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## When the Specters of the First World War Return to the Anglo-Irish Estate: Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love* and J. G. Farrell's *Troubles*

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### Abstract

In Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love* and J. G. Farrell's *Troubles*, the First World War's dead reappear as specters within the Anglo-Irish estate. Through the lens of traumatology, this essay examines the symbolic function of this spectral return in light of its psychological, political, and cultural-historical implications for the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, and more broadly, for contemporary Ireland. This essay argues that although *A World of Love* and *Troubles* are empathetic representations of how the Ascendancy experienced the First World War as an historical locus of trauma, their narrative designs figure spectral return as a symbolic mode of critique aimed at this class's occlusive processing of traumatic loss: in processing the war as the loss of its own *raison d'être* – of both its men and of its centuries-long dominance – the Ascendancy would remain inward- and backward-looking, unreceptive to the sense of trauma or personal suffering the war also caused for others. Spectral return signifies the Ascendancy's tendency to remain entrenched in its own traumatic past.

### Keywords

Irish fiction; First World War; Anglo-Irish Ascendancy; trauma; narrativity; specters

The specters of dead soldiery abound in Irish First World War literature, and with diverse designs. They haunt and intrude upon the living, or the not-yet-dead. Such is the premise of two big house novels, Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love* (1954) and J. G. Farrell's *Troubles* (1970), wherein the reappearances of dead combatants troublingly pervade the lives and memories of the living. Within the crumbling walls of the Anglo-Irish estate, the dead insist on returning, even decades after 1918.

*A World of Love* and *Troubles* belong to a body of Irish First World War texts wherein the return of the dead is rendered a haunting trope with psychological, political, and cultural-historical implications. In Patrick MacGill's semiautobiographical combat novel *The Brown Brethren* (1917) for instance, combatants suffer from textbook, hallucinatory posttraumatic stress, as the corpses strewn across the killing fields of France return as revenants to the soldiers during combat and back at home. Such is also the case for Stephen Ryan of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, in Alan Monaghan's combat novel *The Soldier's Song* (2010). And it is Kenneth Pyper in Frank

McGuinness's *Observe the Sons of Ulster* (1985) who unwillingly confronts the ghosts of his fallen comrades: "Again. As always, again. Why does this persist? [...] I don't understand your insistence on my remembrance" (1986:9). Pyper voices the weight of survivor guilt wrought on him as a politicized "sacrificial" veteran of the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division, just as in Sebastian Barry's *Steward of Christendom* (1995), Thomas Dunne laments the return of his son Willie, now a ghost, killed in action on the Front as part of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division – in Dunne's eyes, a personal sacrifice for a different brand of unionism that was in retrospect, far too costly.

These texts figure possession by specters of 1914-1918's dead, a group of Irishmen who in the Republic would begin to become, in a sense, dispossessed by the end of the 1930s.<sup>1</sup> This thematic figuration remains unexplored in Irish First World War literature, especially as it pertains to literature written by one particular class, the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, whose literal dispossession was the result not only of the lives of the fathers and sons lost in the First World War but of the death of their *way* of life, politically, culturally, and economically. Bowen and Farrell demonstrate this interconnection in *A World of Love and Troubles*, wherein the Ascendancy's loss of "life" is brought on in part by the First World War.

As critics rightfully acknowledge, these two novels are about traumatic loss and the persistent, troubling experience of traumatic memory. But what has not been acknowledged or dealt with is how in these novels, the First World War's return to memory and to lived experience is symbolically narrativized in the form of the forceful return of the specters of dead combatants. Whereas *A World of Love and Troubles* are surely empathetic representations of how the Ascendancy experienced the First World War as an historical locus of trauma, their narrative designs figure spectral return as a symbolic mode of critique aimed at this class's occlusive processing of traumatic loss: in processing the war as the loss of its own *raison d'être* – of both its men and of its centuries-long dominance – the Ascendancy would, in fact, remain inward- and backward-looking, unreceptive to the sense of trauma or personal suffering the war also caused for un-landed Irish men and women. Spectral return is narrativized in these novels as a symptom of the Ascendancy's tendency to remain locked in its own trauma, a consequence of claiming its dead soldiery as an exclusively felt loss: insofar as this class fails to move past its own loss, and insofar as it fails to build community by acknowledging the traumatic losses that the war caused for others, the Ascendancy "re-lives" the past as the present. As such, specters are depicted as reentering the big house – to purloin one of Bowen's terms, in a symbolically significant "enforced return."<sup>2</sup>

Enforced return surely marks the beginning of each novel. *A World of Love* opens in 1950s County Cork, as twenty-year old protagonist Jane Danby reads one of numerous undated, unaddressed love letters from Guy, the Anglo-Irish inheritor of the Montefort estate who is killed in action on the Front after enlisting in 1918. The way in which Jane obtains the letters is uncanny. Attending the town's annual fête, she is suddenly compelled back to Montefort with an "inexplicable feeling of being summoned" (27). Jane brings Montefort's traumatic past into the present when Guy's letters preternaturally reveal themselves to her in the attic: "For her, the house was great with something: she *had* been sent for, and in haste. Why? [...] They fell at her feet, having found her rather than she them" (27). Jane perceives these letters as an intrusion against her "instinctive aversion from the past" (35): "the letters – had they not insisted on

forcing their own way out?” (35). The letters begin to unfold for the Danbys a traumatic past internalized but not yet dealt with, one recurrently returned to, but spoken of too little.

The novel opens with Jane returning to a specific letter, one that has haunted her since the night before. “After some few invaded hours of sleep” (35), she rereads this letter, which references the un-inscribed obelisk under which she now sits, whose shadow falls toward the decaying, almost-defunct Montefort estate. Taking the physical and conceptual position of the letter’s addressee, as Guy’s new love, Jane initiates Guy’s return to Montefort. The narrative of *A World of Love* is subsequently structured on Guy’s spectral reappearance to each one of the estate’s women who have “fallen in love” with him, or the concept of him – Jane, Antonia, and Lilia. These encounters reveal the extent to which Montefort, as a representation of the postwar Anglo-Irish, had become bound to its own trauma and to its consequential idealizing of a prewar past, foreshadowing the Ascendancy’s stasis and ultimate descent.

In *Troubles*, the First World War’s dead enact a more literal enforced return. The novel begins in 1919 when the English protagonist Major Brendan Archer arrives at the Majestic, a dilapidated Anglo-Irish estate-turned-hotel in Wexford owned and operated by the jingoistic, half-crazed former colonial administrator, Edward Spencer. Brendan has come to Ireland on account of his informal engagement to Angela, Edward’s daughter. But he discovers that Spencer’s hotel is a relic for the aging Anglo-Irish who inhabit it, the dining room made a shrine to the fallen of the First World War, who are commemorated each day. Here, the dead return. On Brendan’s first morning, Edward begins a ritualistic prayer for “the Fallen” in front of “a carved wooden memorial” with “two long lists of names” that run alongside “row after row of photographs of young men, most of them in uniform” (45).

The names are hauntingly etched in Brendan’s mind, opening “like wounds” (45). He imagines “no end to the dead men,” their “ghostly arms” extending out toward him, as “long ranks of tiny eyes were now staring at him as if accusing him of being [...] alive” (44-45). As Edward lauds these men “in sepulchral tones” for giving “their lives for King, for country, and for us,” Brendan “ground his teeth at the accusing, many-eyed memorial” (45). So begin Brendan’s post-traumatic stress-induced visions of the war dead. And throughout *Troubles*, these episodes become increasingly prevalent for him, particularly when moments of conflict within the Majestic are catalyzed by the Irish War of Independence outside it. Significantly, the specters of war intrude upon Brendan against the backdrop of Spencer’s insistence, in a sort of siege mentality, that Ireland’s war dead be upheld as a sacrificial *raison d’être* for the continued existence of the unionist Anglo-Irish at the precise moment when the surge of nationalism that is bound to prevail in the south of Ireland by 1921 bears down on the Majestic.

