Part I

Myth and History

Part I
Introduction

After 1979 Britain seemed tentatively aware that a new phase of history might well have begun, which if acknowledged, separated it from the earlier post-war period. A new generation of writers, responding to their literary antecedents, developed a newly focused literary consciousness. This was not simply a matter of reflecting historical events or trends. In politics, the reality and myth of Margaret Thatcher and an attendant concept of history were dominant. The themes of myth and history long considered by literature acquired a currency in the public sphere. Novelists responded to both the contemporaneous political domain and their literary predecessors. The place of history in our everyday lives, its literary recovery and the question of its status recur in a variety of contemporary British fictional texts.

The following chapters consider what might be regarded as a new phase of the historical novel. The writers selected are part of a wider literary commitment to reworking the past as fiction. The novels and other texts featured in this section consider the creation of myth within a perspective framed almost entirely by recognizable everyday events.

Jim Crace's fiction is typical in this respect. In *Quarantine* the culturally resonant contexts of Christ's experience in the desert are stripped of religious significance and made prosaic. In another work, *Signals of Distress*, Crace creates a setting where slavery and its trade in human life serve as a moral backdrop to a very human story of sexual desire and temptation. The effect of Crace's almost lyrical prose is determined both by his use of repetition and by his constant undermining of the parabolic force of narrative. History in

contemporary fiction reaches for an extended sense of its interpretative possibilities (in myth, and in the placing of signification or meaning), drawing themes from the present, such as sexual orientation and gender that Pat Barker, for example, makes central to the social reading of war and its effects in the *Regeneration* trilogy.

Graham Swift addresses the act of reading history when Thatcher's state appears to distort the communal values prized by an older generation. For many of this new generation of writers the perceived crisis of values in the present, so publicly declared by successive Conservative administrations, helped define their need for retrieving the human, the domestic and social patterns of the past. *Waterland* meanders through a social history of family intrigue and illicit sexuality in an attempt to search for some sense of personal identity in a world of flux, as fluid, protean and elusive as the water and eels flowing through the fens of its settings.

Iain Sinclair weaves a mythopoetic account of the rhythms of modern urban life to reveal that the present is integrated into our sense of an almost magical, often turbulent past. Crime, politics, struggle and the mundane lives of ordinary people converge in an incantatory and yet elusive cartography of urban existence. In buildings, hidden links are suggested, a mapping of a symbolic order of history. There is something innately transitional in this sense of history. As Bergson reminds us in *Creative Evolution*: 'Change is far more radical than we are at first inclined to suppose.'[1] So is history in the eyes of these novelists. Throughout contemporary fiction the adjacency of past and present becomes an aesthetic dynamic, a motive force for narrative, self-identifications and cultural models in a changing society. History is both interrogated and becomes interrogative.

Note

1 Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell, (London: Macmillan, 1954), p. 1.

1 Pat Barker's *Regeneration* Trilogy: History and the Hauntological Imagination

John Brannigan

> Only the conscious horror of destruction creates the correct relationship with the dead: unity with them because we, like them, are the victims of the same condition and the same disappointed hope.
>
> Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

In a footnote to his essay 'The Uncanny', Freud offers an anecdote of his own encounter with the deceptive elision of the real and the imagined, of the living and the dead, which might illustrate the experience of the uncanny:

> I was sitting alone in my *wagon-lit* compartment when a more than usually violent jolt of the train swung back the door of the adjoining washing-cabinet, and an elderly gentleman in a dressing-gown and a travelling cap came in. I assumed that in leaving the washing-cabinet, which lay between the two compartments, he had taken the wrong direction and come into my compartment by mistake. Jumping up with the intention of putting him right, I at once realized to my dismay that the intruder was nothing but my own reflection in the looking-glass on the open door. I can still recollect that I thoroughly disliked his appearance.[1]

Freud insists that this incident did not *frighten* him, but served merely to register his failure to recognize his own image. The anecdote is offered in the context of a distinction between 'primitive' beliefs in the return of the dead, or the power to translate thoughts and wishes into

reality, and the 'modern' incredulity to such superstition and myth. Freud's lack of fear, confronted with the ghostly reflection of himself, certifies his modernity, his rational distrust of 'animistic beliefs'. There is some room for doubt in Freud's mind, however. Is it not possible, he asks, that his dislike of his double 'was a vestigial trace of the archaic reaction which feels the "double" to be something uncanny?'

