COMMEMORATION AND THE GREAT WAR:

THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIER, *THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER*, AND *MRS. DALLOWAY*

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ABSTRACT

Criticism on Great War memorialisation typically argues one of two things: that monuments were erected as authentic expressions of grief or that monuments were erected for political purposes. This study attempts to reconcile these diverging views by exploring the effects of Great War propaganda and memorialisation on individual consciousness. This study is particularly concerned with the genesis of the nation—or imagined community—and how traditions, monuments, and cultural symbols construct Englishness during and after the Great War. Ideology transforms individuals into national subjects. The trauma of twentieth-century warfare—millions of men were killed and millions more were physically and psychologically maimed—challenged the ideologies that construct the nation and control the individual. The three novels included in this study represent characters whose war experiences call into question the ideology of the nation; because of the war, these characters become alienated from the English community. In Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (1918), Chris Baldry returns home with shell-shock induced amnesia and refuses to perform his masculine roles as husband and soldier. In Vernon Bartlett's *The Unknown Soldier* (1930), a soldier believes the nation does not exist and that patriotism imposes illusory divisions among men. In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), post-war memorialisation constructs a community of mourners. For Woolf, individuals must separate themselves from the ideology of the community, which glorifies the war dead, in order to engage in authentic grief work. These texts highlight the ways people responded to the trauma of the Great War and the ways the nation assimilated or rejected particular narratives.

Les théories à propos de la commémoration de la première guerre mondiale soutiennent généralement l'une des deux choses suivantes: soit que les monuments ont été érigés en tant qu'expressions authentiques du deuil, ou encore que l'érection de ces monuments s'est faite selon des visées politiques. Cette étude a pour but de réconcilier ces visions opposées en explorant les effets de la propagande et de la commémoration de la première guerre mondiale sur la conscience individuelle. Cette étude s'intéresse particulièrement à la genèse du concept de nation—ou de communauté imaginée—ainsi que sur la manière dont les traditions, les monuments et les symboles culturels ont contribué à la construction de l'identité anglaise pendant la première guerre mondiale et après. L'idéologie transforme les individus en sujets nationaux. Le trauma induit par cette guerre—des millions d'hommes mutilés physiquement et psychologiquement—a remis en cause les idéologies qui fondent la nation et contrôlent l'individu. Les trois nouvelles incluses dans la présente étude présentent des personnages ayant refusé l'idéologie de la nation, de par leurs expériences de guerre; en raison de celles-ci, ces personnages ont été exclus de la communauté anglaise. Dans *The Return of the Soldier* (1918), de Rebecca West, Chris Baldry revient à la maison avec une amnésie liée à un traumatisme et refuse de s'acquitter de son rôle d'homme en tant que mari et soldat. Dans *The Unknown Soldier* (1930), de Vernon Bartlett, un soldat croit que la nation n'existe pas et que le patriotisme impose des divisions illusoires entre les hommes. Dans *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) de Virginia Woolf, les commémorations de l'après-guerre transforment la population, menant à une communauté en deuil. Selon Woolf, les individus doivent se détacher de l'idéologie de la communauté, qui glorifie la mort en contexte de guerre, s'ils veulent s'engager dans un réel processus de deuil. Ces textes mettent donc en lumière les façons dont les gens

réagissent face au trauma de la première guerre mondiale ainsi que les façons dont la nation assimile ou rejette certains individus.

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Introduction

In the Great War, millions of Englishmen were deployed, hundreds of thousands never returned, and millions of civilians were left to mourn. Given such large populations, it is possible to suffer from the same inability to acknowledge the individual as is often attributed to the old men who sent waves of young soldiers over the top and into machine gun- and shell-fire. When Trudi Tate writes that "[w]hole nations found themselves bearing witness to events they did not understand and, by and large, could not see," she reveals the tendency to treat the nation as an experiential entity, rather than as a category that vaguely represents a group of living, breathing individuals, all of whom experience war differently (1). According to Jay Winter, "when we deal with mass movements or nations, we move from tangible realities to abstract, or imagined ones. Once beyond a certain threshold, families are not agents but metaphors, and metaphors do not make monuments. Groups of people do" (*Remembering War* 137). He further argues that the "key agents of remembrance," those groups of people who commemorate the war, are kinship groups formed among families in mourning, not agents of the state (*Remembering War* 136). Although the efforts of these locally based groups have now vanished, "it would be foolish to merge these activities in some state-bounded space of hegemony or domination. What these people did was much smaller and much greater than that" ("Forms of Kinship" 60). Yet the ideology of the community influences any act performed or object created by an individual in public or private. The presence of the nation in these remembrance strategies explains why large groups of people felt that similar objects or ceremonies were the most suitable form for the expression of their grief. While families may be largely responsible for the erection of local monuments, their acts of remembrance were influenced by a nation which provided its citizens with

cues and a lexicon to interpret and cope with the cataclysmic effects of the Great War. Soldiers parading in uniform, propaganda campaigns, and war memorials re-constructed a sense of nationhood by presenting the Great War within a tradition of warfare and as a traumatic event experienced by the entire community.

Some individuals, however, rejected state ideologies and experienced alienation from displays of national cohesion and congratulation. The novels included in this study explore the disillusioned and dislocated individuals who struggle against assimilation or were excluded from the community during and after the Great War. Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (1918), Vernon Bartlett's *The Unknown Soldier* (1930), and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) engage in a discussion about how the individual's view of the community—and himself as a supposed member of that community—changes through war experience. In each of these novels, the Great War has such a tremendous effect on individual consciousness that it undoes the ideology that constructs the nation and the individual as a national subject. The realities of the front "demilitarized" the soldier and "confronted him with realities in which it was impossible to maintain the aggressions reinforced by propaganda" (Leed 106). Some civilians were unable to interpret the disfigured bodies of soldiers and the long casualty lists within the consolatory framework constructed by patriotic discourse. Characters in the texts in this study have become dislodged from the "ebb and flow" of the community, and reappraise the discourses which have constructed their social existence and experiences (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 9). For these men and women, "[n]o ceremonial conclusion to the war could restore the continuities it had ended, or recreate those 'fictions' that had been left behind in the labyrinth of the trenches" (Leed 213). These alienated individuals come to understand that beyond ideology, the nation does not exist.

Yet more than any other war in history, the Great War was concerned with the definition of nation and the establishment of national borders. Elie Kedourie notes that the Great War "broke out over a national question, the South Slav question, and in consequence of Austria's fear that South Slav irredentism based in Serbia might, sooner or later, disrupt the Empire" (124). The problems of nations and nationalisms were particularly relevant in early twentieth-century Europe and the Great War was the opportunity for many nations to be realised—literally to have their sovereignty drawn on the map of Europe. Adrian Gregory argues that wars "define nationality [and] raise the question of what the nation is and what it stands for" (5). During the Peace Conference, the Allies relied on the "national principle" to divide Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire into independent nations (Kedourie 124). Eric Hobsbawm observes that "no systematic attempt has been made before or since [the Great War], in Europe or anywhere else, to redraw the political map on national lines" (*Nations and Nationalism* 133). This approach to resolve the conflict between European nationalities "simply did not work" (133). The identification of a nation by the dominant nationality marginalises minority populations in order to create a homogeneous community. In the years after the Great War, some new nations, in order to maintain a dominant nationality, purged citizens who did resemble the archetype (Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism* 133). In the late 1930s, Nazism showed the extent to which the "purification" of a nation could be taken.

According to Hobsbawm, nations have not always existed, but belong "exclusively to a particular, and historically recent, period" (*Nations and Nationalism* 9). "Sinks," the trench philosopher in Bartlett's *The Unknown Soldier*, traces the development of the nation from "[f]amily to clan, clan to tribe, tribe to race, race to nation, nation to empire, and now you've got three or four empires that boss the world" (270). Craig Calhoun

explains that, while the term "nation" is old, "before the modern era, it meant only people linked by place of birth and culture" (9). The archaic nation, that of the family, clan, and perhaps race, is a community that forms naturally among similar people in close proximity. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson dates the genesis of the modern nation and the popularity of "national consciousness" to the print capitalism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (37). Isolated communities, which may not have communicated verbally because of vernacular differences, could now communicate with text (44). Through the widespread dispersal of text, communities that shared a vernacular "gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that *only those* hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged" (44; original emphasis). The exclusionary function of language—we can speak it, they cannot—promoted the concept of a limited linguistic community. Thus the modern nation, which developed out of the French Revolution, is a "body of citizens whose collective sovereignty constituted them [as] a state which was their political expression" (Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism* 18-9). That the nation has changed drastically in the last two hundred years, and was virtually non-existent prior to the eighteenth-century, reveals that it is not the universal, "unchanging social entity" it appears to be today (Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism* 9).

As the foundation of a "national consciousness," language was also the basis for the modelling, adaptation, and transformation of the community (Anderson 110). The development of linguistic communities led to the belief that language was the "personal property of quite specific groups—[its] daily speakers and readers—and … that these groups, imagined as communities, were entitled to their autonomous place in a fraternity of equals" (84). Because a common language defined the community, those who spoke a

different dialect often experienced anxieties of marginalisation (Anderson 101). This anxiety, common throughout Europe in the nineteenth century, led to "official nationalisms," which were the "*responses* by the power groups … threatened with exclusion from, or marginalization in, popular imagined communities" (109-10; original emphasis). In Anderson's view, the "key to situating 'official nationalism'—[the] willed merger of nation and dynastic empire—is to remember that it developed *after*, and *in reaction to*, the popular national movements proliferating in Europe since the 1820s" (86; original emphasis). The popular nationalism of the community was not replaced with an official nationalism. Rather, the aristocracy adopted and then transformed existing nationalisms to create a dominant imagined community (110). The nation, as it came to be imagined by everyone in the community, developed according to the manipulation of "national" discourses.

Because a nation is imagined into existence, it is without history. This lack of history leads to a rewriting of the past and the incorporation of pre-existing symbols into national discourse. According to Anderson, the "new imagined communities … conjured up by lexicography and print-capitalism always regarded themselves as ancient. In an age in which 'history' itself was still widely conceived in terms of 'great events' and 'great leaders', [the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries], it was obviously tempting to decipher the community's past in antique dynasties" (109). That William the Conqueror and George I are labelled as kings in English history, although neither could speak English, suggests the need to locate the newly imagined nation in history (109). Jens Bartelson notes that the "modern order of states and nations was crafted out of a set of resources whose origin was such that it constantly threatened this creation, and that this origin therefore had to be carefully repressed within collective social memory" (38). The

fundamental figures and events in English history that pre-date the nation are appropriated, re-contextualised, and remembered in order to hide the impermanence of the nation. Even English literary traditions, deities, and heroes were "recycled" from the Romans and boosted "claims to peoplehood, dynastic legitimacy and royal authority" (47). Later writers, like Hobbes and Locke, provided the "theoretical justification of that which now largely had been accomplished in practice, and, by constant omission, help[ed] readers *forget* the fact that the meaning and experience of empire had constituted the ultimate resource out of which the early-modern state had been crafted" (47; original emphasis). Symbols and metaphors are nationalised, "thus making them appear exclusive inventions of particular communities when in fact they had been around long before and had constituted parts of a cultural heritage common to the entire civilization of the West" (38). Modern national identities have been "created and sustained through a distinct strategy of remembrance that could assimilate everything useful outside the spatiotemporal horizon of the present, while erasing the traces of this assimilation" (47). The construction of a history from events which predate the nation suggests that while a nation is imagined, it is also "remembered" into existence" (51).

Through the adaptation and invention of traditions and symbols, the state controls the way the masses imagine the nation and their roles within that nation. The identity of the community requires a "shared understanding of history and its meaning, the construction of a narrative tracing the linkages between past and present, locating self and society in time. It is this understanding that helps to generate affective bonds, a sense of belonging, and which engenders obligations and loyalty to the 'imagined community'" (Bell 5). These symbols and traditions are tools of "social engineering" and include the national anthem and the flag, public ceremonies and monuments (Hobsbawm,

Introduction 13, 7; "Mass Producing Traditions" 271). Hobsbawm defines tradition as a "set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (Introduction 1). He further identifies three types of traditions, including "those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities," "those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority," and "those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour" (Introduction 9).

In the decades leading up the Great War, many European nations were refashioning their traditions. Hobsbawm observes that the progress of "electoral democracy and consequent emergence of mass politics … dominated the invention of official traditions in the period 1870-1914" ("Mass Producing Traditions" 267-8). Re-imagined nations require new traditions to cultivate the loyalty of the people (Hobsbawm, "Mass producing Traditions" 263). While "[n]nothing appears more ancient, and linked to an immemorial past, than the pageantry which surrounds British monarchy in its public ceremonial manifestations," these traditions are the product of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Hobsbawm, Introduction 1). Even Great War memorials were not a new concept in the twentieth century (Mosse 47). While the military cemetery was a new innovation, the Cenotaph and other monuments participate in a tradition that memorialised generals, kings, and princes (47). Hynes points to the "War Memorials Exhibition" of 1919 as demonstrating the tradition of memorialisation (*War Imagined* 273). The exhibition displayed memorials to the dead throughout 2000 years of Western history, thus showing that the principles of contemporary memorialisation, collected in

the modern section, were suitable to post-war England (*War Imagined* 273). The unprecedented number of memorials erected in England—the Imperial War Museum has records of 27,000—suggests the scope of the national project following the conclusion of the Great War (Frantzen 197).

The traditions and symbols which seemingly bind an individual to the nation, and individuals to each other, are objects of ideology. These objects construct the individual's reality and interpellate the individual as a subject within the community. Althusser defines ideology as the "system of ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group" (120). According to Althusser, "[w]hat is represented in ideology is not the system of real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (125). Ideology creates an "illusion" that the individual uses to develop the "imaginary relations" of his real life (123). Men do not represent "their real conditions of existence, their real world" in ideology, but rather "it is their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them there" (124).

The state responded to the ideologically damaging 1914-18 conflict by asserting historical continuity and re-creating traditions. Armistice Day is the "ceremonial occasion in which the nation as a whole is able to redefine its identity and in which rituals of social cohesion are the main constituent" (Bushaway 136). According to Stephen Goebel, medieval rhetoric and imagery allowed the state to represent the "trauma of war" as a "coherent narrative," and thereby the dead soldiers, the victims of war, became "visible within a traditional framework" (29). The "temporal anchoring" of post-war memorialisation allowed the nation to continue unchanged after the war (Goebel 1). Such nation-affirming traditions and monuments "contribute to restoring the ideological belief

that wars were fought, and again may have to be fought, in the interest of people" (Hüppauf 66). The "rhetoric of war writing" ensures that the trauma of war remains within the bounds of cultural representation and moral justification (Lamberti and Fortunati 117). In *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Paul Fussell notes that Great War literature participates in a long tradition of literature. According to Fussell, by studying war literature in the context of this tradition, one can infer the experience of Great War writers (146-7). Celebrative war novels, for instance, not only represent war, but "also and above all must confirm the inevitability of war, reassure the reader of the worthiness of the experience, giving it meaning and a moral, national, and cultural justification" (Lamberti and Fortunati 117). Yet this response to the trauma of the Great War—the refashioning of Englishness—contributes to the ideology of nationalism that led to the war in the first place. The various representations of the war casualties "had significant functions for the collective construction of social reality in the inter-war period and this, it must be added, was also the period of the preparation for the Second World War" (Hüppauf 79).

This study attempts to reconcile two diverging arguments in criticism of Great War commemoration. According to some critics, monument-making is a fundamentally political practice and is "bound up with rituals of national identification, and a key element in the symbolic repertoire available to the nation-state for binding its citizens into a collective national identity" (Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper 7). Winter states that "[c]ommemoration was a political act; it could not be neutral, and war memorials carried political messages from the earliest days of the war" (*Sites of Memory* 82). According to Alex King, the first memorials erected in 1915 were not meant to commemorate the dead, but to aid in the recruitment of new soldiers (46). Other critics believe Great War

commemoration was a psychological response, and that monuments and public rituals were authentic expressions of individuals in mourning (Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper 7). Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker believe "that the building of monuments was determined by the scale of the mourning, the immeasurable bereavement experienced, and not by the desire to suggest that war should never happen again" (189). Larry Ray writes that it is "hard to argue that the war memorials and cemeteries are overtly patriotic structures that were designed to celebrate a major national triumph and mask the war's horrors. The sheer scale of the loss commemorated means that to lionize the dead and glorify war was both distasteful and inappropriate" (144). Because people, rather than nations, erect memorials, one must study the way individual consciousness is constructed by the nation. By approaching acts of remembrance in this way, we will gain insight into why individuals felt that memorials were the most effective way to express their grief and cope with the trauma of the Great War.

The ideology of symbols and traditions fashions the individual. Freud writes that the individual's "manner of life was bound to conform if he desired to take part in a civilized community. These ordinances, often too stringent, demanded a great deal of him—much self-restraint, much renunciation of instinctual satisfaction" ("Thoughts for the Times" 276). According to Althusser, the apparatus that constructs the subject is called an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA, 110). ISAs are a "certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions," which include the family, the church, schools, newspapers, etc. (110). Ideology is instilled in and validated by the individual through the "installation of the ISAs in which … ideology is realized and realizes itself" and thus "becomes the ruling ideology" (138). The ISAs are to be distinguished from the Repressive State

Apparatuses, which include the government, the army, police, prisons, and courts, which "functions by violence" and repression, either by force or coercion (110). While ISAs primarily and predominantly function "by *ideology*, they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is attenuated and concealed, even symbolic" (112; original emphasis). According to Althusser, there is "no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus," because even the church and the school employ physical repression of behaviours through punishment, expulsion, and selection (112). Kedourie adds that the "purpose of education is not to transmit knowledge, traditional wisdom, and the ways devised by a society for attending to the common concerns; its purpose rather is wholly political, to bend the will of the young to the will of the nation. Schools are instruments of state policy, like the army, the police, and the exchequer" (78). In post-war England, the mob-beatings of participants who did not perform the necessary behaviours of public commemorative rituals, such as the Silence, illustrate the conflation of physical and ideological control of the state over its subjects.

The individual is interpellated as subject through his performance of ideologically significant behaviours. Because the internality of the individual is inaccessible, his externality establishes his social existence. According to Judith Butler, "we are constituted politically in part by the virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies—as a site of desire and physical vulnerability, as a site of publicity at once assertive and exposed" (*Precarious Life* 20). Ideology presupposes that the "'ideas' of a human subject exist in his actions, or ought to exist in his actions, and if this is not the case, it lends him other ideas corresponding to the actions … that he does perform" (127). Althusser clarifies that these actions are "*practices*" which are "governed by the *rituals* in which these practices are inscribed, within the *material existence of an ideological apparatus*"

(127; original emphasis). Such rituals interpellate "*concrete individuals as concrete subjects*" of the community (130; original emphasis). The subject willingly performs the behaviours necessitated by ideology:

> If he believes in God, he goes to church to attend Mass, kneels, prays, confesses, does penance … and naturally repents, and so on. If he believes in Duty, he will have the corresponding attitudes, inscribed in ritual practices 'according to the correct principles'. If he believes in Justice, he will submit unconditionally to the rules of the Law, and may even protest when they are violated, sign petitions, take part in a demonstration. (126)

The subject performs the appropriate behaviours, adopts a particular attitude, and "participates in certain regular practices which are those of the ideological apparatus [and] on which 'depend' the ideas which he has in all consciousness freely chosen as a subject" (126).

The works included in this study explore the ends of ideology that were revealed by the Great War. The first to employ conscription, the Great War completed the dehumanisation of man which began with the Industrial Revolution (Gilbert 198). The casualties of this conflict greatly surpass those of any previous European war. Approximately 9.3 million soldiers died in warfare, including 2.3 million Russians, 2 million Germans, 1.9 million French, 1 million Austro-Hungarians, and 800,000 Britons (Morrow 284). These massive casualties resulted from "impenetrable moving curtains of shells, seas of flames, an air saturated with steel and lead, detonations which made the ear drums burst, hours and days of uninterrupted shelling, waves of gas" (Hüppauf 82). The possibility of experiencing such a horrific death "dwarfed the men and robbed their death of significance. In this reality of the war, death could not be experienced as a result of the

violence on the part of an enemy—it had become anonymous" (Hüppauf 82). Through their war experience, men lost their identities. According to Althusser, man is an "ideological animal by nature" and is "always-already [a] subjec[t]" (129, 130). But, in Sandra Gilbert's view, the forced passivity of trench warfare challenged the soldier's ideological view of himself and thus stripped him of his social identity:

> Helplessly entrenched on the edge of No Man's Land, this faceless being saw that the desert between him and his so-called enemy was not just a metaphor for the technology of death and the death dealt by technology, it was also a symbol for the state, whose nihilistic machinery he was powerless to control or protest. Fearfully assaulted by a deadly bureaucracy on the one side, and a deadly technocracy on the other, he was No Man, an inhabitant of the inhuman new era and a citizen of the unpromising new land into which this war of wars led him. (198)

Soldiers, whose identities were formed through ideology, "learned, often painfully, the illusory status of the ideological conception of himself and his comrades as national personas, armed defenders of a unified community" (Leed 112). The soldier no longer had a "transcendent view of himself and his role," for he "lost his ideological contact with home and all that it represented" (Leed 112).