The opening of a letter, the opening of a wound – the openings of spectral return: why narrate the intrusion of the First World War’s dead? What significance did this hold for Bowen and her readers in 1954, and for Farrell in 1970? And what significance does it hold for us now? The present is an opportune time to evaluate what the return of the First World War and its dead mean for Ireland, as the war’s centennial anniversary and its interconnections with the pivotal year of 1916 segue into a decade of centenaries commemorating the Irish War of Independence, Partition, and the Civil War. Certainly, recent commemoration has shown us that the First World War remains controversial in the Republic, even divisive. In his keynote speech at the Abbey

Theatre's "Theater of Memory Symposium," President Higgins anticipated the central though contested place the First World War would play as the 2014 centenaries began, insofar as the 1916 Rising, Partition, and the Irish Independence and Civil Wars were bound to the political, cultural, and economic transformations – and the traumatic legacy – wrought by the First World War. As a summing up of recent scholarship on 1914-1918 and its relationship to 1916, his introduction is worth repeating:

In the Irish context, WWI as a subject for commemoration poses the difficult issue of Ireland's divided, or even divisive, memories. It casts the Battle of the Somme, so central to Irish Unionists' identity versus the 1916 Rising, as our Republic's founding myth. For years the First World War has stood as a blank space in memory for many Irish people – an unspoken gap in the official narratives of this state. Thousands of Irish war dead were erased from official history, denied recognition, because they did not fit into the nationalist myth and its "canonical" lines of memory (16 January 2014).

A blank space or unspoken gap; divisive and "canonical" lines of memory in official state history, myth and narrative: Higgins captures the current idiom of Ireland's First World War experience.<sup>3</sup>

Since the 1980s, historians and historiographers, cultural practitioners, and the state have begun to fill that blank space and even correct the assumption that in the south of Ireland, the First World War has *always* been an "unspoken gap in the official narratives of the state." Of the roughly 200,000 Irish servicemen who fought in the British Forces from 1914-1918, the Irish Divisions incurred an estimated 40,000-50,000 casualties.<sup>4</sup> Those losses were surely felt back home as traumatic, personally and nationally. Bowen's and Farrell's novels convey this. What *A World of Love* is at pains to show is that Irishmen lost to combat could devastate individual families. True to history, *Troubles* describes how tens of thousands gathered in Dublin for Armistice Day well into the 1920s, where Irish combatants were initially commemorated with more instantaneous unanimity than the men of the Rising. It is important to keep in mind that mourning and commemorating the First World War dead entered Ireland's national consciousness even in the South when the movement toward independence was gaining more support and momentum.<sup>5</sup>

However, what is less acknowledged by current scholarship is that it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that Ireland's official remembrances of the First World War transitioned from a gradual fading into a more ideological occlusion. Both *A World of Love* and *Troubles* were composed in this moment. And it is arguable that these novels serve as an anticipatory record of the First World War as a traumatic event at a time when the war had begun to undergo a more programmatic elision from Irish memory. If, as F. X. Martin points out, the Republic's "national amnesia" ("1916 – myth, fact, and mystery") toward 1914-1918 began to set in near the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising, it was only after that date that the Republic began to take on at state level what Jonathan Evershed, echoing Guy Beiner (2007:381), identifies as a more "active process of social forgetting" of the war (2018:83). Galvanized by the late-1960s *Troubles*, that "social forgetting" has continued into the twenty-first century.

Thus, even though the recovery of memories of 1914-1918 is well underway, as evidenced by state administered participation in Irish and international centennial commemorations – occlusion and divisiveness remain. For instance, while President Higgins stated that the goal for the 2014 Liege and Mons international commemoration was to “support inclusive versions of memory” (Collins 4 August 2014), as the year progressed, his prior words about the war’s divisiveness predicted its reception. During Higgins’s subsequent Glasnevin commemoration, protestors of the Republican Sinn Fein and the Thirty-Two County Sovereignty Movement hurled insults at the ceremony comprised of representatives from the Republic, Northern Ireland, and the United Kingdom (Murtagh 1 August 2014).<sup>6</sup> In Northern Ireland, the Falls Road and Belfast City Cemeteries were repeatedly vandalized, with several WWI headstones in the World War-designated area damaged or smashed, and one Cross of Sacrifice graffitied extensively (*Belfast Telegraph* 22 April 2014). Coupled with the number of letters submitted to the *Irish Times* ranging from praise or the need for qualification to outright denunciation of the Republic’s engagement in local and international First World War commemorations,<sup>7</sup> the current moment signals to us how 1914-1918 remains a politically and culturally contentious trauma even as the state endeavors to inscribe it into its narrative. Clearly, the war continues to haunt the national consciousness.<sup>8</sup>

In this context, it is crucial to note that “social forgetting” has also influenced scholarly reception of Ireland’s cultural representations of the First World War. As Mark Quigley notes about current scholarship: “Even as much valuable work has been done on the Irish experience of the war, a wealth of topics and potential insight has fallen through the cracks tracking the ideological fault lines within Irish studies. [...] A review of scholarly and popular treatments of Ireland and the war over the last thirty years reveals some remarkably constrained patterns as to what is deemed worthy of study” (2018:296-298). Literature has been no exception. A vast number of both Irish combatants and noncombatants have written about the war. Yet, these texts either remain understudied, or their war contexts minimized; this has certainly been the case with *A World of Love* and *Troubles*.<sup>9</sup>

As we turn to the novels, it is therefore important to acknowledge that these narratives are not just about traumatic experience; they also adumbrate how the First World War’s trauma would be subject to ideologically- and politically-driven occlusion. Toward that end, *A World of Love* and *Troubles* elucidate the effects of the war’s trauma in two interrelated ways. The novels not only record how the Ascendancy registered the death of their heirs in the war as a traumatic loss, but their very narrative designs also both emulate the effects of, and convey the consequences of this class’s tendency to claim that loss as exclusive. Both novels show how attempting to own, or to exclusively inscribe such trauma effectuates an isolative existence, a kind of ahistorical “living out-of-time” among its adherents. In terms of this tendency’s symbolic implications, the novels anticipate the consequences of claiming one’s own traumatic narrative above those of others – currently, one of the reasons for the First World War’s haunting “return” to Ireland’s memory.

In *A World of Love*, the traumatic past stultifies the living, the not-yet-dead. The Danby’s loss of the heir to the estate in the war and the resulting obsession with a life that is no longer tenable, confer a double meaning on Bowen’s claim that after 1918, the Anglo-Irish lived a “cut-off life” (1984:278). Surely, the Montefort estate represents a “dissolution,” a world “cut-off” (44), for Guy’s death renders it a mere shell of its former influence. The imposing presence that had once

marked the Danby's self-proclaimed dominance over their tenants in rural County Cork has entered into a state of perpetual ruin, a never quite finished obsolescence:

The small mansion had an air of having gone down: for one thing, trees had been felled around it, leaving space impoverished [...]. The door no longer knew hospitality; moss obliterated the sweep for turning the carriage [...]. Had the façade not carried a ghost of style, Montefort would have looked, as it almost did, like nothing more than an annexe of its farm buildings – whose slipshod gables and leaning sheds, flaking whitewash and sagging rusty doors made a patchwork for some way out behind (9).

Most of the Danby's neighboring residents, from their former tenants to the few landed families and the newly arrived *nouveau riche*, assume Montefort to be abandoned, completely unoccupied. The Danbys have indeed withdrawn. With faces like masks (43; 50; 66), virtually impervious to social convention, the adult generation now exists in a half-conscious, self-imposed isolation wherein they mechanically live out their prewar way of life, with no actual exigencies, and with an indifferent, even tacit aversion to the realities of the changing Ireland outside the estate's walls. Throughout Montefort, clocks are "often stopping" (21) or they have "stood still" (95), calendars are outdated (21), and "none of the innovations, boilers, plumbing and so on, envisaged once by Antonia, had yet been installed" (21) – all "spoke of the almost total irrelevance of Time, in the abstract" (21). The Danby's exist ahistorically, resistant to the passage of time.

