imports the rugged and the wild from rural France into urban England, even if its source is savage and cruel. Where rebels and dead merchants crowd ghostly around the bombed sites of London in a processing of war, in the case of Rebecca it is lost mothers and lost children that *anticipate* war. Barbary and Raoul hear the voices of victims long gone, while subterranean threats of the future and past alike whisper through the women's stories in *The Ballad and the Source*. Barbary tries to invoke an eternal 'now', suffused with elements of a familiar 'then': Rebecca is not interested in her present,

constantly harking back to other people's pasts. Indeed, the character of Rebecca gives in to pressure of other memories, while Barbary's character is overshadowed by the memories of places, both her own, and those which the places themselves effuse.

"Through the Unknown, Remembered Gate": Time and the Timeless in T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*

The World my Wilderness alludes to T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as a textual mirror for blitzed London; but Eliot also wrote another poem that is even more pertinent to this setting. Three of his *Four Quartets* (1943) were written during those bombings responsible for the wreckage and wilderness littering Macaulay's novel. Serving as an air raid warden, Eliot had become a close observer of the effects of war (Bush np). Even so, the text at times shuns the present moment of the Second World War, turning to other periods and locations instead. The four poems comprising his quartets meditate on the human condition enwoven with, and governed by, time. With the future endangered by war and more uncertain than ever before, the poet investigates the fragile continuity of history. *Four Quartets* is a troubled account that now hovers on the reasonable and safe side of a chronological view of time, now seriously questions the reality of that idea. This chapter will expand on B.H. Fussell's definition of the poem's major purpose as the "conquering of time" (241). In fact, with the sequence of "Burnt Norton", "East Coker", "The Dry Salvages", and "Little Gidding", Eliot teases apart attitudes to time by means of repetition and through the opposition of extremes, such as connection and separation, unity and division, continuity and fragmentation, of which the unresolved binary time-timeless is ultimately the overarching pair.

First of all, paradoxes comprise the structure of the poem; it invokes concepts impossible to unite, but joins them all the same through language. In what would later become the first quartet of a series, "Burnt Norton" (1936), there are two contrasting settings: it begins (although 'beginning', as we shall see, is a problematic word here) in a garden brimming with birds and flowers, and then travels to "the gloomy hills of London" (Eliot 11). The liveliness of nature clashes with the deadly atmosphere of the city. The initial contrast in "The Dry Salvages" is set out in terms of setting, too: it is an opposition between the "untamed" river,

"a strong brown god", and modern man, who are "the dwellers in cities", and "worshippers of the machine" (25). The lines reprove man for honouring the wrong deity; they worship dead mechanics, when there is a divine river, too. At the same time, the river in a broader sense, as water, becomes an image of time: the river is a "reminder/ Of what men choose to forget" (25), like the abiding "red river" flowing slowly but steadily through a waiting landscape in his short poem "Virginia" (l.1). From the single watercourse the poem broadens its scope to the sea, which "tosses up our losses" ("Salvages" 26), the internal rhyme evoking its repetitive sound of sloshing and rolling. Whereas the sea was for Barbary an image of forgetfulness, Eliot's speaker finds it a monument of memories instead. If water and time are compared here, the oxymoronic quality of water in "the menace and caress of wave that breaks on water" (26) can be placed alongside "[t]ime the destroyer is time the preserver" (29). Time is as protean as water: in the world of the poem, threat and tenderness coexist, as well as undoing and saving.

The major thematic extremes in "Burnt Norton" are motion and motionlessness, which become allied with transience and permanence. The speaker desires to reach a "still point", but to get there, one may not move: "[n]either from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is" (9). By prohibiting the application of directing prepositions, motion is excluded, yet at the same time the 'still point' allows for dancing. This is modified in "East Coker" by "[s]o the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing" (19). Eliot takes advantage of the inherent ambiguity of the word "still", combining its various senses of 'stationary' or 'silent', and of 'as yet': "[w]e must be still and still moving" (22). In addition, the poem complicates the link between stillness and permanence with the lines, "[t]urning shadow into transient beauty/ With slow rotation suggesting permanence" (10). Movement, by definition, requires time to unfold, and so permanence that allows for rotation cannot be timeless.

Time spinning on an axis alternates with more linear images. While George Knox speaks

of the poem's "phantasmagoric features" establishing a "spiritual journey structure" (311), one may read the text as a physical journey as well. The last quartet, "Little Gidding", has a journey as its theme, journeying in general, through time, and a journey in particular: that of the text. Like a train, the poet seems to take its passengers in a particular order along certain stations, its four sections. In fact, however, the views are not truly sequential: they rhyme and mirror each other. The subdivided text suggests the clarity and reliability of a sequence, but by not sticking to it, questions the possibility of order. The final stop, "Little Gidding", contemplates the reaching of a location, the existence of a destination, but refuses to pin itself down to an ending. As David Moody has pointed out, by the end of the poem one may have a modified sense of the journey, but "not at all a sense of having attained the end" (151). On the one hand, the voice of "Little Gidding" speaks from the viewpoint of the finish line:

> If you came this way
>
> Taking any route, starting from anywhere,
>
> At any time or at any season
>
> It would always be the same (Eliot 36).

However, the conclusion undermines the stability of the finish line, as well as the potential that lies in the word 'any'. If any route could have brought one to the vaguely described location, then what is the word 'here' worth? Later, it speaks from a 'here' again, apparently a very definite location, but at the same time unplaced: "[h]ere, the intersection of the timeless moment/ Is England and nowhere. Never and always" (37). Time and place become conflated and thereby indefinable.

This unreal quality is also present in another leading opposition of "Little Gidding", that between strangeness and familiarity. Again struggling with the truth of finality, "[n]ear the ending of the interminable night" (38), the speaker meets "one walking, loitering and hurried" (38). This walker functions as the embodiment of paradox from the very first indication of his

gait. His walking is at once ‘loitering’, slow, lingering, indifferent to time; yet also ‘hurried’, rushed, and pressed by time. The speaker seems confused about temporality himself, as he first talks about the morning, and then about “the waning dusk” (38) of evening. The ambiguity of time and movement seems to emanate from the walker, who is “both one and many”; he has “[t]he eyes of a familiar compound ghost / Both intimate and unidentifiable” (ibid). As with the perception of the “unknown, remembered gate” (43), memory does not equal knowledge here. The familiar brushes elbows with the unplaceable: the sensation caused by the sight of the eyes is one of intimacy, but the mind does not recognise them. The tension between individuality and multitude flows from the walker to the speaker, who takes on “a double part” to chime with the duality of his interlocutor (38). Instead of stabilising identity through the encounter with the ‘other’, the ‘I’ becomes multiplied and fractured.

