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Master Thesis

A BLEND OF HISTORIOGRAPHY AND FICTION IN PAT BARKER'S TRILOGY *REGENERATION*

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci na téma “Kombinace historiografie a fikce v trilogii Pat Barker *Regenaration*” vypracovala samostatně. Během zpracovaní diplomové práce jsem použila pouze citované literarní a informační podklady uvedené v seznamu literatury.

V Praze, dne 17.10. 2011

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Abstract

This thesis explores the factual and fictional content of Pat Barker's war trilogy *Regeneration*, which consists of the novels *Regeneration* (1991), *The Eye in the Door* (1993) and *The Ghost Road* (1995). The aim of the thesis is to find various historical facts Barker uses in her trilogy and analyze how the author incorporates them into her fiction. In searching for the factual content of the trilogy, the thesis focuses on certain historical events, matters or issues which create the background of the trilogy. Some of the main characters of the trilogy and their real prototypes are analyzed. The thesis attempts to describe the trilogy as an antiwar literary work, depicting the impact of the war on soldiers and those who come in contact with them.

Abstrakt

Tato práce zkoumá, jakým způsobem Pat Barker ve své trilogii *Regeneration* kombinuje fiktivní prvky s prvky historicky podloženými. Trilogie obsahuje romány *Regeneration* (1991), *The Eye in the Door* (1993) a *The Ghost Road* (1995). Cílem práce je najít různá historická fakta, jež Barker v trilogii využívá, a analyzovat jakým způsobem je autorka začleňuje do své fikce. V hledání faktického obsahu díla se práce soustředí na určité historické události, záležitosti a problematiky, které stojí na pozadí trilogie. Práce analyzuje některé z hlavních postav trilogie a jejich skutečné vzory. Práce se pokouší popsat trilogii jako protiválečné literární dílo tím, že poukazuje na dopad války na vojáky a ty, kteří s nimi přijdou do styku.

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Abbreviations

R	*Regeneration*
ED	*The Eye in the Door*
GR	*The Ghost Road*

Introduction

This thesis analyses factual and fictional content of Pat Barker's war trilogy *Regeneration*, which consists of the novels *Regeneration* (1991), *The Eye in the Door* (1993) and *The Ghost Road* (1995). In historical fiction it can be difficult to define where facts subside and fiction begins. Not that it would be essential for a literary work, but it is definitely interesting to observe how the author treats facts and incorporates them in his or her work. This is one of the reasons why I chose this topic. Another reason for deciding for this topic was the influence of my Bachelor's Thesis, which aimed to define the autobiographical and fictional elements in Ernest Hemingway's literary work, and which is thus quite similar in nature with this thesis. Finding this type of analysis quite enriching, I decided to stay in this field.

The objective of the thesis is not only to find out which historical facts Barker uses in her trilogy, but also to analyze the ways in which she incorporates them in her work. Barker's trilogy concerns the time period of the First World War and depicts the impact of the war on soldiers, medicine and the British society. It revolves around the destinies of broken soldiers and on the treatment they get to be able to go back to the front. The author also explores the social impact of the Great War on Britain, focusing on the oppression of those who, in some way, do not conform with the generally accepted ideas and values of the society.

The thesis is divided into six chapters, each of them dealing with different aspects of the analysis, such as the characters of the trilogy or the historical events engaged. The different novels are not analyzed separately but all together with respect to the above-mentioned aspects. The first chapter introduces a brief summary of each novel of the trilogy. It is useful to include this part because the reader should be familiarized with the plots of the novels in order to comprehend the thesis in a better way.

The next chapter deals with the characters from the trilogy and their real prototypes. Since Barker bases her work on an important part of the British history, it would be impossible not to include some personalities connected with that period. Some of the characters in the trilogy have their real prototypes,

some of them are based only partly on certain people, and others are the product of Barker's sheer imagination. The attention is mainly paid to the central protagonist of the trilogy, doctor William Rivers, who is responsible for the treatment of broken officers at Craiglockhart hospital. Another character analyzed in detail is Rivers' patient Siegfried Sassoon, who became known for his declaration against the war. The figure of Sassoon is connected with the war poet Wilfred Owen, Rivers' most famous patient. The thesis explores his relationship with Sassoon, focusing more on their literary cooperation. Another character with his real prototype mentioned in the work is the poet Robert Graves, who is acquainted to both Owen and Sassoon. A considerable space of the thesis is devoted to doctor Yealland, whose treatment of soldiers very much differs from that of Rivers.

The third chapter concerns the environment of the Craiglockhart hospital, where the neurasthenic soldiers are treated. The second part of this chapter describes some of Craiglockhart's patients who are based on real people doctor Rivers treated. The fourth chapter deals with some historical events or issues of the wartime Britain which Barker uses as a background for the trilogy. It analyses the notorious case of one pacifist family and its appearance in *The Eye in the Door*. The chapter also focuses on the oppression of people with other than heterosexual orientation, which was a very up-to-date issue then. The fifth chapter is devoted to Rivers' experiences in Melanesia, where he worked as an anthropologist. During this time Rivers documented his adventures extensively. The chapter explores the way in which Barker incorporates Rivers' notes in *The Ghost Road*. The last part of this thesis attempts to portray Barker's trilogy as an anti-war literary work. In order to do so, the chapter introduces several examples on which the author's aim to show the absurdity of the war is demonstrated.

Since *Regeneration* is a relatively recent literary work, and not very known to larger reading public, there is not much information or secondary literature dealing with the factual and fictional content of the trilogy. Therefore, the analytical parts of this thesis are predominately based on the method of close reading of the three novels and on studying literary sources dealing with the afore-mentioned aspects and perspectives of the analysis. Theoretical passages are placed within the actual text and do not therefore create separate

units or chapters in the overall structure of the work. This choice was motivated by the attempt to make the text more coherent, fluent and readable.

1. A Brief Summary of the Novels

Regeneration

The novel begins in 1917 in England with Siegfried Sassoon's protest against the First World War. As the statement has received much attention and might threaten the spirit of the war effort, the authorities do not know what to do with Sassoon's "act of wilful defiance". Siegfried's friend, Robert Graves, explains to him that he should give up the protest and stand before the Medical Board instead of waiting for the court martial. With Graves' help and some string pulling, Sassoon is sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital, a place where various kinds of war neurosis are treated. Sassoon's doctor is Dr. W.H.R. Rivers, whose humane treatment of neurosis is well known. They pursue the "treatment" by which Rivers tries to make Sassoon go back.

The spectrum of patients at Craiglockhart is wide. From Burns, who experienced something so vile that he cannot eat, to Anderson, who cannot see blood. Prior, an arrogant patient suffering from mutism and memory loss, arrives at the hospital and becomes one of the more important characters. Sassoon befriends Wilfred Owen and agrees to help him with his own poems. Prior regains his voice and starts a relationship with a munitions factory girl called Sarah. Rivers helps Prior to remember the tragic experience that led to his collapse. Rivers reminisces about his experiment on nerve regeneration he once underwent with Henry Head. After severing the nerve in Head's arm, he mapped the sensitivity Head was regaining. Rivers did not want to cause him pain by prickling his arm, but he knew he had to go on. A much stronger dilemma troubles Rivers throughout the novel. Although he disagrees with the War, he has to "regenerate" his patients and send them back from where they came broken-down.

Rivers becomes ill and takes vacation in his brother's house. Meanwhile, Prior is granted permanent home service and Sassoon decides to go back to the Front. Rivers takes a new job in a London hospital and during his stay in the city he is invited by Dr. Yealland to the National Hospital, where he witnesses the doctor's terrible treatment of mutism by the electro-shock therapy. When

Rivers visits Craiglockhart, he says farewell to Sassoon with concern that Sassoon wants to go back to be killed.

The Eye in the Door

The story begins in April 1918 and continues the stories of Dr. Rivers, Billy Prior and Siegfried Sassoon. The novel is set in London and it finishes some time before the end of the War. In spring 1918 Germany is likely to defeat Britain. In this atmosphere, the search for scapegoats leads to even bigger discrimination of pacifists and homosexuals. Compared to *Regeneration* where facts and fiction blend, *The Eye in the Door* renders real events, but remains within the realm of fiction. This gives Barker the opportunity to be more creative and analyze her characters in a deeper manner. The main protagonist of the novel, Billy Prior, works in the Ministry of Munitions Intelligence Unit in London after being discharged from Craiglockhart. Prior has to investigate an attempt to assassinate the Prime Minister, Lloyd George. This is a difficult task for him because he knows the convicted pacifist, Beattie Roper, very well. When Prior was a child, they spent much time together since Beattie helped to bring him up.

When Prior enters Beattie's cell, he notices a big painted eye whose pupil forms the door's lock. He immediately recalls the traumatic event from the battlefield when he was holding an eye of one of his men in his hand. Prior starts having fugue states, from which he does not remember what he did. This disturbs him, and so he seeks help from Rivers. Prior is afraid that during these states he did something dreadful, probably betrayed Beattie and another pacifist he knew from his childhood. Among Rivers' other patients is Charles Manning, who is also shell-shocked. His neurosis gets even worse when he receives a copy of an article saying that some prominent British homosexual men and women might be blackmailed by German agents. Manning is afraid as he reckons he is one of them. The Pemberton Billing trial, a conflict between a homophobic MP member and a famous lesbian actress, also complements the background of the novel.

At the end of *The Eye in the Door*, Sassoon is wounded on the Front and sent to The American Red Cross Hospital at Lancaster Gate with a head wound. After hearing the news, Rivers immediately visits his former patient. Sassoon has changed, and there are indications his wound was the result of a suicidal attempt.

The Ghost Road

The third novel of the trilogy culminates the events from *The Eye in the Door*. Again, we meet the same characters such as Dr. William Rivers, fictional Billy Prior and Wilfred Owen. This time, however, Rivers and Prior are the main protagonists. The book is divided into two parts slightly different in form, which adds to the originality of the novel. The whole book is a mixture of Prior's and Rivers' experiences. The first section of the novel shows Rivers working in a London hospital, while Prior is preparing to go back to the Western Front. This part is enriched by Rivers' childhood memories. In the second section of the book, Rivers' reminiscences about his anthropological expeditions are interwoven into Prior's journal and narrative from the Front.

Prior is more or less cured of shell shock and the Medical Board decides he is fit for the service. He is ready to go back to the Front together with Wilfred Owen, with whom he spent some time in Craiglockhart hospital. Meanwhile the relationship of Saran and Prior continues, and they get engaged. Prior is introduced to Sarah's conservative mother, and the couple struggles to have some privacy during Prior's stay at Lumb's. Although he is in a relationship, the bisexual Prior has several sexual encounters throughout the novel, both with men and women. In a London hospital Rivers is preoccupied with his neurasthenic patients, among which are for example Moffet suffering from hysterical paralysis, or Wansbeck, who is constantly afraid of bad smell. Rivers also takes care of his invalid sister while he contemplates uncomfortable events from his childhood.

In the second part of the novel, Prior is on the Front either training with his men or in the battlefield, where he experiences horrors such as seeing his friend, who has only half a face due to the bombing, dying. Prior's journal from

the Front is mixed with Rivers' reminiscence about his research expeditions as a young anthropologist. The fieldtrip he participated in took place in Melanesia in Eddystone Island, where he mostly studied the kinship and the marriage institution of the natives. It is the autumn of 1918 and the war is about to end. The novel finishes with a description of a battle that takes place a few days before the Armistice, and in which Prior and Owen are killed.

2. The Characters from *Regeneration* and their Real Prototypes

Siegfried Sassoon

Siegfried Sassoon is a major character in *Regeneration*, the first book of the trilogy. He also appears at the end of *The Eye in the Door*, and in *The Ghost Road,* he acquires a minor role. It is no wonder Barker chose Sassoon as one of the trilogy's most important characters, since he was a prominent persona of WWI. Sassoon's importance was both literary and historical, which is quite rare in a writer. He is mostly known for his war poetry and official protest against the war. His pacifist attitude caused him to be wrongly diagnosed as shell-shocked, and he was sent to a war hospital in Scotland.

Siegfried Loraine Sassoon was born on 8 September 1886 in Kent to a Jewish father and an Anglo-Catholic mother. His father, Alfred Ezra Sassoon, was a member of the wealthy Baghdadi Sephardic Jewish Sassoon merchant family. Sassoon was often considered to be rich due to his surname; however, his father was disinherited for marrying outside the faith. Sassoon always denied he was 'a typical Jew' and disliked to be thought rich. His mother, Theresa, came from the Thornycroft family, famous for their renowned statues. Her brother was Hamo Thornycroft, a prominent English sculptor. Sassoon had two brothers, Hamo and Michael. Their parents separated when Sassoon was four years old. He attended The New Beacon Preparatory School, Sevenokas in Kent, then Marlborough College, and Clare College in Cambridge, where he read history. After two years, he left the college without a degree. Thanks to the ancestry of his father, Sassoon did not need to earn a living, so he could indulge himself in playing cricket, writing poetry, hunting and in other hobbies. He loved cricket, but was not good enough at it to play it for Kent, which he always wanted. Sassoon then focused on poetry. His first distinct published work was a poem The Daffodil Murderer, a parody on John Masefield's The Everlasting Mercy.

Sassoon joined the British Army at the very beginning of the war, but he was wounded in a riding accident before he left England, and was hence convalescing till the spring of 1915. In November 1915, he was sent to France.