Freud's concern is that the archaic might seep into the modern, that the boundaries between primitive superstition and modern rationality are more permeable than he imagines. He insists that 'anyone who has completely and finally rid himself of animistic beliefs will be insensible to this type of the uncanny', and yet, for a moment, disoriented by the jolt of the train, perhaps, Freud too has *seen* the fiction of another being, 'an elderly gentleman'. The 'double', experienced as a kind of ghostly apparition, threatens to undermine the teleological distinction between superstition and rationality, primitive and civilized, reality and fiction, and so, as Avery Gordon argues, it is inevitable that Freud 'simply refutes the reality of haunting by treating it as a matter of lingering superstition'.[2] The primitive belief in the 'uncanny' or ghostly appearance of the double, for Freud then, is the anachronistic trace of a different mode of knowing, a different way of seeing the world, which he experiences, if only briefly.

Freud's anecdote recounts an experience which recurs consistently in the novels of Pat Barker. Barker's characters, from *Union Street* (1982) to *Border Crossing* (2001), frequently see themselves in others, mistake their own image for others, encounter the ghosts of past lives, experience visions of ghostly visitations, and are haunted by the uncanny doubling of time and space. In the *Regeneration* trilogy (1991–5), in particular, these experiences of the uncanny occur in the context of a confrontation between the modern rationalism of psychoanalysis and the disorienting, traumatizing effects of war. *Regeneration* (1991) constructs a fictional account of the treatment of the poet, Siegfried Sassoon, by the anthropologist and psychoanalyst, W. H. R. Rivers. Sassoon is sent to Rivers to be 'cured', because of his supposedly irrational protest against the war. Rivers is certain that Sassoon's protest is a great deal more rational than the war, but it is nevertheless his duty to restore Sassoon to psychological fitness so that he can return to the front. *The Eye in the Door* (1993) takes up the story of a fictional patient of Rivers, Billy Prior, who develops a dangerous split in his psychic life, which magnifies Freud's experience of his 'double' to 'Jekyll and Hyde' proportions. The final volume of the trilogy, *The Ghost Road* (1995), shifts between Prior's account of his fateful return to the war in France, and Rivers's own psychological

crisis, as he wrestles with his own demons and ghosts. Barker's historiographic trilogy, I will argue in this essay, examines figures of psychic disturbance – doubling, hallucinations, ghosts – as signs of crisis in scientific (or more accurately psychoanalytic) modes of knowledge. Moreover, Barker's novels suggest that haunting – or what I will call here the hauntological, the logic of haunted being – is a constituent element of modernity.

Like Freud, Rivers seems certain that the ghosts who haunt his patients are not 'real', but he is nevertheless compelled to acknowledge that his patients are haunted. Haunting, in this sense, as Gordon argues, 'describes how that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities'.[3] Sassoon in *Regeneration* sees corpses lying all around the streets of London,[4] and in Craiglockhart hospital he wakes to find the ghosts of dead soldiers in his room.[5] Burns, another of Rivers's patients in the same novel, continually relives the smells and tastes of finding his nose and mouth filled with the decomposing flesh of a German corpse.[6] So, too, in *The Ghost Road*, Wansbeck is visited in hospital by the ghost of the German prisoner he murdered, who becomes, visibly and olfactorily, more and more decomposed with every visit.[7] Prior in *The Eye in the Door* becomes his own ghost, by splitting into two opposing personalities, one of whom, as Prior's demonic alter ego, commits the betrayals and deceptions which the 'real' Prior finds unpalatable. Prior's demon even visits Rivers, where he demonstrates, by his oblivion to pain, that he has a physiological reality distinct from his double.[8] Rivers is left in no doubt of the 'reality' of Prior's demonic other, which is to say that he knows that Prior is not just pretending, but lives, remembers, feels and thinks differently from his alter ego. These examples from the novels are all manifestations of things which are verifiably 'not there', and yet which exercise a disturbing, sometimes dangerous, effect on Rivers's patients.