Their stasis is not wholly without reason, however. The Danby's lives more or less ended with Guy's sudden death on the Front, ironically in 1918, after Ireland's anti-conscription movement and right before the Armistice. In a moving, yet under-examined passage, it is Guy's cousin, Antonia, Guy's tacit love interest and heir to Montefort, who voices Bowen's own, semiautobiographical sense of loss – and particularly, it is in the context of the First World War's shadow in the 1950s (as it was for Bowen herself), a moment wherein an isolative paralysis lingered for Anglo-Irish unionists who had to come to terms with their decline:

Obstinate rememberers of the dead seem to queer themselves or show some signs of a malady; in part they come to share the dead's isolation. [...] Our sense of finality is less hard-and-fast: two wars have raised their query to it. [...] [I]t is hard, for instance, to see a young death in battle as in any way the fruition of a destiny, hard not to sense the continuation of the apparently cut-off life [...]. This had been so, so far, for Antonia in the case of her cousin Guy (44).

Indeed, Antonia laments the way that Guy's "generation was mown down" (44), thousands of lives taken before their time. But she also acknowledges that while Guy's actual death was to some extent predictable, it is the fact that the *memory* of him could die for others, while for those of her own generation, family, and class, he continues to possess their lives, that she finds unacceptable:

Not that it was unlike him to be killed – lightly he had on the whole taken that for granted; they all sooner or later were; why should he not be? – but that it was

unlike him to be dead. [...] death, yes, why not? – but deadness, no. [...] It would be long before Guy was done with life ... [...]. It was simply that these years she went on living belonged to him, his lease upon them not having run out yet. The living were living his lifetime; and of this his contemporaries – herself, Lilia, Fred – never were unaware. They were incomplete (45).

Seen through the eyes of Antonia, Montefort's next heir, Guy's loss is felt deeply. Guy continues to possess the family as his death is bound to the whole of the Danby's familial, cultural, and financial destitution. It is an aspect of the novel with a semiautobiographical dimension, which echoes how Bowen's own "loss of life" was bound to the First World War.

In 1930, Bowen was the first and only woman to inherit Bowen's Court, her family's centuries-old estate. She also had a practical though unromantic marriage to a First World War veteran, Alan Cameron (perhaps the basis in *A World of Love* for Lilia's "practical" marriage to Fred, the un-landed First World War veteran and illegitimate cousin of Antonia and Guy). Also like Lilia, Bowen and Cameron were quasi-absentees, living in England until Cameron's retirement brought them back to Ireland to settle at Bowen's Court in 1952. After Cameron's death that same year, Bowen remained at her estate mainly because she felt as if she had no other place to reside until 1955, when the increasing financial strain of maintaining the estate forced her to sell it to a farmer who later demolished it.

In the years during which Bowen wrote *A World of Love*, she experienced the untimely loss of her veteran husband, and the unexpected, unceremonious destruction of Bowen's Court. For her entire life, Bowen's estate not only signified the Ascendancy's potential loss of life to the First World War, but their descent amidst the rise of separatist nationalism, which gained traction from the war's political aftermath. As Jessica Gildersleeve writes of Bowen's Court, "it was here, in August 1914, that Bowen and her friends were told at a garden party of the outbreak of what would become the First World War" (2014:7), which Bowen recalled vividly.<sup>10</sup> Gildersleeve goes on to write: "This, and the growing "Troubles" in Ireland after the Easter Rising of 1916, meant that Bowen's adolescence was not only marked by the collective trauma of war, but by the very real anxiety that her own Anglo-Irish home would be the target of Irish nationalist aggression" (2014:7).<sup>11</sup>

The weight of this anxiety is felt in *A World of Love*. In fact, in the Danby's lament for Guy's death, and in their feeling his persistent "presence" coupled with their tacit, decades-long anxiety about an increasingly nationalist Ireland, *A World of Love* captures the sense of a traumatic legacy spoken of by the Anglo-Irish in the midcentury.<sup>12</sup> Yet, while critics acknowledge Guy's death as the locus of trauma in the novel, no scholarship actually accounts for the historical record of the Ascendancy's casualties in the First World War, or the sense of loss it caused.

In one of the latest and most comprehensive studies on Irish landed families during the First World War, Nicholas Perry catalogues the enlistment and deaths of both a "core group" (direct heirs) and an extended group (non-direct heirs): "Of 1074 young men from these (extended) families aged 15 to 30 in 1914, 756 (70 per cent) served in the armed forces – in the core group the figures were 444 out of 594 (75 per cent) – of whom 192, over one in four, were killed" (2011:328). These figures are corroborated by Peter Martin's (2002:39) and Ian D'Alton's



(2017:8) studies, which place the Ascendancy's death rate at 27% and 20-25%, respectively. Scholarly consensus holds that in the south of Ireland, the enlistment and deaths of the almost totally Protestant unionist Anglo-Irish Ascendancy were disproportionately higher than their non-unionist, un-landed counterparts, and higher than any other southern demographic for that matter (D'Alton 2017:7; Jeffery 2001:70; Martin 2011:29-41; Perry 2011:328). One in four of the Ascendancy's direct heirs were killed (Martin 2011:40). As Perry puts it, "if there is such a thing as the 'lost generation' in Ireland, they are it" (2011:328-329).

These figures imbue a deeper sense of what Guy's death means for the older generation in *A World of Love*. The novel evokes empathy for the death of Montefort's heir, and more broadly, for the Ascendancy's lost heirs. However, insofar as the Danbys process their loss through a siege-like politics of mourning, they remain exclusionary; with a somberly elitist air, for instance, Antonia chides Fred that his own daughter, Jane, should have been "our blood, his [Guy's] and mine. [...] 'She should have been his daughter!'" (80). Tellingly, although Fred has served in the First World War, he is not of the landed class, nor an heir. One point the novel makes clear: his survival and progeny matter little to either Antonia or Lilia.

More broadly, undergoing the traumatic loss of two world wars legitimizes for Antonia her sense of generational and even cultural difference from Jane as well:

Meantime, another war had peopled the world with another generation of the not-dead, overlapping and crowding the living's sense still more with that sense of un-lived lives. Antonia and others younger were creatures of an impossible time, breathing in the wronged air – air either too empty or too full, one could not say which. Jane, on the other hand, unaware of loss, should be taken to be in balance perfectly: she had come late enough (had she not?) to be at no known disadvantage (45).

When Jane reopens Guy's letters, she discovers that "impossible time," initiating the return of Antonia's, Lilia's, and Fred's (traumatic) past via the "post," that is, as if "the after-" or "the belated" returns to the present. The crux of the novel is the generational- and class-based contestation among all three women who stake a claim to Guy's legacy via his letters; both Lilia and Antonia assume that they are the original recipients (100; 107), while Jane imagines becoming Guy's new intended (48). Yet, what the novel suggests is that while all three women attempt to "claim" Guy's memory, Guy's letters are "unaddressed": with no marked recipient, they remain and must forever remain, unclaimed.

Through this figuration, *A World of Love* symbolically narrativizes trauma's effect on the survivors, or the living: in traumatological terms, a trauma often returns or repeats for the survivor (symptomatically through intrusive memories, flashbacks, hallucinations) (*APA* 1980:11), so that traumatic suffering is not limited to the originating event; rather, to the extent that the originating event resists being rendered intelligible – that is, understood, and able to be articulated through language (Whitehead 2004:3) – its very repetition marks its inability to be overcome. Thus as Cathy Caruth notes, traumatic experience remains "unclaimed experience" (1995:6).

