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Making History: The Role of the Reader
in The Wars and Ana Historic

A Thesis

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Master of Arts

by

Alison Tobin

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**MAKING HISTORY: THE ROLE OF THE READER
IN THE WARS AND ANA HISTORIC**

BY

ALISON TOBIN

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fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

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ABSTRACT

“Making History: The Role of the Reader in The Wars and Ana Historic” questions traditional assumptions that history is already “there” by examining the process of its construction in two Canadian novels which are historiographic metafiction.

New historicists recognize that the writer is not a neutral chronicler of events, but in fact actively shapes and determines the events about which s/he is writing. Yet the model of the historian as “performing” through writing, as the mediator between the historical agent and the reader, effectively excludes the reader from the creation of meaning. Both The Wars and Ana Historic reinsert the reader back into this communicative triangle, directly inscribing the reader in the process of finding meaning while wrestling with issues of author/ity. Subsequently, each novel’s reference to “you” creates a blurring of identities that ultimately leads to a relaying of characters and the reader into one another, unfixing identity in ways which challenge traditional notions of the subject.

Both The Wars and Ana Historic focus on figures who have either been marginalized or silenced by history and therefore attempt to open up the boundaries of historical discourse to include many voices. Women, as Marlatt’s novel clearly demonstrates, have been particularly absent in traditional histories, so that “gendering history” can provide a critique of “universalizing” history which ignores issues of race, class, and sex, in order to articulate a women’s history. The Wars, in turn, challenges imperialist master narratives, heroic narrative in particular, using two of its narrators, Lady Juliet and Marian Turner, to posit a “female” reading which values compassion, community, and eco-humanism over conquest, empire, and nationalism.

The Wars and Ana Historic each provide counter-discourses to imperialist history, rejecting the determinism of the “already-made” by rereading and redoing events through narrative reconstructions.

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Introduction

Who makes history: the subject? or the historian? Or is history already “there”? While traditional historiographers would argue that history is the art of representing what really happened, recent critical theory has displaced the notion of history as a mimetic representation, and has focused instead on the writerly process of its construction. Such New Historicists specifically contextualize historical discourse so as not to depoliticize the narratives, because who is writing is nearly as significant as what is being written, given that history has the power to construct and shape reality and not merely to render a neutral reality. Since history is generally written by the winners, marginalized groups attempt to open up the boundaries of historical discourse in order to voice their own previously silenced discourses. Feminist critics, for example, expand the boundaries of historical narrative, exposing the “interested nature of histories” while attempting to voice their own stories (Smarr 1).

Stephen Greenblatt first announced a “new” historicism, writing that “[it] erodes the firm ground of both criticism and literature. It tends to ask questions of both criticism and literature. It tends to ask questions about its own methodological assumptions and those of others” (1059). Whereas the “old” historicism privileges history over literature, portraying history as a mimetic representation of events in the world (Davis 373), New Historicism presupposes both “the historicity of texts” and “the textuality of history” (Shea 125). “Old” historicists view history and literature as separate ontologically; history only provides a background for a literary work, since the text itself is universal, transcending the specific situation in which it is written (125). The New Historicists attempt to expose the “mask of objectivity” worn by both traditional historians and critics by emphasizing the historically and socially shaped perspective of the writers of histories and by contextualizing literary texts within their cultural, social, and historical situations (126).

History, then, is examined as a “discourse” and can be analyzed in the same manner as other narratives, while literature is examined in terms of its cultural context (Davis 373).

The process of actually writing history, particularly in terms of literary historiography, raises questions about the relationship of the author and his/her author/ity to his/her text. In the new historiography, the writer is not simply a chronicler who neutrally records events, but instead actively shapes and determines the reality about which s/he writes. If the writer “performs” the events s/he writes, does this give the writer complete authority over the text? While contemporary literary criticism refers to the death of the author, maintaining that a consciousness behind a text can never be found and that we can only speak in terms of the “author function” (Foucault 267), an “absent” historian would offend the basic convention of history, whereby the historian mediates between two presences, one then and one now. As Derrida phrases it, “History has always been conceived as the movement of a resumption of history, a diversion between two presences” (“Structure” 241). But in this classic conception of history writing as a mediation between the historical agent and the modern reader, there is little attention given to the third party in the communicative triangle--the reader. Where does the reader stand in relation to the creation of historical meaning? Does the historian solely determine the meaning of events? Or does the reader create his/her own meanings, as is sometimes thought to be the case in literary theory? Both The Wars and Ana Historic are novels about the writing of history that must wrestle with these issues of authority, representation, and power.

Though Timothy Findley’s The Wars centers on a young Canadian soldier named Robert Ross and his experiences during the Great War, it is not written as a first-person confessional narrative, being instead comprised of a series of documents and eye-witness accounts. The narrative is explicitly presented as a reconstruction of these past events by a narrator/researcher who is temporally removed from the situation about which he is

writing. Daphne Marlatt's Ana Historic is similarly made up of at least three distinct levels of time. The narrator in Ana Historic, Annie, is also involved in the process of reconstruction/reimagining several lives, one of a young frontier teacher in British Columbia in the 1880s, another of her mother in the 1950s. Since the two novels are seemingly widely different, with little in common, Ana Historic is usually discussed from a feminist perspective and The Wars from a variety of narratological perspectives. They have never been examined together. But both novels, in depicting the process of finding and determining meaning, question the notion of history as fact and as transparent representation, and instead portray the opaque process of making meaning from the past.