Rivers responds to these ghostly manifestations with an impressive array of psychoanalytic and rational explanations. Sassoon's ghosts are simple – his guilt for being absent from the front takes the form of hallucinated images of his dead comrades come to beckon him to return. Wansbeck's apparitions perform the same function, in exercising his feelings of guilt and regret. In both these cases, ghosts appear as the visible forms of feelings which both Sassoon and Wansbeck think they should have, or indeed desire to have. Burns is a more difficult case, and Rivers entertains the simple notion that Burns's experience of finding his mouth and nostrils filled with rotting human

flesh might just be so disgusting and vile to warrant his traumatic recurrences of nausea, and the 'complete disintegration of personality' which such recurrences have produced. However, when Burns begins to put his experience into perspective, the first stage of recovery, Rivers finds that 'his own sense of the horror of the event seemed actually to have increased'.[9] A persistent theme of the trilogy is the effect that the war is having on Rivers, as the psychoanalyst who must encounter and make sense of the horrific experiences of his patients. Burns, like Sassoon, Prior, and others, serve to transform Rivers's sense of himself, and his conception of the war, science, psychology and modernity.

Prior's demonic double is, for Rivers, an all too transparent manifestation of the dissociation of self required under the disciplinary structures of modern society. Prior works for the intelligence services of the Ministry for Munitions, and finds himself tasked with destroying a group of anti-war protestors with whom he is already familiar from childhood friendships. While Prior works subtly to help the protestors, his demonic alter ego carries out the acts of subterfuge required to ensure their destruction. Rivers suggests, in other words, that Prior is generating his own monster, precisely to conduct the tasks he finds himself unable to do. Thus, his alter ego appears as a kind of exaggerated parody of an arch-villain, the self-conscious product of Prior's imagination, whom Prior even describes as his 'Hyde' figure.

Prior experiences the 'uncanny' effect of an alienated self, the substance of Freud's anecdote, in a violent, magnified form. But *The Eye in the Door* seems at the same time to represent continually the scene which Freud describes. When Prior is 'puzzled by something unfamiliar' in his office, he realizes 'that the change was in himself'.[10] Later, when his train enters a tunnel, Prior 'turned to face his doubled reflection in the window and thought he didn't like himself very much'.[11] And again, on a boat, Prior sees himself going up to a man and tapping him on the shoulder, 'and the face that turned towards him . . . was his own'.[12] Like Freud, Prior *sees* himself as an other, as an alien self, and constantly encounters himself as a stranger. Rivers finds that Prior invents this dissociated self, or rather, hypnotizes himself into a dissociated state, in order to escape from traumatic situations. The originary childhood scene, which Rivers helps Prior to remember, is of domestic violence, in which the child Prior was torn between obedience to and fear of his father and empathy with and fear for his mother. In order to resolve the conflict, Prior would sit on the staircase and hypnotize himself into the reflection on the glass of a barometer.[13] Prior's invented other is thus a kind of psychic safety

valve, which enables him to cope with conflicting demands or situations.

Here again, Rivers solves the mysterious appearance of a psychic double, or a troublesome ghost, with skilful rational examination. Prior turns out not to have a monstrous alter ego, after all, just a rather mischievous coping mechanism. Prior is cured of his split personality and, in *The Ghost Road*, is sufficiently stable to return to the front line, where, with tragic but inevitable irony, he joins the ranks of the dead in one last senseless assault. Rivers, in the same novel, is forced to confront his own ghosts. He can explain the ghosts of his patients away, but his own return to haunt him. In *Regeneration*, in order to assuage Sassoon's anxieties about confessing to seeing apparitions, Rivers confesses to his own encounter with ghosts on an anthropological mission in the Melanesian islands. At a wake, at which the mourners await the sound of the spirits coming in canoes to collect the soul of the dead, Rivers hears not the paddles, which he has been told he might hear, but instead a sudden gust of 'whistling sounds':

> Nobody was making those sounds, and yet we all heard them. You see, the *rational* explanation for that is that we'd allowed ourselves to be dragged into an experience of mass hypnosis, and I don't for a moment deny that that's possible. But what we'd been told to expect was the swish of paddles. Nobody'd said anything about whistling. That doesn't mean there *isn't* a rational explanation. Only I don't think that particular rational explanation fits all the facts.[14]

In *The Ghost Road*, Rivers becomes obsessed by this scene, and the events surrounding it, and the novel concludes with Rivers being visited in hospital by the 'not in any way ghostly' apparition of Njiru, the witch doctor in Melanesia.[15] Rivers must distinguish between the irrational visions and healthy realities of his patients constantly and unequivocally. Yet his own experiences of the hauntological in Melanesia defy his attempts at rational explanation, and serve to disturb the stability of his distinctions between appearance and reality, illness and sanity, superstition and reason. If he must deal with the effects of his patients' haunted memories routinely, Rivers cannot finally dismiss the reality of ghosts either.