The disconnection of the soldier from the ideology of the home front speaks to the feelings of dislocation and discontinuity soldiers experienced upon their return to England. This perceived discontinuity in English culture is particularly notable because, as Winter observes, post-war England had the same King, the same Archbishop of Canterbury, and the largely same politicians in Parliament as in 1914. The discontinuity between pre-war and post-war England, then, was less a social phenomenon and more a

psychological one. Shell-shocked soldiers with amnesia have become the enduring symbols of the "great bewilderment caused by the speed and magnitude of the changes taking place in the world, which war had then speeded up and made irreversible" (Gibelli 63). Charles Morgan, a soldier returning to England after war service, expresses his alienation when he arrives home: "I have returned to an island which undoubtedly bears the name of England. Certainly it is not now what once I thought it to be: perhaps it never was. And are all those fine people, with such an infinite capacity for beauty, to suffer for this corpse of England that remains? Is all we loved to be washed out in order that—in order that—what we *are* fighting for?" (qtd. in Hynes, *War Imagined* 171). Returning soldiers "rejected the values of the society that had sent them to war, and in doing so separated their own generation form the past and from their cultural inheritance" (Hynes, *War Imagined* x). Soldiers returned to an England where the arts and culture continued for four years without their participation (Hynes, *War Imagined* 237). The culture that men went to war to defend appeared self-sustaining and unaffected despite their absence.

But the "catastrophic break" caused by the Great War was not limited to the consciousness of soldiers (Lee 341). Civilians on the home front who rejected the claims of propaganda and turned toward the reality of war perceived a discontinuity between their pre-war, at-war, and post-war experiences. According to Richard Aldington, "[a]dult lives were cut sharply into three sections—pre-war, war, and postwar …. [M]any people will tell you that whole areas of their pre-war lives have become obliterated from their memories. Pre-war seems like pre-history. What did we do, how did we feel, what were we living for in those incredibly distant years?" (*Death of a Hero* 199). The Great War "changed reality," and this "change was so vast and abrupt as to make the years after the war seem discontinuous from the years before" (Hynes, *War Imagined* ix). Men and

women in post-war England "looked back at their own pasts as one might look across a great chasm to a remote, peaceable place on the other side" (Hynes, *War Imagined* ix). This discontinuity informed English imaginations and became part of the literary landscape:

> If you remove from literary discourse all abstract propositions—about values, about history, about heroism, freedom, and sacrifice, about the nation and its institutions; if you distrust language, and make that distrust the basis of your style; if you fragment narrative structure, and accept incoherence as reality's image; and if you shift narrative inward, to the confinement of subjective experience, then what you have is something very like High Modernism. (Hynes, *War Imagined* 457)

Memoirs, letters, diaries, and poems of the Great War depict England as "isolated in its moment in history, cut off by the great gap of the war from the traditions and values of its own past" (Hynes, *War Imagined* 353). Post-war England was viewed as a "damaged nation of damaged men, damaged institutions, and damaged hopes and faiths, with even its language damaged, shorn of its high-rhetorical top, an anxious fearful bitter nation, in which civilization and its civilities have to be re-invented" (Hynes, *War Imagined* 353).

The words dislocation, disillusionment, and alienation speak to the experience of pacifists, veterans, and Others in the post-war years who viewed the nation and ideology as imagined and illusory. In Christian doctrine, disillusionment "was a painful but necessary awakening from the enchantment exercised by material and sensual realities, an awakening from the world of mere appearances" (Leed 80-1). Disillusionment is particularly prevalent among the men who volunteered for the war. These men were convinced that the future of their nation depended on the war and that they, as noble

warriors, were rightful defenders of England. But when these men reached the front, they realised that their view of war as a "community of fate in which all classes would be submerged" was an "'illusion, a function of their initial innocence and idealism" (Leed 81). These volunteers learned that "their attitude toward the social significance of war, toward the nation, toward the meaning of war was rarely shared by the dockworkers, farmers, laborers, minors and factory workers who made up their companies" (81). War exposed the soldiers to varying points of view and revealed that the ideology of the home front was false. When these soldiers returned from the front with experiences that were utterly dissimilar to the battles that the home front represented, and with wounds that disfigured their bodies, the veil of ideology was lifted from the eyes of many on the home front. These individuals realised that their imaginings of war, nation, and themselves were illusory.

Imagined Masculinities, Soldiers' Bodies: Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*

In Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (1918), domestic routine continues at Baldry Court, a microcosm of Georgian England, in spite of the war. There is so little war in this novel that many critics assume it primarily advances psychoanalytic theory; West clarifies that the "novel has fundamentally nothing to do with psycho-analysis" ("On 'The Return of the Soldier'" 68). Even Chris Baldry, the returned shell-shocked soldier who has forgotten the last fifteen years of his life, including his marriage to Kitty and the death of his son, Oliver, does not bring his war experience home. Instead, Jenny, Chris's cousin who narrates, must imagine Chris's life in the trenches based on the war films she has watched: "By night I saw Chris running across the brown rottenness of No Man's Land, starting back here because he trod upon a hand, not even looking there because of the awfulness of an unburied head, and not till my dream was packed full of horror did I see him pitch forward on his knees as he reached safety—if it was that" (5). That Jenny's dreams are the only depictions of war in the novel shows the authority the home front community assumes for representing soldiers and their trench experiences. Samuel Hynes notes that, because the Great War was the first to be shown in cinemas and photographed in newspapers, it was also the first war women could imagine and narrate (Introduction viii, ix). In West's novel, a community of women, composed of Kitty, Jenny, and Margaret, imagine Chris as a Great War soldier who is a symbol of masculinity; when Chris returns from the front with shell-shock, this community struggles to control his body and his mind, and thus restore him to his national and symbolic function as soldier.

During the Great War, the community constructed, interpreted, and re-inscribed the male body according to its conceptions of masculinity. Graham Dawson alludes to the power of the collective imagination to regulate the individual's body: "[m]asculinities are

lived out in the flesh, but fashioned in the imagination" (1). Male bodies, before they are imagined and interpreted by the community, are not inherently meaningful. Instead, communities overwrite the body "with signs and declarations of age, generation, class and ethnicity" (Bourke 11). And "[i]t is within this socially constructed 'frame' that bodies lived, were imagined and died" (11). Soldiers who fought in the war were symbols of a tradition of warfare; their bodies bore the community's patriotic expectations and its expectations of masculinity. During wartime, the social construction of the male body and the directions regarding its performance are more strictly defined than during peacetime. Leo Braudy explains that "[b]y its emphasis on the physical prowess of men enhanced by their machines, by its distillation of national identity into the abrupt contrast between winning and losing, war enforces an extreme version of male behaviour as the ideal model for all such behaviour" (xvi).

The community rejects men who fail to conform to a particular code of masculinity. Braudy argues that "war focuses attention on certain ways of being a man and ignores or arouses suspicions about others. Wartime masculinity … emphasize[s] a code of masculine behaviour more single-minded and more traditional than the wide array of circumstances and personal nature that influences the behaviours of men in non-war situations" (xvi). In 1918, pacifists, those who did not subscribe to social conceptions of masculinity, were deemed so threatening to the British community that Parliament voted to exclude them from post-war political life (Hynes, *War Imagined* 217). This rejection of men who did not perform their manly role indicates the extent to which communities at war exaggerate peacetime conceptions of gender and restrict the identities of men.

While medievalism allowed the community to locate the Great War in a tradition of warfare, and thus establish historical continuity, it also provided fundamental ways of imagining the twentieth-century male body. The medieval tradition supplied a framework and a lexicon with which men and their war experiences could be organised and described. Both the Crusades and the Hundred Years' War were important points of reference, or "temporal anchors," for representations of modern soldiering (Frantzen 2, Goebel 1). When the Great War began, soldiers were not synonymous with knights, nor was the nineteenth- or early twentieth-century soldier typically of the middle-high class (Frantzen 153). Through popular images that associated the Great War soldier with the knight, the male body was reinterpreted according to historical masculinities. For instance, the cover of Sir Robert Baden-Powell's *Young Knights of the Empire: Their Code and Further Scout Yarns*, associates St. George, the patron saint of England, with a British youth in full armour who stands in front of a caged dragon, a symbol of Germany (Frantzen 148). Dawson explains that a "repertoire of forms" established by society "organizes the available possibilities for a masculine self in terms of the physical appearance and conduct, the values and aspirations and the tastes and desires that will be recognized as 'masculine' in contemporary social life …. [T]he cultural forms of masculinity enable a sense of one's self as 'a man' to be imagined and recognised by others" (23). To understand the soldier's body, men at the front and the communities at home referred to postcards that romanticised the male form and presented it as a symbol of courage and power (Frantzen 185). Such representations provided images with which the community could imagine the purpose and act of British soldiering. Inevitably, men on the battlefront realised the inconsistency between imagined soldiering and actual soldiering: "[w]hen young men filled with illusions of chivalry were ordered to walk into

machine-gun fire, an ancient brotherhood fell before the weapons of a new age" (Frantzen 1-2).

In addition to framing communal expectations of men, medievalism provided Great War soldiers with a model of soldierly behaviour; lived masculinities were performances of medievalist scripts of manliness (Potter 71). Before conscription in 1916, propaganda exploited the chivalric code to encourage men to join the army. Military service was the test and proof of manhood (Goebel 197). Allen Frantzen adds that "[m]yth, art, and propaganda conspire to suppress blood and struggle—to say nothing of war—and present the surface of heroic masculinity as a free-floating fantasy while leaving the substance of the virtue unexamined" (14). In *Gender Trouble*, Butler describes the performance of socially determined gender scripts as "the stylized repetition of acts" rather than a "seamless identity" (141). Butler continues:

> acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. (136)

Masculinity is not a fundamental aspect of the body, but an ideology that the body acts out. The Great War soldier identified himself by and imitated the idealised images of masculinity present in propaganda.

One way a man in an at-war community shows his identification with an imagined masculinity is by wearing a uniform—men's "finest clothes are those that [they] wear as

soldiers" (Woolf, *Three Guineas* 180). Chris's transformation into soldier requires a uniform and he easily adopts the "Tommy air" when he calls to Jenny and Kitty from the car as he departs: "'So long! I'll write you from Berlin!'" (5). Insouciance transforms him from a civilian into a Tommy, from Chris Baldry to "our soldier" (5). The community emphasises the uniform as stabilising and enhancing a man's masculinity. Woolf notes that the ornamental clothing of educated men "not only covers nakedness, gratifies vanity, and creates pleasure for the eye, but it serves to advertise the social, professional, or intellectual standing of the wearer" (*Three Guineas* 178). Similarly, society reads the soldier's uniform as expressing the inherent qualities, particularly a multilayered masculinity, of the man. Externality overwrites internality and the man himself, whether patriot or pacifist, is arbitrary. The language of Great War advertisements suggests the ease with which a civilian body can transform into a military body (Tynan 90). These advertisements allowed civilian men to imagine themselves as soldiers and to understand the significance of their uniformed bodies. Jane Tynan argues that uniforms in the Great War signified "symbolic distinction between military and civilian, the link between home and battlefront" (71). The clothes of the civilian and the uniform of the soldier convey different, but overlapping, masculinities. The uniform articulates the supposedly inherent masculinity of "soldier." By wearing a uniform, a man assimilates himself to this masculinity.

In Great War propaganda and domestic fiction, manliness and virility were equated with the uniform. The British Army uniform was fashioned to enhance the aesthetics of the male body, and thus coalesce the ideological function of the uniform with the soldier's masculinity (Acton 173). The uniform not only alludes to, but also articulates masculinity on a man's body. Men came to identify themselves by the

impossible masculinities purported by their uniforms. Soldiers materialise from the uniforms they wear: a headdress makes the soldier appear taller, stripes give the illusion of muscular legs, and epaulettes enhance the width of the shoulders (Bourke 128). At the same time that men were trained to equate self-worth with the khaki they wore, women defined themselves by their relationships with men in uniforms (Acton 175). Physicians on the home front noted female patients whose sexual attraction to their husbands ceased when he wore civilian clothes (Leed 47). The uniform speaks for and of the man; when the uniform is removed, the body is mute. The fear that women believed sexual intercourse with a uniformed soldier was a patriotic act rather than an immoral one speaks to the powerful effect of the uniform (Leed 45). This fear also indicates that the female community may blindly conflate the qualities of the uniform with those of the man who wears it.

Jenny omits to mention any details of Chris's uniform, which is to say that she assimilates the uniform to Chris's body. Jenny, who notes the fine details of Baldry Court and Wealdstone, who thoroughly describes the perfection of Kitty and the dowdiness of Margaret, does not describe Chris's physical appearance beyond the traces of silver in his hair (23). Indeed, Chris emerges from the war "ghostlike, impalpable," and Jenny views his body as though it blurs with his surroundings (23). For Jenny, who believes Chris is the epitome of masculinity, Chris's uniform is merely a manifestation of his internal qualities. Jenny does not feel the need to describe his uniform, the way she describes her or Kitty's dresses, because the uniform is inextricably part of his person. When Chris "walk[s] into the hall and la[ys] down his stick and his khaki cap," a part of the uniform becomes divorced from his body, and only then does it enter Jenny's narrative (23). While it lies on the table, the khaki cap exists separate from Chris's body and thereby

loses its significance, becoming one of the many unfamiliar "pieces of metal, or ribbon, or coloured hoods or gowns" that public men wear (Woolf, *Three Guineas* 179).

While the uniform overwrites the body with symbols of masculinity, the body itself—its posture, gestures, and form—was interpreted by the community as alluding to a timeless British masculinity (Koureas 118). Bodies in reality failed to conform to the idealised forms imagined by the community. During the South African War (1899-1902), only 14,000 of 20,000 volunteers were fit to join the army (Bourke 13). The rejection rates of Great War recruits were similar and contributed to a widespread anxiety, a "crisis of masculinity," concerning the failure of British male bodies to reflect national aesthetic and functional standards (Bourke 13). The degenerated male population was perceived as a threat to British imperialism and national progress. Yet the male body, during and following the war, was not depicted nor remembered as insufficient or ugly. Officers and soldiers at the front maintained the aesthetics of the body in letters to deceased soldiers' families (Janz 279). Officers write of soldiers dying quickly and peacefully. The boundaries of the body are intact; what is inside—blood and guts—never comes out. Limbs are never detached from the torso; faces are never disfigured. Instead, soldiers show contentedness in death. Narratives of death complement the official repression of photos of dismembered soldiers at the front. Great War commemoration, such as the controversial *Machine Gun Corps Memorial* (1925), further suggests how the male body was imagined during the war and remembered following it (Koureas 96). The initial model for the memorial, called *Boy David*, included an emaciated body atop a cement structure. Although this body type more realistically represents the British soldier than the later approved muscular version, it did not conform to hegemonic conceptions of the male body. The controversy surrounding the *Machine Gun Corps Memorial* recalls the

anxieties concerning actual male bodies and reveals the community's attempt to overwrite the insufficient male body with an idealised one (Koureas 96).

As Joanna Bourke observes, at the forefront of social constructions of wartime masculinity is the acknowledgement that the male body may be disfigured (77). The body, although romanticised in popular representations, inevitably bares the markings of battle. Sores, gashes, and bullet wounds all speak of a man's physical endurance during war. The most realistic representations of trench experience, filmic and photographic images, fail to evoke the same response in the viewer as seeing a body marked by battle. The veterans who refused to speak of their Great War experiences had their stories told through their mutilated bodies. Bullet wounds and amputated limbs revealed gruesome narratives of battle that were largely absent from popular discourses. The public reliance on physical wounds to infer a man's service resulted in a hierarchy of injury: bodily wounds were more heroic and manly than psychic wounds (Reid 26). Physical wounds came to function as emblems of masculinity, proof that one did his part for his community. Heroes are heroic "when and—it can be argued—*because* they are wounded. In fact, wounds are actually sought, not so much because they represent the 'blighty' that will take [soldiers] home and permanently out of the war, but because they are badges of honour" (Potter 91). Representations of injured soldiers ensured the public that the loss of a limb did not detract from a man's sexual attractiveness or manliness (Potter 92).

The lack of a bodily wound contributed to anxieties that shell-shocked soldiers were malingerers. The male body that the nation uses to fight the war is precisely where the threat of malingering is located. "The malingerer's weapon was his body," Bourke explains: "[a]lthough the shirker who withdrew his labour from a particular task by definition withdrew his body from the workplace, the removal of his body was incidental

…. [T]he malingerer's protest *centred* on his body: often it was the last remaining thing he could claim as his own" (81). Although the soldier's body was ideologically constructed by the community and fashioned through a military uniform, shell-shock revealed the inability of the nation to control that body under all circumstances.

In *The Return of the Soldier*, the women of Baldry Court disagree as to whether Chris is malingering or injured. Frank Baldry, Chris's cousin, states that he is "convinced there is no shamming in the business" because "there is a real gap in [Chris's] memory" (22). It is necessary for Frank to refute the possibility of Chris's malingering and explicitly state that Kitty "must be made to understand" (22). Frank is aware of the tendency to doubt the authenticity of shell-shock symptoms, and his concern proves warranted. Kitty later says to Jenny, after Chris has returned from the hospital and sits nearby, that "'[t]his is all a blind'" and that Chris "'is pretending'" (31). After Kitty's accusation of malingering against Chris, Jenny, "who had felt [Chris's] agony all the evening like a wound in [her] own body," did not "care what [she] did to stop [Kitty]" (31). The belief that Chris is a malingerer is comforting to Kitty, for it means that Chris still has control of his body. If Chris were actually shell-shocked, if he were not the same man who left with a brave "Tommy air," then he would be a stain on Baldry Court, as Harrowweald is a "red suburban stain" on the English countryside (9). But Jenny responds to these accusations of malingering by imagining Chris's psychic trauma as a physical wound on her body, and then she lashes out violently: she shakes Kitty "till her jewels rattled and [Kitty] scratched [Jenny's] fingers and gasped for breath" (31). Jenny's identification with Chris and her vicarious experience of his trauma parallel her transformation into his surrogate. Jenny grips Kitty's "small shoulders" with her "*large* hands" and exhibits the uncontrollable aggression feared of returning veterans (31;

emphasis added). This aggressive act, which causes Jenny to become flushed, makes Jenny appear more youthful. Jenny has effectively regressed to 1901 and joins Chris in a "warm friendly silence" until he describes to her his experiences of Monkey Island (32).

Jenny imagines Chris's psychic injury as a physical wound because his symptoms appear inauthentic without a visible sign of trauma. According to Peter Leese, "[w]ithout bandages, scars, or missing limbs, the shell shock casualty could not lay claim properly to a wound: without the prestige of a wound, he was under suspicion. In private his manhood would be doubted, in public his patriotism might be questioned" (52). Although the shell-shocked soldier may exhibit facial tics or walk queerly, his body remains visibly intact. Neuroses caused by the trauma of a lost limb or facial injury were not comparable to those of a shell-shocked soldier, whose neuroses had no visible, physical origin. The trauma experienced by the shell-shocked soldier was invisible, absent from the narrative of his body, as Chris's trauma is absent from his narrative in *The Return of the Soldier*. While the loss of a limb in and of itself is explicative—visible proof of participation—, men may exhibit symptoms of shell-shock even before experiencing trench warfare (Reid 22-3). Because of the absence of a wound, the physical deformities of a shell-shocked soldier are more threatening to the aesthetic of the male body and British conceptions of masculinity. As such, physically maimed men were easier to re-integrate into society than shell-shocked men; one was upsetting to see, but understandable, while the other utterly incomprehensible (Leese 51).