In this context, there is something to be said for how and where *A World of Love* frames Jane's first reopening of Guy's narrative, which begins the women's contestations. It is done in the shadow of Montefort's obelisk: a monument that not only physically eclipses the estate gnomonically, as if some other "time" eclipses linear progression, but also eclipses any possibility of its associable memorialization among the Danbys, apart from Guy. As Gildersleeve notes about its spatiotemporal significance: "the obelisk is a symbol of monumental time, of perpetuity" (2014:137). In *A World of Love*, it signifies a kind of nonlinear temporality existent at Montefort both within and contiguous with linear time. The novel's narrative, in fact, carries a dual time that we might read as representative of what Jenny Edkins would identify as "trauma time" at work: that is, the phenomenon of intrusive re-experience whereby the traumatic past is no less present, and no less real, than the present (2003:15-16).<sup>13</sup> At crucial moments in *A World of Love*, such trauma time surely overlays, if not overtakes linear time. Jane's reopening of the letters initiates Guy's spectral manifestations to her, Antonia, and Lilia. In these moments wherein the (traumatic) past literally overlies the present, Guy's intrusions are also figured as a kind of desired "re-possession" among the women that continue to evade complete reclamation.

The coupling of "re-possession" with trauma time is at the center of *A World of Love*'s empathetic critique of the postwar Ascendancy. Even before Guy's image appears to her, Jane envisions herself in Guy's possession, his presence closing temporal distance: "he was in love. *I thought*', he wrote, '*if only YOU had been here!*' [...] 'But here I am. Oh, here I am!' she protested. [...] Between him and her dwindled the years: where indeed was he if not beside her?" (48). Shortly thereafter, Jane feels "spirited out of Montefort" (57) to where Guy first appears to her at a tight-knit aristocratic dinner party hosted by Lady Latterly ("late" to the scene), a superficial, *nouveau riche* European who has recently purchased an "unusually banal Irish castle" (57), as if for its novelty. Like the castle, which Jane notes is an unchanged "replica" of "the 1930s" (56), she discovers that the attendees are similarly "unreal" (57) – they are assembled by Latterly. "Everybody was being kept hard at it paying up" (61); all have faces "like lit-up masks" (66); "none were young" (59), yet none are "native" (63) to Ireland except Jane and Terence, who she comes to find out, knew Guy. All "had this foreign dimension of the castle in which nothing, no one could be unreal enough" (57).

Here, as if to reclaim the estate from these *nouveau* usurpers, Guy appears to Jane:

Had she not struck when she spoke the name! [...] Guy was among them. The recoil of the others – she did not for an instant doubt it was a recoil – marked his triumphant displacement of their air. She saw the reflection of crisis in each face, heard it in loudening, dropping then stopping voices. [...] The glissade of the shadow-show, the enforced retreat from here to nowhere – but herself was caught in the midst of their thinning semblances. [...] She was right; there *was* one more figure among the men – all knew this (65).

As Guy's apparition merges in Jane's mind with Montefort's "'studio portrait' taken of him in uniform" (68), she envisions this veteran reasserting possession over a former Anglo-Irish estate. An actual heir, he displaces Latterly's "unreal" reality, being "now more than living" (68). To Jane, Lady Latterly's "displaced rich" (67) now represent "counterfeit notions of reality" (67) compared to Guy; "they remained tributary to him and less real to Jane" (68).

As Andrew Wessels notes of this scene, “Guy’s triumphant presence at the Latterly party serves to mark the inadequacy of the present-day make-belief upstart aristocracy in the face of the real though historically obsolete class that ceased to exist more or less at the end of the First World War” (1995:92). Terence, Guy’s only contemporary, confirms this sentiment to Jane: “‘before it was 1914, [...] Those days, we went where the people were.’ She drew a profound breath: ‘My cousin Guy’” (64). However, Terence cautions against sentimentalizing the past, a point that resonates with Jane given her aversion to the older generation’s obsession with the “past’s activity” (35). He tells Jane, “rotten romancing and story-telling: you make the half of it up [...]. You can buy up a lot; you can’t buy the past. What is it? – not even history” (63). While Jane acknowledges Guy’s “reality” in terms of the traumatic impact of this death, she nevertheless resists the urge to “buy into” sentimentalizing or completely dwelling in the past. If this is what Terence decries about the *nouveau riche*, it is also what Jane comes to realize stultifies her relatives, Antonia and Lilia.

That night, when Jane broaches the subject of Guy’s remembrance, Antonia’s sense of contestation heightens, though rightfully so, to the extent that it is grounded in loss. Of Guy, she tells Jane: “You, Jane, can’t conceive of what memory is. You can’t conceive of what memory costs” (74). Shortly thereafter, Guy appears before Antonia, in a scene that coalesces her feelings of loss with her feelings of desire to return to a prewar period, wherein Guy serves as possessor and defender of the estate:

Going to stand in the doorway, she was met at once by a windlike rushing toward her out of the dark – her youth and Guy’s from every direction: the obelisk, avenue, [...]. No part of the night was not breathless breathing. [...] All round Montefort there was going forward an entering back again into possession: the two, now one again, were again here – [...]. This was not the long-ago, it was *now* or nothing – [...]. Ghosts could have no place in this active darkness – more, tonight was a night which had changed hands, going back again to its lordly owners: time again was into the clutch of herself and Guy (77).

Closing the estate door, she envisions Guy as reclaiming his status as a martial or imperialistic protector of the Anglo-Irish minority against the vague threat of the Irish:

Antonia, having stepped back in the hall, lost no time in barricading the door behind her [...]. Not since Montefort stood had there ceased to be vigilant measures against the nightcomer; all being part of the hostile watch kept by now eyeless towers and time-stunted castles along these rivers. For as land knows, everywhere is a frontier; and the outposted few (and few are the living) never must be off guard (79).

This is one moment in the novel wherein we gain a sense of the Danby’s troubling siege mentality against what they see as “the fecklessness or ill-will of the grazing tenants” (16). Antonia’s attitude also echoes Lilia’s, who “had a neurosis about anyone standing outside a door” – an anxiety in “Montefort of being besieged, under observation or in some way even under a threat” (52). As both Wessels (1995:89) and Vera Kreilkamp (1998:454) argue, *A World of Love* is a novel wherein such politico-historical context unfolds almost entirely within

personal subjectivity. On a symbolic level, these moments in the narrative suggest that the Danby's self-exilic defense is rooted in their notion that the Ascendancy has lost its (martial) defenders and heirs to the First World War, its bulwark against a populist Ireland.

*A World of Love* compounds its apprehensiveness about the Danby women's sense of loss – and symbolically, the Ascendancy's sense of “recovery” – insofar as these Anglo-Irish women even relegate veterans, like Fred, to live in Guy's shadow. For after Jane's and Antonia's encounters with Guy, his (purportedly) former fiancé, Lilia, wife and mother to Fred and Jane, also vies to reclaim, and *be* claimed by Guy. In the “vanishing garden” (97) that was their former meeting place, she evokes Guy's letters to encounter him: “And now these letters. To whom, why? Are you to be leaving me nothing, O Guy, then?” (96). In an ephemeral conflation that lays bare Lilia's desire, Guy appears before her – in lieu of Fred:

Somebody had come in and was in this garden. [...] [S]omething more than human was at intensity. [...] – of whom was this the ghost in the afternoon? He had not finished with them nor they with themselves, nor they with each other: not memories was it but expectations which haunted Montefort. His immortality was in their longings [...]. Lilia supposed only one thing – “You've come to tell me?” [...] [S]he already – as one does see the brilliant image of him or her whom one is to meet in reality in a moment – saw him. Both were deep in love. [...] Not yet, not yet was there quite no one – to *be* gone, a man must have been here! (97-98).

But it is Fred who comes into Lilia's view. Outside of “reality” (98), only within trauma time does Lilia conflate Fred with Guy's image. Fred remains, literally, in Guy's shadow, and as Rachel Mayrer points out, the more Lilia and Antonia desire Guy's repossession over Montefort, and his possession of them, the more Fred is rendered “disassociated” and “dispossessed of the house” (2008:36).