Barker's trilogy represents the crisis for modern rationality principally through conflicting modes of visibility and vocality. Rivers's patients suffer from a variety of speech impediments and hallucinations, which it is his duty to observe and cure. Rivers must teach his patients to see

or to speak again, by encouraging them to put their repressed experiences into perspective, and to recover absent, traumatic memories through introspection. As Anne Whitehead argues, *Regeneration* shifts from 'a series of ghost stories, in which Rivers's patients are haunted by their pasts and by the recent dead, to a detective story', in which Rivers must uncover the missing fragments of memory which will enable his patients to see or speak clearly again.[16] In this sense, Rivers is cast as the agent of salvation for his patients, the medium through which they will achieve sanity and perspective. But, he is also perceived, chiefly in his treatments of Prior and Sassoon, as an agent of social discipline.

Regeneration begins with Sassoon being sent to Rivers for 'speaking out' against the war, and for seeing corpses in the streets of central London. Rivers 'can't pretend to be neutral', and must induce Sassoon to change his view.[17] Rivers concedes that Sassoon's protest against the war is far from irrational and, through his increasing despair at the severity of some of his patients' mental traumas, comes to share Sassoon's belief that '*Nothing justifies this*'.[18] Rivers can explain away Sassoon's visions of corpses and ghosts. They are simply the return of his repressed feelings of horror and guilt. But Sassoon's protest provokes a crisis for Rivers in his conception of the function of psychoanalysis. Towards the end of *Regeneration*, Rivers has a nightmare, which fuses his recent experiences of observing Dr Yealland using electric shocks to 'cure' a patient's silence with his own influence on Sassoon's decision to return to the front. When he analyses the nightmare, he comes to recognize that both he and Yealland 'were both in the business of controlling people', and, more disturbingly, in silencing them:

> Just as Yealland silenced the unconscious protest of *his* patients by removing the paralysis, the deafness, the blindness, the muteness that stood between them and the war, so, in an infinitely more gentle way, *he* silenced *his* patients; for the stammerings, the nightmares, the tremors, the memory lapses, of officers were just as much unwitting protest as the grosser maladies of the men.[19]

The image of an open mouth recurs throughout Barker's trilogy (and indeed many of her other novels), but has particular significance in *Regeneration* for notions of protest and control. Rivers's nightmare revolves around 'the tortured mouth' of Yealland's patient, and figures his treatment of Sassoon as 'uncomfortably like an oral rape'.[20] Rivers thus reconsiders his relationship with Sassoon, who has 'spoken out', and with Prior, who has been unable to speak, as a form of domination rather than healing. His methods may be 'infin-

itely more gentle' than Yealland's, but he has still functioned effectively as an instrument of control and authority over his patients.

If *Regeneration* is a novel about violence and protest, figured through tropes of speech and silence, *The Eye in the Door*, as its title suggests, is a novel about visibility as a mode of knowing. The novel's dominant image is the panopticon, the ideal architectural technology for correctional surveillance, which Foucault studies as a model of modern authority and control.[21] The panopticon prison appears just briefly in the novel, when Prior visits an old friend who is incarcerated for plotting to kill Lloyd George.[22] In the prison, Prior is disturbed by the 'eye' hole in the cell door, particularly as it reminds him of his traumatic experience of finding nothing of his dead comrade but an eyeball in a trench in France. The recovered eyeball (which Prior thinks of as a 'gob-stopper', thus prompting him to 'stop' his 'gob', to become silent) is the source of Prior's psychological breakdown in *Regeneration*. In *The Eye in the Door*, the 'eye' replaces the 'mouth' as the instrument of control and resistance.