As a lieutenant he did very well on the Western Front, showing courage and bravery where he could. He was even awarded the Military Cross. His men he was in charge of assured him they felt absolutely save when he was around. During one of the operations against Germans, Sassoon was wounded when he 'decided to take a peep at the surrounding country' (Egremont 131). He was shot by a machine gun into his back. Luckily, the bullet went straight through without touching a nerve or blood vessel. After some time spent in the hospital he attended a Medical Board, which decided he could go back in three weeks. Meanwhile, Sassoon was thinking 'he should write something more likely to reach a large audience than fierce poems published in small-circulation journals.' (Egremont 143) What a shock it was when he wrote an official statement announcing he had finished with the war. At the end of his convalescent leave in 1917, Sassoon wrote a letter to his commanding officer with the title "Finished with the War: A Soldier's Declaration." The protest read:

I am making this statement as an act of wilful defiance of military authority, because I believe that the War is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it. I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that this War, on which I entered as a war of defense and liberation, has now become a war of aggression and conquest. I believe that the purpose for which I and my fellow soldiers entered upon this war should have been so clearly stated as to have made it impossible to change them, and that, had this been done, the objects which actuated us would now be attainable by negotiation. I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops, and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust. I am not protesting against the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed. On behalf of those who are suffering now I make this protest against the deception which is being practiced on them; also I believe that I may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the contrivance of agonies which they do not, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realize.

Sassoon's attitude towards the war was gradually changing due to his personal experience with the battlefield. This also influenced his writing, which turned from romantic poetry to war poetry showing the truths and horrors of the warfare. He started doubting the reasons the war was fought for, his psychical state affected by the death of his friend David Cuthbert Tomas. Sassoon's opinion on the war was also influenced by his stay in Garsington, a manor where pacifists and anti-militarists used to gather. Garsington, situated near Oxford, belonged to Lady Ottoline Morrell and her husband. Among the regular guests were for example the Huxley brothers and Bertrand Russell, Lady Ottoline's lover. It was Russell who persuaded Sassoon to write the protest against the war, although In Barker's *Regeneration* Sassoon denies it: Graves: 'If I had Russell here now, I'd shoot him.' Sassoon: 'It was my idea' (R 6). Russell also helped with the form of the statement. The Garsington pacifist circle, and Russell especially, wanted to profit from Sassoon's declaration. In order to get publicity they exploited him in supporting his conduct. The protest was printed in press and Lees Smith, a pacifist MP, ensured Russell it would be read in the House of Commons. As the final gesture of his disgust with the war, Sassoon threw his Military Cross in the river Mersey. Rivers: 'You threw it in the Mersey, didn't you?' 'Yes. It wasn't heavy enough to sink, so it just…*bobbed* around' (R 15). This is actually one of the first conversations Rivers and Sassoon have in *Regeneration*. By including the story about Sassoon's contempt for the Military Cross, Barker emphasizes the ridiculousness of his conduct.

Sassoon awaited a court-martial, which, however, did not come. Instead, he was persuaded to attend a Medical Board, where on the basis of his declaration and other interrogations he was declared unfit for military service. He was sent to the Craighlockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh where he was to be treated for neurasthenia. This is where *Regeneration*, the first novel of the trilogy, starts. Barker begins with Sassoon's journey to the hospital, then with his arrival and encounter with his future psychiatrist, William Rivers. Sassoon scorned the other patients in Craiglockhart and he found them degenerates. He knew he had disappointed Ottoline Morrell, Russell and other pacifists, but could not do anything about it. He found his doctor the only person he could

normally talk to. Otherwise, he took no part in Craiglockhart's clubs and social life. He either used to walk alone in the Pentlant Hills, played golf nearby the hospital, made trips into Edinburgh or visited people to whom he was introduced. Slowly he started realizing, thanks to some extent to the conversations with his psychiatrist, and also because of his nightmares about the war, that he should go back to the Front.

In *Regeneration* Barker movingly depicts the last straw that makes Sassoon go back. It was known that Sassoon occasionally suffered from hallucinations. This happened to him first in London when, in the middle of the day he saw dismembered corpses with only half heads crawling on the ground and approaching him: Sassoon: 'Well, that [declaration] doesn't prove me insane.' Graves: 'And the hallucinations? *The corpses in Piccadilly*?' (R 7). Barker, knowing about this Sassoon's problem, creates an interesting scene at the end of the novel, where the protagonist admits to Rivers he sometimes sees his dead friends from the Front. One of the men is Sassoon's good friend and fellow officer, who died in action: 'I just went off to sleep and … when I woke up, somebody was standing just inside the door. I knew who it was. I couldn't see the face, but I recognized his coat.' He paused. 'Orme. Nice lad. Died six months ago' (R 188). Orme was later an inspiration for Sassoon's famous poem To Any Dead Officer. After the hallucinations Sassoon feels guilty, because he is in safe Craiglockhart while his friends are fighting in muddy France. This, in Barker's version, is also one of the reasons why Sassoon decides to go to back.

Sassoon appeared in front of the Medical Board, which decided he was fit for military service. He spent some time in safer Palestine, but eventually returned to France. On July 13 in 1918, Sassoon was wounded again near Arras in France. Feeling self-confident after a successful action he and his men underwent, he stood up to look at the enemy's line. He was, unfortunately, mistaken for a German and shot in head probably by a sergeant of his company. He was taken to the British Red Cross Hospital, from where he continued to London and the American Red Cross Hospital at Lancaster Gate. With this Sassoon's time as a fighting soldier finished.

Sassoon's stay in the Red Cross Hospital is portrayed in the last part of *The Eye in the Door*. While being in the hospital, Sassoon received many

guests including Rivers, who, in Barker's version, comes to see him as soon as he hears about Sassoon's accident. Sassoon was known among his men for being rather reckless in action and for his near-suicidal exploits; hence his nickname Mad Jack. Even Rivers realizes this fact at the end of *Regeneration*: 'Rivers knew, though he had never voiced his knowledge, that Sassoon was going back with the intention of being killed. Partly, no doubt, this was youthful dramatization. *I'll show them. They'll be sorry*. But underneath that, Rivers felt there was a genuine and very deep desire for death' (R 250). By including this passage in *Regeneration*, Barker foreshadows what will happen to Sassoon later in *The Eye of the Door*.

Sassoon's carelessness can be seen in both his war accidents. In the first one mentioned above, he was not very cautious and he wanted to explore one of the trenches alone. He did not find anything particularly disturbing and he just wanted to look at the surrounding country. Raising his head he suddenly felt a blow in the back and realized he was hit by a bullet between the shoulders. After he found out he was not dead, Sassoon even wanted to continue in the action, for he felt not only a hero, but a wounded hero. He suggested the renewal of the attack and later described his momentous feeling with the words 'I felt capable of the most suicidal exploits' (Egremont 131). The second accident was very similar. Sassoon only wanted to see the enemy's side, and so he raised his head and looked back. In *The Eye in the Door*, Barker emphasizes that Sassoon even took off his helmet before looking to the other side. This makes Rivers very angry, since he assumes Sassoon did it because he wanted to be killed. 'You stand up in the middle of No Man's Land, in the morning, the sun rising, you take off your helmet, you turn to face the German lines, and you tell me you weren't trying to get killed' (ED 222). No matter if he really took off his helmet or not, Barker tries to depict Sassoon's suicidal tendencies throughout the trilogy, which she manages to do convincingly.

W.H.R. Rivers

Williams Rivers is one of the main characters of the whole trilogy based on the real-life W.H.R Rivers who was best known for his work with neurasthenic soldiers during WWI. He was an English anthropologist, neurologist, ethnologist and psychiatrist. Rivers worked at Craiglockhart War Hospital from 1916 to 1917. His most famous patient was Siegfried Sassoon and their relationship is further analyzed in the first novel of the trilogy and also in the last part of the following novel. In *The Ghost Road*, Rivers reminisces about his expeditions he used to make as an anthropologist. Although Rivers cures his neurasthenic patients most of which stammer, he himself suffers from a slight stammer he finds difficult to control. The trilogy mentions the experiment concerning nerve regeneration Rivers did with his friend Henry Head. This experiment was Barker's inspiration for the title of her work. Rivers' main dilemma throughout the trilogy is that he treats soldiers in order that they can go back to the front, the place that makes them neurasthenic. The question of the trilogy might then be, whether it is possible to be regenerated, or if the traces of the horrors of the war are ever indelible.

Born in 1864 Williams Hales Rivers Rivers was the oldest of four children, his siblings being Ethel, Charles and Catherine. Concerning his name, Slobodin notes there might have been a mistake on the baptismal certificate, since it is unusual to have Rivers as both given name and surname. Anyway, the final version of the name was signed by Rivers' father, so it was probably intended. The Rivers family had Royal Navy associations, the most famous of which was the Midshipman Williams Rivers and his father, the Gunner Rivers. They both served in HMS Victory, the Midshipman being the man who shot the French who killed Admiral Nelson in the battle of Trafalgar. Rivers was a smart child and after finishing a preparatory school in Brighton he attended a well-known public school Tonbridge. He was supposed to take his degree at Cambridge University, but because of a serious illness he could not finish the last year of his school, and so he missed the entrance exams to Cambridge. 'I got typhoid in my last year at school. We couldn't afford Cambridge without the scholarship' (R 135). However, he decided to study medicine and matriculated at University of London, and entered St. Bartholomew's hospital, one of the

teaching hospitals of the University. After that he received the Bachelor of Medicine at the very early age of twenty-two, which was very unusual. He wanted to join the army, but because of his poor health it was not possible. Instead of fulfilling his dream, Rivers decided to serve several terms as a ship's surgeon because he enjoyed travelling. Back in England Rivers became a house physician at St. Bartholomew hospital in London and later at National Hospital for the Paralyzed and Epileptic.

Rivers suffered from stammer since he was a child. It was in the family's tradition to treat stammer, and Rivers' father was a speech therapist. However, there is no evidence that young William was treated by his father. Later Rivers remarked that the best thing to do about the stammer was to forget it. Although his stuttering diminished over the years, it never truly left him. Knowing Rivers was never completely free of stammering, Barker shows his condition in the trilogy. It is the fictional character Billy Prior who notices it was not only the patients in Craiglockhart who stammer: Rivers: 'We-el, it's interesting that you were mute and that you're one of the very few people in the hospital who doesn't *stammer*.' Prior: 'It's even more interesting that you do.' Rivers was taken back. 'That's d-different' (R 97).

Rivers also suffered from having no sensory memory, apart from dreaming, half-sleeping or half-waking state when he was able to visualize to some extent. This was not Rivers' problem since he was born. He remarked that before he was five his visual imagery was perfect. He did not know what had changed it, but in the beginning he thought it was his low attention and interest in his visual imagery. What was obscure was the fact that the images from his early age remained concrete and vivid in contrast to the images from his later life. Interesting was that Rivers was unable to visualize the upper floor of his house until he was five, while he remembered perfectly the lower floor of the same house. This, Rivers thought, must have been a result of something unpleasant, which had happened to him on the upper floor of the house. Because it was bad, he tried to suppress the memory and hence forgot the whole image of the upper part of the house. Since then his sensory memory in general was handicapped. Barker describes a conversation between Rivers and Prior, where Rivers admits to the patient his problem with visual memory:

'…something happened to me on the top floor that was so terrible that I simply had to forget it. And in order to ensure that I forgot I suppressed not just the one memory, but the capacity to remember things visually at all' (ED 137). Prior then remarked: 'You destroyed your visual memory. You put your mind's eye out' (ED 139). It is not known whether Rivers' visual memory ever improved. If it did, there is no evidence of it; neither in his work, nor in his personal notes.

Slowly, Rivers started being interested in neurology and psychology, especially experimental psychology, and his reputation as a researcher was growing. He became one of the researchers at Cambridge University, where he also started lecturing. The topics he dealt with were special senses like colour vision, optical illusions and sound-reactions. Although he liked his job, he desired a change after some time spent at the University. That was offered to him by his colleague Alfred Cort Haddon when he suggested to Rivers that he led an expedition to the Torres Straights, a place between Australia and New Guinea. After the first refusal Rivers agreed to participate in the field trip, and a group of five men set up for the journey. During the expedition Rivers tested the colour vision of the indigenes, and he gained some interesting results. The expedition was productive in many ways, and it also originated many long-lasting friendships.

Soon after Rivers returned to England, he discovered his old friend Henry Head was doing a study of nerve injuries among patients attending the hospital. Rivers, also interested in this matter, decided he would help Head with the experiment. However, looking at it from psycho-psychical point of view, Rivers realized one of them would have to be the actual guinea pig to gain precise results. Head volunteered to be the subject of the experiment. The radial and external cutaneous nerves of Head's arm were severed and sutured. Rivers' task was to examine the regeneration of the nerves by exploring the sensitivity of particular places on the arm. Together they charted the progress of regeneration over a period of five years. In the beginning the experiments were very painful. Head felt either almost nothing or extreme pain. Rivers was worried about causing his friend pain, but it would never have occurred to either of them to stop the experiment. To map the sensitivity, Rivers used many kinds of instruments from simple cotton to sharp pins.

Barker describes the experiment in *Regeneration* in connection with one of Rivers' dreadful dreams:

'I was in my room at St. John's…Head was beside me, his left sleeve rolled up, and his eyes closed…My task was to map the area of hypersensitivity to pain on Head's forearm. Every time I pricked him he cried out and tried to pull his arm away. I was distressed by this and didn't want to go on, but I knew I had to. Head kept on crying out…Head opened his eyes and said 'Why don't you try it?' He was holding an object out towards me. The object … was a scalpel…he'd leant forward and brought the scalpel down my arm…After a second, small beads of blood began to appear' (R 45-46).