In addition, the poem questions chronology through various other means. One of them is a seeming suspension of time, the insistence of an ideal world that is not conscious of time: “[l]ove is most nearly itself / When here and now cease to matter” (22). Time is portrayed as a consuming force, such as in the “time-ridden faces” (10); it is also the cause of people’s weakness: “the enchainment of past and future / Woven in the weakness of the changing body” (10). Time is both the ‘enchained’ as well as the ‘enchaining’ factor: “right action is freedom / From past and future also” (33). These lines bear upon Bergson’s locating voluntary acts in ‘la durée’, the category of internal, subjective time (*Time* 221). The liberty to act justly must be independent of time, just as consciousness should be: the speaker says that “[t]o be conscious is not to be in time” (Eliot 10), but then nuances his statement by positing that (pleasurable) memories require involvement with time. The independence of time goes against what the aesthete Walter Pater formulates as our inherent dependence on moments and their continuous fleetingness, praising art for “professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake” (259).

Indeed, second to unawareness of time, the speaker also, problematically, advocates a very conscious appreciation of time – living the present to the full. On the one hand the poem underlines the dominance of the present: "[t]ime past and time future / What might have been and what has been / Point to one end, which is always present" (Eliot 8) and "all is always now" (12). However, it also undermines the centrality of the present by constant references to those past and future, taking these out of their remoteness. As George Knox shows about Eliot's diction, "the contemporaneous significance is intensified from the cumulative force of the historical imagination" (312): the meaning of his every word is charged with the past. Etymologically then, the past writes the present – but experientially, too, the poem realises that for something to qualify as 'present', it must come after what has happened, and before what will happen: the present implies a future and a past.

This favouring of present over past and future is tied to references to continuity that border on a cyclical view of time: in "Burnt Norton", there are "the boarhound and the boar" that "[p]ursue their pattern as before" (9). The lives of the hunter and its prey are prescribed and fated: as types, they will always continue their chase. In "East Coker", a human perpetual mobile is that of loss and recovery: "[t]here is only the fight to recover what has been lost/ And found and lost again and again" (22). These opposites bite one another's tail: the lines suggest that people can only reclaim objects as a prelude to their next dispossession. The idea of cyclical time comes indeed repeatedly to the fore in "East Coker", where the first images are about houses that "rise and fall", "live and die" (15): buildings are interchangeable with peoples and cultures in their constant ascension and decline. According to Philip Le Brun, "Eliot's concept of permanence is essentially organic; that is, it is in terms of continuity within time and change and not in terms of something outside time", a theory that Le Brun attributes to Bergson (154). Indeed, there has been a direct influence of the French philosopher on Eliot: Le Brun shows in places the *Four Quartets* mirror parts of translations

of Bergson’s writings into English (153).

After its pattern of urban processes, the scene in “East Coker” shifts from the city to a rural scene: the narrator goes back in time to record a rustic scene of people dancing in a primal sort of way: “[k]eeping time, / Keeping the rhythm in their dancing / As in their living in the living seasons” (Eliot 16). It seems as if the speaker zooms in on that ‘still point’ mentioned in “Burnt Norton”, the location of the dancing, and with the focus he changes his register: the voice shifts to archaic speech, a kind of pseudo-medieval English: “[i]n daunsinge” (16). The dancing, it is implied, was happening then and is still going on. The observer has always been present, or perhaps he has access to the consciousness of his ancestors. He appears to speak with the voice of his historic doubles: “I am here / Or there, or elsewhere” (16) – which brings to mind once more John Dunne’s serial observer, freely ranging along a mistakenly linear timeline. The opening lines of “East Coker” are repeated, with a slight nuance, at the very end, giving a meaningful twist to the sentence. “In my beginning is my end” (15) comes true in the final “[i]n my end is my beginning” (23). What seems like a statement about destiny approaches a cyclical view of history.

The dancers’ scene moreover invokes a parallel between the four quartets and the four seasons, as well as the four elements. According to Thomas Rees, the successive dominant elements are air, earth, water and fire (67). However, one could also argue that earth features in the garden of “Burnt Norton”; fire in “East Coker” with its dancers “leaping through the flames” (16) and its “destructive fire” (17); water in “The Dry Salvages” (the river and the sea, ships); and air in “Little Gidding”, since air facilitates the flight of the dove and the “[d]ust in the air suspended” (37). It is indeed not so clear-cut, because the elements recur in every part, and the seasons are confused: “East Coker” asks “[w]hat is the late November doing / With the disturbance of the spring” (17) and “Little Gidding” begins with the impossible “[m]idwinter spring” (35). The final quartet reinforces the gap between

experienced seasons and actual time of year: “[t]his is spring time / But not in time’s covenant” (35).

That there are different sorts of time is also suggested in “The Dry Salvages”: according to Fussell “ordered human time, imaged in the rhythm of the river, is contrasted with chaotic non-human time, the flux of the sea” (229). This section alienates marine time: “[t]he tolling bell / Measures time not our time […] a time/ Older than the time of chronometers” (26). It suggests history is deeper than is conceivable for mankind, and that we wrongly lay claim to the time of this world. There are processes that have always been going on and will always go on, regardless of human intervention. But then, a ‘bell’ is a human construct to indicate time; in that sense, it is a way to reclaim ‘our time’ after all. In “The Dry Salvages”, the cyclical is expressed both self-consciously in a note about the poem repeating itself, as well as in a collapse of the boundary between the individual and humanity as a whole:

> I have said before
>
> That the past experience revived in meaning
>
> Is not the experience of one life only
>
> But of many generations. (28)

The ‘I’, one may infer, has *always* been speaking about past experiences; the experiences of generations comprise individual lives, and the singular lives in turn build on past generations.

“Little Gidding” illustrates cycles most powerfully, in returning to the start of both an imagined journey as well as the start of the reader’s journey through the poems:

> We shall not cease from exploration
>
> And the end of all our exploring
>
> Will be to arrive where we started
>
> And know the place for the first time
>
> Through the unknown, remembered gate. (43)

'Not ceasing' has an ending all the same; namely, an ending in the start, and therefore the possibility for renewed exploring, by going 'through' again. The gate is a marker for crossing thresholds – it demands the conscious choice to open and depart, or to open and return again. Its threshold recalls the "still point of the turning world" (9) and "slow rotation suggesting permanence" (10). In these lines, too, the paradox of equating the condition of not knowing with remembering is realised: the reader can recollect the *words* about the garden gate from the first page, but they have, of course, never seen the portal and therefore do not 'know' it.