Panopticism pervades the novel as a mode of social control. Prior is aware of the scrutinizing gaze of others from the beginning of the novel, when he considers self-consciously how he must look to passing strangers.[23] His suspicion that he is watched intensifies considerably in the prison, and thereafter the novel shows Prior encountering his own uncanny image repeatedly as the object of scrutiny. This develops into his extreme dissociated state, in which he lapses out of consciousness for hours at a time, during which his double conducts the tasks to which Prior remains blind. In this schema, Rivers is just one 'eye' in the surveillance net in which Prior is caught, observed and monitored constantly, not least by his demonic double. Rivers, as a psychoanalyst, must subject Prior to observation and objectification, and so becomes part of the disciplinary apparatus which defines and controls Prior.

The trouble for Rivers is that Prior is capable of subjecting *him* to the same objective gaze. Rivers reveals to Prior during one of their sessions that he has no visual memory after the age of five, which is too tempting a 'blind spot' in Rivers's psyche for Prior to leave unexamined. Rivers and Prior change places, and Prior probes Rivers's memory of a childhood experience in which something so terrible happened that his mind 'suppressed not just the *one* memory, but the capacity to remember things visually at all'.[24] Prior's diagnosis is emphatic, and troubles Rivers afterwards: '*Whatever it was, you blinded yourself so you wouldn't have to go on seeing it . . . You put your mind's eye out*.'[25] Rivers is sufficiently self-conscious to realize that he has his own psychological problems and repressed memories,

but that he might be the victim of what Prior suggests was a monstrous rape or beating when he was five shocks and disturbs the analyst. The realization that his own lack of visual memory may conceal as dark a repressed past as he has encountered in his patients triggers a crisis of authority in Rivers, and, in the final novel of the trilogy, he is immersed in his own anamnetic efforts to trace the source of his ghosts. Rivers, in one sense, becomes his own patient in *The Ghost Road*, as haunted by spectres as Prior or Sassoon. Here, his own divisions are especially manifest, since his rational self – what he calls the 'epicritic' mind – must analyse and exorcize the demons of his emotional self – what he calls the 'protopathic'. This division between the epicritic and the protopathic occupies much of Rivers's thinking throughout the trilogy, but it becomes especially significant in the final volume, in which it appears to take the form of a split personality. Rivers in *The Ghost Road*, then, is both the capable analyst, who unravels his patients' anxieties and repressions, and the haunted, frightened patient, vulnerable to his own nightmares and hallucinations.

Neither Rivers's ghostly visions nor his paralytic stammer undermine his authority as a psychoanalyst. In fact, Rivers's vulnerability appears to earn him greater credit with Prior. The return of Rivers's spectres and repressed memories illustrates instead the inseparability of the epicritic and the protopathic or, to put it another way, it shows that the rational is thoroughly infiltrated by the irrational. This is an argument which Michel de Certeau makes in relation to haunting more generally:

> There is an 'uncanniness' about this past that a present occupant has expelled (or thinks it has) in an effort to take its place. The dead haunt the living . . . [Any] autonomous order is founded upon what it eliminates; it produces a 'residue' condemned to be forgotten. But what was excluded re-infiltrates the place of its origin – now the present's 'clean' place. It resurfaces, it troubles, it turns the present's feeling of being 'at home' into an illusion – this 'wild', this 'obscene', this 'filth', this 'resistance' of 'superstition' – within the walls of the residence, and, behind the back of the owner (the *ego*), or over its objections, it inscribes there the law of the other.[26]

De Certeau here counters Freud's notion that the modern rational mind can 'rid himself' of primitive beliefs in the ghostly and the uncanny, and argues that the present is perpetually haunted by the dead. In psychoanalytic terms, de Certeau seems to be addressing the return of the repressed, but he is also implicitly critiquing the

conceit of psychoanalysis that it can make the ghosts go away. If, as de Certeau argues, haunting is the figurative return of the 'residue' or excluded others of the past to the 'present occupants', then the attempt to exorcize these ghosts is merely an attempt to prolong the repression of voices of protest or difference. Rivers recognizes that this might be the case when he worries about whether he has, in 'curing' his patients, merely silenced their intuitive expressions of protest.