The novel thus alludes to a stark irony about Lilia's and Antonia's relational distancing of Fred as a First World War veteran. As an “illegitimate cousin” (15) of “foreign blood” (15), Fred is not landed nor perhaps ethnically Irish; as a 1914 recruit of the “Australian army” (16), Fred is not of “the *Army*” (British Army) (145); and as a veteran, he initially seems even without a country: “some years after that war, when Montefort was closed and the lands let out, Fred was reported about the country: [...] again, gone” (16). What we see in *A World of Love* is a unique perspective on Irish servicemen's postwar experience. For, whereas Joanna Bourke notes that it was “the increasing disassociation between the Ireland they were fighting for and the Ireland they returned to, which made repatriation difficult for all Irish soldiers” (2002:158), *A World of Love* adds another dimension to this reality. While for the Ascendancy, the death of their heirs in the First World War was, as historians note, surely felt as their “swan song” (D'Alton 1973:88), the tendency to claim such traumatic loss as exclusive would put non-landed Irish veterans outside the Ascendancy's own imagined community.

*A World of Love* thus illustrates the complicated connection between community (or lack thereof) and trauma. The Danby women's attempt to possess “Guy's memory” (17) is what dispossesses and devalues Fred as a veteran. This overlooked aspect of the novel illustrates, in

Jenny Edkins's terms, how a specific trauma may be contested and attempted to be possessed insofar as it is deemed to have an identity-based political or sociocultural utility, and how in so doing, traumatic memory can, symbolically speaking, troublingly return to the present and even eclipse other traumatic experience or history (2003:15). *A World of Love* ultimately cautions that traumatic loss may lead to exclusionism rather than community, an important point made by Julian Moynahan about Bowen's intent in her fiction: that "the deepest failure of the big house was its failure to provide a vital center for a community" (1995:241).

It is not coincidental that sixteen years later, in his eponymously entitled novel, *Troubles*, J.G. Farrell advances this same theme: the failure of community. Like Bowen, Farrell's novel also interrogates the cut-off life of the southern Protestant unionist Ascendancy, linking that class's sense of loss undergone in First World War to its failure at establishing a viable community. Farrell sets the novel in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, during "the Troubles" from 1919-1921 (though he actually writes the novel in direct response to "the Troubles" of the late 1960s). Taking a page from Bowen, Farrell's narrative style is designed to capture the effects of war trauma on the individual's psychology. Within the Majestic estate, the Anglo-Irish Spencer family, like the Danbys, gradually takes on a siege mentality in the face of their impending obsolescence; the estate develops an overwhelmingly isolated, even xenophobic attitude toward any community that is not Anglo-Irish or unionist. In *Troubles*, Major Brendan Archer, an English officer, along with a host of other non-Ascendancy Irish, are consequently left outside the Ascendancy's community.

From the outset, *Troubles* echoes *A World of Love* in that the narrative figures the past as infiltrating the present, and how living within the past is what characterizes the Ascendancy in its final descent. The novel opens at the beginning of "the end" – the estate in ruin. In an unspecified present stands the now-incinerated grounds where Edward Spencer's Majestic sat, a once preeminently "fashionable place" (6) of Victorian Wexford, whose façade looked toward England across "the Irish Sea (and not into Ireland)" (65). Like *A World of Love*'s opening image of Montefort's mythic monument (timeless though vague), *Troubles* opens, as Margaret Scanlan notes, "in the vague tone of myth" (1985:80): "In those days, the Majestic was still standing" (5). In a nod to Bowen, the narrative introduces the Majestic with ironic reminiscence. It now lies in incendiary ruin, but pervading those ruins is the sense that its past is still not fully elided from the present:

Curiously, in spite of the corrosive effect of sea air the charred remains of the enormous main building are still to be seen; for some reason [...] vegetation has only made a token attempt to possess them. Here and there among the foundations one might still find evidence of the Majestic's former splendor (5).

Foregrounding the novel's trauma time, the narrative opens with a characteristic contiguity: the past exists within the present, and throughout the novel, it imposes itself on the living. As Robert Garratt notes, "this sense of déjà vu is part of the novel's traumatic effect. [...] Farrell dramatizes the grip that the past holds on the present by making *Troubles* above all else a novel of traumatic memory" (2011:20).

Like Bowen, Farrell is keenly aware, however, that the trauma of 1914-1918 could give rise to feelings of individual isolation and anxiety for veterans as well as those who had lost members of their community. As such, *Troubles* emphasizes the way traumatic loss afflicts the Anglo-Irish and English alike. But more so than in Bowen, the style of Farrell's narrative literalizes its traumatic content. Bowen's narrativization of postwar loss correlates the atemporality of trauma time with the Anglo-Irish sense of being "out of time" in its stultification and isolation. Farrell's novel does so as well, but also narrativizes trauma time in a more literal way. In key moments, the narrative positions us inside Major Brendan Archer's experiences of post-traumatic stress, literalizing the delayed, symptomatic effects of combat trauma which he suffers from: dead soldiers invade his consciousness and appear before him with hostility – and significantly, his troubled imaginings are triggered by Edward Spencer's "fighting" to defend his estate from the tide of nationalism brought on by the Troubles.

In filtering our reading through the psyche of Major Brendan Archer, a politically indifferent, middle-class English veteran "recovering from shell-shock" (8) Farrell's narrative operates by symbolic correlation: the protagonist's very real limitations in perceiving reliably are a consequence of his combat neurosis, reflected in moments of nonrealistic narrative, reminiscent of Bowen's. In Farrell's words, this narrative style focuses on "people 'undergoing' history" (quoted in McEwan 1987:125): we read history as weighing down on and unfolding via Brendan's individual psyche, which in specific moments, is troubled by his post-traumatic stress.

In *Troubles*'s 1919 context, "'undergoing' history" is to endure military violence. Brendan's intrusive flashbacks are catalyzed by the tumultuous events of the Anglo-Irish War unfolding. Amidst this continued violence, Major Brendan Archer cannot leave the First World War in the past. Flashbacks to the carnage of the trenches and visions of corpses infiltrate that present, persisting as historical events as "real" to Brendan as is his current existence at Edward's Majestic Hotel. Significantly, this both isolates and alienates Brendan further. In fact, *Troubles* is unique in its depiction of a shell-shocked veteran who "has no family of his own to go to" (9), as he attempts to recover from the war by trying to make sense of his traumatic experience for himself; he attempts to render the memory of his war experience intelligible – to feel "whole" again, to imbue his experience again with linearity – in an effort to legitimize the sense of his own survival (44). His individual "narrative" of recovery is primarily an attempt to piece together memories of his life before and during the war, revolving around the personal: his engagement to an Anglo-Irish woman, Spencer's daughter Angela.

However, it is precisely the attempt at recovering from shell-shock which clouds the Major's sense of relation to Angela even after he "left the hospital" before the "great Victory Parade marched up Whitehall" (7-8): "he now only retained a dim recollection of that time, dazed as he was by the incessant, titanic thunder of artillery that cushioned it thickly, before and after" (7). But not only is Brendan's engagement anything but settled, we come to realize that his very relationship is premised on a sense of patriotic performance and survival, particularly on Angela's part, one that looks past the trauma wrought on individual men and toward the "romance" of the war. "Angela perhaps feeling amid all the patriotism that she too should have something personal to lose, the Major that he should have at least one reason for surviving" (7). Brendan returns to the Majestic to call on his now ailing fiancée, as if to interrogate his own reason for surviving. He seeks out some semblance of community that will give meaning to his

survival. Yet in the process, he finds himself caught up, even against his will, in interrogating what the Anglo-Irish deem is their right to their class's survival.

Ironically upon his return, while Brendan attempts to claim his own trauma, the Spencers thrust onto him their own "claim" to his identity at the Majestic: that since as he is a soldier of the British Army, he is "a member of the 'quality'" (30), a proponent of the Ascendancy's unionist, anti-nationalist *ethos*. Major Brendan Archer thus becomes a type of narratological analogy or model for how trauma, to the extent that it can be both politicized and "claimed," can actually alienate and even exploit the survivor.