The struggle between an obsession with and disregard for time lies in a seasonal conception of time and a cyclical view of history: such a belief is both reassuring in its continuity, but also confining. Everything is then predictable, trapped in its predestined course. Yet the speaker also argues that "every moment is a new and shocking / Valuation of all we have been" (18). The qualification 'new and shocking' clashes with the idea that the past repeats itself. Subjective time does not run parallel with the course of measurable time. The recurring image of a train functions in "Burnt Norton" as an analogy for the world: it has a delineated course, "while the world moves / In appetency, on its metalled ways / Of time past and time future" (11). The 'metalled ways' dictate the path of time, something the speaker partly seeks to escape. The image of a train occurs in "East Coker" as an example of the hours and awkwardness that go into waiting, as well as implying the sense of being in transit, between two wars. This time the train has, like the primeval dancers, gone underneath the earth: "when an underground train, in the tube, stops too long between stations" (19). Not only, then, does the train symbolise the poem, it also covers parts of the poem; it stands for its theme of travelling and its theme of predestined time. It also signals the ordeal of patience and endurance as explored in "East Coker" (and recalls the sighs of the desperately bored speaker in "The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock", "[t]here will be time, there will be time" (Eliot l.26)).

Although the text suggests that the future is predestined, “The Dry Salvages” expresses a certain distrust about the future: it cannot conceive of “a future that is not liable / Like the past, to have no destination” (27). Suddenly the image of the train ceases to be representative. Indeed, later, the text defines the future as:

> (…) a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray
> Of wistful regret for those who
> are not yet here to regret,
> Pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has
> never been opened. (30)

Not heard, but already ‘faded’, not smelt, but withered, an invisible token for absent people: the future is worn out before it can even become the present. The pages of the future have not been read, but time has yellowed them all the same. The future seems dry, fruitless, useless, a thing lost before it is gained. Indeed, as Alexandra Harris writes, “what seems to be very close in these poems is also elusive” (204). The future may be at hand, captured in a book, but eventually unattainable. A little bit further on the text wryly enumerates and rejects abundant ways of foretelling the future, “the horoscope, [to] haruspicate or scry”; “tea leaves, riddle the inevitable / With playing cards”, and calls them “[p]astimes and drugs” (Eliot 32): apparently, people are mistaken to believe in a future of any kind, even though it moves on rails and is ‘inevitable’.

The past is also looked at warily, as the speaker challenges the idea of progress: “development” is “a partial fallacy”, triggered by the theory of “evolution”, which becomes “a means of disowning the past” (28). The ideal of continuity is here deflected; if they are confronted with unsatisfactory facts, people refuse to see the present as a logical consequence of the past. Although a sense of history was praised in “East Coker” by invoking an archaic register, these lines subvert it: people only grant a “backward half-look / Over the shoulder,

towards the primitive terror" (29) of times past. Yet discarding the future and the past is not a decision one consciously makes, because a temporal flight into the timeless is one of distraction: "[f]or most of us, there is only the unattended / Moment, the moment in and out of time" (32-33). No one can escape time entirely: the very flights from the temporal mark the passage of time, as they rely on moments. Moments are intervals of time that structure lives and epochs. Even "[a] people without history / Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern / Of timeless moments" (43) .

On the face of it, *Four Quartets* strikes one not primarily as a war poem, but there are brief glimpses of the threat of attacks and the effects of air raids that serve to punctuate the flow of history. The frustrating inconclusiveness of the poem, the fact that its paradoxes remain unresolved, can be linked to the circumstances of war: Marina MacKay notes that the "war had not yet turned in Britain's favour by the time *Little Gidding* was published, and the poem, like its precursors, refuses to pledge consolatory certainties" (88). The text considers things that are left after gradual or instant ruination: "bits of paper" (Eliot 10), "earth/ Which is already flesh, fur and faeces" (15), "the empty desolation" (23), "drifting wreckage" and "wastage" (27), "the dull façade" and the "tombstone" (36) "ash" and "[d]ust" (37). As Helen Gardner points out, the war took away the poet's opportunity for regular hours of writing, hence it was poems, not plays, which would ask for more coherence, that Eliot wrote at this time (15). Poetry allows for unpremeditated insights of feelings; their provisional quality and inconclusiveness betray the trouble with finding expression for what happened at the time.

War intensifies the struggle to find the right words. After the Great War, the speaker finds himself for a while in a changed world of which he does not know the language, a period that ends with the Second World War –"[t]wenty years largely wasted, the years of *l'entre deux guerres*" (Eliot 21). The speaker evaluates his struggle with words in terms of battle: "a raid on the inarticulate", "[u]ndisciplined squads of emotion", and "what there is to conquer" (22).

According to Gill Plain, this “vital inarticulacy” is what “turns the poem into a protracted, fragmented instance of grief work” (202). The lyrical subject tries to make sense of the reoccurrence of war by placing it in the repetitive cycles of history and euphemistically disguising it as a part of the natural world. Nature echoes the gathering of forces: “[t]hunder rolled by the rolling stars / Simulates triumphal cars / Deployed in constellated wars” (Eliot 17). Sometimes there is merely a hint of war, such as in “The Dry Salvages”, where a bell tolls “under the oppression of the silent fog” (26), bringing to mind an alarm, ‘oppression’ seeming too grand a word for fog, instead evoking an antagonistic force. This threat also features in “Little Gidding”, where a “dove with a flickering tongue” (38) passes, and later on a “dove descending breaks the air / With flame of incandescent terror” (42). This illustrates the speaker’s misuse of language: the dove, though usually a symbol of peace, is here twice portrayed as a bringer of destruction and fear.

In the poem, repetition plays an important role, both stylistically, and as a way of welding the language to the theme. Repetition relies on memory, and memory requires a deliberate throwback in time. The word ‘moment’, interestingly, occurs in twos and threes; it accompanies itself in the following lines:

> But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
>
> The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
>
> the moment in the draughty church at smokefall
>
> Be remembered. (10)

It is as if the tape of the poem freezes on the word ‘moment’, a word that evokes its counterparts, three times repeated to create a tension that is relieved by the last two words. The passage simulates the attempt to retrieve a nagging but shady memory that keeps reverting to the recesses of one’s mind (obscured by ‘rain’ and ‘smoke’), and then suddenly becomes clear again. Similarly, the word “distraction”, by being repeated thrice, performs its

definition in the line “[d]istracted from distraction by distraction” (10). It sounds like a list that could go on and on, dizzying the reader and the walker of the path. In “East Coker”, the preposition “under” is repeated several instances: “[t]he houses are all gone under the sea”, and “[t]he dancers are all gone under the hill” (18). It implies time is a submerging movement, but also that the poem is a kind of hypnotic medium that, with the music of its occasionally incantatory language, can mesmerise the reader. There is repetition within each part, but there are also instances of intra-quartet repetition, such as “the wild thyme unseen” (20, 33), things that “fad[e]” (11, 30, 35, 40), the image of roses, dancing, the sea, trains, a yew tree. By repeating phrases and sentences from earlier parts, the poem breaks with the sequence of separate units. By virtue of its retrospective and foreshadowing qualities, repetition enacts the cyclical view of history laid out in one of the poem’s temporal layers.