Rivers was used to interpreting his patient's dreams and nightmares as well as his own dreams. Barker attempts to interpret this dream and gives several interpretations. One of them might be that Rivers wishes to be back in Cambridge with the scientific team. Another possibility is that he wants to harm one of his close friends. Barker admits the inspiration for the name of her trilogy came actually from her husband who is familiar with W.H.R. Rivers' scientific work, especially with the above-mentioned experiment. The title of the trilogy might not only be connected with this particular experiment. It also may be a parallel to the "regeneration" of the soldiers who break down in the war, though it is only a question to what extent the patients regenerate, and whether they actually do. Barker definitely chose an interesting title, which is open to discussion.

In 1904 Rivers founded the British Journal of Psychology, where he was at first a joint editor. He was also interested in ethnological and sociological problems. He started being more engaged in anthropology, which led into another field trip. In November 1907 he went to the Solomon Islands, which was later extended to other areas of Melanesia. He also reached Polynesia, including stays in Hawaii and Fiji. The itinerary of the fieldwork is given in *The History of Melanesian Society* (1914), Rivers' two-volume publication dedicated to St. Johns. Rivers was accompanied by thirty-six years old Gerald C. Wheeler and Arthur M. Hocart, who was twenty-five. Wheeler, however, spent most of his time with another scientists in Western Solomons, and Rivers worked with Hocart, whom he appreciated a lot. They travelled throughout

much of 1908 and worked together during Rivers' sojourn in Fiji. Hocart stayed in Fiji for three more years and he continued with the work which Rivers begun. In *The History of Melanesian Society* Rivers wrote that the Western British Solomons would be fully dealt with in his and Hocart's new publication, but this never happened. During the trip Rivers focused for example on kinship, marriage and other institutions of this headhunting society, such as associations.

It is in *The Ghost Road*, where Rivers recalls his adventures from the Melanesian field trip, mainly form his stay in Eddystone, a Melanesian island. Once the reader finishes a chapter concerning accounts of the war given by Prior, one is immediately taken by Rivers' reminiscence about his days in Melanesia, though not in the first but in the third person. In Eddystone, Rivers studied the kinship system of the headhunters. In the novel he compares the culture of "primitive tribes" with the culture of civilized countries. At one point he 'realized that their view of *his* society was no more or less valid than his view of theirs' (GR 119). Rivers tries to assimilate with the local indigenes to be able to understand them. He befriends people such as Njiru, Kundaite, Namboko Taru, Namboko Emele, Nareti, Lembu and others. These characters are also historical but nothing more is known of them.

In *The Ghost Road*, Barker develops more their relationships with Rivers, especially the relationship between Rivers and Nijru. Njiru, the leader of the whole tribe, explains to Rivers everything the scientist wants to know. Although Rivers and Hocart are accepted by the community, they often feel insecure: 'What do we do if they come back with a head?' 'Logically, we don't intervene.' 'Logically, we're dead. Even if we decide we won't tell the authorities, how do they know we won't?' As mentioned before, River's memories of a time spent in Melanesia run parallel to Prior's story. 'Barker weaves these two story lines together, showing a culture of death and war amongst the South Pacific tribe linked to the mentality of modern society which supports the war in France.'[1] 'Head-hunting had to be banned, and yet the effects of banning it were everywhere apparent in the listlessness and lethargy of the people's lives.

[1] http://www.caribousmom.com/2008/12/26/the-ghost-road-book-review/. Extracted August 3, 2011.

Headhunting was what they had lived for. Though it might seem callous or frivolous to say so, headhunting had been the most tremendous fun and without it life lost almost all its zest. This was a people perishing from the absence of war' (GR 207). As Barker says in Author's note, 'Rivers drew on his Eddystone data in several published papers, but the major joint work he and Hocart planned was never written. His notebooks are in the Rare Manuscripts Department of Cambridge University Library.' Barker probably studied Rivers' notes in detail to be able to give such an authentic account of the voyage.

When Rivers came back to England from his second journey to Melanesia in 1915, the war had broken out, and he started a new job as a Royal Academic Medical Corps Captain at Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh. The patients of the hospital were mainly British officers suffering from neurosis caused by their war experiences. Rivers' patients loved him, especially because of his humane treatment. In those days, shell-shock was not believed to be illness, and the most common way to treat it was using electric shocks. This method was very "effective", though not for a long time, and the patients could be sent to the Front relatively soon. Doctors such as Lewis Yealland indulged in this method. Rivers, however, believed that talking with the soldiers about their problems and traumatic experiences was the best thing to do.

Compared to other doctors, Rivers did not force the patients to forget the horrors they had experienced. He preferred making conversations with them, though it was not always easy. He focused on dream interpretation and the discussion of mental conflicts. He took every patient as an individual, which won him considerable appreciation from the officers. Rivers knew his methods were different, but he believed in them and never doubted them. In *The Ghost Road*, Barker shows how Rivers was aware of other kinds of treatment, though he never condescended to use them. He is facing a hopeless patient who cannot move his legs: 'He'd tried everything with Moffet. No, he hadn't. He'd not for example, tried attaching electrodes to Moffet's legs and throwing the switch, as Dr. Yealland would certainly have done by now. He'd not held tubes of radium against his skin till it burnt. He'd not given him subcutaneous injections of ether. All these things were being done to get men back to the Front or keep them

there' (GR 20). Desperate about what to do with the patient, Rivers finally chooses quite a radical means of treatment of the paralysis, however, not as drastic as for example applying electric shocks.

To some extent, Rivers' methods were influenced by the writings of Freud on neurosis whose ideas emphasized sexuality, dreams and parental issues. As one can read in Barker's trilogy, Rivers actually did not agree with some of Freud's presuppositions. For example, he disagreed with Freud in that neurosis happened due to sexual factors. Barker tries to show this in a conversation of Rivers and one of his patients: Rivers: 'Do you often dream about snakes? ... 'Yes … Well, go on, then,' Anderson exploded at last. 'That's what you Freudian Johnnies are on about all the time, isn't it? Nudity snakes…' Rivers: 'What the snake might suggest is that medicine is an issue between yourself and your father-in-law?' (R 29). Even if Rivers did not share the same opinion on the sexual role in dreams with Freud, he found his work very useful in diagnosis and treatment of the patients.

The above-mentioned "talking cure" Rivers emphasized was pioneered by Freud, who used this technique in the treatment of hysteria, of which shell-shock was a variant. Because this method had never been used before the war, Rivers was considered to be a pioneer in this field. Not only did he introduce Freud's work to the British medical establishment, but he also went against the grain of the beliefs of the time. Barker highlights Rivers' method of treatment very often in the trilogy, mainly in *Regeneration*: 'Rivers' treatment sometimes consisted simply of encouraging the patient to abandon his hopeless attempt to forget, and advising him instead to spend some part of every day remembering. Neither brooding on the experience, nor trying to pretend it had never happened. Usually, within a week or two of the patient's starting this treatment, the nightmares began to be less frequent and less terrifying' (R 26). This was not the case of all the patients, but it mostly worked. Rivers was convinced that it was essential for the patients to know themselves and to accept their emotions in order not to collapse again on the Front.

The patients got along with Rivers very well and they highly appreciated him. This was due to his patience and sympathy with them. Rivers' relationship with them could be described as almost paternal, especially with some patients.

In a letter to *The Times* that appeared after Rivers' death, one member of Craiglockhart staff recalled that the neurasthenic officers 'constantly spoke of Dr. Rivers' amazing patience, of his helpful and unremitting suggestive treatment. … He gave, indeed, his whole soul and fine mind to this most trying work, I fear often to utter exhaustion' (Slobodin 66). The doctor did not have any children and there are indications that he was homosexual. Maybe for this reason that he did not have anyone to take after, he was so fatherly to his patients.

If the patients liked Rivers, then Sassoon adored him. In 1952 he wrote in his diary: 'I should like to meet Rivers in "the next world." It is difficult to believe that such a man as he could be extinguished..' (quoted in Slobodin, 62) The sympathy they both felt for each other might have been strengthened by two aspects of Sassoon's personal history. He was from the Kentish countryside like Rivers, and he also stammered slightly. Like his doctor, Sassoon was also fatherless as his father left the family when Sassoon was a boy. Rivers may have been some kind of a father figure for Sassoon. As Sassoon once put it: '… There was never any doubt about my liking him [Rivers]. He made me feel safe at once and seemed to know all about me' (quoted in Slobodin, 61). There is also no doubt that Rivers played some role in Sassoon's return to the Front. With his well-aimed questions and patient approach he managed to make Sassoon think more about himself.

The influence was reciprocal. After some time spent with Sassoon, listening to his ideas and opinions during their conversations, Rivers slowly started changing his views on the war. Although he was always against the war, he did not pay much attention to the idea of possible peace or did not show any pacifist views. It was Sassoon, among other patients, who made him think differently. Barker skillfully records Rivers' long stream of thoughts, from which maybe the most important passage can be cited: 'He [Rivers] was amused by the irony of the situation, that he, who was in the business of changing people, should himself have been changed and by somebody who was clearly unaware of having done it' (R 249). Apart from their encounter in the hospital in London where Sassoon was sent with his head wound, the two men were to meet many more times. Sassoon, like other patients, continued to visit Rivers as both his

patient and friend, and on his vacations Rivers was always welcome in Sassoon's home.

Robert Graves

Robert Graves, an English poet, translator and novelist, is a minor character in Barker's trilogy. Nevertheless, he takes the biggest part in Sassoon's stay in Craighlockhart as it is him who persuades Sassoon to attend the Medical Board instead of waiting for the court-martial. Graves appears mostly at the beginning of the first novel, *Regeneration*, where he takes care of Sassoon's transport to the hospital. He meets Sassoon's future psychiatrist, and several times in the book he visits Sassoon in Craiglockhart. He is also introduced to Wilfred Owen, Sassoon's friend in the hospital. In the second and the third book of the trilogy Graves does not appear much.

Robert Graves, nine years younger than Sassoon, also took commission in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers like his future friend. It was in November 1915 when they met in France. They liked each other, talked about their poems, and they also shared the same opinion on the war. Concerning the poetic style, Sassoon was quite surprised when he saw some of Graves' war poems. He thought the poems should not show the reality of the war. To this Graves replied that once Sassoon experiences the battlefield, his poems will turn realistic as well. Edward Marsh, their mutual friend, pointed out there was clear influence of Robert Graves on Sassoon's poetry. Graves was much more experienced than Sassoon. He was already fighting in the war while Sassoon was convalescing. He also travelled a lot thanks to his parents. His mother came from an aristocratic German family von Ranke and the Graves family often visited the Ranke's Bavarian estate. Young Robert had already been to Belgium, Germany, France and Switzerland, long before Sassoon left England in 1915.

Graves and Sassoon became close friends and Sassoon's declaration against the war was a huge shock for Graves who saw the foolishness of it. In order to help his friend Graves immediately turned to Sassoon urging him to give up his protest. He tried to persuade him to accept a Medical Board instead

of waiting for the court martial. Sassoon wanted the court martial in order to give publicity to his feelings. Also, Russell and other pacifists longed for it, since the matter would raise more attention in public. Graves scheduled a special Medical Board for Sassoon and made him attend it. He lied to him, swearing on an imaginary Bible, that Sassoon would never get the court martial. 'Graves informed him that he had been told, on the highest authority, that if he persisted in his refusal [to appear in front of the Medical Board], then he would be certified insane… He would not get the court martial for which he was angling' (Seymour-Smith 57). Sassoon believed Graves' words and agreed. This process of persuading Sassoon is very well depicted in Barker's *Regeneration*, at the beginning of the novel: G: 'I had to persuade them to give you another Board.' S: They won't court-martial me?' G: 'No. Not in any circumstances. And if you go on refusing to be boarded, they will put you away' (R 7). Later, Graves regretted he had to lie to his friend, and he decided to admit it to Sassoon. The conversation, in which Graves admits his reasons for the lie, is also described in *Regeneration*. Sassoon's reaction was not as negative as Graves expected, but their friendship stood it.

Graves was afraid that Sassoon was not in a state to face a court martial and the imprisonment that would certainly follow. By lying to him he most probably saved Sassoon's sanity and saved him from public humiliation. In a way, Graves fully agreed with everything Sassoon wrote into his protest, but he did not see any point in making it official. It would not change the course of the war, so why to do it. For this reason, Sassoon always blamed Graves for not having enough courage to protest as well. He found him a hypocrite, doing what he did not agree with. Barker puts the following reasonable explanation in Graves' mouth: 'The way I see it, when you put the uniform on, in effect you sign a contract. And you don't back out of a contract merely because you've changed your mind. You can still speak for your principles, you can argue against the ones you're being made to fight for, but in the end you *do the job*. And I think that way you gain more respect. Siegfried isn't going to change people's minds like this. It may be *in him* to change people's minds about the war, but *this* isn't the way to do it' (R 23). This was not only the opinion of Graves, but of many others. Sassoon received a lot of letters from his friends or

people he knew expressing surprise at what he had done. Although it was not anything agreeable, he gradually got used to the allegations and embitterment of the public.

With the help of one doctor on the board, Graves arranged to be taken as Sassoon's witness in order to persuade the Board that Sassoon was shell-shocked and that he needed a rest from the war. During the board Graves cried several times and was told he should stand in front of the Board himself. This is humorously described in the *Regeneration*, when Graves is giving the account of the process to Rivers, Sassoon's psychiatrist: 'I kept bursting into tears. I think that helped in a way. I could see them thinking, My God, if this one's fit for duty what *can* the other one be alike?' (R 22) What also might have helped the Board's decision was Graves' mentioning the hallucinations Sassoon occasionally suffered from. He used to see crawling corpses of soldiers on the floor. As mentioned above, Sassoon was to become a patient at Craiglockhart hospital, a convalescent home for neurasthenics. Graves was supposed to accompany Sassoon on his way to the hospital. Nevertheless, since Graves very often missed trains, he did not escort his friend to Edinburgh: Sassoon: 'Do you know, I don't think Graves's caught a train in his life? Unless somebody was there to put him in' (R 10). The protest disrupted the friendship between Sassoon and Graves to some extent. However, later on Sassoon admitted he was grateful to Graves who had saved him from the court martial. It was actually Graves who was neurotic, and who needed to be cured in Craiglockhart. 'His nerves were at pieces, strange smells put him into trembling sweats, and any bang set him flying for cover' (Seymour-Smith 59). This only shows how he was concerned with Sassoon and what their friendship meant for him. To be able to help Sassoon through the Medical Board, Graves actually had to declare himself fit, which he obviously was not.