The implications of Edward Spencer's assumed "claim" to Major Brendan Archer are apparent during Brendan's first moments at the Majestic's breakfast table, when Spencer lauds First World War veterans' sacrifice for "King, for country, and for us" (45) – that is, Anglo-Irish unionists. But in assuming Brendan's "loyalty to the King" (90), Spencer's evocation causes Brendan to see "the vast army of the dead" (43) reappear before him, not only inducing his survivor-guilt, but causing him to see Edward's sense of loss as hypocrisy. For in fact, Edward has not even lost his own son to the war and views his son's failure to serve as bringing shame upon the Spencer name (48). Brendan sees Edward's commemoration as a kind of sociopolitical posturing; it is a lament for national-as-personal loss (not dissimilar from Angela's). Inasmuch as Edward rues the loss of the Ascendancy's lineage, he likewise decries the Empire's disintegration – that "the presence of the British signified a *moral* authority" which "the Republican movement" now threatens to destroy (55). As such, Spencer views the Majestic as one of the last strongholds against a nationalizing Ireland, and he views Brendan as one of its only remaining military-trained British defenders.

For Brendan, the Majestic thus becomes a hauntingly domineering space. Farrell pushes that symbolization to carnivalesque extremes. The narrative filters our perception through Brendan's attempt to read, or make sense of, the claustrophobic, isolating, and monstrous character of the house and its inhabitants. And it is precisely the Spencers' siege mentality, their intractable clinging to their prewar way of life, which impedes Brendan's own desire to recover from his trauma by confronting it: "he was trying once again to delve into the past with the paralyzed fingers of his memory, hoping to grasp some warmth or emotion, the name perhaps of a dead friend that might mean the beginning of grief, the beginning of an end to grief" (44). Ironically, while Brendan attempts to end the intrusion of his traumatic past, he finds that the Spencers cling to theirs – almost pathologically.

The Spencers' self-isolation is a chronic symptom of their family's ultra-unionism, manifesting literally as illness in various ways. Edward Spencer is a jingoist for the Orange narrative of loyalist history, who with a "military appearance" (49) hunts "natives" (85) half sportingly. When the Troubles arrive on his doorstep, he even ends up murdering a man who tampers with his Queen Victoria statue. While he and the elderly residents of the Majestic repeatedly provoke Irish tenants, haranguing local pubs with Union Jacks, simultaneously and farcically they repress the reality that their "Unionist cause had fallen into decline" (123). Tellingly, Spencer's last contingency of unionists is depicted, like the Majestic itself, as physically decaying with unnatural rapidity, metaphorically (and unwittingly) "engulfed by the advancing green tide" (153).

In this context, Spencer presumes that since Major Brendan Archer has been “loyal” (440) to Britain in the First World War, he must be of the Ascendancy “tribe” (30), a *de facto* “member of the ‘quality’” (33). To Spencer, that membership indexes Brendan’s “manly” (85) and “moral fiber” (86). It does not occur to Spencer, however, that although Brendan is an Englishman, he knows little about unionist or Orange politics, or even Ireland’s political crisis during and after the First World War for that matter. Consequently, Edward involves Brendan, literally, in hunting down rumored “Shinners” (24), re-exposing the Major to violence. Brendan laments this exposure. As Patrick Williams remarks, “the Major, having survived the trenches of the First World War, seems [...] in flight from mass violence and concomitant notions of masculinity” (1999:170). In drawing Brendan into the violence of the Troubles, Spencer in fact “returns” him to the First World War: the Major finds that “the war was still there. He had not yet finished with it” (79).

A significant correlation in the novel’s narrative is discernable between the political violence impinging on the Majestic and Brendan’s flashbacks. As Brendan reads through news stories (printed in the *Irish Times*)<sup>14</sup> about the Empire unraveling, he begins to read the Troubles within a global context, situating his own war story within a national one. Photographs of First World War veterans “smudged and accusing” trouble him, such that he feels that the war’s “harvest was not yet complete,” not yet “finished and forgotten” (79). Other reports of carnage compound his uneasiness, those claiming that “what was going on in Ireland was connected with what was going on in Egypt and India” (177), as insurrectionist skirmishes around the globe are countered by Britain’s reprisal killings. What becomes apparent to Brendan is the unreality and performative aspect of the Spencers’ “cut-off life,” its clinging to a now tenuous narrative of class stability, moral superiority, and martial defense amidst a drastically changing political landscape during the decline of Empire.

The infiltrating presence of violence, brought on by Spencer, begins to manifest for Brendan as post-traumatic stress, locking him in trauma time, wherein he relives the experience of his (traumatic) past. As such, *Troubles* frames Brendan’s “narrative” as contiguous with the descent of the Ascendancy estate, the center of the novel’s plot. The Anglo-Irish demesne in *Troubles* is a living anachronism; reminiscent of Montefort in *A World of Love*, the Majestic Hotel’s Anglo-Irish residents not only rue the loss of their sons to the First World War, but in the incipience of nationalist violence, they attempt to “cling to the late-Victorian, early-Edwardian period which they nostalgically regard as the height of British civilization” (Crane and Livett 1997:81). In the mind of Edward Spencer, this apogee is a version of (Irish) civilization untouched by the First World War or the 1916 Rising. The recurrence of the past-in-the-present in *Troubles* is thus a narrative design that symbolically renders Major Brendan Archer’s personal combat neurosis a kind of insistent return of the (traumatic) past, a return that is catalyzed by Edward Spencer’s tendency to cling to a prewar Anglo-Irish *ethos* of dominance by belligerently resisting Ireland’s nationalizing present.

Not surprisingly, Brendan learns early on that Edward Spencer grounds his sense of the Ascendancy’s superiority and *raison d’être* in privileging the sacrifice, specifically, of Protestant unionist servicemen in the First World War. In an argument with an elderly man regarding recently reported nationalist attacks on “R. I. C. barracks” (53), Spencer falsely attempts to claim that all Irish servicemen were Unionists and fought for continued union. His opponent attempts



to correct him by alluding to the roughly 24,000 National Volunteers that enlisted in the British Armed Forces, following John Redmond's call: "Thousands of Nationalists fought against Germany. [...] Constitutional Nationalists who fought not only for France's and Belgium's freedom, but for Ireland's too. Not all Nationalists belong to Sinn Fein, you know... [...] Those men have a right to a voice in the settlement of their country's future" (53). But Spencer entrenches himself in false narrative: "And you know as well as I do that the bulk of those who served and died came from Unionist families of the south and west. Who have a better right to a voice than the survivors of the men who fought at Thiepval, their fathers, sons and brothers? [...] I repeat, there are only two sides in Ireland. Either you are a Unionist or you support Sinn Fein, which means endorsing their mad and criminal rebellion in 1916, not to mention their friend the Kaiser" (54).

Suffering under the weight of this version of "history," Brendan departs from the Majestic ostensibly to attend the First World War's Peace Day celebration in Dublin but in fact in a secret attempt to flee Wexford. Yet, in the immediacy of these casualties, Brendan is haunted by nightmarish flashbacks: "tattered figures crawled towards him, pallid and speechless" (92). It is a portent. As a wounded veteran, for Brendan, Peace Day turns out to be anything but peaceful. The crowd, "stirring violently" and laden with "Union Jacks," troubles him as he witnesses political unrest disrupting "the triumphant apotheosis of the Empire's struggle for Peace" (93-4). When a mob breaks out, Brendan suspects that despite the ensuing violence, "Dublin was still living in the heroic past" (89). That sentiment is soon legitimated when Sinn Fein arrives, threatening soldiers, eventually gunning down an English "army officer" (101). The Major detects a "flaw in the smooth and majestic edifice of Peace Day" (89). Here in Dublin, he encounters the same rifts and cracks that back in Wexford will ultimately bring the Majestic to the ground. Brendan finds himself more than ever suffering from a sickening isolation. Removed from the dead and as it seems, the living as well, he longs for community. Ironically, Major Brendan Archer returns to "the quality," though regretfully, realizing more than ever that Edward's community belongs to a fictional "heroic past" from which it desires no escape.