The text self-consciously heralds repetition on the first page, with the lines “[o]ther echoes / Inhabit the garden” (7): the poem is the garden, the words are the sound of the birds reverberating all through the space of the text. The poem may be centred around time, it is also concerned with its own medium: “[t]he two themes, that of conquering time, and that of getting the better of words, are drawn together, since words are the medium by which the mind may attain the consciousness which transcends time” (Moody 147). The text draws the reader into that process of its own discussion. “You say I am repeating” is a mutual reminder, alerting the reader that they not only have an active role, but are to warn the speaker of the poem’s ‘echoes’, its repetitive quality (Eliot 20). In addition, “East Coker” predicts the course of the verbal journey, by repeating “[i]n my beginning is my end” at the start of the two first stanzas (15). It creates expectancies for the unfolding of the poem, and stimulates reflection on what has been read.

The text talks about history as a pattern, and by structuring itself around recurring phrases, it weaves its own pattern too, only realised once read in its entirety: “[f]rom which

the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled" (36). As the text progresses, the speaker wants to fix the reader to the present words, yet simultaneously it takes the reader back to the beginning, most obviously in its self-conscious statements about its own composition: "[t]he poetry does not matter / It was not (to start again) what one had expected" (17). These lines subtly encourage a flashback – 'to start again' – and an evaluation of what will come at the same time: 'what one had expected'. It reflects on the process of writing and on the process of reading, in addition criticising the authenticity of memory and prediction. While *Four Quartets* constitutes an attempt to do away with time, it also reinforces how past, present and future continuously interact.

"The Tomb-defying Tenaciousness of Memory": A Predatory Past in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Demon Lover and Other Stories*

In her paper on documenting the war, Gill Plain writes about the anxiety surrounding the possibility of producing a species of text that could be adequate to record experiences at the time (40): "while the private form of the diary answered well to the needs of writers, it could not satisfy the media demand for a new war poetry" (42). A resolution came with the "rejuvenation of the short story" (ibid). *The Demon Lover and Other Stories* (1944) was the only "diary" that Elizabeth Bowen kept during the years 1941-1944 (Bowen 223). After having considered Lehmann's and Macaulay's novel-length mediations on war, and Eliot's poetic renderings of the processes of time, these short narratives bring yet another perspective to the discussion. The patterned diversity of the collection represents the eeriness of everyday life during wartime, as well as a feeling of overbearing oppression that is, however, seldom explicitly military. Bowen addresses the way war has compromised the usual passing of time. In the final story, "Mysterious Kôr", one character connects war to time directly: "[t]hey forget war's not just war; it's years out of people's lives that they've never had before and won't have again" (212). Consequently, many of the texts revolve around a kind of struggle to grasp time. With that, Bowen is in line with Lehmann and Macaulay, as she presents the past as being more prominent than the present. Several stories have characters looking on at their own past and those of others, (re)living memories, and trying to postpone the inevitable acknowledgement of reality. This chapter analyses a selection of stories that offer complementary voices on the experience of wartime existence and people's attempts to escape that present.

In a couple of stories, most notably "The Happy Autumn Fields", memories replace present perceptions. In "The Happy Autumn Fields" dreaming provides an escape from deadened, harassed life, into another time, even another body. The story seemingly presents a

mode not of retelling, but of direct experience: the story sets out with Sarah's family walking the countryside in what appears to be a Victorian setting. However, when she and her favourite sister Henrietta have almost caught up with the party, the person looking through Sarah's eyes is rudely jerked back to the reality of the present day. Although twice the narrator insists that "[i]t was Sarah" who is the beholder of the scene, it is in fact a different person (re)living Sarah's memories – a sleeping woman named Mary (107,108). "Dull but piercing white light filled the room and what was left of the ceiling", brutally illuminating the bland – 'dull' – but simultaneously harmful – 'piercing' – surroundings, which contrasts with the glowing happiness of the scene Mary has been part of in her sleep (114-115). Here, war surrounds Mary and oppresses her: the building stands "in semi-ruin" due to bombings (117), while Sarah's life is full and peaceful, brimming with feelings and complete. When she falls asleep she finds herself in the Victorian family house, where objects possess "an equilibrium of their own. Nothing would fall or change" (122). The room where Mary sleeps, however, has lost all its balance and purpose; it threatens to fall down upon her – down on what she calls "the irrelevant body of Mary" (117). Real, physical life feels 'irrelevant' as opposed to a fictional past that has heightened in importance only by virtue of its contrast to the war-drained present.

Gavin, the protagonist of "Ivy Gripped the Steps", similarly prefers to meditate on the past. Having returned to the house where he used to spend his holidays, he clutches the remains of those days, falling back into his boyhood self. This time it is not, as with Mary, somebody else's past, yet all the same the protagonist clings desperately to what is gone – partly fictionalising it in consequence: "[b]ut also he attached himself to the story as to something nothing to do with him; and did so with the intensity of a person who must think lest he should begin to feel" (134). The feelings of the adult Gavin have grown numbed, and he seems only to desire a wholesale throwback in time. It is merely his "other self" standing

outside the house of his mother's friend, who looks on, or back to, what happened in the past (152). By using the words 'his other self', one can see a connection between Gavin and Mary, whose body seemed to herself 'irrelevant' – both defy the actuality of the present, one by dreaming, one by reminiscing. Gavin is indifferent to the present state of affairs before he has assembled every piece of that other time. At the end, Gavin accosts a girl who exits another house associated with his past. Contrasting with her own youthfulness, she calls the house, as well as the city it is part of, a "tomb" (169); and Gavin, divided by time, looks to her like "somebody dead who was still there" (170).

Bowen shows how war muddles previously stable categories: the living and the dead interact and interchange importance with one another. Indeed, when compared to the living characters, the dead ones are more vigorous: they linger, whereas the living shrink passively to the background, both mentally and physically. As Jessica Gildersleeve points out, Mary's flirtation with death in the real world results from "the possibility of her death that will permit her survival" in the dream-world (108). Yet it is possible to doubt her stance that "[e]ach story refuses or overcomes annihilation, consistently privileging life over death" (109). Indeed, before the first sentence of "In the Square" (which is also the first story of this collection) has finished, the word 'ghost' intrusively appears and sets the tone for the following texts: "the square looked mysterious: it was completely empty, and a whitish reflection, ghost of the glare of midday, came from the pale-coloured façades on its four sides and seemed to brim it up to the top" (Bowen 9). The first page, then, opens powerfully with an "extinct scene" even before it mentions the protagonist, the person coming out of a taxi to observe the square, "satisfied to find the shell of the place here" (ibid). Over the course of the story, Rupert barely acts, sitting with a former lover in an unrecognisable place and time, inferior to the shadows of reminiscences.