Wilfred Owen

Wilfred Owen is another real-life character Barker chose to include in her war trilogy. It actually would not be possible not mentioning him, since Siegfried Sassoon was Owen's best friend and example in Craiglockhart. Owen appears

mostly in the first novel. In *The Eye in the Door*, he is mentioned only occasionally. In the last book he appears several times in connection with Prior with whom he fights in the war.

Wilfred Owen was an English soldier and poet. He is considered the leading poet of WWI. His poetry was notably influenced by Sassoon, especially in terms of the war realism and in drawing on the real-life experience. His poems contrasted the poems of patriotic war poets and they differed considerably from the public perception of the war at that time. Owen was born in 1893 in Shropshire, a West Midlands region, of mixed English and Welsh ancestry. After leaving the Shrewsbury Technical School Owen was accepted at University of London, but his results were not good enough to gain a scholarship. He could not afford studying because of financial reasons. Owen changed several jobs before the war, most of them connected with teaching. In 1915 he enlisted in the war and soon he was a lieutenant. Later he became an officer in charge of several soldiers. Like many others he entered the war with enthusiasm and patriotism, which changed after seeing the atrocities of the warfare. What contributed to this change was Owen's accident in the battlefield. He was blown into air by a trench mortar and after this shock he had another traumatic experience waiting for him – he was trapped for several days in a German dugout, lying next to his dead disembodied friend. He put these events in words like this: 'A big shell lit on the top of the bank, just two yards from my head. Before I awoke, I was blown in the air right away from the bank! I passed most of the following days in a railway Cutting, in a hole just big enough to lie in, and covered with corrugated iron. My brother officer…lay opposite in a similar hole' (quoted in Stallworthy, 182). It is no wonder that this horrible event negatively influenced the rest of Owen's life. Also, if this had not happened, he would probably never have met Sassoon, and thus never published any of his poems.

Some time after the accident, Owen started behaving strangely and his memory seemed confused. He was suspected to be neurasthenic, and so he was not in condition to lead troops and consequently forbidden to go into action. He convalesced in several hospitals, the last one in Southampton being the largest military hospital in the world when it was built in 1863. He appeared

before a Medical Board, where he was described as unfit to go back to the service for six months. He was to be sent to Craiglockhart for special observation and treatment. His doctor was a Medical Officer, Captain Brock, William Rivers' colleague and friend. Like many other patients Owen found Craiglockhart rather a dull and depressive place. However, soon he got used to the institution and passed his free time by writing poetry. He also enjoyed the company of Captain Brock and his friends. Owen was proud to become an editor of the hospital magazine *Hydra*, which included sections such as Short stories, Correspondence, Arrivals, Departures, or Notes and News. One evening Owen attended a hospital's Saturday concert and when giving his mother an account of that evening, he mentioned a newcomer, Siegfried Sassoon, for the first time: 'I have just been reading Siegfried Sassoon, and am feeling at a very high pitch of emotion. Nothing like his trench life sketches has ever been written or ever will be written. Shakespeare reads vapid after these. Not of course because Sassoon is a greater artist, but because of the subjects, I mean. I think if I had the choice of making friends with Tennyson or with Sassoon I should go to Sassoon. That is why I have not yet dared to go up to him and parley in a casual way' (Stallworthy 204). This proves how Owen must have admired Sassoon; and not only for his poetry as it later showed. In one of the letters to Sassoon, Owen admits he loved him, although "dispassionately" as he puts it.

Barker's portrayal of Sassoon and Owen's friendship is very accurate in the first novel of the trilogy, and it is apparent that the author studied the characters thoroughly before she set to writing. Owen in the end plucked up the courage and shyly introduced himself to Sassoon. It was one of the most important meetings in his life, though Sassoon found it evidently less important at that time. Their meeting is described in the novel almost like it happened in reality. Owen knocked on the door of Sassoon's room and stammering he asked Sassoon whether he could sign his own book, *The Old Huntsman*, which Owen had under his arm. When Sassoon asked why Owen came with five copies, his admirer peeped the other four books were for his friends. This small detail actually differs from Barker's version, where the other copies are actually for Owen's family. After signing the books they talked mostly about Sassoon's

book and its interpretations of the war. It was only when Owen was leaving Sassoon's room that he confessed he also wrote poetry himself. In *Regeneration*, Sassoon follows Owen to the door and asks: 'Did you say you wrote?' 'I didn't, but I do. 'Poetry?' 'Yes. Nothing in print yet' (R 84). This meeting did not mean much to Sassoon, who was rather amused by Owen's shyness. Nevertheless, it was a start of great friendship that unfortunately did not last long time.

The two could not be more different. Owen was six and a half years younger, and almost a foot shorter than tall Sassoon with long face and slim athletic figure. Compared to his friend, Sassoon came from a rich family and as mentioned above, there was no pressure on him to choose a career or earn a living. Owen, coming from a poorer background, never had a chance of going to Oxford, which he always regretted. Owen's respect for Sassoon is well depicted in *Regeneration* during their first meeting: 'Everything about Sassoon intimidated him. His status as a publisher poet, his height, his good looks, the clipped aristocratic voice, sometimes quick, sometimes halting, but always cold, the bored expression, the way he had of not looking at you when you spoke - shyness, perhaps, but it seemed like arrogance. Above all his reputation for courage' (R 81 - 82). Their first meeting started a new friendship which lasted till Owen was killed in action. Meeting Sassoon was important for Owen mainly in terms of his literary career. It was probably for this reason that Barker chose to portray their friendship in such detail.

After that first encounter, Owen, on Sassoon's encouragement to bring his own poems, visited his future friend again a few evenings later. He showed him his poetry and they discussed it. What happened to Owen was very similar to what happened some time before to Sassoon. Like Sassoon's romantic poetry changed after seeing Robert Grave's realistic verses, so did Owen's style transformed under the influence of Sassoon. Owen's poems were originally influenced by Keats and Shelley, but after seeing Sassoon's realistic verses which showed the atrocities of the war, he changed his writing to some extent. From the point that Owen showed his poems to Sassoon until he left Craiglockhart, they saw each other most evenings. Sassoon became Owen's mentor and tried to help him find his own literary style. Owen used to bring his

new poems, mostly just sketches, to show them to Sassoon and his friend suggested possible changes, or he just encouraged him to continue in his work.

Barker shows Sassoon's influence on Owen's poetry quite humorously in *Regeneration*: 'Sassoon picked up the next sheet. Craning his neck, Owen could just see the title of the poem. 'That's in your style', he said. 'Yes. I … er … *noticed*' (R 123). Apart from other poems, Sassoon helped his friend with one of Owen's best-known work – The Anthem for Doomed Youth. The poem is a lament for young soldiers who unnecessarily lost their lives in the war. Sassoon refined the rough draft of this poem and also suggested the word "anthem". Sassoon's last touch was substituting the adjective "doomed" for "death". The cooperation of the two poets is also mentioned in *Regeneration*: 'You will need a different title, though. "Anthem for…" ' He thought for a moment, crossed one word out, substituted another. 'There you are', he said, turning the page back, smoking.' „Anthem for *Doomed* Youth"' (R 158). Paradoxically, Wilfred Owen later became more acknowledged a poet than his mentor Siegfried Sassoon.

At the end of October 1917 the Medical Board decided that Owen was ready to go back to military service. Before Owen left Craiglockhart, he went with Sassoon for their last supper at a Club in Edinburgh, which Barker calls a Conservative Club in *Regeneration*. She gives a detailed account of that evening in her novel. She must have read Sassoon's semi-biographical novel *Siegfried's Journey (1973)* to be able to write about it so authentically. After the supper Sassoon started reciting extracts of over-elaborated verse written by Aylmer Strong, sent to him by the author himself. They were both quite drunk (after one bottle of Burgundy), so it did not take them long to start laughing: 'Sassoon had begun by declaiming the verse solemnly, but when he came to: "Can it be I have become this goud, this gothic vaccu-um?" he burst out laughing' (R 217 – 218). They were alone in the restaurant except one gentleman, who was reading newspaper. 'The more we laughed, the more solemnly he eyed us, and this somehow made our hilarity uncontrollable.' (*Siegfried´s Journey 1945*) When they were finally saying good-bye to each other, Sassoon gave Owen a sealed letter of introduction to Robert Ross, another prominent artist and friend of Oscar Wilde, and a ten pound note which Owen was to discover only later. 'This is a letter of introduction to Robert Ross.

It's sealed because there's something else inside, but that doesn't mean you can't read it' (R 219). Owen met Robert Ross, Oscar Wilde's friend and editor, in the Reform Club in London. They liked each other, and so they decided to dine together also the next evening.

Owen returned to his regiment in November 1917 but he only went back to France in the middle of the next year. In August 1918 he returned to active service in France, although he did not have to and could have stayed on home duty. His decision might have been influenced by Sassoon's above-mentioned accident. Sassoon was sent back to England and Owen probably felt that he had to take his friend's place on the front. Sassoon did not agree with this and threatened him not even to try to go back to the trenches. Owen's time in France in 1918 is depicted in *The Ghost Road*, where he first meets Prior, a fictional character whom he knows from Craiglockhart. They meet on the Medical Board and both are decided to be sent to France, where they spend several weeks together. In October 1918 Owen captured an enemy machine-gun and killed many Germans at Amiens. For this he was awarded a Military Cross, however, only after his death.

The 96th Brigade Owen was part of was holding a line west of the Sambre and Oise Canal. The soldiers were supposed to cross the Canal the night from the 3rd to 4th November. It was raining until midnight, and then fog settled in the valley. When the time came Owen led his platoon over the fields. However, there was a counter-attack of the Germans from the far bank and first British men began to fall. The enemy destroyed the bridge over the Canal and the British had to mend it quickly. It was a fiasco and British soldiers were dying trying to fix the bridge or crossing it. In this chaos, Owen walked between his men, encouraging them and patting them on the shoulders. He was helping the men with some duckboards, when he was shot in head. Barker authentically describes the whole action in The Ghost Road from Prior's perspective, including Owen's death. Prior, dying himself because he cannot seize his gasmask, sees his friends falling: 'There was no pain, more a spreading numbness that left his brain clear. He saw Kirk die. He saw Owen die, his body lifted off the ground by bullets, describing a slow arc in the air as it felt. It seemed to take forever to fall, and Prior's consciousness fluttered down with it.

He gazed at his reflection in the water, which broke and reformed and broke again as bullets hit the surface and then, gradually, as the numbness spread, he ceased to see it' (GR 273). Owen died on 4 November 1918, only one week before the end of the war. One day after his death he was promoted to a lieutenant. The telegram about Owen's death reached his mother on the Armistice Day.

Lewis Yealland

Dr. Lewis Yealland is a character closely based on a therapist of the same name who treated shell shock in England during WWI. Born in Canada, he came to Britain in order to practice medicine during the war. The character of Yealland appears by the end of *Regeneration*. Rivers is offered a job at the National Hospital for the paralyzed and epileptic in London, where he meets Yealland, who is at the forefront of experimental shock techniques to treat shell-shocked soldiers. Compared to Rivers, Yealland did not believe shell shock was an illness. He thought men who had the symptoms of shell shock lacked the sense of duty and discipline. His therapy was based on electric shock treatment. He was known for sending most of the neurasthenic patients back to the front very quickly. Yealland published his discoveries from the wartime in *Hysterical Disorders of Warfare* in 1918.

In Barker's *Regeneration* he appears as a negative and arrogant character, who does not have any feelings or compassion for his patients. He regards the soldiers who break down during the war as weaklings and thinks they would collapse in normal life anyway. The only thing he cares for is the result of his treatment, unlike Rivers who focuses more on the process of the cure. Yealland is portrayed very unsympathetically when he treats one of his patients who suffers from hysterical mutism. He uses the above-mentioned electric shock treatment and the cruelty he performs on the man is shocking for Rivers. He basically does not allow the patient to leave the room till he talks: 'You will not leave me … until you are talking as well as you ever did. No, not a minute before' (R 229). Yealland puts one electrode into the patient's mouth and he attaches the other one on his back, and he straps the patient to the

chair. The doctor also locks the door of the room in case the patient wants to leave, which happens anyway. The hopeless man suffers rather hard electric shocks until he finally emits first sounds. However, Yealland is not satisfied yet and he keeps torturing the patient until Callan talks almost normally. 'Yealland appeared to lose patience. He clamped his hands down on to Callan's wrists and said, 'This has gone on long enough. I may have to use a stronger current. I do not want to hurt you, but if necessary I must' (R 232-233). After a long struggle when Callan tries to escape, the result comes at last. The patient is able to speak normally.