Early conceptions of shell-shock, as the term suggests, maintained it was the result of a violent physical injury (Winter, "Shell Shock" 9). Some doctors attributed the tics and other physical ailments of shell-shock to a concussion or microscopic shell fragments lodged in the head (Leese 131). Conceptualisations of shell-shock as a physical

disorder allowed soldiers, their families, and the community to circumvent the stigma of neurasthenia and other mental disorders that would have otherwise suggested the psychological vulnerability of British soldiers and officers to modern warfare (Leese 131; Winter, "Shell Shock" 9). If shell-shock were the result of physical trauma, these soldiers were not insane or cowards (Bourke 118). Margaret conceptualises shell-shock as a physical disorder when she tells Jenny that if Dick, Margaret's son, "'had been a cripple … and the doctors had said to [her], 'We'll straighten your boy's legs for you, but he'll be in pain all the rest of his life,' [Margaret would] not have let them touch him'" (86). In order to dissociate Chris from accusations of cowardice, Margaret must conceptualise his shell-shock as though it were a physical wound comparable to her son's deformed legs.

A discussion among Jenny, Kitty, and Margaret much earlier reveals that war neuroses were ill-defined by the medical community and indefinable by the female community. Leese explains that shell-shock was often described in vague terms, such as "clouding of consciousness," in order to associate the condition with amnesia, confusion, and disorientation, rather than neurosis or psychosis (114). Certainly Jenny's description of the situation as "all a mystery" suggests that there are only hints and clues to Chris's actual condition (17). When Margaret explains to Kitty and Jenny the nature of Chris's illness, she is reluctant to introduce the term "shell-shock." Rather, Margaret attempts to describe Chris's trauma with less threatening words. The first term she uses is "hurt," which suggests the early-war interpretations of shell-shock as having a physical cause (11). Both Kitty, who wonders whether Chris has a concussion, and Frank Baldry, who describes Chris as "disabled," interpret Chris's condition as a physical wound (12, 19). When Kitty asks Margaret whether Chris is "wounded," Margaret states that she does not "know how to put it," and that "[h]e's not exactly wounded … A shell burst" (12). The

elipses that puncuate Margaret's description of Chris's injury indicate that she is unable to communicate effectively with Kitty and Jenny. Margaret cannot describe Chris's psychological degradation because of her unfamiliarity with medical discourse; at the same time, she is reluctant to label Chris as a psychological casualty by diagnosing him with shell-shock.

"Shell-shock" is a new and ambiguous term in 1916. Margaret also uses "hurt" and "wounded" because these words are part of the domestic lexicon and thus terms with which the female community is familiar. "Shell-shock" does not refer to specific symptoms, but rather a wealth of physical and psychological responses to a trauma. Margaret only uses "shell-shock" out of desperation, because she cannot define the condition (Bonikowski 520). Margaret "had long brooded over ["shell-shock"] without arriving at comprehension," and tenders the term to Kitty and Jenny, "hoping that [their] superior intelligences would make something of it" (12). When Kitty's and Jenny's "faces did not illumine," Margaret "dragged on lamely" (12). Margaret reverts to the familiar, domestic lexicon and describes Chris as "'not well'" (12). Jenny also states that "'Chris is ill,'" for she feels there are "no better words than those Mrs Grey had used" (17). Kitty, though, refuses to accept the veil that these vague depictions create around Chris's disorder. While Jenny may be "'slow,'" Kitty interprets the connotations of "shell-shock." She realises that Chris is "'mad, [their] Chris, [their] splendid sane Chris, all broken and queer, not knowing [them]'" (17).

The vague lexicon used to describe war neuroses shielded the officer class from the labels of cowardice and malingerers. Only Kitty has the audacity to accuse her husband of such a thing. The neurasthenic officer was still seen as "respectable" and "refined," while the shell-shocked soldier was "vulgar" and displayed "physical hysteria"

(Reid 17). The soldier may be accused of cowardice for his inaction during battle; such accusations were difficult, if not impossible, to make against the upper-class officers (Bourke 112). Thus, when Siegfried Sassoon, a prominent trench poet diagnosed with shell-shock, was released from Craiglockhart War Hospital, he could state that he had again become an "officer and a gentleman" (qtd. in Showalter, "Rivers and Sassoon" 67). By pairing "officer" and "gentleman," Sassoon regains his class standing. At the same time as he recovers from shell-shock, he regains his masculinity.

This emphasis on regained masculinity suggests something of a man's experience in the trenches. Contemporary representations of battle, such as those on postcards or propaganda posters, advertised the Great War in the medievalist, hand-to-hand tradition. But after the first few months of the conflict, trench systems revolutionised battle and the war became one of passivity rather than volition. This passive experience of war resulted in emasculated soldiers who were powerless over their own fates and bodies. The nation controlled men's bodies either through coercion—death in battle as a dutiful sacrifice—or through force—the threat of physical harm to the body if orders are not followed. Men were sent over the top into machine gun fire or forced to remain in the trenches as shells burst nearby.

Numerous critics have associated the powerlessness of men in war with that of Victorian women (Stryker 155). According to Gilbert, "the war to which so many men had gone in the hope of becoming heroes ended up emasculating them, depriving them of autonomy, confining them as closely as any Victorian woman had been confined" (223). Elaine Showalter, in *The Female Malady*, argues that "the essence of manliness was not to complain," and thus "shell shock was the body language of masculine complaint, a disguised male protest not only against the war but against the concept of 'manliness'

itself" (172). As with malingering, where the reluctant body is the site of a response to the war, the shell-shocked body, although a focus of hegemonic masculinities, renounces social control. Showalter continues: "[w]hile epidemic female hysteria in late Victorian England had been a form of protest against a patriarchal society that enforced confinement to a narrowly defined femininity, epidemic male hysteria in World War I was a protest against the politicians, generals, and psychiatrists" (172). Gilbert describes how modernist antiheroes return from the war with sexual wounds, "as if, having travelled literally or figuratively through No Man's Land, all have become not just No Men, nobodies, but *not men*, *un*men. That twentieth-century Everyman, the faceless cipher … is not just publicly powerless, he is privately impotent" (198).

Some physicians and officials interpreted the effeminacy and cowardice of shell-shock as symptoms of a soldier's hereditary degeneracy (Stryker 154). After conscription, when the pacifists who refused to perform voluntarily were forced to enlist, it was easier to associate cowardice and shell-shock in the social imagination (Reid 22-3). By interpreting shell-shock as an inherited abnormality—and an aspect of the individual realised through combat— the man may be viewed as physically or mentally deficient (Leed 171). The nation was not responsible for debilitated soldiers because heredity, rather than trench experience, caused shell-shock. Such conceptions of degeneracy utilised Darwinian theory to present war as a "survival of the fittest" not only for the nations involved but also for the individual soldiers; those soldiers who were psychic causalities on the front became devolved Englishmen at home (Leed 172). West disagreed with the use of Darwinian theory to "maintain that war is a biological necessity and a manifestation of the 'struggle for life'" ("War and Women" 333). Yet war commentators attributed the large number of shell-shock cases to the insufficient military

procedures, which were supposed to filter out these men who were physically and psychically incapable of fulfilling requirements of soldiering (Showalter, *Female Malady* 170).

Fears about Chris's hereditary degeneracy may explain why neither Kitty nor Jenny tell Dr. Anderson about Oliver, Chris's deceased infant son. West says Kitty does not inform the doctor nor remind Chris about the child "because she was jealous of [Chris's] love for it" ("On 'Return of the Soldier'" 68). While Kitty's jealousy may explain why she kept the death a secret, it does not explain Jenny's silence. Jenny, who already has defended Chris from accusations of malingering, does not wish to invite further questions of his degeneracy and remains mum about the dead child. Much of the domestic anxieties in *The Return of the Soldier* concern the mystery surrounding Oliver's death. Jenny explains to Margaret that Oliver "was the loveliest boy, *but delicate from his birth*. At the end he just faded away, with the merest cold" (77; emphasis added). Chris's return from the war, and the realisation of his apparent genetic degeneracy, becomes linked in Jenny's mind with Oliver's frailty and inability to recover from the slight illness. While Kitty silently fears the connection between Chris's degeneracy and Oliver's death, she overtly denies it. When Dr. Anderson chastises Kitty for failing to mention the child, she says she "'didn't think it mattered,' … and shivered and looked cold as she always did at the memory of her unique contact with death. 'He died five years ago'" (82). Kitty interposes the five-year gap in an attempt to dissociate Chris's recent shell-shock condition and Oliver's earlier death.

While Kitty worries that Oliver's death may be inadvertently Chris's fault, Dr. Anderson determines the cause of Chris's amnesia is a domestic trauma, rather than a battle trauma. During his initial analysis of Chris's condition, Dr. Anderson explains that

Chris's amnesia is caused by "'[h]is unconscious self … refusing to let him resume his relations with his normal life, and so [they] get this loss of memory'" (79). Dr. Anderson further says that Chris's "'obsession is that he can't remember the latter years of his life'" and wonders "'what's the suppressed wish of which it's the manifestation?'" (79). When Dr. Anderson suggests that Chris was dissatisfied with his life at Baldry Court, Kitty defends their aristocratic lifestyle: Chris "'was fond of us, and he had a lot of money'" (79). Dr. Anderson refuses to accept Kitty's response. He argues that Chris "'[q]uite obviously … has forgotten his life here because he is discontented with it. What clearer proof could [Kitty] need than the fact that [she] was just telling [Dr. Anderson] … that the reason the War office didn't wire to [her] when [Chris] was wounded was that he had forgotten to register his address?'" (80). Dr. Anderson supplements this suggestion—namely that Chris's amnesiac condition occurred before he experienced battle—with the assertion that "'[o]ne forgets only those things that one wants to forget'" (80).

By denying Baldry Court, what Jenny once thought was "the core of his heart," Chris threatens the home front effort during war. Kitty and Jenny often justify their lifestyle and establish Baldry Court as a place where "happiness [is] inevitable," not just before the war but especially after Chris's return (6). The architects who renovated the property and house "had not so much the wild eye of the artist as the knowing wink of the manicurist, and between them they massaged the dear old place into a matter for innumerable photographs in the illustrated papers" (4). The border of silver birch and bramble and fern around Baldry Court "is purely philosophic; it proclaims that here [the Baldrys] estimate only controlled beauty, that the wild will not have its way within [their] gates, that it must be made delicate and decorated into felicity" (35). Because of its aesthetic perfection, Baldry Court is a point of pride for Jenny and Kitty. Jenny explains

that they "had proved [them]selves worthy of the past generation that had set the old house on this sunny ledge, overhanging and overhung by beauty. [They] had done much for the new house" (6). As women on the home front, Jenny and Kitty are responsible for preparing the soldier's home for his return. Jane Potter observes that one of the responsibilities of high-class women during wartime was to maintain their lifestyles; by doing so they contributed to British trade and did their part to keep the nation afloat (82). Jenny acknowledges that "when spending seemed a little disgraceful, [she] could think of [the] beauty [of Baldry Court] with nothing but pride" (6). By maintaining their lifestyles at Baldry Court, Kitty and Jenny not only fulfil their patriotic duty, but also uphold the social contract between soldiers and the women they leave at home.

Chris's shell-shock invalidates this contract between soldier and wife, battlefront and home front. As a war wife, Kitty understands she has a right to official information regarding her husband's condition. If Chris were injured in the war, the War Office would have wired information to Kitty directly (14). But Kitty does not receive her information from official sources. She hears it second hand from Margaret, or espies it in Frank's letter to Jenny. Chris's shell-shock results in a disruption in the social order on the home front. This disruption is evident when Frank tells Chris he has a "'beautiful little woman [who] had a charming and cultivated soprano voice;'" Chris responds: "'I don't like little women and I hate everybody, male or female, who sings. O God, I don't like this Kitty. Take her away'" (21). Chris then tells Frank that "his body and soul were consumed with desire for [Margaret]" (21). Kitty, who read the letter over Jenny's shoulder, responds that Chris "'always pretended he liked [her] singing,'" and cries out, "'Bring him home! Bring him home!'" (22).

The war provides Chris an escape from this "home" and a welcomed change from bourgeois England to an "alternate existence" where masculinities, largely formed by the public school system, are acted out (Leed 41). In 1914, men viewed war as an adventure largely expected to last no more than three months. Thus they welcomed war with the sense of urgency to do their part before fighting ended. Men viewed war as a way of restoring the authentic pastoral of Old England, idealised in propaganda, to contemporary Georgian England. By going to war, many young men gladly left behind the superficiality and ornamentality of the Victorian period, exaggerated in Edwardian and Georgian England (Leed 64). Baldry Court does not function as a home, but rather a museum that exhibits "brittle beautiful things" (6). A child does not laugh or play in the nursery; an "empty stage," essentially a memorial, remains after his death (7). Georgian England, unlike the romanticised England in propaganda, is predicated on bourgeois responsibilities; Kitty is quick to remind Chris that "[w]ith all the land [he has] bought there's ever so many people to look after" (29). The weight of these responsibilities is the "yoke" that Chris escaped by entering war. Jenny believes that she and Kitty sufficiently "compensate[d Chris] for his lack of free adventure by arranging him a gracious life" (8). But this "gracious life" only exacerbates Chris's need for freedom. His return to England is a return to the female community that is, as Jenny describes, "useless either in the old way with antimacassars or in the new way with golf clubs" (8). In this way, going off to war was, for many men, a rejection of the female community and the specific masculinities which they expected their men to perform.

Chris's war experience, particularly his war injury, alters his views of the female community and Georgian England—he has the revelation Jenny always expected. Although "there wasn't room to swing a revelation in [Chris's] crowded life" before

1914, the outbreak of war is an occasion for "free adventure" (8). Amnesia allows Chris to question the nature of reality in Georgian England and destabilise what has been accepted as true: "'Is this true? ... That Kitty is my wife. That I am old. That—' he waved his hand at the altered room—'all this'" (32). Although Jenny assures him that Baldry Court is "'better and jollier in all sorts of ways,'" Chris is not convinced "by material proof, his spirit was incredulous" (32). "'What seems real to you?'" Jenny asks Chris, and thereby welcomes his description of an altered reality. It is a question Kitty would not have asked, because, for her, reality is Baldry Court. After Chris describes the reality of Monkey Island to Jenny, the substantiality of Baldry Court fades in her mind. For Jenny, Baldry Court becomes unreal, "not so much a house as a vast piece of space partitioned off from the universe and decorated partly for beauty and partly to make [their] privacy more insolent" (70). Kitty, who earlier "looked so like a girl on a magazine cover that one expected to find a large '7d.' attached to her person," becomes one of the "faceless figures with caps and aprons" (4, 46). Jenny describes her altered consciousness as though she became "absorbed in a mental vision" of the "only two real people in the world"—Chris and Margaret (46-7).

Jenny views Chris's amnesia as "something saner than sanity" (65). She calls it a "triumph over the limitations of language which prevent the mass of men from making explicit statements about their relationships" (65). Soldiers who returned from the war interpreted 1918 Georgian England as drastically different from that of 1914. For Jenny, Chris has transcended the "language" of class, rank, and responsibility in Georgian society. This is the same reality Chris experienced in 1901, before the confrontation with Margaret revealed the latent class conflicts in their relationship. The ideas that Chris "had to exclude from his ordinary hours lest they should break the power of business over his

mind" again fully engulf it (63). Shell-shock allows Chris to transcend his social function to realise what Jenny expected of him all along:

> I felt … a cold intellectual pride in [Chris's] refusal to remember his prosperous maturity and his determined dwelling … for it showed him so much saner than the rest of us, who take life as it comes, loaded with the inessential and irritating. I was even willing to admit that this choice of what was to him reality out of all the appearances was so copiously presented by the world, this adroit recovery of the dropped pearl of beauty, was the act of genius I had always expected of him. But that did not make the less agonizing the exclusion from his life. (65)

Chris's "sanity" is an example of the intellectualism that West believes may bring an end to the war. In her review of Ellen Key's *War, Peace, and the Future,* published during the serialisation of *The Return of the Soldier*, West disagrees that a "'mass-rising of motherliness'" could affect the progress of the war ("Woman Worship" 340). According to West, "If every Englishwoman had recorded an anti-militarist vote in the summer of 1914 it would not have altered the situation of August in the smallest degree" (340). West criticises Key's "brand of pacifism" that "contains not the smallest intimation of how [an] emotional revolt against war is to be turned into an *intellectual attack* on it" (339, 340; emphasis added). West believes that "emotion by itself can never end the war" (339). Rather, it is "alert and vigorous thinking about specific points, … the very quality of intelligence which Miss Key persistently belittles, which brings an end to war" (340). When Chris returns from the trenches, he is unlike the "large number of men who regard anything they have experienced as being … eternally established in the order of things; [these men] accept war as supinely as in peacetime they accepted the inefficiency of the railway system that took them up to town" ("Woman Worship" 339). Chris returns to an

unfamiliar England of which he is critical. He refuses to accept the reality of Baldry court as "eternally established" and instead privileges his own reality. But Chris's forgetting of the war is not a denial of it; Jenny finds him reading a history of the war, and he is appalled at the atrocities of Germany in Belgium (71). Chris's amnesia, sanity, and intellect—terms that the text conflates—provide him the faculty to address the problem of war.

Chris, however, cannot develop and apply his intellect to bring an end to war because his revelation threatens Baldry Court. Jenny, who praises Chris's revelation, also views his "sanity" as endangering her aristocratic lifestyle. The agony Jenny experiences because of Chris's return is a symptom of "domestic trauma, a shattering of the domestic space comparable to the shattering of the soldier's mind" (Bonikowski 515). Chris challenges the foundations of Jenny's life, Baldry Court and Georgian reality. This domestic trauma manifests in Jenny's death fantasies. Jenny contemplates her isolation from Chris and Margaret, while she remains in her reality alone—she experiences "no sort of joy because [her] vision [is] solitary" (63). Jenny wants to "end [her] desperation by leaping from a height, and [she] climb[s] on a knoll and fl[ings] [her]self downwards on the dead leaves below. [She is] now utterly cut off from Chris" (63). Jenny identifies Chris's shell-shock as the cause of this domestic trauma, and believes his return to sanity, his return to his appropriate Georgian masculinity, will repair the broken globe of the home front that she "thought [she] had really heard … breaking" (67). The urgency of Chris's cure is apparent in Jenny's plea: "Gilbert Anderson must cure him" (67).

The necessity of Chris's cure reveals the threat of his condition to the community. Dr. Anderson explains that the purpose of his "'profession [is] to bring people from various outlying districts of the mind to the normal,'" and that it is the "'general feeling'"

that normality is "'the place where they ought to be'" (81). By failing to conform to a Georgian definition of normal behaviour, Chris is an affront to the established order, a "breach of trust" that Kitty resents (17). In fact, Kitty, "the falsest thing on earth," reminds Margaret and Jenny of Georgian reality and the necessity of Chris's recovery (87). "[O]ne must know the truth," Jenny realises, and she "knew quite well that when one is adult one must raise to one's lips the wine of the truth … and celebrate communion with reality, or else walk for ever queer and small like a dwarf. Thirst for this sacrament had made Chris strike away the cup of lies about life that Kitty's white hands held to him, and turn to Margaret with this vast truthful gesture of his loss of memory" (87-8). "The state of affairs that the women … try to protect," Marina Mackay argues, "is essentially that which reinforces their parasitic relationship to men, and their complicity in male crimes is articulated in terms of economic dependence" (132). Even Margaret realises "the truth's the truth" and that Chris must be reconciled with reality and be reincorporated into Baldry Court (88).

During the Great War, women reminded men of their obligations to defend King and country. One recruiting leaflet, addressed to "MOTHERS!" and "SWEETHEARTS!" states that if a woman "cannot persuade [her man] to answer his Country's Call and protect [her] now [she should] *Discharge him* as unfit!" (Gullace 184). If it is a man's failure to remain a civilian during war, it is a woman's failure not to send, or return, her man to the front. One extreme example is the Order of the White Feather, a group of women who patrolled the streets of London to hand white feathers, symbolising cowardice, to men who were in civilian clothing (Gullace 183). While contemplating whether or not to cure Chris, Jenny describes him as a "flag flying from [her and Kitty's] tower" who, if uncured, would become "a queer-shaped patch of eccentricity on the

countryside, the stately music of his being would become a witless piping in the bushes. He would not be quite a man" (88). Chris, as an able-bodied male, belongs in the trenches.