The shadowy suggestion of a haunting entity tyrannises an ordinary housewife in "The

Demon Lover". Initially, the atmosphere of the narrative is deceptively bright: "the trees down the pavement glittered in an escape of humid yellow afternoon sun" (91). However, the word 'escape' is fraught with dramatic irony: whereas the light can perhaps find a way through the clouds, Mrs Kathleen Drover will not be able to evade the clasp of her demonic lover. Again, categories collapse: her anonymous lover was a soldier in the Great War, conventionally an example of a hero figure; but in this story, the soldier represents an oppressive, hurting form of love. Indeed, his diabolic qualities appear from Kathleen's confusion about his effect on her when he was courting her:

> She remembered with such dreadful acuteness that the twenty-five years since then dissolved like smoke and she instinctively looked for the weal left by the button on the palm of her hand. She remembered not only all that he said and did but the complete suspension of *her* existence during that August week. I was not myself – they all told me so at the time. She remembered – but with one white burning blank as where acid has dropped on a photograph: *under no conditions* could she remember his face. (98)

What he has left her with is not a memory of loving affection, but with a now vanished scar of his clothes on her hand; what is more, his advances pushed her soul to the margins, not allowing her personality to assert itself in any way. The memory, though strong, works not in terms of presence, but in terms of negation: there were no caresses, indeed she recalls "not being kissed" (94); there is the physical razing of skin; the soldier denied her active participation or authority; and then there is the 'burning blank' of the absence of a visual memory. The soldier does not treat her with the conventional kindness; it is"[n]ot love, not meaning a person well" that Kathleen feels he effuses, but malice (98). To have agreed on an engagement baffles her retrospectively, as she cannot imagine "a more sinister troth" (95). The letter she receives on this day, disrupting the safety of her home, "collapses the gap

between present and past, between the two wars, and between her former and current selves" (Bell 174), quite like the transformation the memory of the shell-shocked captain effects in Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (1918), eliding the 15 years that intervened between his finding true love and his return to his position as husband to another woman. It is as if war victimises both people as well as time, wounding us whilst tearing gashes in its fabric, too, negating its development. At the end of "The Demon Lover", the man who was reported missing more than 20 years ago abducts Kathleen in a taxi, both encapsulating her body and taking control of direction, and thereby finishing 'the complete suspension of her existence'.

The texts play with reversals, such as the dead taking the place of the living, and with that the past parasitically eating the present. But in other ways, too, people lose their reality. Frequently, characters appear as hollowed out figures or two-dimensional shapes. They are seen by others as silhouettes behind glass, or "like figures at the end of a telescope" (164); Callie, the third wheel in "Mysterious Kôr", appears sitting "like an image" (202). In "In the Square", the social potential of the room reorganises the characters into a setting that loses its vitality on the instant that the onlooker, Bennet, realises that nobody else is there: "Rupert and Magdela for the moment looked quite intimate, as though they had withdrawn to the window from a number of people in the room behind them – only in that case the room would have been lit up" (18-19). Indeed, Rupert himself feels that "he and she could not be intimate without many other people in the room" (14). The war has divested people of their purpose and proper position. As Mary plaintively observes in "The Happy Autumn Fields", "all we can do is imitate love or sorrow" (127). With that remark in mind, it becomes less strange that characters seem drab, flattened, and choose to act out, or re-enact, past experiences. Like Rupert and Bennet, Gavin looks through the unresponsive windows of a house like some sort of exile: "Gavin, like his dead host, beheld Southstone with all the ardour of an outsider"

(139). By doing so, he echoes what Mrs Nicholson once told him, before the war: "'There are times,' she said, 'when one seems to be at the other side of glass. One sees what is going on, but one cannot help it. It may be what one does not like, but one cannot feel" (160).

The war intensifies sensations and feelings, but simultaneously diminishes them. The ideal past upon which Mary looks back in "The Happy Autumn Fields" erases boundaries between persons. Henrietta and Sarah (present day Mary), are endowed with the capacity to share one another's thoughts and feelings. Henrietta moves her head "in answer to Sarah's thought", a thought not spoken but felt; in addition, they see the world "with the same eyes" (111). As Clifford Hallam writes when considering the 'double' in literature, "psychologically incomplete individuals in a given text may "fit together" like pieces of a puzzle" (5). Sarah forms a particularly complex case: she has two doubles – Henrietta is her parallel, Mary a visitation from the future. Even if Mary would unite with Sarah, she would still be incomplete: Henrietta remains her separate complement. Perhaps because of her incompleteness as Mary, Sarah is hypersensitive to all of her family members' feelings:

> It was Sarah who located the thoughts of Constance, knew what a twisting prisoner was Arthur's hand, felt to the depths of Emily's pique at Cousin Theodore's inattention, rejoiced with Digby and Lucius at the imaginary fall of so many rocks. Most she knew that she swam with love at the nearness of Henrietta's young and alert face and eyes which shone with the sky and queried the afternoon. (Bowen 108)

This intensity, of a life, "strung like a harp" (128), resonates and reverberates until one feels "enfolded, dizzied, blinded as though inside a wave" (114). Although this is supposedly only a dreamed scenario, one that is idealised by Mary-as-Sarah, Brad Hooper calls it one of "dual realities, with a shared character" (153). Its elevated vibrancy underlines the vapid dullness of that other reality, where, as stated above "all we can do is imitate love or sorrow" (Bowen 127). Sarah is, if we borrow Erich Auerbach's terms regarding figural readings, Mary's

“fulfilment”: compared to the rhyming “figure” (Mary), the fulfilment is of “greater and more intense measure” (197); Mary’s life is but an echo of the real version; hers is an imitative reality. For Sarah, the walk in the fields seems timeless: “[t]here was no end to the afternoon, whose light went on ripening now they had scythed the corn” (Bowen 111), whereas Mary has a deadline of two hours before she must wake up, when her husband comes to take her away from the crumbling house.

According to Kristine Miller, “traditional notions of the home’s seclusion and security crumbled with the walls of townhouses, flats, private homes, and air raid shelters” (140). Indeed, the wartime places in Bowen’s stories are ruled by an atmosphere of isolation and abandonment, yet the boundaries internally are fluid. In that sense, they symbolise how “during the war the overcharged subconsciousnesses of everybody overflowed and merged” (Bowen 217). In “In the Square”, Rupert visits his former lover Magdela, where he finds the once familiar house ruled by “functional anarchy” (10). As Magdela asserts, “[T]he house seems to belong to everyone now” (13). Characters keep repeating the words “these days” (11), to mark the break with the past, indicating that the war has irrevocably altered even the smallest details of life. Rupert is baffled by the disorder of the run-down rooms. The “many chairs” have a “pattern […] so without focus” that Rupert barely knows where to sit (11). The appearance of the building from outside, flanked by empty, locked-up houses, is directed by the times of the black-outs. What is more, the square is not a space of connection between the houses, but of separation: that evening, “the dusk of the square […] lay at the foot of the steps like water” (18), turning the dwellings into isolated islands.