It is not sure whether Lewis Yealland's treatment was so drastic, but even if not, Barker manages to portray the abysmal difference between the two doctors, which is probably her main intention. The truth is Rivers was always considered a great psychiatrist dealing with his patients in most caring way. It must have been quite a confrontation when the two met in one hospital and Rivers realized Yealland was his potential colleague. 'His confrontation with Yealland had exhausted him, for, however polite they had each been to each other, it *had* been a confrontation' (R 234). Rivers obviously did not agree with his foil's methods of treatment although they were mostly successful: 'Rivers couldn't bear to go on watching. He looked down at the backs of his clasped hands' (R 232). In her portrayal of Yealland, Barker is probably inspired by the doctor's *Hysterical Disorders of Warfare* (1918), where Yealland's methods of treating his patients are described in detail. Barker's version of Yealland is probably more negative than what the doctor was like in reality. However, by doing so the author manages to underline the humanity Rivers approached his patients with.

3. Craiglockhart War Hospital

Craiglockhart War Hospital is the place where most of the first novel of the trilogy is set. Situated in the western outskirts of Edinburgh and built between 1977 and 1880 in an Italian style, the institution formerly served as a hydrophatic institution, in which various kinds of illnesses were treated by using water. After the breakout of WWI, the building was used as a military psychiatric hospital for the treatment of neurasthenic officers. After the war the edifice functioned as a Catholic teacher training college. Later it was used by the Napier College, and now it is a part of Napier University. The original building was retained from a large part, apart from a new wing which houses Business School.

Although shell shock was not considered an illness by many doctors then, Craiglockhart was a place where this variant of neurosis was treated. The most famous and acknowledged doctor working there was the above-mentioned William Rivers who, with other staff, did their best to make the officers feel good in that gloomy place. The treatment of the patients was usually divided into several sessions a week, during which a doctor talked with a patient about his problems. There were about a hundred and fifty officers at Craiglockhart who were mostly preoccupied with work or various kinds of sports during their free time. These included for example cricket, tennis, crocket, badminton, billiards and golf. The patients could also swim, do gardening, help at neighbouring farms, participate in a musical, political or an acting group, or take care of animals like bees or hens. It could be said that the hospital was cheerful and bustling during the day. The patients could also take a walk along the adjoining hill of Craiglockhart and enjoy the view of the valley of the Forth. The nights were, however, different. In a semi-biographical novel, *Sherston's Progress* (1936), Sassoon describes the night atmosphere of Craiglockhart:

> One became conscious that the place was full of men whose slumbers were morbid and terrifying - men muttering uneasily or suddenly crying out in their sleep. Around me was that underworld of dreams haunted by submerged memories of warfare and its intolerable shocks… Each

> man was back in his doomed sector of a horror-stricken front line, where the panic and stampede of some ghastly experience was re-enacted among the livid faces of the dead. No doctor could save him then, when he became the lonely victim of his dream disasters and delusions. (quoted in Stalworthy, 191).

Rivers was constantly awake at nights helping and nursing his patients. It was rare if a night passed in piece and quiet. Although Craiglockhart was a safer place than the Front, not every officer was content there. Everyone, including Rivers, knew that Sassoon hated the place. He scorned the other patients and did not feel like making any connections with them. Knowing this fact, Barker tries to show it in *Regeneration* in a scene where Sassoon suddenly wakes up in the middle of the night not knowing what exactly woke him up. 'He knew he was shivering more with fear than cold, though it was difficult to name the fear. The place, perhaps. The haunted faces, the stammers, the stumbling walks, that indefinable look of being "mental". Craiglockhart frighetened him more than the front had ever done' (R 63). It is true that the first impression of the newcomers was not much optimistic. The daunting façade of the building was not the only discouraging aspect of the complex. The corridors inside the hospitals did not receive any natural light and there was no interior decoration, which added to the dullness of the place and its melancholic atmosphere. The only aspect that made Craiglockhart bearable was its location and a nice view of the Pentland Hills.

Patients at Craiglockhart

To depict the image of the Craiglockhart hospital authentically for a reader, Barker chooses some real-life patients on the basis of whom she creates her characters. An example of one of them is a patient who is described in Dr. Rivers' publication *On the Repression of War Experience* (1918). Before getting to this patient it would be convenient to mention several facts about this publication. It was believed then that one of the most efficient ways to cure war neurosis was for patients to forget their horrible memories. The doctors forbade the patients to think about the traumatic events. They also emphasized work or

hobbies as factors, which helped to repress the bad experience. Dr. William Rivers, however, was of a different opinion. He believed the repression and subsequent suppression of the memories made it worse in most cases. Rivers thought the patients should, on the contrary, talk about their past. To prove his point he treated his patients, especially in Craiglockhart hospital, according to his method and he recorded the results. Some of the cases are written in *On the Repression of War Experience*, one of which Barker chose for her novel *Regeneration*.

This was, however, the case where Rivers' method was not applicable, since the 'experience which a patient is striving to forget is so utterly horrible and disgusting, so wholly free from any redeeming feature which can be used as a means of readjusting the attention, that it is difficult or impossible to find an aspect which will make its contemplation endurable.'[2] One of Rivers' patients, whom Barker names David Burns in *Regeneration*, was knocked down by the explosion of a shell and his face struck the belly of an enemy who was dead for several days. The patient's fall caused the rapture of the German's swollen corpse. Before falling to coma, the officer had realized his situation and knew he had in his mouth the decomposed entrails of the German. When the patient woke up he constantly vomited and could not get rid of the bad smell and feeling he remembered from the accident. When this patient came to Craiglockhart and started with Rivers' treatment, he suffered from terrible dreams, which kept the memory coming back. He could only forget the bad experience when he was away in the countryside. Although the nightmare became less frequent, it still recurred and he was recommended to leave the Army for good.

In *Regeneration* Barker skillfully shows Rivers' primal attitude towards the treatment of Burn's problem, which is to think and talk about the horrible experience: 'Have you made any progress with what we talked about?' 'Not really', he looked up at Rivers, I can't make myself think about it' (R 19). Another patient based on one of Rivers' real patients is Anderson. He used to be a war surgeon, but he suffered a mental breakdown and since then he could

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[2] http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/On_The_Repression_of_War_Experience. Extracted May 7, 2011.

not bear the sight of blood. Barker accredits this problem to a bad experience Anderson had. He did not save the life of his patient and saw him dying covered in blood: ‘He started to hemorrhage, and ... there was nothing I could do. I just stood there and watched him bleed to death’ (R 30). Barker might have implied this character to show what the war and its ferocity can cause - even surgeons who are used to seeing people bleed and die break down.

4. Historical Events and Issues Creating the Background of the Trilogy

Alice Wheeldon's case

Barker chooses the case of the pacifist Alice Wheeldon and her family to form the background of *The Eye in the Door*. It was January 1917, and several members of the Wheeldon family were arrested and charged with plotting to murder the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George. Lloyd George was a promoter of the war and in 1916 he became the leader of the war effort. Not agreeing with this policy, many pacifists did not wish Lloyd George on the political scene. In her novel Barker analyzes the process of interrogation of the Wheeldon family, whom she renames the Roper family. The case is entrusted to the fictional character Billy Prior, who works for the Ministry of Munitions. He finds it rather difficult to investigate Beattie Roper (Alice Wheeldon), since he knows her and her family very well from his childhood. Although Barker changes the names of several people and she is not accurate with some of the data, she sticks to the main facts and events of the case.

Before analyzing how Barker sets the case in her novel, it would be convenient to summarize the whole story. Alice Wheeldon was born in Derby on 27th January, 1866. With her husband, William Wheeldon, they had four children – Nellie, Hettie, William and Winnie. As for her job, Alice bought people's clothes and sold them in her second-hand clothes shop at 12 Pear Tree Road in Derby. Being a convinced socialist and feminist, Alice was active in politics. She was a member of Socialist Labour Party, and she also figured in the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). She taught her daughters, especially Hettie and Winnie, to share her political views. At the beginning of the war, there was a clash between Alice and WSPU, since the pacifist Alice did not agree with the WSPU's support of the war. Soon she, Hettie and Winnie joined the Women's Peace Army, an institution that demanded peace. Alice and her daughters also supported the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF), an organization that supported men to refuse military service. After the heavy losses in the middle of the war, the Military Service Act was passed, introducing

compulsory enrolment of men in the British Armed Forces. The NCF encouraged men to refuse fighting from conscientious motives, because a human life was sacred, and even during the war it was wrong to kill a person. Winnie married Alfred Mason, a chemist, and they moved to Southampton continuing in the anti-war movement. William Wheeldon, Alice's son, was also a war objector, and he was imprisoned for a month for his rebellious behavior.

Alice and some other pacifists established a network in Derby in order to help the conscientious objectors on the run or in jail. It was a risky business, but the group managed to save or hide many deserters. In December 1916, a man called Alex Gordon arrived at Alice's house. He claimed he was a conscientious objector on the run, who needed to stay somewhere overnight. Alice did not find anything disturbing or suspicious about Gordon, and so she accommodated him in the house of her friend, Lydia Robinson. Several days later Gordon came again, but this time he brought Herbert Booth, whom he introduced as a member of the anti-war movement. The fact was that both were secret agents from the Ministry of Munitions. Not knowing the truth, Alice had a conversation with them about the camps where the objectors of the war were held. Supported by Gordon and Booth, Alice expressed her wish to set the poor men free. According to Alice, the two agents then told her that dogs guarded the camps, and she could only get rid of them by poisoning them. Then, the men could escape without a problem. Alice then made a bargain with Gordon: she would help him to get his friends from the camp by obtaining the poison from Alfred Mason, while Gordon would help Alice's son William and other pacifists to escape to the United States. One of these pacifists was Alexander Macdonald, who was hiding at Alice's house.

On 31st January 1917, Alice Wheeldon, Hettie Wheeldon, Winnie Mason and Alfred Mason were arrested for the conspiracy to kill David Lloyd Goerge. Macdonald was found at Alice's home and immediately arrested. Frederick Smith, the Attorney General, became Alice's prosecutor and the trial began in several weeks. At the very beginning Smith humiliated Alice Wheeldon, claiming that she and her daughters employed a very low language, often obscene and disgusting. Gordon did not participate in the trial, but Booth testified. He stated that during their conversations, Alice mentioned that she

and her daughters participated in the arson when they were still members of WSPU. According to Booth, the atheistic Alice claimed they set fire to the church of all Saints at Breadsall in 1914. She apparently found it very hilarious and was proud of it. Booth also claimed that Alice had made a death-threat to Lloyd George several times. Alice admitted this to the court, but she claimed she had not said this when she gave the poison to Gordon.

Booth testified that Alice confessed to him she had planned to kill Lloyd George before, when she was still a member of WSPU, by inserting a poisoned nail in his boot. The scheme did not succeed, since the Prime Minister changed his plans and went to France. Smith argued in the court that the plan to kill Lloyd Gorge this time was exactly the same like the one Alice had made before. The letters addressed to Alfred Mason in which Alice asked for the poison were then showed to the jury. Alice admitted she had asked for the poison, which, however, she had not meant to use on the Prime Minister but on the dogs guarding the camps to set the imprisoned men free. The letter from Mason supported Alice's testimony as it included a passage about dogs being killed in twenty seconds by the poison. Winnie Mason admitted she and her husband had helped her mother obtain the poison, which was for some dogs and not for a person. Alfred Mason also explained why he chose curare, since this poison could not kill anything bigger than a dog, and it would not certainly work on a human. Apparently, Hettie claimed she had been immediately suspicious of Gordon and Booth, and she had tried to warn her mother. Nevertheless, the court believed Booth's testimony and Alice Wheeldon, Winnie Mason and Alfred Mason were found guilty. Alice was sentenced for ten years in prison, Alfred for seven years, and Winnie got five years of penal servitude.

Many people were unconvinced of Alice's and the others' guilt. There were demands that both agents should be interrogated themselves, and that they should not be trusted completely. Meanwhile Alice was put in Aylesbury Prison where she went on hunger strikes in order not to cooperate with the authorities. She also made other prisoners stop eating their daily portions of food, and some of them were even afraid of her. Alice was then moved to Holloway Prison where she was separated from Winnie. She begun a new hunger strike and her condition was declining. She lost a lot of weight and her

pulse was much faster. At the end of December in 1918, Alice was released as Lloyd George insisted that she should not be allowed to die in prison. Her daughter Hettie picked her up in the prison on 31st December and took her home to Derby. Soon, Winnie and Alfred Mason were also released on the licence at the request of the Premier. Alice died of Spanish influenza on 21st February since her health condition did not recover from her time in prison.

In *The Eye in the Door*, Alice Wheeldon is Beattie Roper, but the names of her children stay the same. Compared to Alice Wheeldon who lived in Derby and had her second-hand shop at 12 Pear Tree Road, the Roper family is from Salford and the shop is situated at 11 Tite Street. The reader is first introduced to the case at the beginning of the novel, when Billy Prior visits Beattie's cell and interrogates her. Prior knows Beattie and her family very well because Beattie helped to bring him up, which makes the encounter rather stressful. He visits her as a friend, which does not change the fact he has to interrogate her and report back to the Ministry of Munitions. Although he is familiar with the case, he wants Beattie to tell him her own version of it. Beattie basically says to Prior what Alice herself claimed in the trial. Although the spies from the Ministry of Munitions were two in reality, Barker presents only one spy whom she calls Spragge. He is more similar to Gordon rather than to Booth. To make it more interesting, Barker changes the circumstances of Beattie's first encounter with the spy to some extent. While in reality, Gordon did not bring any letter to Alice, in *The Eye in the Door*, Spragge's excuse for his night visit is a letter from Patrick MacDowell, addressed to Beattie. In the novel, MacDowell, one of the members of the Anti-war movement, is the leading organizer of the Sheffield Strike in the Munitions factories. He knows Beattie and Prior very well from his childhood, and is currently hiding. In reality, Alice Wheeldon kept a certain Macdonald in her house, one of the conscientious objectors who were supposed to escape to the United States in exchange for the poison.