Brendan returns to Wexford only to find Edward verging ever closer to madness, attempting "to close the ranks" (123) by proudly billeting Auxiliaries at the Majestic. True to history, these "ex-army officers are brought over from England" (165) to combat nationalist insurgency, and as Edward proudly boasts to Brendan, they are seasoned in combat, having "done their bit [...] in the trenches" (165). *Troubles*, however, depicts the Auxies as an unacknowledged internal threat to the Ascendancy. Brendan is "disturbed by their presence," deeming the Auxies' association with "bravery, steadfast obedience, [...] chivalry" as actually eradicated by 1914's "holocaust" (168). To him, these men are the living counterparts of the revenants that haunt him, and the Majestic comes to experience their threat as real. The Auxies hold bayonets to elderly residents' throats and forcibly invade local businesses, terrorizing both Catholic and Protestant civilians in unprovoked assaults.

In fact, the Auxies' increasing violence and reprisal terrorism not only directly trigger Brendan's flashbacks, returning him to the war, but the Majestic itself becomes a war zone for Brendan, wherein he must stay on the move in order to survive:

The Major's nerves were once more in a deplorable state. He could hardly bear to open the newspaper, for it seemed that the war, which he thought he had escaped, had pursued and caught him after all. Martial law was proclaimed in Cork, Tipperary, Kerry, and Limerick. [...] uniformed police and military staggering through the flaming streets with looted goods; Auxiliaries drunk on looted whiskey [...]. The Major's sleep was as short and disturbed as it had been during his convalescence in hospital, punctuated by nightmares which continually return him to the trenches. [...] [H]e felt himself compelled to keep moving from room to room, corridor to corridor, upstairs and down. Only now did he consider that this compulsion might stem from the irrational fear that a trench-mortar shell was about to land in the spot where he had been standing only a moment before, invisible explosions [...] on and on, perpetually allowing him to escape by a fraction of a second (296-297).

As Brendan's episodes of post-traumatic stress become more frequent, he becomes more inward-turning, apathetic, and immune to historical events (like the Majestic's residents), suggested by his dwindling interest in news altogether: "the Major was perfectly numb to the daily horrors printed by the newspaper. He had become used to them as he had once become used to the dawn barrage" (325). Living amongst revenants from the First World War, Brendan becomes bound to his own trauma – if he is "a member of the 'quality,'" he is such only to the extent that the Majestic holds him hostage.

As a result of his trauma, the Major's gradual inward turn and indifference ultimately almost leads to his own demise, evident when Spencer plans one last ball to capture the spirit of "the old days" (332). The narrative casts the apex of Spencers' siege mentality in carnivalesque, even grotesque terms. Suggesting the Majestic's way of life is now disintegrated in the aftermath of the First World War, the ball is a choreographed dance of and for the dead. Like Bowen's characters with faces like waxen masks, the Majestic's "absence of youth [...] lent the guests the appearance of wax figures, museum curiosities, unconnected with [...] the seething modern world" (345). It is a remnant of the Ascendancy cordoning itself off: "this was the face of Anglo-Ireland, the inbred Protestant aristocracy, [...] a separate species, which had ruled Ireland for almost five hundred years" (344-5).

The Auxiliaries are the only young men amongst this class, though instead of acting as suitors, they act as terrorists, "threatening to shoot" (362) their hosts. Their violence sends Brendan into his most visceral flashback, wherein in a moment of terror, he conflates an Irish tutor, Evans, who is murmuring vicious indictments at the ball, with an anonymous soldier from the Front. Brendan's violence upon the Irishman is cast as kind of transference akin to bloodletting:

But now the speaking voice rose querulously, becoming audible; a confused string of obscenities reached his ears. The voice was unrecognizable, but an image flashed into the Major's mind – of a man he had seen mortally wounded sitting hunched in a shell-hole with his intestines in his lap [...] his blue lips still quivering with an unending rigmarole of curses while his eyes turned milky. [...] There was only one person there. [...] It was Evans. [...] The Major grasped him by the frayed collar [...] and wrenched him back [...]. Sudden anger gripped him.

He shook Evans with all his strength; all the growing bitterness of the last hour, [...] all the tragedy and despair of the years in France exploded in one violent discharge of hatred concentrated on the loosely swaying head in front of him (354).

The instance exemplifies a crucially symbolic moment of traumatic repetition in the novel. Past violence repeats itself in the present. Unable to recover from the First World War in the Majestic's paradoxical space of belligerent insularity, Brendan's traumatic condition and episodes are analogized as violence reifying *in* or *as* the Troubles. An Englishman, Brendan becomes an inadvertent aggressor toward the Irish, figured in the narrative through his symbolic act of transference onto the (metaphorical) face of emergent nationalist Ireland. But like the Spencers, insofar as Brendan begins to pull back from – and even be an aggressor toward non-Anglo-Irish men and women – he becomes a target of ensuing separatist reprisals. “The quality” seals its own fate. Shortly after the ill-fated ball at the Majestic, (possible) I.R.A. members bury Major Brendan Archer on the beach facing England to drown alongside a Black and Tan. Analogously, *Troubles*'s beginning (its portended end) repeats, as the Majestic is set aflame, erasing any remnant of an Anglo-Irish presence.

Ultimately, *Troubles* suggests that it is the Majestic's *ethos* that induces Brendan's post-traumatic state, locking him in trauma time, wherein his traumatic past is inseparable from the present and just as real. As such, Farrell frames Brendan's “narrative” as contiguous with the descent of the Ascendancy estate itself. As in *A World of Love*, the Ascendancy's ultimate decline in *Troubles* comes not from lamenting their lost sons, but from attempting to maintain political, cultural, and economic dominance. In the mind of the Danbys and the Spencers, this is a version of Irish history untouched by the First World War or the 1916 Rising. In *Troubles*, the return or recurrence of the past is a narrative design that symbolically renders Major Brendan Archer's personal combat neurosis as a kind of insistent return of his (traumatic) past.

Writing *Troubles* in the late 1960s, Farrell employs this analogy of the intrusion of Brendan's traumatic past in order to adumbrate Ireland's situation in the 1970s. Farrell would later be explicit about that correlation: “I would go up to the British Museum newspaper library to read the *Irish Times* for 1920, and come back, buying an evening paper on the Tube. It was uncanny: exactly the same things were happening again, sometimes even in the same streets in Belfast” (quoted in Crane 1997:68). Farrell's rendering of violence as a recurrent aspect of Ireland's history is something that Bowen also acknowledged in *Troubles*: “It is yesterday reflected in today's consciousness. The ironies, the disparities, the dismay, the sense of unavailingness are contemporary” (1971:59). As in *A World of Love*, the “unavailingness” Farrell depicts takes expression in the Ascendancy's foremost symptom of traumatic loss – its ambivalence toward community: it is a “community which is torn to pieces between the warring impulses of order and continuity (the past),” notes Lars Hartveit, “and the vitality inherent in the process of change and renewal (the future)” (1992:456).

We are struck by the complex ways in which Bowen and Farrell treat this tension. On the one hand, they weight their novels with the realistic inevitability that despite Ireland's collective losses in the First World War, the south would continue to forge an independence-oriented consciousness. In the shifting sands of the 1920s, the non-unionist majority would see the

Ascendancy as they tacitly saw themselves – in an increasingly untenable position, their past prominence irrecoverable, their obsolescence imminent. As such, their state of resignation seemed perhaps as proper as it was inevitable. On the other hand, Bowen and Farrell question the Ascendancy's own attitude and response to that inevitability. Inasmuch as these novels display the Anglo-Irish's resignation at the loss of its sons and centuries-old existence, *A World of Love* and *Troubles* expose the limiting effects of this class's mindset of becoming locked into, or refusing to progress from a traumatic past.

It is a condition that still troubles the First World War's reception in Ireland after 2014, suggesting that indeed, yesterday is still reflected in today's consciousness. If at this moment, the Republic's unprecedented state-level participation in local and international commemorations is publicly contested, it is because the order and continuity of its former *telos* (its independence narrative) is being reconfigured through a process of change and renewal of that narrative. Bowen's and Farrell's novels suggest to us that the difficulty Irish communities face in endorsing such change may arise from which traumas they have undergone and are descended from, as well as which narratives they adhere to.