At the start of “The Demon Lover”, Kathleen Drover finds herself in a comparable environment when she returns to her “shut-up house” (91) in a the street that was “once familiar”, but has now accumulated “an unfamiliar queerness” (91). The door to her house has “warped” (91), a word denoting physical deformation as well as suggesting mental

disarrangement. In fact, Douglas Hughes has argued that the demon lover is a figment of Kathleen's imagination, maintaining that the "quite serious illness" (Bowen 94) she had is an indication of her fragile mental health: "[w]ar, not a vengeful lover, is the demon that overwhelms this rueful woman" (Huges 411). On the other hand, Stefania Porcelli shows that the ghost is "the most profitable representation of the disruption of time and space in the city under siege" (18), and "a structural device that fulfils the aesthetics of the fragment ensuing from the war" (24). In any case, for Kathleen there is no certainty, and place has become severed from time and experience: "her married London home's whole air of being a cracked cup from which memory, with its reassuring power, had either evaporated or leaked away" (Bowen 96).

The opening of "Ivy Gripped the Steps", too, recalls that of "In the Square": characters are studying from a distance or indirectly – through windows for instance – what used to be part of their lives. The stories in *The Demon Lover* are about looking back, not about looking at what is present or what will be present. Gill Plain indicates that there is "a strong sense of déjà vu" in writings about the Second World War; they inevitably respond to the First World War (39). Indeed, according to Jessica Gildersleeve, "Ivy Gripped the Steps" "is structured by the legacy of the last war" (91). The reader first learns about the aspect of the dilapidated building, then of its inhabitant. The ivy-overgrown house measures the stifling effects of war: "[t]he process of strangulation could be felt: one wondered how many more years of war would be necessary for this to complete itself" (Bowen 131). Gavin also notes the two-sided treatment of place, its fluidity as well its isolation: "[i]n its condition, today, the house was a paradox: having been closed and sealed up with extreme care, it had been abandoned in a manner no less extreme" (133). As with the demon lover's way of loving, attention does not imply emotional consideration. In fact, the war unnaturally imposed aloneness upon togetherness: Bowen notes that "[h]owever many people have got together, each has, while

the air whistles and things rock, his own deadly accesses of solitude" ("Britain in Autumn" (1940), 50).

Re-imagined place provides the surreal atmosphere of "Mysterious Kôr". In the story, the young girl Pepita wanders around London with her lover, a soldier named Arthur. Initially, as in "In the Square", what forms the first impression is a place shed in "ghostly" light: "London looked like the moon's capital – shallow, cratered, extinct" (196). Whereas the sense of unease in other stories was mostly personal, "Mysterious Kôr" universalises it: "[s]omething more immaterial seemed to threaten, and to be keeping people at home. This day between days, this extra tax, was perhaps more than senses and nerves could bear" (196). People are cooped up in their houses, while the streets lie eerily deserted. An abundance of negations heightens their 'cratered' aspect: the third paragraph focuses on "the now gate*less* gates of the park", on traffic lights that "went through their *un*meaning performance of changing colour", and "faces […] with *no* expression at all", to eventually zoom in on "a girl and a soldier who, by their way of walking, seemed to have *no* destination but each other and to be not quite certain even of that" [italics mine] (197). Indeed, in a senseless world, the lovers attempt to seek refuge in a fictional place. In London's desolation, strained with emptiness, Pepita, like Barbary, decides to give her own meaning to the bombed city, by restyling it "'Mysterious Kôr'" – " a completely forsaken city, as high as cliffs and white as bones, with no history" (198). The text is haunted by another: contemporary London approaches the exotic zone of imperialist fantasy that H. Rider Haggard created in his *She* (1886), a novel that was central to fulfilling Elizabeth Bowen's own childhood desire for "an undiscovered country" ("Rider Haggard: *She*" 246). This fantastic city is immune to air raids and accessible to no-one but the two of them. As the lovers are trying to find privacy, Pepita argues that the deconstruction induced by war may allow for reconstruction of something else in its stead: "[t]his war shows we've by no means come to the end. If you can blow whole places out of existence, you can

blow whole places into it" (*Demon Lover,* 199). She voices a kind of optimism about the possibility of replacing destruction with reinvention. However, James Haule suggests that her imagination has a distancing consequence: "Pepita's powerful imagination ultimately will not unite, but will separate" her from Arthur (213).

A suggestion of the supernatural charges the night: the light of the moon enchants the lovers and Pepita's housemate Callie. Before Pepita can exchange London for Mysterious Kôr, it is already present as "the moon's capital" (Bowen 196). When Callie gives up waiting for the lovers to return, she blows out the candle, to find herself drawn to a substitute light – that of the moon, which becomes "a white explanation" (206). Previously annoyed by the lovers' failure to be on time, she can now forgive them, for "the moon did more: it exonerated and beautified the lateness of the lovers' return" (206). The moon is the great actor of the story, chaperoning the lovers, and accompanying the lonely Callie, who finds rest in its beams. Lunar influence endows her with inhuman knowledge: "Callie knew, as though from a vision, that Arthur would sleep soundly" (205). When Pepita and Arthur finally come in, Callie wonders: "their features looked faint, weathered – was this the work of the moon?" (207). The moon, its shine unimpeded by artificial light due to the blackouts, turns the city into a different place, and its inhabitants into different people. Arthur connects the moon to Callie, who, after seeing her hand daubed by one of its beams, still feels "her glove of moonlight" (207); in reply to Arthur asking her "how's your moon?" (214), she realises it has ultimately diminished in strength: "the moon's power over London and the imagination had now declined" (214). That light plays such a role is especially significant to a pair of lovers whose "love had been a collision in the dark" (208). Presence and absence of light have a violent bearing on the course of events: indeed, the characters have experienced not so much illumination of feeling, but as it is war that enables the moon's full potential, a true "siege of light" (214).

Light serves to underline the disruptive effect of war on time in the story "Ivy Gripped the Steps" as well. When Gavin contemplates the passing of time, he realises that "the silencing of the guns across the channel had ended the tentative love affair with death: Southstone's life, no longer kept to at least a pitch by shelling warnings, now had nothing but an etiolated slowness" (132). 'Etiolated' means to grow pale due to lack of light: while the war animated people and the place in a (violent) sort of way, peace carries no tangible promise for revitalisation. In his youth Gavin was already made attentive to the passing of time: partly living in the Midlands, partly in Southstone, he could compare time in different regions. His preference for Southstone stems not only from health-reasons, for he is also in love with Mrs Nicholson: "[a]lways towards the end of a stay at Southstone Gavin's senses began to be haunted by the anticipation of going back" (140). Moreover, to him it feels, retrospectively, that existence in the inferior Midlands "belonged to *any* century. It was unprogressive. It had stayed as it was while, elsewhere, history jerked itself painfully off the spool" (147). This answers Mrs Nicholson's commentary on history, who posits that "history is quite far back", and that it has, essentially, come to an "end" with the spread of civilisation (145). This naïve statement seems particularly poignant when looked at from the viewpoint of Gavin, who has gone through two wars in this 'civilised' world. He ponders her statement upon his return: "the voidness and the air of concluded meaning about the plan of Southstone seemed to conform her theory: history, after this last galvanized moment forward, had come, as she expected, to a full stop" (166), only not with a perfect civilisation as the end-point. Due to the war, a progressive development of time has come to a halt. Bowen's texts hardly speak of 'the future', they address only a disconcerted 'now'.