The "shock" cure that the women of Baldry Court use to restore Chris's manliness is similar to the Order of the White Feather's shaming of men in mufti. While Anderson wishes to treat Chris with dream analysis and therapy, the women decide to give Chris the "rude awakening" that Frank earlier suggests (21). Kitty tries to shame Chris by wearing her wedding gown and fixing her hair as on her wedding day. She parades herself in front of Chris, her "right hand … stiff with rings" and "[a]round her throat were pearls, and her long chain of diamonds" (26). Kitty's performance, an act of physical regression, fails to "shock" Chris into acknowledging the responsibilities that he accepted ten years ago. Kitty, with her excessive ornamentality, represents the very aristocratic ideals Chris escaped by entering the war, and continues to avoid because of his amnesia.

Margaret realises that the denial of Oliver's life and death is Chris's greatest transgression against the community. "'Remind him of the boy,'" Margaret declares, knowing that "'[a] memory so strong … would recall everything else—in spite of [Chris's] discontent'" (81). Margaret suggests that they present to Chris a toy with which his son played; the toy functions as Chris's white feather, a public condemnation against him for his denial of Oliver. By using Oliver's death as leverage for Chris's recovery, the women of Baldry Court defer the guilt for returning him to Georgian reality and the trenches. Chris's denial of his son is unjustifiable and inconsistent with the "strange order of this earth," where sons die before their fathers, and fathers must maintain the guise of manly men (88). Chris's lapse in masculinity results in a denial of his social role. A community of women take it upon themselves to restore and return him.

Many critics and historians speak of disillusioned soldiers who resented the old men who started the war and willingly sacrificed an entire generation of young men. Yet Chris is not concerned with these old men. He reacts against their inheritors—women. Although West acknowledges that women do not have the power to stop the war, women do have moral responsibilities to uphold; otherwise they are implicated in the destruction. "Women of Britain say, GO!" was a popular postcard that advertised women as pro-war (Potter 73). West believed that women should maintain a level of moral-intellectualism because men are unable to "form … a clear judgement of the moral aspect of war" ("Woman Worship" 339). Wyatt Bonikowski observes that "even those furthest from the war may be complicit in its movement, that those with a knowledge limited to the most apparent of surfaces may unwittingly support the continuance of the war without and the war within" (531). Mackay argues that the women of *The Return of the Soldier* "take an instrumental role in ensuring the continuation of male violence. Apparently exempted from the violence of public events by clinging to their own private idiocy, West's … female characters … perpetuate the false values of public men" (134). Woolf further examines the relationship between women, patriarchy, and war in *Three Guineas*. Here Woolf explains that if the daughters of educated men "are going to be restricted to the education of the private house, they are going … to exert all their influence both consciously and unconsciously in favour of war" (204).

West criticises Jenny's, Margaret's, and Kitty's complacency in Georgian patriarchy. In "The Woman Worker," West champions the female munitions workers who have become "freer, because they are now paid their own wages instead of sharing in a collective income of the family as they commonly did under the domestic system" (308). For West and Woolf, this freedom is not merely financial, but also intellectual.

Woolf observes that women whose education is restricted to domestic space, which is controlled by men, will ignorantly accept whatever they are taught, and thus become perpetuators of patriarchy. Baldry Court is the epitome of such a space. Jenny notes that "nothing could ever really become part of [her and Kitty's] life until it had been referred to Chris's attention" (8). West describes Ellen Key's feminism as "women-worship," and it is this feminism that Kitty and Jenny live; according to West, Key's pacifist feminism "has not been a form of the worship of life, it has not been an aspiration that women should contribute more largely than they have done to the development of humanity by the exercise of intelligence and genius …. [Women] are merely to sit still and be as female as they can" ("Woman Worship" 338, 339). Woolf further explains the complacency of women: "So profound was her unconscious loathing for the education of the private house with its cruelty, its poverty, its hypocrisy, its immorality, its inanity that she would undertake any task however menial, exercise any fascination however fatal that enabled her to escape. Thus consciously she desired 'our splendid Empire'; unconsciously she desired our splendid war" (*Three Guineas* 208).

Although Jenny earlier wants to "[d]isregard … the national interest … [and] snatch … Christopher from the wars and seal him in this green pleasantness," by the end of the novel she betrays her beloved cousin and becomes party to the "national interest" that keeps him in the trenches (5). Jenny understands that when she and Kitty lift "the yoke of [their] embraces from [Chris's] shoulders he would go back to that flooded trench in Flanders under that sky more full of lying death than clouds" (90). As Chris walks across the lawn, "his back turned on this fading happiness," Jenny recalls that as "bad as [she, Kitty, and Margaret] were, [they] were not yet the worst circumstance of

[Chris's] return" (90). The horrors of the trenches, and Chris's anxieties about his own death, overshadow the betrayal of this community of women.

The female community of Baldry Court controls its soldier. They return Chris's reluctant mind to Georgian reality and his reluctant body to the front. The at-war community requires Chris to sacrifice his body in order to maintain the illusion of imagined masculinities. The community interprets Chris's external performance of masculinity as his internal acceptance. Butler explains that "if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the *appearance of substance* is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief" (141). Although shell-shock destabilises the constructed masculinity that the community requires its soldier to perform, a soldier's recovery from shell-shock reaffirms the supposed authenticity of his gender role. Jenny witnessed Chris's transformation into a soldier a year earlier when he volunteered for service, so she easily identifies and articulates this second transformation: Chris looks "'[e]very inch a soldier'" (90). As Chris walks toward the house, he does not walk "loose-limbed like a boy, as he had done that very afternoon, but with the soldier's hard tread upon the heel" (90). Chris's physical performance of heroic masculinity, by assuming the posture and gestures of a soldier, reassures the community of his return and the novel ends with a reaffirmation of the community's control over his body: "He's cured! ... He's cured" (90).

Beyond the Nation, Beyond the Individual: Vernon Bartlett's *The Unknown Soldier*

As the London Director of the League of Nations Secretariat from 1920-1932, Vernon Bartlett was present while the League of Nations, created in the aftermath of the Great War, failed to resolve the conflicts between European countries. Even in the 1920s, writers began to refer to the Great War as the "First World War," and the withdrawal of Germany from the League of Nations in 1933 ensured the inevitable—in six years, Europe again was at war. The failure of the League of Nations to prevent the outbreak of a second war reveals the rifts that nations and patriotism create among men. Benedict Anderson defines the nation as a community "imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (3). Bartlett believes the notion of a limited and sovereign nation caused the Great War and contributed to the failures of the Peace Conference and the League of Nations. He further rejects war memorials because they perpetuate patriotism, celebrate the patriotic individual, and promote the image of a sovereign nation. If anything is learned from the Great War, Bartlett believes, it is that the "one immortal soul" of all men transcends the artificial divisions imposed by nations (*The Times*, 22 November 1920). What Bartlett calls "the soul," William Watkin calls "singularity"—the core of man's being that is free of ideology. In *The Unknown Soldier*, Bartlett rewrites the Unknown Warrior as a monument that exists beyond the nation, a monument that represents the singularity of man.

Official nationalism—discourses constructed by the power groups of a nation that direct the way the nation is imagined—represented twentieth-century England as sovereign and authoritarian (Anderson 109). According to Althusser, the educational State Apparatus "drums into [students] … a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped up in the ruling ideology (French, arithmetic, natural history, the sciences, literature) or simply

the ruling ideology in its pure state (ethics, civic instruction, philosophy)" (118). In *The Unknown Soldier*, the soldier recalls that "they made you learn lists of dates of kings and queens, the names of generals and admirals. You knew of Nelson, Sir John Moore, and brave Kempenfeldt" (275). The individuals whom the nation celebrates are heroes of war; by learning these names, students are situated within a patriotic discourse concerning war and authoritarianism. The soldier acknowledges that important Englishmen are absent from this list: "[h]ardly a word did they tell you of the Caxtons, the Newtons, the Darwins, and never a word about the artists and poets unless they were men of such calibre that their names could be used to make other nations jealous" (275). Through their exposure to national ideology in school, students learn to recognise individuals whom the community identifies as nationally relevant. Nelson, Moore, and Kempenfeldt become models for the students who are developing their own identities as individuals within English society.

Bartlett distrusts patriotism because it constructs the nation as sovereign. In his first autobiography, *This Is My Life* (1937), Bartlett states that he has "little sympathy for what most people call patriotism, with its absurd assumption that anything 'foreign' must be inferior" (39). Bartlett recalls a Swedish Banker who remarked that the highest form of praise one can expect from an Englishman is "'That's not too bad,'" because the "Englishman flatly refuses to believe in the perfection of any other form or system than his own" (75). In 1933, Bartlett experienced first-hand the repercussions for violating the sovereignty of his nation when he sympathetically compared Germany to England. After Germany left the League of Nations, Bartlett announced on the BBC that he believed "Herr Hitler made his people act in very much the same way as the British, or any other spirited people, would have done in similar circumstances" (*TIML* 189). Bartlett's

justification of Hitler's actions, which countered official British opinion, ended his broadcasting days with the BBC (192). The soldier in *The Unknown Soldier* questions the extent to which English sovereignty requires the subordination of other nations. He understands that "each man loved his country, and especially his own county, and in that county his own town or village, more than any other place in the world" (274-5). But the soldier does not understand what this type of patriotism has "to do with this operation of trying to suppress another man's devotion to his country and county, village or town" (274-5).

In *The Unknown Soldier*, the soldier believes patriotic individuals, who have delusions of authoritarianism, willingly enter their nation into conflict with other nations. The divvying up of land to particular nations after the Great War, as well as the exploitation of colonies for their natural resources throughout history, reveals that patriotic individuals are acquisitive and antagonistic. The soldier believes that the "basis of [English] patriotism was the thirst for possession," and that the "driving force behind war was … [the] desire for possession and domination" (311). The soldier wonders what patriotism has to do "with this business of planting the flag on some new territory, or with this squabbling for the possession of raw materials and outlets for emigration instead of attempting to reach some equitable division of the fruits of the earth" (274). If mankind continues on this path, it will become "overwhelmed in its patient plodding efforts to win final control over the earth on which it lived by these periodical waves of war" (321). The soldier states that Europe is a "team that has no team spirit," for each nation "tried to have everything for themselves" (311). In 1937, Bartlett writes of the "strange patriots who would rather see their country collapse in solitude than save itself by co-operation with other countries" (*TIML* 155). He states that "[i]t is only when people

begin to be proud of areas painted red, yellow, green or whatever on a map that they become aggressive and acquisitive" (*TIML* 39).

The soldier rejects the autonomous nation and the conflicts that patriotism creates among the men of Europe. He believes that nations "fought over raw materials or new territory as though there were no truth in all they said in their churches of the fundamental brotherhood of man" (*US* 313). This "brotherhood of man" exists beyond the nation and beyond the differences nationalities impose on men. The soldier recalls that the achievements of William Penn, England's "most successful colonizer," are not taught to the children because his relations with the North American "Red Indians" are inconsistent with the image of an authoritarian England. (275). Penn, who "set out in the *Mayflower* without arms and treated the Red Indians as friends and lived at peace with them," has been "neglected and forgotten" (275). Instead, children learn about the Seven Years' War and recite "miserable poems about the Battle of the Baltic and the Charge of the Light Brigade, about rivers and snow befouled and tinged with blood" (275-6). This is counter to the revelation the soldier has in the trenches. He claims the "world had lost religion," and in its absence he develops his "own religion," the sole tenet of which is that one must "get the maximum amount of joy out of life with the minimum amount of hurt to other people" (314). The soldier's rejection of the autonomous nation and his idealistic hope for a worldwide community are the reaction of a man to a war fought over nationalisms, a war for which he voluntarily and needlessly sacrificed his life.

But "[w]hat did patriotism really mean?" (265). "Sinks," the trench philosopher in *The Unknown Soldier*, understands that patriotism has something to do with an "absurd national sensitiveness" caused by the individual's identification with the nation (265). When war breaks out in 1914, the soldier is "elated at the thought of the new adventure

which faced his country" (85). He gladly accepts his patriotic duty, as did many other young Englishmen. The soldier, working off "Sinks," observes that when "[i]t was suggested that your national dignity had been offended, [you were] prepared to don khaki, to fight (or send others to do it for you), to wave flags and cheer, to paint one country on the map the deepest and most villainous black" (265). He further notices that when "[s]omeone said something nasty about British climate, … you, personally, felt offended. An English tennis player, or football team, or aviator defeated a foreign player, team, or aviator, and you felt as though you'd acquired some merit by the deed" (265). When the patriotic individual identifies with the nation, any offense to the nation is an offense to the individual. The women of the Order of the White Feather viewed pacifist Englishmen as cowards who reflected poorly on the nation as a whole, and thus on themselves as Englishwomen. The soldier recalls an incident following his enlistment, but before he was called up, when he was handed a white feather for "lacking in patriotism" (264). Even when the war was only a few months old, "people were beginning to look questioningly at young men who walked around in 'mufti,'" and he realises that "[p]atriotism became more powerful than the press-gang" (264).

Propaganda imposes national ideologies on the individual and influences the way he understands his relationship with others within and without his nation. According to Eric Hobsbawm, the xenophobic sentiments that spread throughout England during the Great War were "borrowed and fostered by governments" (*Nation and Nationalism* 92). The way the nation described the Great War, as the "glorious struggle of civilization against barbarianism," reflects the xenophobic patriotism of wartime England (*TIML* 37). When England entered the war, the soldier realises that there "was a barrier now between England and Germany which divided mankind into two parts. There were the Allies

fighting gallantly for justice and right, and there were the cowardly Huns, whose whole *Kultur* had been based on murder and rape" (*US* 88). When Bartlett enlisted in the army in 1915, he "had to try to forget that the Germans had ever been kind to [him] …. [He] must have been mistaken and misled in [his] judgement of [the Germans] who crucified soldiers and murdered children. Anyhow, [he] wasn't going to let any Boche rape [his] sister!" (*TIML* 37). The social reality constructed by propaganda, centring on the sadism of Germans, appears more authoritative than Bartlett's personal experience in Germany. After his experience of war, an experience that shatters national ideologies, the soldier realises that only non-combatants believe the hateful patriotism presented by propaganda: Germans were "'The Hun' to people at home; 'Gerry' to fellows out here" (*US* 267).

In *The Unknown Soldier*, the soldier criticises the extent to which the nation controls the consenting subject and assimilates the dissenting subject. Anderson observes that the "great wars of this century are extraordinary not so much in the unprecedented scale on which they permitted people to kill, as in the colossal numbers persuaded to lay down their lives" (144). The soldier questions the nature of man's profound "self-sacrificing love" for the nation (Anderson 141). He wonders whether it was "cowardice, or solely the righteous indignation over the invasion of Belgium, that led so many men to enlist? The herd instinct that made you do as others did?" (263-4). The soldier views the voluntary enlistment of men as an acknowledgement of their responsibility to the nation. He describes the theatre of soldering as reinforcing the individual's submission to the nation. He understands how "absurd it all was, this waiting, this meticulous discipline, this fussiness over small matters to give the impression the fate of [the] country depended upon them" (166). Acts as trivial as polishing buttons or shoes now had national significance. Those who did not willingly submit to the nation "were broken" (115). The

soldier describes that "[s]omebody ordered you to clean latrines or polish buttons, and you saluted. It was worse than that. Somebody said some other nation was an enemy, and you all shoved on khaki and formed fours and dug bayonets into sacks in order to learn how to fight it. You had to submit to public opinion or you were destroyed" (115).

In *The Unknown Soldier*, the Great War is a symptom of official nationalism and reveals the inherent faults of twentieth-century Europe. The soldier believes that "[m]en had so defaced the world, so debased what might have been a glorious civilization, that in sheer self-defence God had set them to fight against each other" (267-7). The old men responsible for the war "told you that you were fighting for civilization, but you were fighting against it—you and the Germans and the people at home" (142). D.H. Lawrence describes the Great War not as the pinnacle of civilisation, as propaganda suggested, but as an event that revealed such a pinnacle as nonexistent:

> For a thousand years man has been pushing his civilization, like a great snowball, uphill. All the time he has pushed it uphill, while it got huger and huger. In the belief that he would come at last to the happy top.
>
> Now he no longer believes there is any top. And as a matter of fact, there isn't. So he has fallen into a funk, the go has gone out of him. And the snowball of his own accumulation begins slowly to roll back on him, slowly at first, but with gathering momentum, forcing him downhill. That is what is happening today. (221)

In light of the Great War, Georgian England, as a civilisation, was in decline. In *The Brighter Side of European Chaos* (1925), Bartlett describes that "[t]he tragedy of Europe is that [it is a] civilization [that] still runs the risk of dying slowly of anaemia; there is nothing sufficiently sensational about its fading away to arouse public opinion, to make

millions of people say to themselves, as they did in 1914, 'This is appallingly serious, and we must do something to stop it'" (12). The war was not the fault of the old men alone, for all citizens "were responsible, each one of them. And now they were paying back their debts" (310). While remembering his tour of the sex district in London, the soldier in *The Unknown Soldier* wonders "what … a civilization that produced such scenes in its largest city deserved but a war which would lead to its own destruction? What else could you expect in a world that believed only in symbols, that lost Christ in its dispute over ritual, that forgot the finer qualities of patriotism in the cant about flags and armaments and glory of war?" (274). The discourses of the nation—violence, flags, glory—have created a "grotesque and ugly thing—a mockery of civilization," for which young men have "grotesque, ugly deaths out … in No Man's Land" (272).

Bartlett rejects official nationalism and patriotism for "local patriotism," which champions the "love of simple existence in unpretentious places" (*This Is My Life 39*). Bartlett's "local patriotism" destabilises assumptions of what constitutes a nation and, thus, challenges the reasons why men go to war. For Bartlett, England is not an imagined community. He states that England "was [*his*] country. Other Bartletts or Bartelots had for generations looked on these hills and lowlands, had worked in these fields, drunk in these inns, put on their Sunday-best clothes to pray in these old stone-built churches" (*This Is My Life* 39; original emphasis). One's nation, when stripped of ideology and rhetoric, becomes the "hills," "lowlands," "fields," "inns," and "churches" that were the setting for lived experience. This "local patriotism" subverts assertions of an authoritative England or Englishness. England is composed of England*s*, each created through the experience of an Englishman. "When a Frenchman talks of 'mon pays,'" Bartlett continues, "he may mean France, but the chances are that he means that very small

section of it where his ancestors lie buried, his village, the copse where he did his wooing, the river where he goes fishing, the café where he plays his cards or his billiards when the day's work is over. For that he would fight. For the English equivalent [Bartlett] would fight" (*This Is My Life* 39).

Bartlett's "local patriotism" contributes to the way he and the soldier in *The Unknown Soldier* imagine national borders as transitory, if not nonexistent. Bartlett states that if he "were capable of subtle propaganda, it would be in support of international goodwill and good-humoured understanding. As the Italians say, '*tutto il mondo è paese*,'—all the world's one country" (*BSEC* 14). Bartlett and the soldier describe pre-war Europe as though it were borderless. Both the soldier and Bartlett travelled to France and Germany before the war. It was a centuries-old tradition among Englishmen of means, having just graduated from public school, to travel to the continent. Numerous men who fought in the Great War had fond memories of the Frenchmen and Germans among whom they studied, worked, and lived. Following graduation from public school, the soldier attends a boarding school in France, described as a "little world" that functions as a utopian ideal of Europe (47). "They represented the youth of the world in that boarding-house," the soldier describes (47). For Bartlett and other Englishmen who returned from the continent when the Great War began, it was especially difficult to view his German friends as enemies. Bartlett "knew and loved Germany, and could pay little attention to the rumours that she was preparing for war. There could not be war with people who had treated [him] so kindly!" (*TIML* 36). But those "kindly people" with whom Bartlett lived in Germany are "separated from [him] now by the tremendous abyss of the Great War" (*TIML* 18).