For while *A World of Love* and *Troubles* empathize with the persistence of traumatic memory, the novels also forewarn us of the consequences of being "locked in time" – or in stasis – by either clinging to a singular traumatic narrative or by not making room for contiguous traumatic pasts – the impediments to community. Indeed, in light of *A World of Love*'s and *Troubles*'s concerns for trauma and community, these novels invite us to participate in what Caruth refers to as "a new mode of reading and listening": the narratives invite us to consider "the way in which one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's wound" (1995:8-9). This notion of reading and listening to (trauma) narratives speaks to the utility of Irish First World War literature in current public culture. As the decade of centenaries is underway, perhaps this is an apt time to look toward Ireland's literary narratives as a means of writing the future of its historical ones.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to keep in mind, however, that in Ireland after 1918, the 200,000 recruits who served in the British Armed Forces from 1914-1918 were neither unanimously nor immediately forgotten or elided from memory, in either the South of Ireland (including the Irish Free State and the Republic) or Ulster (later, Northern Ireland). The term that is often employed to characterize the First World War's gradual fading from Ireland's public memory is "national amnesia," first used by F. X. Martin in his posthumously published essay, "1916 – myth, fact, and mystery" (1967). But it should be pointed out that contrary to numerous historians' interpretations of Martin's term, Martin identified "national amnesia" as setting in particularly in the mid-1960s, during the centenary of the 1916 Rising. During this time, the Republic made a more concerted, public effort to emphasize the South's independence narrative of Easter 1916 over its First World War experience. Later, historians with revisionist tendencies such as R. F. Foster employed a more loaded term, "deliberate amnesia" (1988:535), in order to call attention (though somewhat overstatedly) to how the South began to claim the Rising as the Republic's founding narrative, and how consequently over time, the First World War was elided from public commemoration or acknowledgement.

<sup>2</sup> This term, taken from Bowen's essay, "Out of a book," is later made the title of Neil Corcoran's *Elizabeth Bowen: The Enforced Return*, wherein he employs Bowen's phrase in a variety of ways. One of them is to explicate Bowen's tendency to write about the troubled past in terms of haunting return. In discussing how Bowen's fiction thematizes "returning" to original sites of distress, Corcoran writes, "Bowen's writing [...] manifests the entrapment of obsessive return, the inability to shake off a distressing, or distressed, past in a way which virtually demands to be under the rubric of Freudian return of the repressed" (2004:9). This notion of the haunting return of the past (and of the repressed) is central to how the narratives of Bowen and Farrell figure the Ascendancy's compulsion to look back obsessively at its prewar way of life, and how the spectral return of the First World War dead functions symbolically as the representation of a traumatic past that has yet to be properly dealt with, and thus overcome.

<sup>3</sup> Higgins, for instance, echoes historian Alvin Jackson's description in "Irish Unionism" of the competing mythologies surrounding 1916 and the First World War into the 1920-30s: "War simultaneously united and divided the Irish people: 1916 came to represent a different form of magic number to different types of Irishmen and women, even though Protestants and Catholics were fighting and dying together on the Western Front. The Great War, and the battle of the Somme in particular, dominated Unionist history-writing in the 1920s, when the Irish Free State was being supplied with a revolutionary mythology and hagiography by its scholarly and polemical defenders. Celebratory accounts of the struggle against the British and of its protagonists filtered into the print of the 1920s and 1930s" (1996:125-126).

<sup>4</sup> This number of servicemen includes recruits who were enlisted before 1914-1918, in addition to soldiers who served in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 36<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Divisions who did not necessarily have Irish ancestry, but who began to fill these divisions in the last two years for the war following heavy casualties. For detailed figures on Irish recruitment by year and division, see: David Fitzpatrick's "Militarism in Ireland 1900-1922," in *A Military History of Ireland*.

<sup>5</sup> As Keith Jeffery aptly points out (qualifying Roy Foster's suggestion in *Modern Ireland* that the war was, entirely, anathema in the South during the 1920-30s), Irishmen by the thousands would parade in Dublin for Armistice Day. "Official Irish government representatives laid wreaths at the London Cenotaph," and "the Fianna Fáil government after 1932 provided a publicly acknowledged state subsidy for the completion of the Edwin Lutyens-designed Irish National War Memorial" (2011:257). Additional governmental measures included the 1919 Irish Land (Provision for Sailors and Soldiers) Act, a housing and land settlement project that provided about 7,600 homes for Irishmen of the British Armed Forces returning from the First World War (Jeffery 2001:117).

<sup>6</sup> Noting the historical resonances in this protest incident, Evershed writes: "A protest banner, proclaiming in the hundred-year-old slogan of the Irish Citizen Army that 'We Serve Neither King Nor Kaiser', and the accompanying chants of 'Shame on you!', haunted Higgins' speech in Glasnevin. Despite (or because of) the social and political transformations engendered by forty years of conflict, the ghosts of 1916 that haunted 1966 continue to disrupt during this Decade of Centenaries" (2016:242).

<sup>7</sup> See "Commemorating the Dead of the First World War." *Irish Times*. 5 Aug. 2015, for the wide range of responses to the Republic's most public and publicized participation in commemoration ceremonies to date.

<sup>8</sup> For a sustained discussion of the unevenness of the First World War's commemoration amidst the decade of centenaries, see Mark Quigley's "Reconsidering the Great War: Ireland and the First World War," in *Modernist Cultures*.

<sup>9</sup> To date, the only monograph of Irish First World War literature that also includes prose and drama is Terry Phillips's *Irish Literature and the First World War: Culture, Identity, and Memory*. However, this book does not discuss or mention *A World of Love or Troubles*.

<sup>10</sup> Bowen later wrote of this moment: "For miles around, each isolated big house had disgorged its talker, this first day of the war. The tensions of months, of years – outlying tension of Europe, inner tension of Ireland – broke in a spate of words. Braced against the gale from the mountains, licking dust from their lips these were the unmartialled loyalists of the South. Not a family had not put out, like Bowen's Court, its generations of military brothers – tablets in Protestant churches recorded deaths in remote battles; swords hung in halls. If the Anglo-Irish live on and for a myth, for that myth they constantly shed their blood. So, on this August 1914 day of grandeur and gravity, the Ascendancy rallied, renewed itself" (1942:434-435).

<sup>11</sup> Referring to the trope of the burning Anglo-Irish estate home which becomes the last image of Bowen's *The Last September*, and which is later employed by J. G. Farrell at the denouement of *Troubles*, Bowen writes in *Bowen's Court*: "So often in my mind's eye did I see it burning that the terrible last event in *The Last September* is more real than anything I have lived through" (1952:126).

<sup>12</sup> For instance, taking up the idiom of living amongst their own ghosts, Countess Elizabeth Fingal wrote: "I used to think and say, during the War, that if ever that list of Dead and Wounded could cease, I would never mind anything or grumble at anything again. But when the Armistice came at least, we seemed drained of all feeling. And one felt nothing. We took up our lives again, or tried to take them up. The World we had known had vanished. We hunted again, but ghosts rode with us. We sat at table, and there were absent faces. For us, I suppose, the Irish Troubles were a continuation of the War" (1937:386).

<sup>13</sup> Edkins's notion of "trauma time" as inseparable, and no less real than linear time, is crucial for understanding why past traumatic events are still extant *in* or *as* the present for the traumatized: "Linear time and trauma time do not exist independently; [...] they define and constitute each other in a complex relationship, almost like opposite poles of a dichotomy. Like remembering and forgetting, each implies the other: they are inextricably entwined. Trauma time is inherent in and destabilizes any production of linearity. Trauma has to be excluded for linearity to be convincing, but it cannot be completely put to one side: it always intrudes, it cannot be completely forgotten. And similarly, trauma time cannot be described in the language we have without recourse to notions of linearity" (2003:15-6).

<sup>14</sup> The news clips inserted throughout *Troubles* are all excerpts from the *Irish Times*, which Farrell collected from the British Museum as he was composing the novel.

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