Variously, characters try to claim time as something physical. In "The Happy Autumn Fields", Mary clings to a photograph of Sarah and Henrietta, the only tangible counterpart to her ethereal dream. She tells her husband how it feels: "I am left with a fragment torn out of a

day" (127). Mary imagines time as a piece of fabric, or an entity that can be possessed. In her dream, she attaches importance to moments, for instance at dusk, "[t]his particular hour of subtle light – not to be fixed by the clock, for it was early in winter and late in summer and in spring and autumn now, about Arthur's bedtime – had always, for Sarah, been Henrietta's" (120). But time is slippery, like the water in *Four Quartets*: when Sarah/Mary feels the pull of the world where her sleeping body lies, "she trie[s] to attach her being to each second, not because each was singular in itself, each a drop condensed form the mist of love in the room, but because she apprehended that the seconds were numbered" (123). With the two characters negotiating time whimsically, Nicola Darwood notes that "the reader is never sure whether the past encroaches on the present, or the present causes chaos in the past" (141). While her sister tries to reassure Sarah that she "will see that there is tomorrow" (Bowen 126), an explosion wakes Mary, whose stopped watch silently negates the promise.

Indeed, the war compounds time's effects. Walking through Southstone, Gavin is shocked by the "vindictiveness" of time, which is temporarily personified: "she had worked in the less than a second of detonation" (167) – his realisation cannot keep up with "history's power to scar" (147). As noted in previous chapters, time is explicitly portrayed as a malevolent force. Bowen shows how the war makes people endure intolerable waiting. Time becomes a means of imposing control on somebody. At the time that the demon lover was courting Kathleen, he told her "'I shall be with you […], sooner or later. You won't forget that. You need do nothing but wait" (95). The message constitutes not a promise but a threat, forcing her to run from the forbidding authority of the clock. In her essay "Britain in Autumn" (1940), Bowen tells how the blitz required unnatural anticipation; among other things, Londoners had to brave streets "seeded with time-bombs" (48), and every night the black-outs brought "that date with fear" (49). The soldier represents the choking sensation of waiting, the intimacy of that invisible tick-tocking threat.

As the story "The Inherited Clock" illustrates, the evil of war nestles itself in time and time pieces. It tells of a woman, Rosanna, who has been playing her two young cousins, Clara and Paul, against each other. The device she uses is a clock, which she bequeaths teasingly to Clara. However, Clara has entirely forgotten about it, until years later, she sees it again: "[t]he skeleton clock, in daylight, was threatening to a degree its oddness could not explain. […] Clara tried to tell herself that it was, only, shocking to see the anatomy of time" (38). The eeriness and menace of the clock derives from its openness, its almost rude quality of bareness. Like the other characters in *The Demon Lover*, Clara is haunted by the past. She remembers everything about her cousin's house, to an unnatural extent – except the existence of the clock. Whilst walking the grounds of Rosanna's house, she feels the burden of the past, a past which she drags out into the present: "[t]hese sombre pleasure-grounds, unchanging as might have been a photograph of themselves, were charged for her with a past that, though discontinuous, maintained a continuous atmosphere of its own" (40). When Rosanna dies, Clara inherits the clock, realising she is inexplicably afraid of it. She flees from the object, feeling spectral herself by fear of the 'skeleton clock': "Clara, walking at high speed into the solid darkness, was surprised all over her body to feel no impact: she seemed to pass like a ghost through an endless wall" (45). Time tangibly affects her being, and Clara's life has, like Kathleen Drover's, been dominated by waiting: "[s]he had been subject to waiting as to an illness; the tissues of her being had been consumed by it. Was it possible that the past should be able to injure the future irreparably?" (43). Eventually, Paul clarifies both Clara's fear and Rosanna's game: tried by patience for years herself, Rosanna likes to inflict waiting on others. "The younger the heirs you name, the longer they have to wait, and the more the waiting can do to them" (54). Waiting has the association of deliberate torture, a torture that becomes real in Paul's behaviour. Trying to jog Clara's memory, he reveals they once interfered with the workings of the flawless clock: making Clara believe she might capture a minute, he pushed

her finger into the cogs of the timepiece until the flesh was mauled and bruised. This is his "experiment" with time (56).

The stories in *The Demon Lover* conspire to mix "the temptation and the threat of the otherworldly" (North 443). Indeed, the texts interact with one another to create the overall effect of patterned disorder, repeated bewilderment and the frustrating certainty of loss of control. The final story, "Mysterious Kôr", revisits aspects of the preceding texts. The word 'extinct' ties up the first story and the last. The element of the inherited skeleton clock informs "The Demon Lover"; it adds meaning to Kathleen's urge to run away from time, and the power of implementing waiting as a means of manipulation rises in importance. Moreover, the enigmatic demon lover complicates the character of Arthur in "Mysterious Kôr": this soldier has, like his nameless peer, shimmering eyes – Pepita "saw his eyeballs glitter" (198). In addition, he follows the behaviour of the soldier in the garden by asking her suddenly whether she is cold: "he asked brusquely: 'Cold?'" (202). These details would have been innocent, but having read the "The Demon Lover", they become suspect. Individual responses to the circumstances of war mirror one another at a slant; indeed, as Bowen says about her war-time stories, "[t]hey are the particular", but through them runs "the high-voltage current of the general" (224).

Conclusion – Keeping Time

Time cannot be touched, seen, heard, or smelled, but its effects are omnipresent: it is unfathomable, yet inescapable. In this thesis, I have examined the modernist representation of time as disfigured by war in a variety of texts; both prose and poetic meditations, with a special focus on women writers but considering the masculine voice as well. Seeing that there has been a great deal of attention directed at the modernist experimentation with time, as well as the modernist reflection on the experience of war, this project seemed an exciting opportunity to see how these factors interact. Close-reading Lehmann, Macaulay, Eliot and Bowen has allowed me to expose a shared, yet unfulfilled wish for a reliable, safe processing of time, and the impossibility of an uncoloured access to the past. In addition, situating these readings in their historical context of war and in cultural context of an 'obsession' with time made it possible to reveal the nuances plotted by these particular writers in the face of more general trends.