Bartlett is interested in individuals who occupy the liminal space between nations, both physically and psychically. These individuals problematise the strict definitions of what constitutes the nation and national subject, and show that a man may exist beyond the nation and outside its ideology. The protagonists in *The Unknown Soldier* and *Journey's End* (1931), Bartlett's novel adaptation of R.C. Sherriff's play, perform raids on German trenches. Both men, who are multi-lingual, traverse No Man's Land, the non-occupied, non-national space between the Allied and the Central Powers. This area becomes a symbol of the possessive instinct of the warring nations; thousands of lives are spent in battles to gain mere yards in this tract of land. In *Journey's End*, Raleigh reaches the German trench and returns with an informant. That *The Unknown Soldier* was entitled *No Man's Land* for the first English edition shows how pertinent this contested terrain is to the novel. In *The Unknown Soldier*, while en route to raid a German trench, the soldier is injured and occupies a shell-hole in No Man's Land for the remainder of the novel. His physical dissociation from any nation, marked by the frontline trenches, speaks to the way he describes the war. He was not between comrades and enemies, but "between rival armies which belched noise at each other such as the world had never known before" (114).

The soldier's destruction of his diary while in No Man's Land suggests his dissociation from his former identity as patriotic soldier. "[T]o his horror," the soldier finds his diary and begins to destroy it for any "invaluable information" it may contain (*US* 147). But after reading excerpts from the text, the soldier realises that the diary confirms the expectations of the home front audience for which he is composing the text. He remarks that the "few events that were in any way out of the ordinary dull routine were referred to in the diary as though they had been epoch-making" (167). The soldier

notices that "every noun had an adjective, generally in the superlative degree, to precede it, and there was nothing about mud or lack of sleep except in relation to 'Tommy's' heroism in putting up with them. It was all quite true, and yet so intensely false. Because it was the war, the dirtiest, the meanest, the foulest objects or actions became glorious" (210). By destroying the diary, the soldier relinquishes this former identity. He reads the text in order to be reminded of the "life that had finished some six hours ago—the life of muddle and boredom and comradeship and overwhelming fatigue" (246-7). This past life was constructed by the nation; therefore, the soldier becomes "more lonely, less a figure in the world" (*US* 259).

The destruction of the dairy becomes an act of self-destruction. The diary is a surrogate for the soldier, and destructive acts to the diary are experienced by his body. Grandiose statements—"'Incongruous weather to make my début on the stage of death'"—cause the soldier to tear "out the page with a violence which sent red-hot pain down his spine" (158). The soldier's burying of the pages in the earth prefigures the burial of his body. When he reads an excerpt concerning the time he spent on leave, he decides that this page "could come out, for it referred to a boy who had long since ceased to exist. Holding the diary between his teeth, he tore out these earlier sheets, crumpled them into an insignificant ball, and buried them beneath the dry, discoloured earth" (153). The "crumpled" pages recall his "crumpled" body, a body that will become an "insignificant ball" as it is interred in the earth.

The soldier's rejection of his identity speaks to the anti-individual and anti-novelistic aspects of *The Unknown Soldier*. Novels celebrate individuality and the formation or *Bildung* of the individual. Throughout a typical novel, a character develops from his experiences until the *dénouement*, when the character is individualised and

attains a stable identity. The soldier in *The Unknown Soldier* lacks a stable identity and, throughout the novel, becomes de-individualised. The soldier remains unnamed in the text and the narrator refers to him awkwardly as "the boy" or "he"; readers must follow suit (20). The soldier never achieves the *dénouement* that his society assures him will come. The gipsy's prophecy early in the novel instils in the solider a sense of self-importance. He develops expectations for his future as a painter, an author, or an explorer. But the war, physically, and the novel, formally, never allow him to become any of these. As the soldier lies in the shell-hole, an "unheard-of pain overwhelm[s] him" and he believes that "[i]t wasn't for this he'd lived and planned and hoped. It wasn't this end the old gipsy woman had foreseen" (128). Through his war experience, the soldier realises that the individual who the nation—and the novel—champions is an illusion. He looks to the "rotting corpses with whom he shared this long strip of No Man's Land" and thinks how, "so short a time ago, [each had] been a young man, eager to live, convinced that *his* world could not be destroyed, that no bullet could suddenly check all movement, all thought, all ambition" (187). In this way, *The Unknown Soldier* is similar to the Great War. Both are relentless in their treatment of men; both cut short the lives of men who have so much hope for the future.

The Unknown Soldier dismantles the "cult of the fallen soldier" by subverting the nationally constructed identity of the soldier-as-hero (Mosse 91). Numerous novels published around 1930 also portrayed war as unheroic (King 181). The decade between the conclusion of conflict and the appearance of unheroic representations of war reveals that post-war England was preoccupied with hero-making. The soldier asks "by what right did men talk of the calm and beauty of death? … [T]here was no dignity, no beauty here. And the liars talked of the glory of a solder's death!" (144). He further wonders

why "fools who talked of the dignity and glory of war [could not] see all these men scrambling over each other, or pressing their bodies flat against the parapet in their anxiety to escape this black terror?" (235). The first time the soldier sees casualties, he notices that they do not fall "in the dramatic way men fell on films—arms thrown up and bodies spinning round—but just stagg[er] forward, carried on by their own momentum, and then giv[e] way at the knees" (108). Because the German artillery "fired a little behind the British front line in the anxiety not to hit their own men," many of the soldier's "casualties were among men who had gone back to the latrines; but they, too, died like heroes" (284-5). The soldier understands that the heroicism of soldiering and the identity of hero exist only in the space of the home front. When he writes letters to the families of deceased soldiers, he was "party to the lie himself" (285). He would describe how soldiers "had fallen splendidly, fighting for their country" (285). But he recalls that "[p]oor, clumsy Leggatt, who had been the most incompetent officer the world had ever seen, had slipped in a trench and fallen on a box of bombs. He had been blown to bits, but he had died a hero" (285).

Post-war memorialisation fashions deceased soldiers into heroes. The soldier believes that the war dead will be heroicised in much the same way as Christ. He describes the "priests and parsons [who] … came up with much pomp to bless submarines and cannon, and the regimental colours hung near altars erected to commemorate the one Man who had preached meekness and humility; that was the spirit in which they'd commemorate the dead of what already they called 'The Great War'" (228). Adrian Gregory notes that the old men who were responsible for the Great War were later responsible for post-war memorialisation (26-7). These old men controlled the lives of men during the war, as well as the way dead soldiers are remembered. George

Mosse explains that the "cult of the fallen soldier … became a centrepiece of the religion of nationalism after the war" (7). The words the nation used to disguise the reality of battle, "glory" and "honour," were also used to describe a soldier's death. The soldier remembers that the "people at home, blind to truth and beauty, talked of the dignity and glory of war and the sweetness of dying for one's country" (277). The soldier fears the extent to which his body may be used to justify the national project. He states that he "would not die [in No Man's Land], and be made one more excuse for the glorification of war and the postponement of some more decent and more just method of settling quarrels" (285).

Memorials not only encourage survivors to remember the casualties of war, but also to remember the dead in a particular way (King 173). In this way, memorials are instruments of ideology. The nation became the site of the "articulation of war memories, and the mobilization of commemoration, since war had been central to its identity and symbolic continuity" (Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper 22). The effectiveness of a memorial was determined by its ability to promote the "right kind of memory" (King 173). According to Douglas Higbee,

> Commemoration … attaches the injured and killed bodies of combatants to abstract issues of victory, political structures, and national identity. For war's violence does not in and of itself create resolution; though the violent exchanges that are the means of war may have ceased, wars are not complete or 'won' until their violence has been translated into the political structures and, to some extent, the identities of the participants. (199)

In *War Imagined*, Hynes explains that when a society recovers from war, it is not "a time for realism …. [T]he impulse, perhaps one should say the social need, was for affirming

monuments" (279). D.H. Lawrence writes that "state rituals falsely reaffirm the legitimacy of an illegitimate regime …. Abstract nouns, such as 'pride' and 'sacrifice' engraved on public monuments … justified killing and mutilating in the name of the country" (qtd. in Marlene Briggs, "D.H. Lawrence" 203). Memorials re-imagined the nation and boosted national moral. The state and private citizens erected memorials that perpetuated a specific brand of collective memory. Romantic soldier figures top pedestals, and these pedestals are inscribed with celebrations of heroism. Memorials of the Great War affirmed England and were patriotic articulations.

According to William Watkin, memorialisation is an "ideology of mourning" that reinforces the individuality, rather than singularity, of the deceased. "Loss," Watkin continues, "is singular not individual, and the imposition of ideologies of individuality typical of commemoration—eulogies which detail the salient characteristics of the dead person, ideological constructs of our life, and so on—is primarily designed to mask singularity" (16). The soldier believes that the blanket application of "hero" to all deaths in war is a fault of memorialisation. He wonders "if one man was killed while standing on a parapet to give his fellows fresh courage or while trying to rescue a friend, how many thousands died meanly or ridiculously, huddling down in shell-holes or running from an explosion? (284). Siegfried Sassoon also believed that "some soldiers do not deserve the status of 'hero' bestowed upon them for the sake of home front morale and, therefore, do not deserve to be mourned as such" (Kunka 75). The memorials erected following the Great War limit the quality of the deceased for whom they were to honour. In his discussion of the reaction of Americans to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Watkin states that signs like "the dead, our friends, our co-workers, our fellow-countrymen and women … are inadequate when it comes to naming lost objects because language summarises

while the object of being is singular. Singularity is not the same as personality or individuality; it can instead be defined primarily as a guarantee that a subject is always more than the words used about them" (228). Great War veterans' distrust of words like "glory" and "honour" arises from the recognition that the language of the home front cannot effectively represent all the soldiers who died. The extent to which memorialisation is a function of this inability of the nation to describe its dead permeates throughout *The Unknown Soldier* as an anxiety. Even the naming of the dead in Honour Rolls or on memorials is an act of hero-worship, rather than an acknowledgment of the singularity of each sacrifice. The soldier thinks that, "[i]f he died, they'd engrave his name on some stone somewhere or other—there would certainly be a Penbridge War Memorial, for example, to inspire the younger Penbridgians and prepare them in turn to sacrifice themselves" (296). Post-war commemoration reinforces the ideology of the nation, and ensures a future war for the "younger Penbridgians" and the rest of England.

For D.H. Lawrence, post-war memorialisation reveals the failure of Englishmen to understand their Great War experiences. He believes that Georgian men viewed the war as reinforcing their innate Englishness. Thus, the men who fought in the Great War "never fought the great fight … never made the last adventure. We played with guns and horror and death, and funked realising" (222). Lawrence does not deny that soldiers fought like heroes, but they did so "from their self-conscious selves" (219). Men fought to "save democracy, to make the world safe for something or other called democracy"; they fought to make the world "safe for the cowardice of modern man" (219). Lawrence acknowledges that England "had a war, and beat the Germans, and lost our manhood. We made the mechanical, automatic adventure, but not the soul adventure nor the thought-adventure" (221). "Real thought is an experience," Lawrence explains. "It begins as a

change in the blood, a slow convulsion and revolution in the body itself. It ends as a new piece of awareness, a new reality in mental consciousness" (213). Lawrence condemns the false masculinity created by the war:

> As men, as responsible, sincerely-conscious men they never fought. As heroic automata, as servants of their country, as heroes and saviours they fronted the guns. But as men, isolated men, they never faced the strange war-passions that came up in themselves. As thought-adventurers, they never for one moment faced the issues of the war inwardly. They were all of them popular darlings, so they just sweltered in horrors and popularity, without ever taking the last manly adventure of realisation. (221).

Lawrence reads the Unknown Warrior as the primary symbol of post-war England's failure to develop beyond its current faults. He describes the post-war English mentality as complacent: "*We are unchanged. We are awfully nice fellows, too good to change"* (Lawrence 222; original emphasis). The Unknown Warrior monument is an "altar to the Unknown God in Athens," and its occupant is "grimly smiling at our imbecility and preparing our doom" (222). Lawrence describes his love for the "great lump of stone[,] … the Unknown Warrior. It's like the Unknown God, who is always a God of Vengeance to those who don't know Him" (222). The anxiety that the vengeful dead will return to exact revenge on an unchanged society is a common trope in post-war fiction and film (Winter, *Sites of Memory* 15). In the film *J'accuse* (1918), the dead rise from their graves to redress the disrespect of their community. Only when the community changes its behaviour do the dead return to their graves (Winter, *Sites of Memory* 15). Lawrence seeks to associate such a threat with the Unknown Warrior: "[t]he tomb isn't

empty …. Beware of the occupant, that's all" (222). For the occupant "is preparing to attack us and annihilate us in the full flower of our own imbecility" (222).

The social significance of the Unknown Warrior in post-war England was vested in the return and burial of a body. During and after the war, England venerated the soldier-body. But corpses often did not survive modern warfare intact. Thousands of corpses remained unaccounted for after the war, many having been obliterated by shells. After 1916, England stopped repatriating the bodies, and instead buried them where they fell (Hynes, *War Imagined* 271). With the absence of a body to bury, the bereaved "had no body to mourn over, no focus for their grief" (Todman 48). The Unknown Warrior memorial was an official attempt to redress the "corpselessness" that constituted the home front experience of war death (Booth 21). The memorial to the Unknown Warrior functioned as a surrogate body for the son or husband who was killed at the front—and for many mourners, it was possible to imagine the body buried in Westminster Abbey as the body of their soldier (Wolffe 260, 261).

For Bartlett, the use of the Unknown Warrior as a focus for patriotism is an example of the "imbecility" of post-war society. In the press leading up to and following the burial, the Warrior was described as an object of national significance. The burial reveals not only the veneration of the nation for the soldier's body, but also the nation's ideological control over it. The Warrior's tomb was draped in Railton's flag, his casket was made of an oak tree from Hampton Court, and the sword placed in the tomb belonged to King George V (Gavaghan 26). On the tomb, the warrior's nationality is explicit—"Beneath this stone rests the body of a British Warrior"—and articles claimed him to be the "Unknown representative of all our dead" (*The Times*, 12 November, 1920). He was imagined as a "Representative Man in whom the strange fate of millions finds its

fit symbol" (*The Times*, 11 November, 1921). The corpse interred in Westminster Abbey is intentionally anonymous, having been one of six bodies exhumed from France and then chosen at random (Gregory 25). This anonymity allows the nation to overwrite the corpse with a nation-affirming narrative and nationally constructed identity. The corpse acquires its significance through this mythmaking. According to John Wolffe, the "burial of the Unknown Warrior was a logical if unconscious ritual extension of the representative dimension of other great deaths," including Victoria and Edward VII (260). Anderson explains that "[t]he public ceremonial reverence accorded [Cenotaphs and Unknown Warriors] precisely *because* they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has no precedents in earlier times …. Yet void as these tombs are of identifiable mortal remains or immortal souls, they are nonetheless saturated with ghostly *national* imaginings" (9; original emphasis). Mosse adds that the "return and burial of the Unknown Soldier was accompanied by a riot of symbolism, for all the symbols present in the design of military cemeteries, and in the mythology which surrounded the fallen, were compressed into one ceremony—indeed, into one symbol" (94).

The national efforts to re-imagine and overwrite the unknown body with Britishness suggest the threat death poses to ideology. According to Watkin, "[d]eath forms the outer limit not just of life, but of the idea of limits, containment, categories and definitions" (18). He explains this is because man's existence outside of national constructs, his "singularity[,] is most apparent at the moment of birth and the moment of death, moments that remain radically threatening to ideology" (16). The nation's control over the individual is only fully challenged by the individual's death. Death reveals the difference between the nationally constructed individual and the singular being that exists somewhere beyond it. Death threatens the ideology of the nation because it unravels the

layers of signification the nation applies to the body and to which the individual subscribes. This is why funeral rituals are of such social importance. The body lacks consciousness and consequently lacks its social identity. Funeral rituals seek to reinterpret the body and reincorporate it into the community.

Bartlett challenges the reverence of the nation for the soldier's body. In *The Unknown Soldier*, the body is no longer a point of social importance, but a "poor [mass] of corruption and decay whom one dug up in the trenches" (272). The first corpse the soldier sees had "little dignity and majesty about [it]" and juxtaposes romantic representations of war dead: "[t]hese were the brains, these lumps of soft, grey matter that stained the waterproof sheet and clotted the dead man's hair. A few hours ago, in some inexplicable way, this substance had enabled West to walk, to laugh …. [N]ow the body lay so stiff, so deprived of will or mind or soul, that one could hardly believe it had ever been more than a puppet" (161-2). The undignified corpse, now no more than an inanimate puppet, challenges the venerated body. The soldier continues:

> And people, instead of destroying the body as soon as life had gone, kept it as long as they could, slowed down the inevitable process of decay …. [T]hey sealed you in a nice metal case which would resist corrosion, then in a fine box of some hardwood that would rot slowly. The cities had far too few parks for the living because they gave up acres and acres to cemeteries with white, ugly, lying tombstones. Always the same effort to escape the truth, the same lack of faith. The body was finished with, but you kept up the fiction that it had not become so revoltingly corrupt that it had to be buried for fear of poisoning the living. (223-4)

The soldier's own body is a site of degradation and filth. As he reaches for a water bottle, "[t]he movement of his hand stirred up a cloud of sickly, black flies from Bailey's body.

But not only from Bailey's body—also from his own" (223). He thinks that the "foul insects would leave poison in [his] wound, there might be gangrene, loathsome swellings, living decay. The body, of which one was so proud, so easily turned into something disgusting and repulsive" (223).

According to the soldier, an aspect of his being exists outside of national discourse, and outside of his body. He is reassured that, after death, "[t]here was something inside him that would go on, whatever happened to the body it now inhabited. You can't destroy matter[,] old Rhodes used to declare to his chemistry class. Then how much more was it impossible to destroy the spirit!" (177). The solder claims that there "was something in man which was indestructible, and that was life. It was life which was 'glorious' and 'magnificent,' and you could not sit here, listening to Chopin, and yet believe that the life of the spirit could be destroyed, whatever man-made machines might do to your body" (210). The soldier understands that deeper than the constructions of the society, there exists a fundamental aspect of his being. He explains that "even in this community life, where there was never a moment of solitude, where everything was done in public, you had to keep your soul to yourself" (319). Watkin refers to Bartlett's concept of the "soul" as "singularity." For Watkin, singularity "is the irreducible aspect of our being, that which exists but cannot be named, that is singular to us but which we share with all others, that is who we are but that cannot be known, that relates us to strangers because it is the strangeness within ourselves" (15). According to Watkin, "[s]ingularity reveals a subject who is always in excess of language and definition and thus each subject is always other even unto itself. The subject in its singularity cannot describe for others their own singular being" (228).

The soldier locates his immortal being in nature. The soldier describes that the "same life-force that enabled him to breathe, to think, to see, enabled those birds to soar until they became little white specks, to judge the correct motion necessary to rise, descend, advance, turn. There was a definite and beautiful link between him and the seagulls on the beach-trees on Barrow Hill" (179). The soldier describes that "the only things that really counted were the moments when his vision had been so clear that he was in complete harmony with all the world, was inevitably a part of this throbbing, pulsing globe that twisted through space on its ordained course" (177). Similarly, in *This Is My Life*, Bartlett describes an occasion when he stood on South Downs and looked at the "lovely English countryside" (139). Near to him "the sun still shone on the masses of flowering willow herb and the rabbits pottered about as though [he] didn't exist or [was] just a natural and normal part of it all. Never before or since [has he] had such a feeling of 'belonging,' and [he] would not wish to forget it" (139). In *The Unknown Soldier*, the gipsy associates the soldier's future "fame" with nature. When reading the soldier's hand, the gipsy "stared around her, at sea and wide chalk down, at the village and its elm trees in the valley, at the sky with its stately white clouds and its gliding seagulls. It was as though she were calling the world to witness this phenomenon" (38). The soldier's function as the Unknown Warrior is associated with the permanence of his being.

According to Bartlett, the power of the Unknown Warrior monument is its anonymity. He refuses to use the lexicon of the nation to describe the monument and thus overwrite the body with an identity. Bartlett's Unknown Warrior speaks to Watkin's questions concerning the possibility of ethical mourning:

> So how does one commemorate responsibly and repeat the singularity of the event without reducing it to generalised statements? The great challenge of an ethical

> mourning of mass death reveals itself to be, … how can one address the dead without reducing their singularity through the use of signifiers of summation, the most significant of which is the lost subject's name of course. It is debateable … whether one can ever speak well of the dead without ever even naming them. (Watkin 231)

The practice of naming the dead on memorials was an effort to return each individual to "an individuated existence against the oblivion to which he had been consigned on the battlefield. Even if the soldiers did not return physically, commemorations gave the pledge that 'Their Name Liveth for Evermore'" (Goebel 29). Gregory claims that the naming on memorials functioned as a surrogate body for the corpseless dead (23). For Hynes, the soldier's name was a symbol and was an acknowledgement of the realism of the war (*War Imagined* 285). But as Watkin explains, "when we stand at the grave of someone who has died and intone their name, believing that in this name there is some remnant of their true and singular being, we are actually robbing them of their being as other, not honouring it" (210). The community's reliance on the name is an attempt to conflate the essentiality of a man with his social identity. At the same time, his identity is articulated according to the national lexicon also inscribed on the monument: Tom, Dick, and Harry were brave soldiers who died heroically. Both Bartlett and Watkin reject such efforts to identify and summarise the dead.