The return of the dead to haunt the living, whether in the form of ghostly apparitions or uncanny experiences, functions to unsettle the conceit of the present. This appears to be an important recognition in Barker's trilogy. The teleological narratives of historical progress, cultural superiority and technological prowess, which underpinned notions of European civilization, and which ultimately led to the 'Great War', produced the most savage, regressive and irrational conflict the world had yet known. The dead lying on the battlefields of France are material testimony to the gaps and contradictions in such narratives, and hence, they are witnessed by Rivers's patients in the trilogy as the spectres haunting Europe. The uncanny experiences represented in the *Regeneration* trilogy, then, are disturbing not just in their meanings for scientific and psychoanalytic claims to knowledge, but also in their implications for the chrono-and geo-politics of modernity.

Barker represents this crisis in European modernity through tropes of displacement and temporal disjunction. Throughout the trilogy, everywhere – the hospital corridors of Craiglockhart, the landings of a prison, the hollows of an urban waste-land, the labyrinthine streets of a city – comes to resemble the topographical features of the trench or no-man's land. The streets of London and the fields around Craiglockhart seem to resemble the battlefields of France, so that Rivers's patients sometimes behave, mentally and physiologically, as if they are still at the front. They listen for the whine of incoming shells, and see the corpses of their comrades lying all around them. Rivers experiences his own version of this, when his memories of life with a 'primitive' tribe in Melanesia become confused with his waking life in England. Here, the geographical 'otherness' of Melanesia refuses to remain in its place – it continually appears to haunt and disrupt Rivers's sense of 'home'.

Time, too, is continually disrupted in Barker's trilogy. The very notion of anamnesis, as Freud explained it in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', involves a radical disturbance in the patient's sense of time: 'He is obliged to *repeat* the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of, as the physician would prefer to see,

remembering it as something belonging to the past.'[27] Rivers's patients are, for the most part, stuck in time, in reliving one particular moment of experience or trauma, which continues to exercise a grip on their consciousness. The effect of the severe disjunction of time undergone by the war veterans, Middleton and Woods explain, is that they 'find that the ordinary realism of memory is no longer adequate and must re-imagine the space-time of the past'.[28] Both Owen and Sassoon, when they share their experiences of the war, project their visions either back or forward in time, for example:

> [*Owen*:] 'Sometimes when you're alone, in the trenches, I mean, at night you get the sense of something *ancient*. As if the trenches had always been there. You know one trench we held, it had skulls in the side. You looked back along and . . . Like mushrooms. And do you know, it was actually *easier* to believe they were men from Marlborough's army than to to to think they'd been alive two years ago. It's as if all other wars had somehow . . . distilled themselves into this war, and that makes it something you . . . almost can't challenge.'
>
> [. . .]
>
> [*Sassoon*:] 'I had a similar experience. Well, I don't know whether it is similar. I was going up with the rations one night and I saw the limbers against the skyline, and the flares going up. What you see every night. Only I seemed to be seeing it from the future. A hundred years from now they'll still be ploughing up skulls. And I seemed to be in that time and looking back. I think I saw our ghosts.'[29]

Owen's experience of the war is filtered through its historical resonances, through notions of cyclical recurrence and repetition, while Sassoon sees the war through the postmodern lens of the future anterior.[30] For both, it is necessary to see the present through images of its otherness, of its double, or, more pertinently, of its ghostly resemblances through time. What is not possible is for Owen and Sassoon to see their own time in its modernity, to see the present as a homogenous self-present identity. Instead, they, like other characters in the novel, such as Burns, who can only find solace in a medieval moat, or Manning's soldiers billeted in a graveyard, achieve some understanding of their situation only by radically dislocating their 'place' in historical chronology. To situate themselves, it is necessary, in other words, to conceive of the radical heterogeneity – the hauntedness – of their own time.

In Barker's *Regeneration* trilogy, then, history is experienced always as untimely, as anachronistic. It is not just that her characters fail to grasp the significance of the events of their own time, but rather that

time itself seems to become profoundly discontinuous and unstable. The war repeats the time of other wars, churns up the dead of other centuries, and refuses to be contained in its present time. For Barker's characters, to use Paul Fussell's terms, 'war detaches itself from its normal location in chronology and its accepted set of causes and effects to become Great in another sense – all encompassing, all-pervading, both internal and external at once, the essential condition of consciousness in the twentieth century'.[31] This is experienced in the trilogy as a chronic disturbance in the function of memory.