In the novel, Beattie insists that the poison was for the dogs guarding the camp with conscientious objectors. She also claims it was supposed to be a bargain. The exchange for obtaining the poison from her son-in-law is, however, different in Barker's version. It is not Beattie's son William whom the spy has to help to get to the United States but a fictional character, a pacifist Tommy

Blenkinsop. Beattie is hiding Tommy in her house and she wants to help him escape. Concerning the dogs, Barker takes the same sentence Alfred wrote in his letter to Alice and uses it in the novel: 'If you get close to the poor brutes, I pity them. Dead in twenty seconds' (ED 86-87). What Barker changes is the intended way to poison the dogs. While in reality the animals were allegedly supposed to eat the poison on a piece of bread, meat or some other kind of food, Beattie suggests that the poison is fired through the fence at the dogs in a blowdart. This would apparently ensure the acts to look as if it were done from outside and the guard would not be suspected of collaborating. The author sticks to the main points of Alice's testimony and puts almost the same words into Beattie's mouth. Beattie threatens Lloyd George in front of Spragge in a similar way that Alice talked about the Prime Minister in front of the spies: 'That bloody, buggering bastard Lloyd George, he's got a head on him like a forty-shilling pisspot, but you mark my words he'll come to rue' (ED 37). Barker must have studied Wheeldon's correspondence very well to be able to apply a similar language in her novel.

Like Alice, Beattie also uses a rather low, at places vulgar language. To emphasize this fact, Barker introduces half-fictive letters of the Roper family. '…we bumped into Mrs Warner you no her from the suffragettes and of corse she asked after you but she was only standoffish you could see her wanting to get away she says she thort to much was made of Xmas and turcy was a very dry meat I says well Ive never tasted it so I wouldn't no…' (ED 83). In *The Eye in the Door*, Beattie mentions to Prior that her letters were even read in front of the jury, which was rather humiliating. Barker also includes Hettie's remark concerning the suspicion of the spies in the novel: '… I met [Spraggie] once, just for a couple minutes, and I knew there was something wrong with him' (ED 101). The author probably studied the Wheeland's case thoroughly, since she includes details such as the possible corruption of the spies. The Deputy commissioner of the Metropolitan Police blamed Gordon that he had invented the whole story to get money and other bonuses from his employer. When Prior talks to Spragge, he suggests the same: 'How big a bonus did you get for Beattie Roper?' … 'Not big enough… Half on arrest, half on conviction.' 'You got a *bonus* if she was *convicted*?' (ED 49) Concerning the hunger strikes,

Beattie does the same in the prison. When Prior sees her, he is in shock at how bad and thin she looks: ‘It was possible in this position to see how emaciated she was, how waxy her skin. Her hair, which had been brown the last time he saw her, was almost entirely white. Thin strands escaped from the bun at the back of her head and straggled about her neck’ (ED 33). At the end of their first encounter in prison, Beattie asks Prior whether he at least knows on whose side he is. To this, the confused Prior cannot reply.

Barker uses the case of the Roper family mostly in connection with Prior fugue states he experiences. In the beginning, it is only several minutes that he is not conscious of himself. Later, the memory gaps are four hours and even more. Prior starts being afraid that during these states he does something dreadful. This proves right when the above-mentioned pacifist MacDowell is arrested. Prior realizes he is the only one who could have betrayed him, since he has all the information about MacDowell’s hiding place. Prior has also several uncomfortable encounters with Spragge, to whom he allegedly offered a job in the Ministry of Munitions, but he did not keep the promise. Prior, not remembering it at all, tries to understand his behavior with the help of his former psychiatrist from Craiglockhart. Although Rivers tries to reassure his patient, Prior ultimately faces the fact that there is duality in his personality, which he compares to the case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

“The Cult of the Clitoris”

A sub-plot to the controversies of war objectors is the suppression of homosexuality. Britain faces the prospect of defeat by Germany and among the scapegoats are not only pacifists, but also homosexuals. They are regarded as digressers of the War and one of the reasons of England’s bad success. As Cohler points out, ‘discourses on national degeneration and elite effeminacy were projected not only onto men, but onto marginalized women as well’ (Cohler 112). The infamous political affair "The Cult of the Clitoris" contributes to the unrest in the country. The affair was started by an article published in January 1918 by an MP Noel Pemberton-Billing in the Imperialist magazine, often called Vigilante. Noel Pemberton-Billing was a multidimensional man

regarding the variety of his occupations. Apart from piloting, boxing, bricklaying and tram conducting, he was also a playwright, publisher, policeman and entrepreneur. As a Member of Parliament, he was a controversial figure, considering his opinions on war and his homophobic attitudes. He became an editor of the Imperialist magazine and used his power to provoke homosexual citizens of England by implying they would be found and prosecuted.

Pemberton-Billing wrote in the above-mentioned article that there was a Black Book containing the names of 47,000 British prominent allegedly homosexual men and women. The book was supposed to be held by a certain German Prince who was blackmailing these homosexuals into undermining the British war effort. In another article which was supposed to be a continuation of the first one, Pemberton-Billing implied that Maud Allan, a famous dancer and choreographer, was a lesbian, and that she was in connection with German wartime conspirators. Maud Allan was a former pianist and a belly dancer born in Canada. In February 1918 she was preparing for the performance of *Vision of Salome.* It was her production loosely based on Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (1893). She became particularly popular with her version of The Dance of Seven Veils, which gained her the nickname "The Salome Dancer". In April, several days before the first performance in England, the article about the Black Book was followed by a short paragraph with the heading in bold "The Cult of the Clitoris", saying:

'To be a member of Maud Allan's private performance in Oscar Wilde's *Salome* one has to apply to a Miss Valetta of 9 Duke Street, Adelphi, WC. If Scotland Yard were to seize the list of these members I have no doubt they would secure the names of several thousand of the first 47,000.'

The paragraph suggested that the list of subscribers to the performance might contain many names of the 47,000 homosexuals. It was known from several reasons that considerable number of homosexuals would visit the *Salome* performance. It was Robert Ross who gave the authorization for the play. His open homosexuality in a time when homosexual acts were still illegal brought him many troubles, strengthened by the fact that he was Wilde's lifelong friend and executor of his estate. The paragraph also clearly implied Allan was a lesbian. Enraged with the article, Allan decided to sue Billing for

criminal libel. The trial begun on 29 May, 1918 and lasted six days. The MP stated he hadn't written the second article, but in the end he took responsibility for its contents. Billing represented himself in the court, which only questioned the gravity of the case. One of his witnesses was Lord Alfred Douglas, Oscar Wilde's former lover. After claiming that Maud Allan was a lesbian, Billing alleged her of immorality and obscenity she showed when dancing. He accused her of performing perverted sexual acts including necrophilia, which were depicted in Wilde's writings.

During the trial, Billing asked what Allan's real name was, which influenced the jury as well. Maud Allan's original name was Beulah Maude Durrant, and the reason why she changed it was to distance herself from the disgrace of her family. Her brother, Theodore Durrant, was hanged in 1898 for a murder of two women in San Francisco. The murders had a sexual subtext, which implied Theodor Durrant was sexually perverted. Allan never recuperated from the shock of this event. After her brother's execution she stopped playing piano and devoted herself to dancing. Billing used the fact about Allan's personal history to allege her of having a background of sexual insanity in her family. Nevertheless, before the end of the trial, Pemberton-Billing took back his allegation that Allen was a lesbian and claimed that she only had not understood the articles in the magazine from the beginning. After a confusing consultation of the jury, Billing won the trial. While Maud's career was ruined, Billing's victory helped to make him more popular, and he was later re-elected to parliament.

There is an explanation as to how the heading of the second article corresponds with lesbianism. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan analyze further "The Cult of the Clitoris" case in their book *Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires* (1998), in the chapter "Trial by Sexology?":

> From late eighteenth century through into the early twentieth century, one of the most consistent medical characterizations of the anatomy of the lesbian was the claim of an unusually large clitoris. Not only was the clitoris associated with female sexual pleasure separate from reproductive potential, but lesbians were assumed to be masculinized,

and the supposed enlarged clitoris was one signifier of this masculinity. In presenting lesbians' bodies as less sexually differentiated than the norm more masculine - it was inferred that they were atavists - throwbacks to an earlier evolutionary stage and thereby "degenerates". It was held that progressive differentiation of the sexes was one of the hallmarks of evolutionary progress. An enlarged clitoris or the inference of deviant genitalia was also given as the signifier of black women's sexuality and of nymphomania. Lesbians, black women and nymphomaniacs were all grouped together as possessors of a "primitive" sexuality.[3]

The suggested connection between lesbianism and the above-mentioned "enlarged" clitoris is obviously absurd and there is no evidence of such relatedness. This inaccurate description of a lesbian anatomy was surely influenced by the lack of medical knowledge concerning gynecology or sexology at that time. The intolerance or phobia of different sexual identities might have contributed to this notion of female homosexuality as well. Last but not least, it cannot be forgot that a lesbian identity as such did not fully exist until the first half of the twentieth century, and so the matter could not be dealt objectively.

Pemberton-Billing further defended himself with the argument that Maud Allan knew what the word clitoris actually meant. The court even demanded to be explained where the clitoris was and how it was related with lesbianism. The MP then told the committee that only one person out of many questioned knew what clitoris was. Another witness, Dr Cooke, supported his statement by claiming that none of his friends knew where clitoris was. Another witness, the inventor of the article's title, was called. He explained to the court that he had tried to come up with a heading which would only be understood by certain

[3] The origin of the text:
Bland L., Doan L. *Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
The citation taken from:
http://clitoris-cult.livejournal.com/profile. Extracted Sept. 20, 2011.
http://www.lesleyahall.net/clitoris.htm. Extracted Sept. 20, 2011.

people. In order to obtain such a title, he called to a specialized doctor, who suggested the term “clitoris”. Apart form a detailed explanation of the word, the doctor assured Spencer that it was a medical term and only doctors or people interested in medicine would understand the word. Pemberton-Billing then continued that it could only be because Maud Allan was a lesbian, that she had knowledge about it. This was supposed to prove that homosexuality was a secret cult. Whereas male homosexuality was forbidden, sex between women was not illegal in England. Pemberton-Billing case was not the only court case that involved lesbianism in the early twentieth century. Jodie Medd, an English professor at Carleton University, analyzes lesbian sex scandals in early twentieth century England. He claims that ‘because of its lack of legal standing there is the popular idea that lesbianism was invisible.’[4] The truth is that before the war, no coherent narrative of female homosexuality existed in Great Britain. Lesbian, as well as male same-sex relationships, were more and more common, nevertheless, it cannot be said that a lesbian identity as such existed yet. It only came into the public notion during The World War I.

Barker sets the issue about the suppression of homosexuals in *The Eye in the Door* in connection with the fictional character Charles Manning. Manning is also one of Rivers’ patients, who are treated for shell shock. He befriends Prior with whom he works in the Ministry of Munitions. They have several sexual encounters, which only emphasizes Manning’s bisexuality as he also has a family. The reader is first faced with the infamous affair at the beginning of the novel, when Charles Manning receives a disturbing letter. When he opens the envelope, he finds inside a piece of magazine article with the above-mentioned paragraph titled “The Cult of the Clitoris”. At first, Manning has no idea who any why sent it to him. However, he soon realizes that his name is probably on the list of homosexuals. He knows he is going to see *Salome*, ‘and not simply as an ordinary member of the public, but in the company of Robert Ross who, as Oscar Wilde’s literary executor, had authorized the performance’ (ED 23). At that time, *Salome* was at risk, since the Lord Chamberlain's ban on public performances of Wilde's play was still valid in England. Going to the

[4] http://archives.xtra.ca/Story.aspx?s=1428790. Extracted Sept. 15, 2011.

performance with an open homosexual would not help Manning to disguise his own bisexuality. Anyway, he decides to see *Salome* in order not to look frightened by the article, and thus reveal his true sexuality.

Rivers who gets familiar with Manning's problem of leading a double life, tries to help him. They meet occasionally, and after some time Manning is admitted to the hospital where Rivers works. This is due to his anxiety attacks which become more severe, partly because of the Pemberton-Billing affair. Manning keeps receiving disturbing letters, which contain cut newspaper articles blaming homosexuals for undermining the war effort. The titles of the articles are for example "Spreading Debauchery", "Sodom and Lesbia" or "The Fall of Rome" in which the author ridiculously compares the fall of the Empire of Rome to the possible fall of the British Empire. The insane victimization of homosexuals is well explained in the novel through the character of Rivers: 'I think it's the result of certain impulses rising to the surface in wartime, and having to be very formally disowned. Homosexuality, for instance. In war there's this enormous glorification of love between men, and yet at the same time it arouses anxiety' (ED 156). After his stay in the hospital and regular sessions with Rivers, Manning is more or less cured from neurasthenia. He starts working again and feels settled and content with his family.

The theme of homosexuality permeates the whole trilogy. It is not surprising, since all the soldiers and doctors in the novels are male. Love and intimate friendship between men seems to be strengthened by the fact that the country is in war. Officers feel responsible for their soldiers as well as doctors feel responsible for their patients. It can be said that on the battlefield love between men is supported, even demanded. Sassoon, for instance, is so dedicated to his men, that it actually makes him leave Craiglockhart and go back to the Front. He describes his love for his soldiers several times throughout the trilogy. Sometimes it seems more like parental love. Feeling guilty that he is not with his men, he writes a short poem in Craiglockhart, expressing his state of mind. Another example of love and compassion between soldiers is Owen's relationship with his men. Even in the most dangerous and extreme situation, he them to fight the enemy in Sambre-Oise canal, and pats

their shoulders to show his devotion. Society agrees with this kind of love, as it produces a better army.