In this way, the Unknown Warrior, like the graves of all the soldiers "Known Unto God," is a monument to the singularity of man. The Epilogue to *The Unknown Soldier* states that "when men die for each other there is to be no distinction between them. We are capable of sorrow for an Unknown because he was a man and died for men. We did not need to be told his name or what he did" (331). The anonymity of the

monument, like the anonymity of the protagonist, speaks to the immortal soul's transcendence beyond nationality. The soldier explains that "[o]ne day they would be grateful to him—not to him personally, of course, for the individual no longer mattered, but to all those who had worked to stamp out this plague of war, hatred, and suspicion" (322). "'We really *are* fighting for a great ideal,' ["Sinks"] used to say. 'So's the Boche, for that matter'" (270). For Bartlett, the Unknown Warrior is not a monument to English greatness, but a monument to the singularity of each man that exists beyond the nation and beyond his nationally controlled individuality. Perhaps this explains the proliferation of unknown warriors interred in countries around the world throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Stephen Graham's comments on the Cenotaph in his work of battlefield tourism, *The Challenge of the Dead* (1921), could easily be about the Unknown Warrior. He writes that the "impersonal cenotaph … without even the pronoun 'our' which some wished to see upon it—'Our glorious dead,' instead of 'The glorious dead,' can stand for all who laid down their lives baptised or unbaptised, white or coloured, friend or foe. For even Germans had to die so that Europe might be free" (172-3). Nearly a century later, the internment of these warriors appears to be an acknowledgment of the universality of sacrifice, rather than as expressions of national grief.

Bartlett believes that each mourner, when paying his respects to the Unknown Warrior, acknowledge the singularity of man. The soldier is comforted by his belief that, when "his individual task was done, his body was laid aside, and the conscience which had inspired him had found other vehicles of action and expression" (315). The warrior's singular existence is intended as an inspiration for the mourners. In the Epilogue to *The Unknown Soldier*, each mourner is stripped of his individuality and becomes part of a community of mourners: "[t]he great also pay honour to him and forget their greatness;

the King is his chief mourner, as one representative of the people for another" (331). Articles published after the Unknown Warrior's funeral further depict the mourners as though they shared one soul. The unanimity of the crowd was "not the sameness of the herd—[they] were not lowered, but exalted to it" (*The Times*, 12 November, 1920). This crowd, in an act of communal mourning, showed that "at our highest, we are one" (331). Watkin, building off Jean Luc Nancy's work in *The Experience of Freedom*, describes that "[r]eal community … consists not of individuals forced into categorical units by values shared in common, … [but] the relation of non-relation. What we have in common, what links and ultimately limits us, is the illimitable and unique singularity of our existence, each time just this once" (18). He further explains that "death, and our relation to it, tie us to the other as other as it is unrecognisable, just like the other is unrecognisable, and just as the other also is unable to recognise death" (229). For Bartlett, an authentic community is formed by man's acknowledgement of the singularity of all men, rather than by national allegiance. While dying in the shell-hole, the soldier realises that he is not the "centre of the earth," and thus places himself among a community of man (*US* 317). On Armistice Day, the mourners formed a similar community. *The Times* article quoted at the end of *The Unknown Soldier* concludes with an affirmation of universality of man:

> [H]ere all was planned and as in a great piece of music, and all of us were members of the orchestra; we had, each, his part in the expression of this grief and pride without discord or failure. There was one forgetfulness of self in that quiet ritual, one desire that its prophecy may be fulfilled—that we may come to be one in life as our dead are one in death; that we may, indeed, all become members of

> one body politic and of one immortal soul. That was the meaning implicit in the funeral of the Unknown Dead. (*The Times*, 12 November 1920)

The meaning implicit in the Unknown Warrior memorial, that we are "one in life as our dead are one in death," suggests that the community of man exists beyond the nation.

On Armistice Day, 1920, the mourners, upon the return of a dead soldier, perform an act of "true and ethical mourning" (Watkin 233). Watkin describes such mourning as an "act of radical, commemorative, singular freedom." He explains that to truly mourn, "one must be surprised and thus find oneself placed at the very limit of life and death and what you know and don't want to know and could never possibly know and yet it is there before you demanding a response. To be free, one has to become dead or go to dead's place, because what else can this place where the subject meets with its limits actually be?" (233). Bartlett's Unknown Warrior, stripped of national and personal identifications, is a body also stripped of national ideologies. Each mourner, when he pays his respects to the soldier, confronts his own inevitable anonymity in death, his future outside of national consciousnesses. Watkin departs slightly from Anderson, who argues that "true" communities do not exist and cannot be "advantageously juxtaposed to nations" (6). Watkin explains that "in giving us brief access to our own singularity, death gives us community itself" (18). "[T]he birth of the subject in each singular moment is followed by two deaths," Watkin continues (18). "The first is the death of society caused by the birth of a community of singularity. The second is the death of this community because singularity has no duration, only occurrence" (18). Each mourner, while performing his own "quiet ritual," acknowledges his singularity, his "event of being," his self at birth and at death outside the community. And thus the mourner acknowledges the death of the nation and the birth of a new, albeit temporary community—a community of mourners.

Monumental Grief: Communal Mourning in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

The commemorative strategies used to cope with the trauma of the Great War—the erection of monuments and the scripting of memorial ceremonies—construct grief as communal. Due to the large number of casualties that England suffered in the Great War, "[o]ne can truly talk of [it as] a society in mourning" (Capdevila and Voldman 30). The funeral rites for the millions of dead soldiers were performed communally. Families that did not lose a soldier were expected to participate in public acts of mourning (Gregory 24). Jay Winter points out that monuments "were built as places where people could mourn. And be seen to mourn" (*Sites of Memory* 93). Grief "was emphasised, sometimes even flaunted. … [R]eminders of the deaths supplanted commemorations of victory so often that psychiatrists might speak of a 'show' of mourning, so conspicuously was it displayed" (Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker 177). Virginia Woolf was among a group of intellectuals who rejected the orchestration of national grief following the Great War (Bradshaw 108). In response to Peace Day celebrations in 1919, Woolf writes that there is "something calculated & political & insincere about these peace rejoicings. Moreover they are carried out with no beauty, & not much spontaneity" (*Diary* 1:292). In Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, communal mourning is controlled by the state and merely performed by the public, and thus fails to encourage authentic grief work. Conscious engagement with death—authentic mourning—occurs outside of the community, free from the control of ideology.

According to Freud's early work, mourning "passes off after a certain lapse of time" and "comes to a spontaneous end" ("Mourning and Melancholia" 252; "On Transience" 307). Although mourning is a painful aspect of human existence and "involves grave departures from the normal attitude of life," it is not pathological (Freud,

"Mourning and Melancholia" 243-4). The features of melancholia, the pathological reaction of the bereaved to the death of a loved one, are a "profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment" (Mourning and Melancholia" 244). The melancholic may not "consciously perceive what he has lost," or perhaps he "knows *whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him" ("Mourning and Melancholia" 245"). Mourning "contains the same painful frame of mind [as melancholia], the same loss of interest in the outside world—in so far as it does not recall [the deceased]—the same loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love (which would mean replacing [the deceased]) and the same turning away from any activity that is not connected with thoughts of him" ("Mourning and Melancholia" 244).

Unlike the melancholic, the mourner acknowledges, and subsequently accepts, social reality. For the mourner, "[r]eality-testing has shown that the loved object no longer exists, and that it proceeds to demand that all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object" ("Mourning and Melancholia" 244). The mourner requires time "for the command of reality-testing to be carried out in detail, and that when this work has been accomplished the ego will have succeeded in freeing its libido from the lost object" (252). Through this confrontation with reality, the mourner's ego, anxious that it might share the same fate as the deceased, "is persuaded by the sum of the narcissistic satisfactions it derives from being alive to sever its attachment to the object that has been abolished" ("Mourning and Melancholia" 255).

The communal grief caused by the Great War and the way the community articulated that grief suggest that Freud's theory of individual mourning may be applied

to a group. Communities may be viewed as a "conglomerate of thousands upon thousands of individual consciousnesses" (Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich 50). In his discussion of mourning following "great" deaths throughout English history, John Wolffe argues that "[o]n occasions of national mourning, [theological and literary reflection on issues relating to death, judgement, and afterlife] were brought suddenly to the forefront of the collective consciousness" (6). Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich acknowledge that "[t]ransferring such individual experiences onto a large group entails considerable difficulties, because … the immense range of living circumstances and character differences adds new and unknown factors" (xxv). But these authors maintain that the emotional state of a large group is not just a "qualitative problem. What matters is the *ease* with which a specific type of behaviour spreads; whether or not it meets with a response in the psychic structure of the majority" (xxvi; original emphasis). War commemoration is successful if it conveys the feelings of large numbers of people. A single monument may convey the grief of an entire community, and thus "private pain of past experience is alleviated through being symbolized in shared forms" (Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper 43). This view of commemoration assumes an "organic relationship between the individual, the agencies of civil society and the nation-state," as all three structures are working toward a common goal—successful recovery from the trauma of war. While acts of mourning may also occur at the individual level, the "presence of communities in mourning—communities of mourning, perhaps—reminds us that the mourning was collective, and endured collectively" (Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker 204).

In *The Psychoanalysis of War* (1966), Franco Fornari outlines a psychoanalytic approach to the social experience of mourning. Fornari explains that mourning as a "social phenomenon does not make use of reality testing" (141). Instead, the "criterion of

validity of social experiences seems to reside in the fact that [these experiences] are verified by the process of coparticipation rather than reality testing" (141). In Freud's theory, the reality of the community functions as a comparison for the mourner's psychic reality. But a community of mourners does not have access to an external, authoritative reality. The community relies on "a mode of experience whose value and validity arise from its being shared by the individuals belonging to a group, i.e., whose criterion of truth is sharing" (141). Fornari explains that with communal mourning, "reality testing (as a system, separate from, and independent of, the interhuman experience, of validating the world) *is replaced by a particularly rigorous validation system governed exclusively by the interhuman relation*" (143-4; original emphasis). Communal mourning "acquires its character of truth in the very fact of being shared by the subjects belonging to a group, without the subjects' being able to refer to a third neutral element presenting itself as external reality" (143). The typical mourner observes a discrepancy between his psychic experience and the reality of the community. The acceptance of the objective reality of the community is the impetus for the mourner to work through his grief. The reality of a community of mourners, rather than being challenged by an objective reality, is constructed and verified by the monuments a community erects and the mourning rituals that community performs.

The monuments and rituals organised by the state construct a particular post-war reality. Adrian Gregory acknowledges that the need for memorials arose from the extreme grief experienced by the bereaved following the war. But war remembrance was a "socially framed signifying practice that could not be politically neutral" (286). War commemoration "*always* has to engage with mourning and with attempts to make good the psychological damage of war; and whenever people undertake the tasks of mourning

and reparation, a politics is *always* at work" (Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper 9; original emphasis). Monuments are "sculpted, constructed works that occupy specific places in the rural or urban landscape; they are an expression of governmental power, of 'mentalities', of consensus and rejection" (Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker 186). This display of "consensus" and "rejection" reveal the authoritative posture war commemoration assumes. According to Alex King, "symbols[, such as monuments], along with rituals, affect people's behaviour by propagating fundamental ideas about the world. People then use these ideas as reference points for understanding what is happening to them" (9). Commemorative rituals and monuments, such as Armistice Day and the Cenotaph, connect the English community and direct the way that community imagines itself. These "symbols and rituals represent the social world as if it was organised according to certain categories. People come to accept these categories as natural, and as necessarily true descriptions of reality …. [T]hey provide individuals with a common understanding of the form and processes of the society they inhabit, and with common values through which they can relate to one another" (King 9-10).

Monuments connect individuals through shared, national grief. In post-war England, the bereaved were reminded to mourn all English casualties, rather than only their deceased beloved. When the War Graves Commission ceased the repatriation of corpses from the battlefront in 1916, mourners lacked the bodies of their deceased, and also lacked the funeral rituals that would provide ceremonial closure. Mourners felt obligated to remember their dead. By generous donations to memorial funds, monuments were erected as surrogate headstones (Connelly 44). Such monuments function as cumulative symbols of all the absent dead, and thus become the focus for the grief of large numbers of mourners. In this way, communal mourning displaces familial or

individual mourning. Newspaper accounts of Armistice Day emphasise the shared grief of the community. An article in *The Times* claims it was at the Cenotaph where "the nation's undying gratitude to its glorious dead found … its fullest and most complete expression. A countless multitude gathered at the 'empty tomb' to commemorate in reverent silence the memory of those heroic sons of Britain than whom hath no man greater love of country or of home" (12 November, 1921). By 1925, individual grief and the various personal responses to death are completely supplanted by the grief of the community. It was observed that the "expression of public sentiment was devoid of extremes. The tyranny of personal loss is overpast: the sudden relief, which explained and excused hilarity, is felt no longer" (*The Times*, 12 November 1925).

This community of mourners is imagined through the signification of mundane objects. Marc Redfield explains that the nation "can only be visualized—imagined—through the mediation of a catechresis, an arbitrary sign" (62). These signs, such as a flag or a monument, achieve national and cultural significance through an imaginative act by the community. The community must imbue the Cenotaph with significance, for it is literally an empty tomb that only refers to the dead who have been buried at another site. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the motorcar and its occupant become the focus a group of onlookers who adopt these objects as nationally significant symbols. Only a few people are able to "see a face of the greatest importance against the dove-grey upholstery, before a male hand drew the blind and there was nothing to be seen except a square of dove grey" (15). Yet everyone on the street "looked at the motor car. Septimus looked. Boys on bicycles sprang off. Traffic accumulated" (16). As the car proceeds down Piccadilly, it "ruffl[es] the faces on both sides of the street with the same dark breath of veneration whether for

the Queen, Prince, or Prime Minister nobody knew" (17). Even though "the sex was now in dispute," the group believes "that greatness was seated within" (17).

The motorcar and its passenger become sources of national identification for the onlookers. The onlookers' "faces[,] which a second before had been utterly disorderly," show a "sudden sobriety and stillness" (15). Each Londoner had "heard the voice of authority" and the "spirit of religion was abroad with her eyes bandaged tight and her lips gaping wide" (15). The men in White's shop "perceived instinctively that greatness was passing, and the pale light of the immortal presence fell upon them as it had fallen upon Clarissa Dalloway" (19-20). According to Redfield, the motorcar and its passenger, like the flag and the Cenotaph, are "aesthetic fetishes" because they "interpellate the national subject as the subject of a national culture" (67). The Londoners interpret the "greatness" within the car as the "enduring symbol of the state which will be known to curious antiquaries, sifting the ruins of time" (17). While the onlookers will inevitably die, the motorcar and its passenger represent their eternal Englishness. Clarissa believes that "when London is a grass-grown path and all those hurrying along the pavement this Wednesday morning are but bones with a few wedding rings mixed up in their dust and the gold stoppings of innumerable decayed teeth …[, t]he face in the motor car will then be known" (18). The mysterious face is a symbol of the English "character … something inborn in the race," the very thing that "Indians respect" (21).

As objects of national significance, the motorcar and its passenger are a form of "social organization" that "cement[s] … social consciousness and collective life" (Marcus 7). The motor car and the mysterious figure appeal to the community of spectators, and "in all the hat shops and tailors' shops strangers looked at each other and thought of the dead; of the flag; of Empire" (19). The national sentiment elicited by the

motor car is a "breeze flaunting ever so warmly down the Mall through the thin trees, past the bronze heroes, lifting some flag flying in the British breast of Mr. Bowley," who responds by "rais[ing] his hat" (21). For Mr. Bowley, the motorcar opens his emotional war-wounds. Mr. Bowley had been "sealed with wax over the deeper sources of life but could be unsealed suddenly, inappropriately, sentimentally, by this thing" (21). Mr. Bowley thinks of the effect this "thing" will have on the "poor women, nice little children, orphans, widows, the War" and "actually had tears in his eyes" (21). As a national symbol, the motorcar arouses men's self-sacrificing love for England. When the car passes by, men "stood even straighter, and removed their hands [from behind the tails of their coats], and seemed ready to attend their Sovereign, if need be, to the cannon's mouth, as their ancestors had done before them" (19-20). The community associates the motorcar with other nationally significant objects. They look from the car to "the Palace itself with the flag flying; at Victoria, billowing on her mound" (20). In a frenzy of signification, the community haphazardly interprets unimportant objects as nationally significant: they "singled out from the motorcars in the Mall first this one, then that; bestowed emotion, vainly, upon commoners out for a drive" (20). The once significant motorcar becomes confused among a host of insignificant objects.

The skywriting airplane, which interrupts the impromptu ceremony on Bond Street, is a capitalist object that elicits the same identification as the motorcar. Marcus observes that the national symbol and the advertisement similarly organise the crowd. According to Marcus, "if the collective consciousness of the crowd is focused upon, or created by, the demands of memorialisation, it is also centred upon the workings of advertising and commerce" (73). Throughout the war, the airplane was perceived as a national symbol. Stephen Graham describes the death of airplane pilots as a "lurid

spectacle in the heavens" where "men saw not death but a hieroglyphic—a sign" (119). As a sign, the airplane requires interpretation. Hermoine Lee points out that "[t]he war from the air was a tremendous shock. Few people had seen aeroplanes, and no one had bombs fall on them, before [the Great War]" (352). This shock of mechanised war lead the Londoners to misinterpret the significance of airplane. The Londoners hear the airplane before they can see it, and the anxiety of the crowd is apparent as the sound "bored ominously into [their] ears " (21). When the airplane first appears, it "[d]rop[s] dead down … [then] soared straight up, curved in a loop, raced, sank, rose" (22). Yet "whatever [the airplane] did, wherever it went, out fluttered behind it a thick ruffled bar of white smoke which curled and wreathed upon the sky in letters. But what letters?" (22). The perceived threat of the airplane becomes an entertaining spectacle. Septimus even believes the airplane, which is skywriting an advertisement for Glaxo, Kreemo, or toffee, is on a "mission of the greatest importance" (22). This consumerist spectacle distracts the crowd and the motorcar, earlier a focus for communal mourning, "went in at the gates and nobody looked at it" (22).

The influence of monuments and rituals on communal consciousness suggests why the state regarded post-war commemoration as its responsibility (Goebel 22). The state intended for the Armistice Day ceremony, taking place in London in 1921, to be replicated by communities throughout England, and thus create a cohesive national experience and consciousness (King 216). According to George Mosse, the Cenotaph was not intended to be a focus of communal mourning, but rather was erected by a government, which feared bolshevism, to unite a country that was "seething with unrest" (95). In the years following the Armistice, newspapers extensively reported the yearly ceremony, which provided those who attended a lexicon to understand their experience

and allowed individuals throughout the country, regardless of their isolation, to participate in the national celebration (King 24). Some newspapers, including *The Times*, contained photographs of the event, which "extended the sense that every community was sharing in a single commemorative event" (King 24).

Because communal mourning requires participation in events, there is an immense pressure for all individuals attending a commemorative ceremony to perform socially sanctioned behaviours (Koureas 31). In *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler writes that the "prohibition on certain forms of public grieving itself constitutes the public sphere on the basis of such prohibition. The public will be created on the condition that certain images do not appear in the media, certain names of the dead are not utterable, certain losses are not avowed as losses, and violence is derealized and diffused" (37-8). There is a "limit to discourse that establishes the limit of human intelligibility. It is not just that death is poorly marked, but that it is unmarkable. Such a death vanishes, not into explicit discourse, but in the ellipses by which public discourse proceeds" (*Precarious Life* 35). Septimus's suicide generates anxiety concerning whether his death should be communally mourned. In 1921, the War Office discontinued funerals for veterans who died from injuries incurred on the battlefield (Todman 57). Three years after the end of the war, the deaths of veterans were no longer nationally relevant. Septimus's death, when brought up at Clarissa's party, is a taboo subject. Lady Bradshaw "sink[s] her voice," "draw[s] Mrs. Dalloway into the shelter of a common femininity," and "murmur[s] that the man had "'killed himself. He had been in the army'" (201). Sir William also mentions Septimus, but with a "lower[ed]" voice (201). Although Septimus is a veteran, his death occurs outside of war and is not significant. But deaths that occurred during war still have an important social function. When composing the letter

for Lady Bruton, Hugh Whitbread writes that the emigration of youths, an attempt to solve the employment issues of post-war England, was "'what we owe to the dead'" (121). Hugh, along with the rest of his community, fail to remember those, like Septimus, who fought and lived. It is only the nationally sanctioned, honourable deaths that this community remembers and mourns.