Rivers's patients suffer either from amnesia or anamnesia, too little or too much memory. Both amnesia and anamnesia are forms of representation (especially after Freud), open to psychoanalytic interpretation, and marking out by presence or absence the reappearance of the past in the present. It becomes apparent to Rivers that the memory crises of his patients are not just indications of psychological failure – not just the signs of mental disorder – but instead are registering a more general, social and cultural, crisis. Memory appears, in the words of Richard Terdiman, as 'a problem, as a site and source of cultural disquiet'.[32] It emerges as the involuntary counter-narrative of modernity, bearing witness to that which modernity forgets or fails to see. But memory functions not just as the *repetition* of the past, not just as a kind of video replay of the event, but rather, as Derrida indicates, as the deferred past. The recovered memory of the past is, for Derrida, 'the *supplementary delay* . . . the reconstitution of meaning through deferral, after a mole-like progression, after the subterranean toil of an impression':

> This impression has left behind a laborious trace which has never been *perceived*, whose meaning has never been lived in the present, i.e. has never been lived consciously. The postscript which constitutes the past present as such is not satisfied . . . with reawakening or revealing the present past in its truth. It produces the present past.[33]

Not surprisingly, Derrida describes this eruption of the past into present consciousness in ghostly or hauntological terms – trace, delay, deferral, the present past. The past as such is a perpetual palimpsest, continually rewritten, and in continual dialogue with its present enunciation. Derrida's conception of the time of memory is structured by absence, in which the possibility of the past revealing its truth is endlessly deferred. In this sense, as Jean-Luc Nancy argues, to represent the past 'is not to re-present some past or present presence. It is to trace the otherness of existence within its own present and presence.'[34]

Barker's trilogy concludes on this theme of the encounter with the 'otherness of existence'. Rivers envisions his cultural other, the Melanesian witch doctor, Njiru, dancing an invocation to the gods to 'go down and depart'. The dance repeats a scene he has witnessed often in Melanesia, but appears now dislocated from its normal time and place, in Rivers's hospital ward. Njiru sees the 'end of men', and his dance is performed for the *mate*, the living dead. Rivers now belongs, the scene implies, to the land of the living dead, like all his patients. Just as the final scene signifies the dramatic return of Rivers's powers of visualization, it indicates too a traumatic shift in historical consciousness, from one in which time unfolded progressively towards healing, to one in which time is structured around loss, absence and otherness. History, after the Great War, Barker's trilogy suggests, is continually haunted by the memory of loss, and is constantly striving to regenerate the past.

Notes

1 Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', *The Penguin Freud Library: Volume 14 – Art and Literature*, ed. Albert Dickson (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 371.
2 Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 53.
3 Ibid., p. 8.
4 Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 12.
5 Ibid., p. 188.
6 Ibid., p. 19.
7 Pat Barker, *The Ghost Road* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 26.
8 Pat Barker, *The Eye in the Door* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 242.
9 Barker, *Regeneration*, p. 184.
10 Barker, *The Eye in the Door*, p. 44.
11 Ibid., p. 88.
12 Ibid., p. 185.
13 Ibid., p. 248.
14 Barker, *Regeneration*, p. 188. Original emphases.
15 Barker, *The Ghost Road*, p. 276.
16 Anne Whitehead, 'Open to Suggestion: Hypnosis and History in Pat Barker's *Regeneration*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Fall 1998), 688.
17 Barker, *Regeneration*, p. 15.
18 Ibid., p. 180.
19 Ibid., p. 238. Original emphases.
20 Ibid., p. 236.

21 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Penguin, 1979). See also Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, ed. Miran Božovič (London: Verso, 1995).
22 Barker, *The Eye in the Door*, p. 29.
23 Ibid., p. 3.
24 Ibid., p. 137.
25 Ibid., pp. 140–1.
26 Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 3–4.
27 Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', *The Penguin Freud Library: Volume 11 – On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Angela Richards (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 288.
28 Peter Middleton and Tim Woods, *Literatures of Memory: History, time and space in postwar writing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 88.
29 Barker, *Regeneration*, pp. 83–4. Original emphases.
30 Jean-François Lyotard argues that the future anterior is the defining tense of the postmodern. See *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 81.
31 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 321.
32 Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. vii.
33 Jacques Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978), p. 214.
34 Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Finite History', *The States of 'Theory': History, Art and Critical Discourse*, ed. David Carroll (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 165.

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