However, there is a difference between this kind of love, and love between the same sex in its proper meaning. These limits are mentioned by Rivers in *Regeneration*, when he tries to explain to Sassoon that his homosexuality is unacceptable to the society outside of war. Also, Sassoon is a friend of Robert Ross, which does not make it "better". 'After all, in war, you've got this enormous emphasis on love between men – comradeship – and everybody approves. But at the same time there's always this little niggle of anxiety. Is it the right kind of love? Well, one of the ways you make sure it's the right kind is to make it crystal clear what the penalties for the other kind are' (R 204). Homosexuals, like neurasthenic soldiers, were outside the boundaries of normal social interaction. Sassoon always felt uneasy about his sexual preferences and he never ventilated them. It was only after reading Edward Carpenter's book *The Intermediate Sex* (1908), that Sassoon's attitude to his sexuality changed. Egremont states in his biography of Sassoon that reading the book 'was like a new life to me [Sassoon], after a time of great perplexity and unhappiness… I was in such a groove that I couldn't allow myself to be what I wished to be, and the intense attraction felt for my own sex was almost a subconscious thing, any my antipathy for women a mystery to me' (Egremont 46). Still, Sassoon was finding his sexuality a problem, which Barker depicts at the end of *Regeneration*. Rivers is telling Sassoon about the Pemberton-Billing affair and about the Black Book's list of 47,000 homosexuals, when Sassoon immediately replies he is not one of them: 'Relax, Rivers. I'm not eminent' (R 204). Whatever Sassoon's sexuality was, he got married in 1933 to many people's surprise, and soon after he became an enthusiastic father.

A man without his own family, Rivers was aware that his life was emotionally deficient. It was almost certain he was a homosexual, and that he probably soon recognized Sassoon was too. There were hints that the relationship between the two of them was a bit more than just a doctor and a patient. Judging from a passage from *Sherston's Progress* (1974), it seemed Sassoon felt something more than mere liking for his doctor. He later confessed to Eddie Marsh that he loved Rivers from the beginning. Anyway, it is not known

whether the friendship of these two men ever became more intimate. It probably did not due to Rivers' tight morals. Barker attempts to show Rivers' distancing from women in The Ghost Road in one of the conversations the doctor and his sister Kath have: 'We really did think you were going to marry her, you know. She was the only woman we ever saw you with' (GR 88). Apart from Sassoon and Rivers, the clash between sexuality is noticeable in other characters such as Wilfred Owen or Roberts Graves. Although they were only friends, Owen's admiration for Sassoon was evident from the beginning, and it was clear he was homosexual. Sassoon introduced Owen to a homosexual literary circle which included, among others, Robbie Ross. This was an important factor in Owen's literary work since it broadened his outlook and pushed him into inserting homoerotic themes into his poetry.

Robert Graves' sexuality was a bit more complicated. He considered himself a pseudo-homosexual, but slowly started changing to a heterosexual. He first discovered his feelings in the public school he attended. Graves platonically loved several boys, such as a certain Raymond or another classmate Dick, who was later killed in the war. Graves pointed out several times that homosexual practices flourished at British preparatory and public schools, while the opposite sex was despised. He then continued in his thought, claiming that for every one born homosexual there were about ten homosexuals made by the public school system; and he was afraid to be one of them. Graves was probably never a pure homosexual. He was, however, anxious that he might be and that he would not be capable of loving the opposite sex. This was probably one of the factors that contributed to his hastened marriage to Nancy Nicholson. Egremont points out that when announcing the news to Sassoon, his friend found Graves 'so funny with his apologetic air about his engagement with Nancy' (Egremont 178). Knowing this little detail, Barker depicts the conversation in *Regeneration*. 'It's only fair to tell you that … my affections have been running in more normal channels. I've been writing to a girl called Nancy Nicholson. I really think you will like her. She's great fun. The … the only reason I'm telling you this … I'd hate you to think I was homosexual *even in thought*' (R 199). It must have been quite an uncomfortable situation for Sassoon. First,

because he was homosexual himself and might have felt something for Graves, and then because he wished he was in love too, as he later complained.

5. Rivers' Adventures from Melanesia and their Incorporation in *The Ghost Road*

Rivers' reminiscences on his afore-mentioned field trip to Melanesia, concretely to Eddystone Island, comprise a considerable part of *The Ghost Road*. The doctor's experiences from the expedition were concluded in *The History of Melanesian Society* (1914), however, the bigger work Rivers and his student Hocart planned was never written. Being aware of it, Barker included this information in one of Rivers' contemplations in *The Ghost Road*: 'His and Hocart's book on Eddystone had been one of the casualties of the war, though hardly – he [Rivers] glanced up and down the ward with its rows of brain-damaged and paralysed young men – the most significant' (GR 269). In the introduction of *The History of Melanesian Society*, Rivers describes the two kinds of ethnographical work done at that time. One was an intensive field work and the other was a survey-work, on which *The History of Melanesian Society* is based. The second kind of work was limited and Rivers found the results not much consistent, since the notes were done during hasty visits or conversations. Also, Rivers did not speak the language of the natives, so he found it difficult to communicate with them. There was usually a translator present, which made the surveys possible.

Melanesia, apart from other places, was an area where headhunting was practiced. Headhunting means taking the head of a person after killing them. There have been long discussions concerning the roles, motives or functions of headhunting. It is now generally agreed that its main function was ceremonial and that it was used in order to shape hierarchical relationships in a society. In Melanesia, headhunting had mostly a ritual purpose, rather than functioning as a kind of revenge. Rivers points out in his notes that 'the headhunting of some parts of Melanesia bears a closer resemblance to the blood-feud in that two communities often take heads from one another over long periods of time. The heads are taken, however, for definite religious purposes, and there is no evidence to show that revenge plays any part in the process' (Slobodin 238). Headhunting in Melanesia also functioned as a catalyst for ending of mourning for the community's dead. In Barker's version, this is what Rivers and

Hocart experience one day. Ngea, one of the natives, dies and his wife Emele has to undergo mourning. However, this is mourning in a different sense than the Europeans know. Emele is obliged to sit in a small wooden enclosure with her knees bent up to her chin in the same position as her dead husband. She can only be freed by killing a man from neighbouring village and taking off his head. This means the tribe has to go headhunting and bring back one head. Rivers is, however, quite skeptical about Emele: 'What he secretly thought, but superstitiously afraid of saying, was that the situation would end in Emele's suicide. He could see no other way out' (GR 186). Since the British colonizers forbade the activity, the natives "only" kidnap a four-year old boy from the neighbouring village, whom they do not kill but only keep. Emele is thus liberated from the cramped position.

Banning headhunting by the authorities was, in Rivers' opinion, connected with the sharp decrease in population of Melanesia. His *Depopulation* volume concerning the Eddystone Island suggests that anyone visiting the island can notice the inhabitants' lack of interest in life. He then pursues in his point, proposing that the absence of the zest is mainly due to the abolition of headhunting by the British. This is depicted in *The Ghost Road* in one of the anthropologists' dialogues about headhunting and its aphrodisiac function. 'The genealogies made grim reading. Families of five or six had been common three or four generations ago. Now any marriages were childless' (GR 158). Rivers claims in his work that in Melanesia people know how to cause abortion, and that they are aware of techniques believed to be contraceptive. The indigenous probably ask themselves why they should bring children into this horrible world where the colonizers take all the power. It is not sure whether Rivers was definitely against the abolition of headhunting or not, which is clearly shown in a heated dialogue in Barker's novel: 'Hocart: "You know what the penalties are. If they go on a raid…, you've got… villages on fire, crops destroyed, screaming women and children…" Rivers: "Makes you proud to be British, doesn't it?" H: "Are you suggesting headhunting should be allowed?" R: "No." Tight-lipped' (GR 186). The influence of banning headhunting on the decrease of population of Melanesia is not so cleat cut. In *The Ghost Road*

Hocart actually suggests the opposite – that taking heads virtually depopulated Ysabel, one of the Melanesian villages.

Apart from kinship, marriage, sex and other associations, Rivers studied the conception of death in primitive societies. During their stay in Eddystone Rivers and Hocart obtained an account of the destination of a man after death. They were informed that dead people stay in the neighbourhood of the place where they passed away for some time until ghosts come in the canoes from an island inhabited by the dead to take the souls to their new home. Rivers describes in his notes that on one night he and Hocart were part of a "séance" where this taking of the ghost of the dead was just happening. They were sitting in a house filled tightly with people, who sincerely believed that the strange whistling sounds around them were the spirits approaching to fetch the soul of the man who had recently died. Rivers' account of the event clearly implies that it was only the natives, not including Rivers and his companion, who heard and believed what the whistles, swish and paddles of the ghostly visitors meant.

The story apparently caught Barker's attention because she described it in *The Ghost Road* vividly. The author stuck to the main points, however, to make the story more interesting, she made Rivers and Hocart hear and think about the sounds of the ghosts as well. 'By now the room was full of whistles, slithering up and down the walls and all across the floor. At times the sounds seemed almost to be a ripple running across the skin... "Who was whistling?" Hocart asked. "I don't know" ' (GR 211 – 212). The séance described in *The Ghost Road* continues in rather a disturbing way. One of the natives claims to have the ability to understand the spirits, and so he translates the questions of the ghosts to Rivers and Hocart. Some of the ghosts want to know what these white people are doing there or whether they are as harmless as they appear. The climax of the evening is when the two come to their tents and Rivers' neck touches a blade of an axe when lying down. The two anthropologists take it as a kind of warning that they are not much welcome in the island anymore and that they ask too many questions.

Rivers and Hocart noted down another myth concerning the dead in their work. It says that after death the people of the Eddystone inhabit a certain cave, where the two were taken by the natives. It is interesting because the natives

seem to believe in two different concepts – the spirits go to the distant island of the dead and they also stay in the cave, which is not compatible with one another. Barker took the idea of the visit of the cave and used it skillfully in the novel. Both Rivers and Hocart are taken to the cave, which is quite an unpleasant experience for Rivers since the cave is full of bats: 'They stood together, breathing. Rivers shone his torch at the floor and cautiously they moved deeper into the cave. He put a hand out and touched something that slithered away under his fingers, then swung the torch round, a weak sickly ring of yellow light that revealed what for a second made him doubt his sanity: the walls were alive. They were covered in heaving black fur. Bats, of course' (GR 165). The novel also mentions that Rivers is told about the language of the ghosts who reside in the cave. However, as Barker puts it, he is not allowed to hear it.

The last point to be mentioned regarding the notion of death in Melanesian society and its relation to Rivers' experience in the island is the meaning of the word *mate*. Rivers tried to show that the conception of death among some primitive societies such as the Melanesians is different from the Eurocentric one. He points out that 'if any collection of words used by savage people in different parts of the world be examined, it will be found that each native word is given its definite English meaning, while many English words are also given a definite native equivalent' (Slobodin 210). It is often thought that the natives do not have any equivalent for some English words. At the same time, there is rarely any doubt that English would not have equivalents for certain vocabulary of primitive languages. This is, however, wrong, which can be further exemplified on the above-mentioned word *mate*. The term *mate* is translated to English as dead, which is true, but it is only one of the word's meanings. *Mate* is used for a dead person, but it is also used for one who is very ill and is going to die soon, as well as for one who is so old that it is surprising he is not dead yet.

Rivers describes his experience from Eddystone when a man whom he knew was seriously ill in his notes. The doctor was told the man was *mate*, which, however did not mean he was already dead, but still ill, likely to die. This person actually recovered after some time. Then Rivers knew about another

man, Rinambesi, who was the oldest inhabitant of the island, and thus considered *mate*. Barker treats the matter in a way to show the various meanings of the word. When Rivers is told that one dying man he came to visit is *mate*, he says, ‘breathing deeply and pointing to Mbuko’s chest, “No *mate*”, thinking they want to bury the man alive by mistake. Rivers was then told that ‘mate did not mean dead; it designated a state of which death was critically ill. Rinambesi, though quite disgustingly healthy, still with a keen eye for the girls, was also *mate* because he’d lived to an age when if he wasn’t dead he damn well ought to be’ (GR 134 – 135). When studying Rivers’ notebooks, Barker must have found this part concerning linguistics inspiring, since she devotes quite a big part of the novel to Rivers’ contemplation on this matter.

6 *Regeneration* as an Anti-war Literary Work

Barker's trilogy ranks among novels, inspired by the atrocities of the Great War, such as Hemingway's *A Farwell to Arms* or Remarque's *Quiet on the Western Front*. More than showing the reader the atmosphere of the battlefield or other military scenes, the trilogy focuses on the social, mental and physical consequences of the war, which are often irrevocable. It goes even further, since it portrays not only the harm done by warfare, but also the recovery process of the soldiers. The author attempts to create an anti-war feeling in a reader through the depiction of unfortunate fates of the broken men, for whom it is easy to develop sympathy. The "regeneration" of the Craiglockhart patients is the main content of the first novel. In *The Eye in the Door*, Barker continues with her war criticism, focusing mainly on social consequences of the war. Blending skillfully facts and fiction, she manages to portray the social restrictions imposed on an individual in the wartime Britain. Those include, among others, the oppression of different sexual identities, and persecution of pacifists and conscientious objectors which were discussed above. The reader comes in contact with the Western Front only in *The Ghost Road*, where Prior's journals of the fighting play an important role. Here, Barker portrays the cruelties of the warfare in order to imply the monstrosity of the war.