Social reality is created through the suppression of deviant behaviours, narratives, and even individuals. And the community will resort to violence in order to defend this reality. According to King, the community's reverence for the dead was "not sustained simply by public respect for them. They could be, and often were, physically enforced. Official and unofficial steps were taken to control the character of acts of remembrance, and to see that they were honoured by all, and their unity extended to all, including those who might otherwise have shown no interest in them or have been actively hostile" (234). Those who wished to attend the ceremonies had to accept the "etiquette of commemoration" put forth by the community (King 16). This etiquette was "physically enforced … by civic authorities, employers, crowds, or private individuals, who all might act, sometimes violently, to protect sacred times and places of commemoration" (16). The Daily Herald reports that on Armistice Day in 1924, a man was attacked by a mob of two hundred mourners for his failure to acknowledge the beginning of the Silence (King 235-6). Individuals who rejected the communal modes of commemoration, and avoided public ceremonies, were still forced into observance. *The Times* reports that the "electricity will be cut off from the tramways and the car drivers and guards will merge themselves in the national tribute of the dead. The shops will close their doors so that no one may enter. The lifts will cease to work and current transactions will be suspended in large stores" (11 November, 1919). Even the telephone operators would not put through calls during the

Silence (Gregory 16). Such restrictions on behaviour during commemorative ceremonies contributed to the image of a simultaneous communal event.

One of the most important communal behaviours performed on Armistice Days, the Silence, requires universal public observance in order to achieve its effect (Connelly 141). In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson describes how communities are constructed through a similar social ritual. He writes that when a group sings a national anthem, "people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody …. If we are aware that others are singing these songs precisely when and as we are, we have no idea who they may be, or even where, out of earshot, they are singing. Nothing connects us all but imagined sound" (145). During the Silence, the mourners are connected by the absence of sound. According to Eve Sorum, the Silence transgresses the boundaries between private and public (160). She argues that during these "two minutes, individual experience was expressed within a public structure" (160). Gregory also notes the "behavioural and ideational elements" of the Silence (12). During these two minutes, people were not supposed to be "empty of all thought and emotion," but were to be "filled with private contemplation of the meaning of the war, with prayer, with a renewed commitment to certain goals" (12). Contemporary newspapers are filled with instructions on what readers should think during the two minutes. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York wrote that "men and women should … lift up their hearts to God. That a common purpose may bind the thoughts of so many at such a time, we suggest that some such words as these might take shape in the heart of each:—'In remembrance of those who made the great sacrifice, O God, make us better men and women, and give peace in our time'" (*The Times*, 1 November 1922). Through such overt instructions, it becomes apparent that the Silence was successful not only because it sought to control the thoughts

of those in observance, but also because it provided information to those in attendance to interpret communal behaviours. In this way, the individual perceives silence as unifying the community in a single act of commemoration.

Parades of soldiers also transformed groups of observers into a community of subjects. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Peter relinquishes his body to the nation and becomes a subject when he watches uniformed boys march through the streets. These boys, parading to place a wreath on the "empty tomb," "marched with their eyes ahead of them, marched, their arms stiff" (55). These boys display the soldierly behaviour that they were too young to perform in the Great War—they are sixteen in 1923, only seven when war broke out. Although Peter observes that the young boys are "weedy" and "did not look robust," a national narrative is still inscribed on their bodies. As the boys march past the monuments of Nelson, Gordon, Havelock, Peter thinks that the boys have made the "same renunciation" as the men immortalised in "the exalted statues" (56). The boys have "trampled under the same temptations, and achieved at length a marble stare" (56). Peter notes that "on their faces an expression like the letters of a legend written round the base of a statue praising duty, gratitude, fidelity, love of England" (55). Through this display, the boys represent the ideals of a society that has remained unchanged by the trauma of the Great War (Jones 128). Peter observes that the boys marched "as if one will worked legs and arms uniformly, and life, with its varieties, its irreticences, had been laid under a pavement of monuments and wreaths and drugged into a stiff yet staring corpse by discipline" (56). This display of singularity "overtook [Peter and] drummed his thoughts, strict in step, … without his doing" (55). Peter unknowingly merges himself with the boys' brigade and "begin[s] to keep step with them" (55). Peter believes the relinquishing of one's body to the nation must be respected: "one might laugh; but one had to respect

it" (56). By watching this parade, Peter also relinquishes his identity to the nation. He "felt he, too, had made it, the great renunciation" (56). But Peter "did not want [the marble stare] for himself in the least; though he could respect it in others. He could respect it in boys" (56). Because Peter derives his identity from this group, when he leaves the parade, he experiences a lack of identity: "What is it? Where am I?" (57). He remembers that no one knows he is in London, and he feels a "strangeness of standing, alone, alive, unknown at half-past eleven in Trafalgar Square" (56-7).

Doris Kilman refuses to relinquish her self to the community that these marching boys represent; thus she becomes alienated. Helen Southworth argues that Doris's refusal "to deny the German heritage that hampers and hinders her, and that has cost her her livelihood …, highlights the shallowness of Clarissa's commitment to England, a commitment which by contrast costs her nothing" (111). Because Doris' family originated in Germany—her family name was spelt "Kiehlman" in the eighteenth century—she is perceived as an enemy in post-war England (135). Even though she lost a brother who fought for England in the war, Doris is still not "English." Unlike Clarissa, Doris talks about the war and acknowledges that "there were people who did not think the English [were] invariably right. There were books. There were meetings. There were other points of view" (143). Doris "would not pretend that the Germans were all victims—when she had German friends, when the only happy days of her life had been spent in Germany! And after all, she could read history" (135). According to Jay, "those who do the remembering stubbornly remain individuals whose minds resist inclusion in a homogeneous group consciousness" (221). This is why Clarissa believes "it was not [Doris] one hated but the idea of her" (12). Doris represents that which threatens the reality constructed by Clarissa's community. She is "one of those spectres with which

one battles in the night; one of those spectres who stand astride us and suck up half our life-blood, dominators and tyrants" (13). Perhaps "with another throw of the dice … [Clarissa] would have loved Miss Kilman! But not in this world. No" (13). Doris has the same resentment for "women like Clarissa Dalloway; she pitied them. She pitied and despised them from the bottom of her heart" (136). Doris believes that she "had been cheated" because while she "might have had a chance at Miss Dolby's school, the war came, and she had never been able to tell lies" (135). These lies that Doris renounces are those that construct the post-war reality of England.

The community also refuses to acknowledge and assimilate the grief of Septimus Smith's wife, Rezia Smith. According to Jay Winter, "[e]veryone in mourning for a soldier was a victim of war, and to see the ways they were helped (and the ways they helped each other) enables us to appreciate the importance of kinship—familial or socially defined—in the process of coming to terms with bereavement in wartime" (*Sites of Memory* 30). But Rezia lacks kinship in both the familial and social sense. Rezia moved to London from Italy after she married Septimus, and so is "without friends in England" (17). Furthermore, Septimus, a soldier who returns from the war with shell-shock, is a psychic casualty. In a social sense, the state refuses to acknowledge Septimus, an emasculated veteran, as a heroic soldier. In post-war England, shell-shocked veterans were derelicts, outcasts from society. Thus Rezia, who mourns her altered soldier, cannot identify her grief with that of the community. She sees "the English people, with their children and their horses and their clothes, which she admired in a way … were 'people' …. She looked at the crowd. Help, help! she wanted to cry out to butchers' boys and women. Help!" (17). But Rezia's grief is silent: "It was she who suffered—but she had nobody to tell" (25).

Rezia further distances herself from the narrative of the community by identifying Septimus's suicide as a war death. Before Septimus jumps from the window, his last words, "'I'll give it you!,'" are more appropriate for going over the top of a trench, than leaping to one's death from a window (164). But Dr. Holmes labels Septimus's act as that of a "coward," rather than a soldier (164). As Rezia falls asleep, she associates the iconography of the nation with Septimus's death. She thereby re-imagines his death as nationally relevant. In this moment of stream of consciousness, Rezia confuses symbols and images and real life. She dreams that "the clock went on striking, four, five, six and Mrs. Filmer waving her apron (they wouldn't bring the body in here, would they?) seemed part of that garden; or a flag. She had once seen a flag slowly rippling out from a mast when she stayed with her aunt at Venice" (164-5). Rezia then thinks that "[m]en killed in battle were thus saluted," and that "Septimus had been through the war" (165). Although Rezia believes Septimus should be remembered as an honourable soldier, the community believes otherwise. After Septimus's death, Rezia's narrative breaks off—she is silent for the remainder of the novel.

In her diary, Woolf criticised communal mourning ceremonies. On Peace Day in 1919, Woolf writes in her diary that "the usual sticky stodgy conglomerations of people, sleepy & torpid as a cluster of drenched bees, were crawling over Trafalgar Square, & rocking about the pavements in the neighbourhood" (2:292-3). This criticism is followed by comments of regret: "I can't deny that I feel a little mean at writing so lugubriously; since we're all supposed to keep up the belief that we're glad & enjoying ourselves. So on a birthday, when for some reason things have gone wrong, it was a point of honour in the nursery to pretend. Years later one could confess what a horrid fraud it seemed; & if, years later, these docile herds will own up that they too saw through it, & will have no

more of it—well—should I be more cheerful?" (2:293). The following day, Woolf writes of what "herd animals we are after all!—even the most disillusioned" (2:294). Woolf, one of the "most disillusioned" by the war, nevertheless feels compelled to join in the festivities. She writes that, "after sitting through the procession & the peace bells unmoved, [she] began after dinner, to feel that if something was going on, perhaps one had better be in it" (2:294).

In a society that is preoccupied with performed communal mourning rituals, mourners, whose grief is not represented by these rituals, are alienated. Woolf describes how "[i]t was a melancholy thing to see the incurable soldiers lying in bed at the Star & Garter with their backs to [her], smoking cigarettes, & waiting for the noise to be over" (20 July, 1919). While the soldiers felt secluded from communal celebrations, the home front community were "children to be amused" (2:294). In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Septimus is one of the few characters who has lost a loved one in the war, with the exception of Clarissa, whose Uncle William "had turned on his bed one morning in the middle of the War. He had said, 'I have had enough'" (11-2). Richard, Peter, Hugh, and even Sally and her five sons appear to have escaped the war unscathed. While Rezia perceives the visible effects of Septimus's trauma, she does not understand its connection with his grief. Rezia trivialises Septimus's grief by stating that Evans "seemed a nice quiet man; a great friend of Septimus's, and he had been killed in the War. But such things happen to everyone. Every one has friends who were killed in the war" (72). Many combatants felt that the community did not accommodate their particular need to mourn. In particular, Siegfried Sassoon is critical of communal mourning and viewed veterans, because of "their role as witnesses, as the true legitimate mourners" (Kunka 80). Due to this alienation from the home front community, Sassoon "places himself and his mourning strategies constantly

at odds with those of civilians, and the end result is a series of works that dictate specific mourning practices available for combatants only" (Kunka 80).

Like Sassoon, Septimus describes his relationship with grief and the dead as more authentic than that of the home front community. Septimus's grief and psychological trauma place him in the role of clairvoyant. In his notes scribbled on scraps of paper and his incoherent babblings, Septimus becomes a mediator between the living and the dead. As he sits in Regent Park, Septimus can hear Evan speaking and believes that the "dead were with him" (102). He casts himself in the role of "the giant mourner" and believes himself to be a "colossal figure who has lamented the fate of man for ages in the desert alone with his hands pressed to his forehead, furrows of despair on his cheek" (77). Septimus is the "ultimate arbiter of wartime mourning" because he is "one who both witnesses and speaks" (Kunka 76). He knows that "millions lamented; for ages they had sorrowed. He would turn around, he would tell them in a few moments, only a few moments, of this relief, of this joy, of this astonishing revelation" (77).

Septimus's inability to assimilate his grief is perceived as a threat by the community. Once a symbol that bound the community together—"They were proud of him; he had won crosses"—Septimus is now a psychic casualty on the periphery of society (97). When Septimus returned from the war, he could not rejoin the community. He "looked to people outside; happy they seemed, collecting in the middle of the street, shouting, laughing, squabbling over nothing. But he could not taste, he could not feel" (96). This denial of society is common during the mourning process. After Clarissa's sister, Sylvia, died, Clarissa became "one of the most thorough-going sceptics he had ever met" (85). Clarissa "thought there were no Gods; no one was to blame [for the death]; and so she evolved this atheist's religion of doing good for the sake of goodness"

(85). While mourning Sylvia, Clarissa rejects the fundamental beliefs of her society. According to Fornari, in communal mourning, the separate, individual mourner "tends to be felt as incompatible with the group system of validation and seems to be elaborated in the following sequence: separate therefore different, therefore extraneous, therefore alien, therefore enemy" (146). The portrayal of Septimus as an enemy to the community is latent in *Mrs. Dalloway*. But when Woolf first imagined Septimus, she intended him to kill the Prime Minister as he killed himself (Showalter, Introduction xxxvi). In lieu of this violent act, Septimus's threat to the community is much more latent. His malevolence is evident in his appreciation of how "Shakespeare loathed humanity—the putting on of clothes, the getting of children, the sordidity of the mouth and the belly!" (97). This disgust of mankind "was now revealed to Septimus; the message hidden in the beauty of words. The secret signal which one generation passes, under disguise to the next is loathing, hatred, despair" (97).

Woolf uses Septimus's alienated mourning as a model for authentic mourning. Because communal acts of mourning are veiled acts of national celebration, it is only when Peter separates himself from the community that he can address the trauma of the Great War. Jones observes that no one in *Mrs. Dalloway* cries because of grief (125). Peter Walsh cries after his meeting with Clarissa, but does not cry during the remembrance ceremonies near the Cenotaph. As Peter falls asleep on a bench in Regent's Park, images of death enter his dream. Peter's isolation leads him to question the existence of a stable community. He realises that "[n]othing exists outside us except a state of mind, … a desire for solace, for relief, for something outside these miserable pigmies, these feeble, these ugly, these craven men and women" (62). For Peter, such philosophical issues only concern the "atheist," for he has rejected the authoritative

reality purported by religion. After Peter's dream, he, too, proclaims "[t]he death of the soul" (64). In Vernon Bartlett's *The Unknown Soldier*, the unnamed soldier's traumatic war experience leads him to declare that "There is no God!" (145). The soldier's rejection of God is a rejection of the fundamental organising principle of his community, and this allows him to address the failure of his society. The stable pre-war community has been reduced to an imagined community, a "state of mind" (62). Peter even questions the physical existence of the grey nurse knitting beside him; but he believes that "if he can conceive her, then in some sort she exists" (62). In Peter's dream, the nurse's femininity coalesces with the landscape, and Peter endows the sky and branches with her "womanhood" (62). And "with amazement" Peter "sees how grave they become; how majestically, as the breeze stirs them, they dispense with a dark flutter of the leaves charity, comprehension, absolution, and then, flinging themselves suddenly aloft, confound the piety of their aspect with a wild carouse" (62). These "visions" of the "solitary traveller" engage Peter to such an extent that he regrets having to wake up and return to the community (62). Peter wants to "never go back to the lamplight; to the sitting-room; never finish [his] book; never knock out [his] pipe; never ring for Mrs. Turner to clear away" (63). He wishes to "walk straight on to this great figure, who will with a toss of her head, mount [him] on her streamers and let [him] blow to nothingness with the rest" (63).

The communal mourning ceremonies at the Cenotaph, the parading boys, and the monuments create a socially manipulated reality. As Peter walks through London, he experiences this reality as "historical amnesia," for he senses a change in the community but does not identify the Great War as its cause (Jones 127). Eric Leed explains that the experience of the post-war community was "dominated by the sense that war had altered

relationships between men and social classes …. [In] leaving behind the social world structured by wealth, status, professions, age, and sex, individuals themselves had been transformed" (42). In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Maisie Johnson, who just arrived in London from Edinburgh two days earlier, notices "how queer it was" (28). She knew "something was up" when she looked at "all these people, the stone basins, the prim flowers, the old men and women, invalids most of them in Bath chairs—all seemed … so queer," but she is unable to identify the source of the change (28). When she sees an invalided soldier, she wants to yell "'Horror! horror!'" (28). Even the horror of mutilated bodies does not provoke her to think of the war. Peter thinks that the "five years—1918 to 1923—had been … somehow very important. People looked different. Newspapers seemed different" (78). When Peter looks at the statue of Duke of Cambridge, he thinks of the "young men such as he was, thirty years ago" (55). Peter fails to notice this generation of "young men" were soldiering age during the Great War, and many of them were likely killed (Jones 127).

While dreaming, Peter, for the only time in *Mrs. Dalloway*, contemplates the war dead. Only when Peter is removed from the celebrative ceremonies of society can he can engage in grief-work. Maurice Halbwachs observes that it is "not in memory but in the dream that the mind is most removed from society" (42). Peter, who earlier imagines himself as a "romantic buccaneer," now imagines himself as a soldier-veteran returning home (58). His substitution of "traveller" for "veteran" suggests the unfamiliarity and dislocation soldiers experienced upon rejoining English society. The return home for soldiers was indeed uncanny—familiar, yet unfamiliar (Hynes *War Imagined* 237). When Peter advances beyond the wood, "coming to the door with shaded eyes, possibly to look for [Peter's] return, with hands raised, with white apron blowing, is an elderly woman

who seems … to seek, over the desert, a lost son; to search for a rider destroyed" (63). The grey nurse becomes "the figure of the mother whose sons have been killed in the battles of the world" (63). When Peter progresses beyond the mourning figure, his dream becomes apocalyptic. The home front community in Peter's dream knowingly waits for its inevitable destruction. As Peter walks through the village, "women stand knitting and the men dig in the garden, the evening seems ominous; the figures still; as if some *august fate*, known to them, awaited without fear, were about to sweep them into complete annihilation" (63; emphasis added). Peter's use of "august" to describe the doom of this community recalls the August of 1914 when England declared war on Germany. This apocalyptic view of post-war England, which is a product of Peter's unresolved and repressed mourning, is absent from his waking consciousness.

In "Mrs. Dalloway on Bond Street," mourning is a much more visible aspect of Clarissa's life. The trauma of war informs every activity that Clarissa performs throughout her day. As Clarissa walks down Bond Street, she becomes a figure of stoic mourning. Her "[p]ride held her erect, inheriting, handing on, acquainted with discipline and with suffering" (20). Clarissa thinks of "[h]ow people suffered" and is reminded of Mrs. Foxcroft, the woman who was "decked with jewels" and "eating her heart out, because that nice boy was dead" (20). But this overt sympathy with mourners is absent in *Mrs. Dalloway*. When Clarissa thinks of Mrs. Foxcroft and Lady Bexborough "who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite killed," she repeats that the "War was over" (4-5). Clarissa's role as mourner in *Mrs. Dalloway* is restrained, if not absent. In "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street," Clarissa still mourns the war dead. Clarissa believes contemporary English culture fails to express appropriately her feelings of grief. She recalls lines from Shelley's "Adonais," lines that resonate

throughout the remainder of the story, and regrets that "moderns had never written anything one wanted to read about death" (22). Shelley's line, "And now can never mourn," defines Clarissa's inability to cope with the war (22). When she is in the glove shop, Clarissa thinks that the salesgirl "had sorrows quite separate [from selling gloves], 'and now can never mourn, can never mourn,' the words ran in her head. 'From the contagion of the world's slow stain'" (27). In "Mrs. Dalloway," Clarissa actively engages with this problem of mourning and thinks about the "'[t]housands of young men [who] had died [so] that things might go on" (28). But even this Clarissa's mourning is interrupted by capitalism. As she ponders the dead, she exclaims "At last!," for she found a pair of gloves that fit ("Mrs. Dalloway" 28).