The first chapter showed how philosophers in the nineteenth and twentieth century paved the way for reconsiderations of time, a discussion that can be traced at least as far as to late antiquity and the writings of St Augustine of Hippo. Henri Bergson essentially re-sparked a dormant debate with his insistence on two sorts of time: the external, spatialised time, and the internal, subjective rendering of time: *la durée*. This latter category is what writers at the beginning of the twentieth century delved into, exploring the alternatives to conventional clock time. In addition, his thoughts on the lingering, active participation of memories in perception would acquire an insidious quality in several (late) modernist works. At this time, too, John W. Dunne offered a new voice in the philosophical discussion on time with his Serialism. He suggested, like Bergson, that time is not truly linear, but extended this to a view of time that allowed for extreme versions of retrospection and prescience in a system of indefinite layers of temporal planes. Fictional accounts at the start of the twentieth century

shared a preoccupation with time, especially once a global war shattered the promise of a safe future, and a second one made the repetition of tragedy seem inevitable.

At the core of Chapter Two is the comparison of two feminine middle-brow novels that together encompass the temporal peripheries of war: its imminence and its repercussions. The work of the relatively neglected Rosamond Lehmann cleverly tweaks an innocent nostalgia by undercutting the roots of stable family life, weaving their misfortunes into a self-reflective fiction that dazzles the narrator herself. A deluge of recollections washes over Rebecca's impressions of the actual present, staining her mind's eye with the burden of cursed lives. With Rose Macaulay, then, the analysis moves the adolescent's experience of war from the countryside to the city, and from war's approach to its aftermath. Here, revisiting the past is personal, and memories are not shared through words, but rekindled by draping them over the shape of the present. Barbary finds an oxymoronic continuity in the remnants of change: wreckage and crumbling buildings become the nourishing soil of both wild flowers and her remembrances. While Rebecca transcends her own childhood by stepping into past experiences of an adult world, Barbary gives in to her yearning for an everlasting youth filled with dangerous adventures.

Chapter Three contrasts the foregoing with a poetic perspective on the passing of time in view of war. It maintains a tentative quality of wonder about the role of history in the present and future, more so than Lehmann and Macaulay, with its opening from a peaceful, paradisiacal garden shored against the following descriptions of burned buildings – but it is also very cynical in its evaluation of continuity. It fights a hopeless battle for a timeless conception of the world: the speaker wants to step into an eternal now, but cannot be oblivious to the foundations history has laid. With that, Eliot's poetry epitomises what Ricardo Quinones calls the "double need […] at the heart of the Modernist quest": "to find a new sense of eternity *within* the flux of time" (61). The poem taps into a Bergsonian kind of

preference for subjective time, trying to escape measurable time, yet remaining consciously indebted to it throughout. It expresses its frustration about the dependence of the present on moments past and those to come through a bundle of oppositions worked out differently in each quartet. It draws the reader in by addressing one directly, yet simultaneously distancing the world of the poem from the reader's world by its obscure references and conflicting images. The pattern that it paints constantly renews itself, while it also strives for the harmony of continuity by establishing parallels between times, places, and words.

Finally, in Chapter Four recollections gain their most fantastic and hallucinatory quality in the wartime stories of Elizabeth Bowen. Her characters seem to have lost their essence in the peace of the past, beholding the shattered reality with eyes that are only half-awake and half-alive. They float back to the past, reaching for their irretrievable fulfilled potential, through a fluid kind of time that rushes whimsically in all directions, away from the present. Conversely, while the current washes backwards, the dominating past sometimes actively intrudes into the drab, impassive present. In these stories, the war has alienated people from their surroundings, their time-frame, and their fellows. Even if they are accompanied by others, there is a consistently huge spiritual gap that separates them and insists on a state of loneliness that is only relieved by a sinister sort of companionship, a ghostly one that uses time as a means of manipulation. Waiting proves a form of physical torture, which, like powerful memories, distorts a clear perception of the world. In fact, these texts reveal that such an undistorted view might never have been within reach in the first place.

Heather Wiebe writes that "the past persists in a variety of subtly different modes: the ruin, the artefact, the monument, the remnant or trace, the ghost, ritual, memory, tradition, and canon" (9). Of these, the ruin and memory feature heavily in the discussed texts, but what they have in common, too, alongside their holding up a mirror of the past to the eyes of the present, is an element of the ghostly. The stories in *The Demon Lover* aren't the only texts to

bring ghosts into play – all writers featuring in this thesis veer towards a form of the spectral. In *The Ballad and the Source,* Rebecca's initially nostalgic, childishly curious desire for real-life stories absorbs her until she feels she might see Cherry's ghost: "I had suppressed the image of the third, the absent one" (Lehmann 226). She conceives of her grandparents as "familiar phantoms" (12), words that find their parallel in T.S. Eliot's "familiar compound ghost" (38), suggesting that the familiar is estranged by its separation in time: yet it hovers over the scene in less palpable, but still haunting, shapes. To Barbary, the city of London in its restored capacity provides but a shadow of homeliness, while the ruins that harbour visions of the dead reinforce her own role as a 'remnant' of the war. Ghosts, writes Lisa Kröger, "often signal eruptions that deconstruct binary ways of perceiving the world" (ix). As memorials to their own death, ghosts embody the dissolution of the physical world caused by war; as personifications of the intrusion of the past into the present, they symbolise the disintegration of the mental certainty of linear time.

These forms of dissolution and disintegration reign in the novels, the sequence of poems, and the short stories. Lehmann defamiliarizes a thoroughly intimate concept: she deconstructs the safety of the family. Macaulay pushes this further by letting her heroine find the familiar in barren margins of time and space, only to return to a motherly haven after a complete exclusion from society. Eliot's subtle version of time-travelling takes the reader on an ongoing journey along primitive rituals, personified rivers, and desolate cities – all the way back to a beginning that is also the end, as well as a start renewed by time. Bowen invites the reader to stop by and enter houses: she permits us to intrude into urban houses that seem filled more with past presences than with actual inhabitants. These texts acknowledge, but also alert to, the dangers of our yearning for past moments. They lay bare our inclination to integrate our lives into stories that we can only assimilate retrospectively. With their various modes, the texts invite the reader to ponder the enduring mystery of time, negotiating the disastrous

contingencies that may alter its flux.

Unfortunately there was no opportunity to incorporate other novels by Lehmann – it would be interesting to explore what the sequel to *The Ballad and the Source* makes of time and whether it develops the line of disillusioned nostalgia. As another suggestion for future research, it might be of use to investigate writers that were directly influenced by Henri Bergson and John Dunne, as compared to these indirect associations. Moreover, to flesh out the ghostly side of the Second World War a fuller treatment of Williams' *All Hallows' Eve* is in order. Regarding the prolific Bowen, had the space not been lacking, it could have been fruitful to compare her war-time short stories with those written before and after these years, to see more clearly how war has an impact on the identity of her characters and their experience of time. Furthermore, a clear-cut comparison of time as portrayed by writers on the Great War versus the Second World War – the 'people's war' – might provide an interesting nuance in the experience of the soldier as opposed to that of the civilian.

These research possibilities are for another time. What the readings in this thesis reveal is that through the narratives of war, time flies waywardly, fantastically – now backwards, now forwards; a story that centres only on art for its infinite renewal as well as for recurrence.

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