The first novel, *Regeneration*, starts with Sassoon's public protest against the war. This very beginning of the book sets the mood for the whole trilogy. Barker might have included Sassoon's declaration in the novel simply because it is a historical fact upon which she could base her literary work. Another, more appealing reason might be that the author wanted to emphasize the anti-war mood of the trilogy. Although Sassoon's protest seems ridiculous and naïve and raises unpleasant feedback from his friends and public, it later becomes clear that his points are fully justified. They are, however, rejected. Looking at the war situation in autumn 1917, the time of Sassoon's declaration, Britain was fighting one of the biggest battles of the First World War - the battle of Passchendaele. Together with the battle of the Somme in 1916, they were the war conflicts with immense number of casualties and bloodshed. The rising anger and soldiers' disagreement with the war policy was caused by the fact

that many of those casualties were utterly unnecessary. Whatever the circumstances were, it is sure that ‘the war was being deliberately prolonged,’ as Sassoon stated (R 3), ‘by those who had the power to end it.’ The content of Sassoon’s protest is mentioned or discussed throughout the whole trilogy and functions as a kind of reminder of the war’s absurdity.

Concerning the title of the trilogy, a careful reader might notice its parallel not only to the “regeneration” of soldiers, but also to that of the Hydra, the hospital magazine edited by Wilfred Owen. At first sight, it seems the magazine was named after the Craiglockhart Hydrophatic Institution, which was the original function of the edifice. However, the name of the magazine might have been based on the Larnaean Hydra, an ancient serpent-like water beast from Greek mythology. The creature was the guardian of the entrance to the Underworld beneath the waters. Hydra possessed many heads, and when one of them was cut off, it immediately regenerated two more. Therefore the monster could never be killed. This might imply that regeneration is not a positive idea. Healing neurasthenic men and sending them back to war where they will most probably break down again is not any solution. In *Regeneration*, Rivers also realizes it; he knows his patients probably suffer when he makes them remember the horrible events from the battlefield. He contemplates the matter when he watches the above-mentioned Dr. Yealland’s treatment of mutism by electroshocks. Rivers asks himself whether his patients also suffer, though not physically but psychically, when he prompts them to recollect their traumatic experiences. He realizes he deals with his patients more humanely than Yealland, yet he feels the sense of self-accusation. When comparing his and Yealland’s different approaches to treatment, he says to himself at one point: ‘Don’t flatter yourself. There is no distinction’ (R 238). The men will be sent to the front anyway and Rivers cannot prevent it.

Through showing the tragic experiences of the Craiglockhart patients and their consequences, Barker emphasizes the anti-war undertone of the trilogy. The men from the hospital will never be able to live the lives they have lived so far, and this evokes a strong sympathy from a reader. Among other ways to show the dreadful effects of the war on the soldiers, the author uses the concept of hallucinations, nightmares and dreams. One of such hallucinations is

depicted in *Regeneration*, where Sassoon wakes up at night and sees his dead friend standing by the door: Orme [was] standing immediately inside the door', but 'after a while he [Sassoon] remembered that Orme was dead' (R 143). Barker probably aims to show by this episode another consequence of the war, which is the soldiers' grief for their dead friends and family members. Through dreams and nightmares, the author also portrays one of the most common feelings neurasthenic soldiers have – the feeling of guiltiness. Most of the patients have to spend considerable time in the hospital for the treatment to start being effective. Sometimes it takes ages until some progress is visible. During this time, the patients are engaged in many activities, which, however, do not always prevent them from thinking about their comrades and friends who are struggling on battlefields. Although the patients know they are not capable of the active service yet, they feet guilty to be "wasting" their time in the hospital while their friends suffer. One of such portrayal of this feeling can be seen in Sassoon's unusual dream which was already pointed out in this work. In this dream the dead officers appear in front of Sassoon and indirectly ask him why he is in Craiglockhart: Rivers: 'You are not frightened?' Sassoon: 'No. That's why I said they weren't nightmares.' R: 'Afterwards?' S: Guilt' (R 189). The notion of guilt appears from different points of view throughout the whole trilogy. Either it is the broken men who feel guilty, or civilians for not being in the action, and sometimes it is even the doctors who feel guilty about sending the patients back to the same place where they broke down.

Another aspect of the war effect is the concept of emasculation. The theme of emasculation, or the lack of manliness, permeates t all the novels. The war and its horrors put some men in powerlessness, because they have to deal with something that one who does not go through cannot imagine. Enlisting is one thing, but to actually take part in the fighting is something different. It is only in extreme situations that a person breaks down and there is nothing wrong about it. However, the pressure of society is powerful and the soldiers have to face the public's opinion that to suffer a breakdown is utterly unmanly. Being always aware of this wrong judgement, it is difficult for the neurasthenic patients to overcome their problems. This is seen for example on one of the Craiglockhart patients, Anderson, who dreams that he is chased by his father-

in-law and two orderlies when running naked through bushes. After they get hold of him they tie him up with a pair of lady's corsets which they fasten round his arms and tie the laces. After recounting the dream to Rivers, Anderson points out that 'it is *possible* someone might find being locked up in a loony bin a fairly *emasculating* experience' (R 29, original emphasis). Another example is Sassoon's reminiscence of a young man he knew, who was castrated during a battle. Regarding the fictional character Prior, the reader finds out more about his family background in *The Eye in the Door*, where Prior remembers his weakness when dealing with his father or, on the contrary, the strong influence of his mother. The theme of emasculation also appears when Sassoon indirectly reveals his homosexuality to Rivers. The doctor tries to explain to his patient that he should be more careful and not venture his sexual identity. Rivers then contemplates the war's effect on men, who tend to behave in a more feminine way in caring for one another on the battlefield.

Finally, the theme of unmanliness is noticeable in Rivers' method of treatment. It is discussing feelings and expressing emotions what Rivers wants from his patients – two characteristics mostly attributed to women. Men are not used to this kind of communication, and so it is sometimes complicated for both the doctor and the patients to reach a satisfactory conclusion. Rivers himself was not sure if his way of treatment is the best one, since it was still in an experimental stage then. Sometimes men do not want to admit both to themselves and to others that apart form a physical problem, they have also a psychological problem. This is because they can not reconcile with the unmanliness of their situation. One such example is Rivers' patient Willard, who appears in the first novel and whose problem is paralysis. All the doctors from Craiglockhart assure him that there is nothing wrong with his spine, and yet Willard thinks he cannot walk. This is connected with some psychological block of his that Rivers tries to help him overcome: R: ' "There's no reason for you to be in bed… you could go out into the grounds." Willard thought about it, reluctant to concede anything that might suggest his illness was not purely physical' (R 113). It is, paradoxically, thanks to Rivers' unmanly methods of treatment that the officers in Craiglockhart finally improve their state.

The Great War was a traumatic experience for every nation involved in it. For Britain, however, it seems to have been far more traumatic than for continental Europeans or Americans. There was something, according to John Terraine, that characterized Britain before, during and after the war – delusion. In his article, “Britain in the First World War”, Terraine concludes that the delusion is not so much connected with huge economic or human lost, as it is generally believed, but more with the psychological damage. It was for the first time that educated and highly articulate middle class itself went to war. This was not common in British history, where the armies mostly consisted of people of lower classes who were considered dispensable. ‘Horrible things had happened to British armies before…but they had never happened to an army like this, so the impact was new.’[5]

It is then not surprising that the afore-mentioned battles of the Somme and Passchendaele were such a shock for the British. They were the battles that saw the biggest amount of casualties, almost no gains of territory, huge destruction and immense expenditure of munitions. Concerning Passchendaele, Lloyd Goerge ordered the offensive to continue although he knew many lives were already sacrificed and many more would still be. This and other of George’s war strategies rose anger in the public and the hatred for him grew. This is what Barker tries to show in *The Eye in the Door* by introducing the pacifist circles and the case of Alice Wheeldon, and thus incites the anti-war feeling in the audience. The reader only gets to know the atmosphere of the battlefield from Prior’s authentic account of the war in *The Ghost Road*. The climax of Prior’s war experience is the battle at Sambre-Oise Canal, the conflict that saw one of the last victories against Germany. Knowing the nature of the two big battles, Barker incorporates them in her novel when Prior analyses how he should lead the battle at Sambre-Oise. He is in charge of his men and while deciding on the strategy of the action, he compares the two alternatives on the bases of their similarity with the battles of the Somme and Passchendaele. The former would mean to possibly end up in weltering mud while the later would probably lead to self-destruction by the enemy’s machine-

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[5] http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/great-war-on-land/163-john-terraine - essays-on-leadership-and-war-1914-18/116-britain-war-terraine.html. Extracted Sept. 6, 2011.

gunners: ‘It’s a choice between Passchendaele and the Somme. Only a *miniature* version of each, but then that’s not much consolation’ (GR 252). Both Billy Prior and Wilfred Owen die in the battle, just a few days before the end of the Great War. Throughout *The Ghost Road* Barker lavishes upon authentic descriptions of dying soldiers and traumatic situations the officers have to deal with. Doing this, she indirectly criticizes the war trying to show its absurdity.

Conclusion

The objective of this thesis was to explore the fictional and factual content of Pat Barker's trilogy *Regeneration*. It is a literary work based on historical facts which Barker mixes with fictional elements in order to create an interesting and readable piece of art portraying Britain in the period of the Great War. The incorporation of facts in the trilogy is done in various ways. Mostly, the author tries to keep the factual content unchanged in order not to mislead the reader. Sometimes, however, Barker slightly changes or enriches the facts in an attempt to make the story more appealing.

The first novel of the trilogy, *Regeneration*, follows the destinies of shell-shocked soldiers and their subsequent treatment. Hence, the factual content of the novel is mostly made up of various personalities who are historically important, such as doctor William Rivers or his famous patients Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. In the second book, *The Eye in the Door*, Barker draws on historical facts concerned with the politics and society in order to create an authentic background for her fictional story. The last novel, *The Ghost Road*, is a mixture of two plotlines considerable different in their nature. The former is a fictional account of the battlefield while the latter is a narration heavily based on Rivers' experiences in anthropology, and thus highly factual.

As for the central characters of the trilogy who are based on real people, Barker usually keeps their names, main characteristics and their experiences. These are the main protagonist William Rivers, his patients Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, and a poet and Sassoon's friend, Robert Graves. Barker studied the lives of these people extensively, since their depiction in the trilogy is extremely accurate. The characters whose names are changed or who are only partly based on real people are mostly Rivers' patients, such as Burns and Anderson, or Callan, the mute patient of doctor Yealland. An important character of *The Eye in the Door* is Beattie Roper, for whom Barker found inspiration in the radical pacifist, Alice Wheeldon.

Concerning the historical events, issues or aspects of the wartime Britain used in the trilogy, Barker mostly draws on the political and social sphere.

Regarding the politics, the author tries to depict the resistance to the war policy represented by the Prime Minister Lloyd George. In order to do so, she chooses the case of Alice Wheeldon, a notorious pacifist, who was accused of attempting to murder the Prime Minister. Barker uses this event as a background for her fictional story of *The Eye in the Door*. Although Barker changes the name of the pacifist and other small details, she sticks to the core of the case. As for the social issues depicted in the trilogy, the author portrays the narrow-mindedness of the British society toward homosexual people who were, together with pacifists, considered a threat to the spirit of the war effort. In order to do it authentically, Barker uses the controversial affair, known as The Cult of the Clitoris. This campaign against homosexuals was triggered by the dancer Maud Allan, whose performance of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (1893) brought disturbance to then homophobic British society. The author takes this real event and skillfully incorporates it in her fictional story of a bisexual character Charles Manning, who appears in the audience of Allan's performance. Barker also demonstrates the oppression of homosexuality on, among others, the characters of Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen.

Regarding Rivers' experiences from Melanesia, which form a considerable part of *The Ghost Road*, Barker draws on the doctor's notes from the field trip. Not all the adventures described in the novel happened to Rivers and his colleague Hocart in reality, but most of them did and others are heavily based on Rivers' diary. When deciding which parts of Rivers' notes she should use, Barker gives importance to those adventures which somehow contrast the "civilized" society that is in war. She focuses on describing the headhunting Melanesian culture and its traditions in a way that it parallels with the other fictional plotline of *The Ghost Road*, that is, with the account of the battlefield.

Throughout the trilogy, Barker attempts to criticise the war in various ways. The very beginning of the first novel introduces Sassoon's declaration against the war. Barker uses the document without changing a word of it to introduce the anti-war mood of the whole trilogy. The consequences of the war are mainly delivered to the reader through the author's portrayal of the broken soldiers and their unfortunate destinies. She draws on the stories of real patients treated by Rivers. Barker demonstrates the absurdity of the war on

other aspects as well, such as the concept of emasculation, which is noticeable in the army, or on River's treatment of the broken men.

The Ghost Road differs from the other two novels in that it contains two main plotlines. One of them is a fictional account of the war mediated by a fictional character Billy Prior. This is done through Prior's journal he keeps on the front. The second plotline is Rivers' reminiscence of his adventures in Melanesia which are based on reality. From the second part of the novel, chapters concerning Prior's war experience alternate with the chapters about Rivers' time in Melanesia. The parts of the book dealing with the two different contents become shorter and shorter, and both the plotlines are eventually juxtaposed in the last chapter. Barker uses this technique in order to create a tension that leads to the tragic ending of the novel, and in consequence, of the whole trilogy.

All the historical facts Barker employs in her trilogy are only raw material upon which the author bases her literary work. What makes the trilogy extraordinary is, firstly, the choice of appropriate factual material which goes in line with Barker's intention to criticise the war. Then it is the skilful incorporation of this material into the fictional realm of the trilogy. And last but not least, it is Barker's original conception of the whole work, since each novel is quite different with respect to both the content and narrative style.

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