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa's sole experience of authentic grief follows Septimus's suicide. Clarissa believes that Septimus's death was an act of "defiance" against the community (202). His death reveals to Clarissa that her community is non-existent, and that "one was alone. There was an embrace in death" (202). Septimus's suicide becomes Clarissa's "disaster—her disgrace" (203). She wonders how Septimus killed himself and experiences his death vicariously. When she thought of death, "[a]lways her body went through it first …; her dress flamed, her body burnt. He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it. But why had he done it?" (201-2). The immense guilt Clarissa feels after Septimus's death is connected with her "inability to grief or confront mortality … [following] her own role as traumatized eye-witness to her sister's death" (Briggs, "Veterans and Civilians" 47). The psychic trauma of these deaths causes Clarissa's community—her party—to disintegrate: "the party's splendour fell to the

floor" (201). It becomes Clarissa's "punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness, and she forced to stand here in her evening dress" (203). Death strips Clarissa of her community and she stands, in the darkness of her individuality, to face her personal mourning. In this state, Clarissa physically separates herself from the party guests. After the Bradshaws introduce death into her party, Clarissa "went on, into the little room where the Prime Minister had gone with Lady Bruton. Perhaps there was somebody there. But there was nobody" (201). Rather than seeking the comfort of her guests, Clarissa seeks isolation.

Clarissa's perceived exclusion from the community causes her anxiety. According to Fornari, "an individual, wishing to separate himself from the social experience and, so to speak, awake from the strongly cathected social experience, would find himself assailed by an anxiety of exclusion that would have all the characteristics of the child's original fear of separation from the mother" (204). This "anxiety of exclusion" is evident when Clarissa is not invited to Millicent Bruton's lunch party. Clarissa feels this anxiety as a "shock," and it "made the moment in which she had stood shiver, as a plant on the river-bed feels the shock of a passing oar and shivers: so she rocked: so she shivered" (32). This "shock" reverberates throughout the remainder of her day, for she sees herself as a "single figure against the appalling night, or rather, to be accurate, against the stair of this matter-of-fact June morning" (33). She imagines herself as "suddenly shrivelled, aged, breastless, the grinding, blowing, flowering of the day, out of doors, out of the window, out of her body and brain which now failed, since Lady Bruton, whose lunch parties were said to be extraordinarily amusing, had not asked her" (33). When Clarissa experiences a moment of exclusion at her party, the "shrivelled, aged, breastless" self she earlier imagines is projected on the "old lady" who appears in a window in the next

building (203). The old woman exists outside the community, and "with people still laughing and shouting in the drawing-room," Clarissa watches as "that old woman, quite quietly, go[es] to bed alone" (204). Clarissa's day converges on this moment: the clock strikes and she remembers Septimus's suicide. She feels "very like him—the young man who killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living" (204).

Living in post-war England, according to Clarissa, makes her inseparable from her community. She acknowledges that she "needed people, always people, to bring [her sense of comedy] out," and so she "frittered her time away, lunching, dining, giving these incessant parties of hers, talking nonsense, saying things she didn't mean, blunting the edge of her mind, losing her discrimination" (86). By being part of a community, by participating in the "pageant of the universe," Clarissa loses her individuality (89). She participates in a "rather solemn progress" with everyone else, and has a sense of being "Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa anymore; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway" (11). When she throws a party, she "quite forg[ets] what she looked like …. [S]he had this feeling of being something not herself, and that every one was unreal in one way; much more real in another. It was, she thought, partly their clothes, partly being taken out of their ordinary ways, partly the back-ground" (187). Clarissa's parties reinforce the community and thereby reinforce the identities of her guests: "Here was So-and-so in South Kensington; some one up in Bayswater; and somebody else, say, in Mayfair. And she felt quite continuously a sense of their existence; and she felt what a waste; and she felt what a pity; and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it. And it was an offering; to combine, to create" (133-4). This comfort of being part of the community reduces Clarissa's anxiety of exclusion. By rejoining the community, Clarissa

can move beyond her "horror of death" (167). She seeks the stability of the community and the consolation of its social reality. The "unreal" party guests must be made intelligible. Thus Clarissa "must go back. She must assemble" (204).

Clarissa's rejoining of her party at the end of *Mrs. Dalloway* recalls the function of monuments and ceremonies in post-war England. The years following the Armistice saw the creation of numerous national symbols that were not only gestures of remembrance, but also artefacts of social organisation. Bob Bushaway observes that the Unknown Warrior, the Flanders Poppy, the Cenotaph, along with other items of commemoration, were created in the aftermath of the war (136-7). The Great War, more than any war before it, required a new system of symbols to represent the experiences of 1914-18 and to direct the way the community coped beyond the Armistice. According to Martin Jay, Walter Benjamin refused "to seek some sort of new symbolic equilibrium through a process of collective mourning that would successfully 'work through' the grief. Scornfully rejecting the ways in which culture can function to cushion the blows of trauma, [Benjamin] wanted to compel his readers to face squarely what had happened and confront its deepest sources rather than let the wounds scar over" (225-6). Woolf also rejects the way monuments and commemorative ceremonies mediate the individual's experience of death, and believes the reverence her society pays to these objects signals the "birth of a new religion" (24). This religion is inextricably linked with nationalist sentiment, for the community represents and perceives itself as having become stronger through the sacrifice of a generation of young men. According to Freud, "[w]e cannot be surprised that our libido, thus bereft of so many of its objects, has clung with all the greater intensity to what is left to us, that our love of our country, our affection for those nearest us and our pride in what is common to us have suddenly grown stronger" ("On

Transience" 307). Post-war commemoration fostered this intensified relationship between the individual and the community. The icons of public mourning and the discourse which surrounds them reassure the bereaved that mass death in war is justifiable and that, even after the Great War, the imagined community will continue.

Conclusion

In the Great War, technology—gas, machine guns, shells, and tanks—was used to massacre an unprecedented number of young European men. Countless more were physically and psychologically maimed. The events of 1914-18 shattered all conceptions of how war could be fought and of how men could die in battle. Many individuals on the home front could comprehend such developments in modern warfare because propaganda framed the way they interpreted the events of the conflict. Others in post-war England were concerned with the extent to which the ideology of war infiltrated the minds of individuals and controlled their consciousnesses beyond the conclusion of the war:

> It is asking too much of human nature to expect that the moment an armistice is signed all the hatred, the campaign of lies, with which your people have been persuaded to put up with the sacrifice involved in war, can disappear. They do not disappear. For years the effect of that campaign of propaganda continues. It vitiates the atmosphere of any peace conference to such an extent that the delegates inevitably sow the seeds of a future war. (Bartlett, *This Is My Life* 74)

For Bartlett and other intellectuals, the Great War revealed that ideology constructs the nation and the national subject in problematic ways. If the Great War truly was to be the war to end all wars, then the ideological system that led to its occurrence had to be changed.

As a member of the nation, the individual is immersed in an environment of national signification which dictates the relations between himself, other members in his group, and those who exist outside of it. Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Elie Kedourie and others argue that the nation has not always existed, but was an invention of the eighteenth century. According to Anderson, the advances in print capitalism in the

sixteenth century made possible the wide dissemination of text to a large group of people. These texts, read by individuals who did not know each other but could now imagine each other's existence, constructed a collective consciousness. People gradually became aware that they were part of a community that extended beyond their family group. This imagined community is not a stable entity; rather, powerful groups transform that community by manipulating national discourses. The recent appearance of the nation is masked by traditions and symbols that situate the nation in a distant past. Traditions "take their form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. It is this contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant," which creates the illusion of the nation in history (Hobsbawm, Introduction 2).

For Althusser, nation-building traditions and symbols are Ideological State Apparatuses that interpellate the individual into the community as a subject. The school system, for instance, instructs the individual on his relations within society and subjects him to the ruling ideology (Althusser 104). The ISAs, which control the individual with ideology rather than force, lead the individual to believe that he is an autonomous being within society and has control over his own fate. But his free will is an illusion. According to Althusser, "every 'subject' endowed with a 'consciousness', and believing in the 'ideas' that his 'consciousness' inspires in him and freely accepts, must '*act* according to his ideas', must therefore inscribe his own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his material practice" (126-7; emphasis original). The way the individual thinks and behaves is determined by his society—his self is socially formed. Through ISAs,

society flexes its control over the individual and manipulates the way that subject perceives reality.

The concept of self that a Georgian Englishman had was shattered when he reached the battlefield. Posters and postcards depicted men in khaki as noble warriors of the nation and defenders of women and children. The uniform functioned as a focus of ideology and articulated social conceptions of manliness on the soldier's body. Men imagined themselves as medieval knights charging into battle against their foes. The idealised images of soldiering that proliferated on the home front were inconsistent with the reality men experienced. Men did not have control over their bodies and fates in battle as was depicted in home front propaganda. The stasis of trench warfare, a new tactic in the Great War, challenged the identities that men assumed as soldiers. Rather than being part of a massive army engaging in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy, men cowered in trenches as shells exploded nearby or bullets whizzed overhead. When men were sent over the top, they faced a barrage of shells, mud, and the bodies of fallen comrades and enemies. The disparity between the idealised identity as soldier and the actions performed on the front especially problematised the men's conceptions of themselves:

> [T]here did come to exist an intense, destructive tension between official conceptions of the soldierly self and the frontsoldier's conception of what he was and what it was possible for him to do and be within the defensive system. It is against the background of this tension that we must understand war neurosis as an attempt, through the neurotic symptom, to repudiate a role that, objectively, was self-destructive. (Leed 112)

Sandra Gilbert compares the passivity and emasculation of men in the trenches to that of women in the Victorian period: men endured their fates and performed their roles in the

trenches as women in the Victorian period performed their domestic duties. This abrupt shift in gender roles was just as pronounced for women. As men passively faced death in the trenches, women experienced an increased social power. Women left the domestic space to work in munitions factories or drive ambulances. This transformation of gender roles further destabilised men's imagined identities and challenged their views of English society.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to social conceptions of manliness was the cases of shell shock that became increasingly common as the war progressed. Although war-induced illnesses such as shell-shock occurred prior to 1914, it was not until the Great War that the large number of psychological casualties became a social issue. Men with shell-shock symptoms lacked the prestigious wounds that society interpreted as evidence of their courage. Instead of a bullet wound, shell-shocked soldiers display tics, mutism, amnesia, and other symptoms. Society refused to interpret these shell-shock symptoms as legitimate battle wounds and viewed psychic casualties as cowards, malingerers, deserters, and even degenerates. Such victims of war were not reincorporated into society as easily as physically injured soldiers. The large number of psychic casualties, especially shell-shocked aristocratic men, showed that courage and manliness could no longer be viewed as an inherent aspect of Englishness. To reduce the threat of shell-shock to conceptions of masculinity, the condition was often associated with physical origins, such as undetectable cracks in the skull. Yet shell-shocked men were psychologically unable to perform the duties their society assigned to them. This condition challenges assumptions regarding social and personal control over the body. The medical treatment of this condition was seen as restoring men to normalcy. Doctors, such as Anderson in *The Return of the Soldier* and Bradshaw and Holmes in *Mrs. Dalloway*, were viewed as

enforcers of social codes of manliness. The therapies "administered to men who broke down in war must be understood as an attempt to reimpose officially sponsored conceptions of the offensive, aggressive self, by reinforcing the moral universe in which that self was at home" (Leed 112).

Shell-shocked soldiers were not the only individuals who went through a crisis of self-hood during the Great War. All men who fought on the front realised that death in war was unlike that which society represented. Postcards and posters depicted death romantically and often compared it to Christ's sacrifice. The bodies of the dead and dying in these images were intact and not bloody; men accepted death and died without pain. Death was also a social experience—a fellow soldier often cradled the deceased. These images represent death on the front lines as meaningful and dignified. But the reality of the mass, violent death on the battlefield challenged such images. Death was a frightening and often gory experience. Men died lonely, painful deaths in No Man's Land where shells destroyed their bodies. In *The Unknown Soldier*, the soldier understands that he, like all his fellow soldiers, has illusions of self-importance. Society has instilled in him expectations as an educated Englishman. But he has witnessed shells obliterate bodies beyond recognition. Such anonymous deaths were not possible before the Great War, and the shock of this realisation—that the bodies of war dead could be unidentifiable—shattered the associations between the body and identity. Death strips the body of ideology and exposes social control of it as illusory. If the purpose of funerals is to reinterpret the dead and reassign social significance to the body, then the anonymous body problematises social reincorporation. When the body is unrecognisable and the uniform is not intact, national identity is impossible to assign. The soldier's anonymous sacrifice merges into the national fiction of the Unknown Warrior.

The individuals who reject or cannot be incorporated by ideology experience alienation from the imagined community. This alienation was especially pronounced for the soldiers who returned from the war. From 1914 to 1918, English culture had progressed without the participation of the young men fighting on the front. These men perceived themselves as superfluous in the very culture that they risked their lives to protect. Society assured these men that they would be compensated for their service and that the nation would be grateful. Upon their return, however, the home front became a site of betrayal because men could not return to their lives as they had left them. In *The Return of the Soldier*, Chris Baldry's amnesia is a metaphor for the dislocation of the returning soldier who attempts to rejoin his society. This soldier cannot resume his life because the community's expectations of him are different from what he imagines. Chris believes that he is returning to England circa 1901, when the atrocities of the Great War are still unimaginable. Septimus in *Mrs. Dalloway* also cannot rejoin society because of his shell-shock symptoms. His traumatic war experience—witnessing his friend's death at the front—alters the way he experiences life and perceives English society. Septimus believes that he could change humanity if he were to deliver a message to the Prime Minister. Such alienation from ideology is sometimes manifested as an outright rejection of the nation. In *The Unknown Soldier*, the Great War was not fought for civilization, but against it. That an entire generation of young men was sacrificed over a question of nationhood causes Bartlett, and his anonymous soldier, to reject the idea of an autonomous nation. The soldier challenges the idea of a large, imagined community and favours local patriotism and the love of one's surroundings.

Many writers and intellectuals rejected the ideological function of the war dead. Ideology seeks to interpellate the individual as subject, and thus is uninterested in

individual narratives that challenge dominant social beliefs. Censorship of the experiences of soldiers who served on the front line suggests the extent to which the nation controls, marginalises, or rejects their authentic experience. Through their war experience—as soldiers or as pacifists—these individuals came to distrust the lexicon used by the state to depict deceased soldiers. Honour, glory, and sacrifice shroud the reality of the war with an air of celebration. Those who experienced or at least heard of the horrors of the front could no longer imagine war and soldiers according to the images produced on the home front:

> Once the soldier was seen as a victim, the idea of a hero became unimaginable: there would be no more heroic actions in the art of this war. And if entire armies could be imagined composed of such victims—if indeed every army was an army of martyrs—then Victory too must fade from the story, and war became only a long catastrophe, with neither significant action nor direction, a violence that was neither fought nor won, but only endured. (Hynes, *War Imagined* 215)

In *The Unknown Soldier*, the soldier challenges conceptions of the heroic soldier. He believes that men who volunteered for service were obeying the herd instinct. Every man should not be regarded as a war hero, and the soldier regrets that he may die without performing any heroic deeds. This attempt to dismantle the "cult of the fallen soldier" reveals a turn toward reality and away from ideology (Mosse 7).

This refusal to participate in hero worship is a response to war memorialisation. The romantic depictions of trench warfare in war commemoration demonstrate the way the nation wishes the bereaved will remember the dead of the war. Commemoration represents the deaths of soldiers in the Great War as virtuous and guiltless. The terms common throughout memorialisation—honour, glory, sacrifice—disregard the individual

and apply a single, war-affirming narrative to all war deaths. In *The Unknown Soldier*, the soldier criticises the English for celebrating war death and using the war's victims as points of national identification. Rather than acknowledging the actual experience and sacrifice of the men on the front, commemoration marginalises the experience of the soldier and reinforces the illusions of the home front. In *The Unknown Soldier,* Bartlett attempts to re-write the Unknown Warrior, a monument celebrating Englishness, as a memorial to the reality of war. Similarly, in *Mrs. Dalloway* Woolf criticises the orchestration of national grief through the erection of monuments. The Cenotaph is only the latest of memorials that are scattered throughout the London landscape. As such, monuments are inextricably connected with patriotism. Londoners observe these memorials, yet they do not associate memorials with the dead. Instead, memorials encourage a sense of pride and self-sacrificing love for the nation in the mourners.

The patriotic elements of war commemoration and mourning rites suggest the extent to which the state controlled post-war mourning. The bereaved were to think of the dead in a particular way and their mourning rituals were to be performed in public. Grief was not personal, but communal and the rituals of the bereaved, including the Silence, the wearing of a poppy, or the placing of flowers on the Cenotaph, provided the illusion that the English were working through their grief as a community. In post-war England, the mourner was immersed in a community of mourners, which is a contrast to the traditional mourner who works through his grief outside of society. In communal mourning, the individual mourner cannot resolve his grief through reality-testing. Instead, the mourner's acceptance of the community's reality and his participation in communal mourning rites supplants the process of reality-testing. As long as the individual partakes in mourning rituals and ascribes to the nation's narratives of the war, he will continue in the illusion

that these social practices are alleviating his grief. According to Fornari, the emphasis on human needs, rather than on reality-testing, in the rituals of communal mourning "does not mean that the experience is valueless" (143). Communal mourning "seems to be of fundamental importance to man, so much so we may safely assume that to deprive man of it would expose him to … primary frustrations" (143).

In post-war England, the superficiality of communal mourning rituals came under scrutiny. Although such rituals may be important to society, some believed that the mandatory observance of these rituals was a disservice to the dead. The Silence was of particular interest because the individual's external observance does not mean that his thoughts will be "concentrated on reverent remembrance of the Glorious Dead" (*The Times*, 7 November, 1919). On Armistice Day in 1922, *The Times* published an article that was concerned with the ineffectiveness of the Silence and which voiced fears that its observance may become performative. The author recommends that Londoners should "examine [them]selves sincerely before participating in the present sacrament of memory." He acknowledges that the Silence will be physically successful, that "[o]utwardly and formally none can doubt that every reverence peculiar to the occasion will be done." Yet "formal and external reverence will be, of itself, unworthy of the state of mind which it should express, if, within, the beginnings of indifference are allowed to encroach, or the more positive assaults of disillusionment to make headway." The author knows that in "every act of commemoration there is the danger, if not the certainty, that conformity to custom will, in process of time, mask feelings which are not in accordance with its spirit." But the Silence is an extraordinary social act because "overtakes us all—the loyal, the thankful, the proud, as well as the doubters, the waverers, and the superficial." While the author values the Silence—"[a]s a piece of ritual it is unique"—he

believes that its forced observance across all individuals may necessitate an "inadequate spiritual response." Even by 1922, it was becoming difficult to view the entire English community as united in mourning. Individuals who refused to observe these rites of national mourning challenged the ideological foundations on which the community of mourners was constructed and led to the questioning of the effectiveness of public mourning rituals.

In the years following the war, particularly throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the narratives of alienated individuals came to occupy an important position in national consciousness. During this period, the majority of war monuments and anti-monuments—objects that challenge the romanticisation of war—were created. Anti-monuments redress the disregard for individual experience and the reality of the front which plagued war commemoration. As monuments were erected and mourning rituals became important traditions of English society, individuals became concerned with how the war would be remembered. During the 1920s memory boom, individuals whose narratives were silenced throughout the war became the mouthpieces for the disillusioned of post-war England. Armistice Day, the official day of mourning, provided the opportunity for protest against the nation which failed to compensate its soldiers. Frustrated veterans passed out pamphlets that asked the public to "'revere the memory of our class who fought, bled, and died, BUT DON'T FOREGET THE UNKNOWN WARRIORS LIVING'" (Sorum 160). Individuals challenged the ideology of the nation and changed the way the war would be remembered. In the Introduction, I quoted Jay Winter as saying that the nation, as a metaphor, "do[es] not make monuments," but "[g]roups of people do" (*Remembering War* 137). In a similar way, nations cannot remember, but groups of people can. In response to the nation-affirming narratives in

post-war England, individuals articulated their own narratives of the war: “Cowardice, desertion, and fear became as much a part of the story [of the Great War] as heroism, and the coward (or shell-shock victim, or frightened boy) became a possible literary figure, and his fate a possible plot” (*War Imagined* 214). That these alienated individuals are the enduring images of the Great War speaks to the relevance of their narratives and the power of their war experiences. Although the imagined community survived the war, these individuals ensured that the community would not be remembered as unchanged.

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