Central to this process of making meaning in both novels is the collaboration of the inscribed reader. Because of the explicit use of the second-person voice in The Wars, the reader's role has been discussed often enough by other critics. Donna Pennee's "Paradigms of Interpretation, or, The Ethics of Reading the Metafictional Text," focuses on the reader's involvement in reconstructing the events in the text and on the way in which the novel demonstrates the necessity of choosing interpretations in order to come to "perform an ethical act" (59). In "'It Could Not Be Told': Making Meaning in Timothy Findley's The Wars," Diana Brydon focuses, by comparison, on the act of telling in the novel and ultimately on the novel's gaps and silences and on the way in which so much cannot be told in the "eddy in The Wars" into which the reader is drawn (71). Lorraine York, in her introduction to the novel, more clearly links the reading process with the creation of the story, highlighting the researcher's role as mediator between the past and present. While these critics have all noted the emphasis on the reading act in the novel, epitomized by the researcher's role as the interpreter and creator of story, they focus primarily on this researcher and do not examine how the implied reader is inscribed in the text and how the notion of identity becomes unfixed through the reader's entry into

differing subject positions in the text.

In Ana Historic, the role of the reader has been a critically neglected subject. Glen Lowry's "Risking Perversion and Reclaiming Our Hysterical Mother: Reading the Material Body in Ana Historic and Double Standards," does briefly highlight the reader in the conclusion, citing the last line of the novel--"reading us into the page ahead"--as evidence for the way in which the reader releases Annie from having to find an end to her story and instead leaves the reader responsible for finding meaning in the text. Lowry's article focuses more specifically on the writing of the female body in the novel, and how Annie must rescue her mother's life which has been lost to history through "hysteria." Manina Jones, in the most detailed analysis of the novel to date, entitled "'I quote myself' or, A Map of Mrs Reading: Re-siting 'Woman's Place' in Ana Historic," focuses instead on the gendered writing of history in the novel and how the text portrays both the "forgetting of women within the restrictive monologic narrative of official history" as well as the narrator's re-citation and remembering of the absent or lost stories of women (150).

Criticism has never explained the central significance of the inscribed reader in either text, particularly with respect to the reader's part in the creation of history. A chapter on the role of the reader, building on Wolfgang Iser's theories of reader response, proposes to rectify this problem. Iser, in The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response, posits a dialectical relationship between reader and text by which the reader's imagination completes the inherent gaps within a text in order to form a conditional meaning for the text. Iser's depiction of the collaboration inherent in the reading process is not only revealing for a study of The Wars, with its explicit use of a second-person creation of the text, but is also important for a study of Ana Historic, which similarly uses a second-person voice. The central reader in Ana Historic is the narrator's dead mother Ina, to whom the entire novel is addressed. Both novels not only inscribe readers into the text--

“you” the researcher and Ina--but also incite implied readers into assuming the role of co-creator. Both Ana Historic and The Wars begin with a mystery--The Wars with an intriguing scene of a man alone with some animals in the prologue, and Ana Historic with the question, “Who’s There? she was whispering. knock knock. in the dark” (9)--a mystery which the reader is invited to solve.

In The Wars, the reader is positioned from the outset as the researcher who finds, interprets, and recreates meaning--“You begin at the archives with the photographs” (11). In section one of the novel, the reader is similarly implicated in the role of the interviewer--“They look at you and rearrange their thoughts” and “In the end, the only facts you have are public” (10). The intriguing gap in the narrative that is evoked in the prologue invites the reader to discover what has happened and to reconstruct these past events. The reader thus becomes the co-creator of the text and is inscribed into the dramatic record of discovery and revision.

In Ana Historic, while the reader is not addressed so explicitly, she is inscribed in numerous ways, from the opening question of “Who’s There?” (9). While the novel, as a “bedtime story for... Ina” (137) is written to the narrator’s dead mother, the ambiguous use of the third-person pronoun “she” (which simultaneously refers to two dead women--Ana, Ina--and to Annie the narrator) carries over into the second-person address, so that the reader, who is always implicitly evoked in the text, is very explicitly evoked in the final words of the novel, “reading us into the page ahead.” Furthermore, the elusiveness of the opening section of the novel requires that the reader “pay attention!” as s/he did in The Wars, and demands the reader’s active reconstruction and reconfiguration of events.

Iser’s model of the reader’s interaction with and formulation of the text leads into larger questions about the notion of identity in both novels. In The Wars, the reader enters the text as the historical subject--“And this is where you fought the war” (22)--so that her

involvement is not only in the process of creating the text, but also in the process of questioning identity. In The Wars, a novel which questions the male ethos of war and demonstrates how the wars are implicit within all human relationships, this unfixing of an absolute identity entails an ability to empathize with others as the reader steps into the subject position of others in order to identify with them. For the reader, this process involves moving through the different subject positions of the characters in the novel, through a chain of identities by which the reader can begin to formulate herself anew.

In Ana Historic, the strict boundaries of self are likewise questioned throughout the novel as the different characters slide into one another, so that the pronoun “she” comes to represent Ana, Ina, Zoe, and even Annie, as the narrator admits to the fact that she is attempting to tell “our story” in the broad sense of telling women’s histories. In the novel, however, the dangerous potential of a complete loss of identity is evident in Ina’s loss of self after electro-shock therapy. Annie’s writing nonetheless attempts to portray the dangers of fixing or limiting the identities of women as she both imagines more than the sparse archival information that comprises Mrs. Richards’ story, and constructs alternate possible selves for Ana, Ina, and even for herself.

Both novels not only highlight the reader’s involvement in the unfixing of identity in each text, they also inscribe their readers in the process of writing history. While Manina Jones has focused on the “gender-specific codes of history” in Ana Historic, and on the way in which Marlatt uses citations and “re-citation” (151) to question the objectifying male gaze of history, and Simone Vauthier has focused in detail on the narrative reconstruction of events in The Wars, a study of the specifically historical discourses in the texts themselves has not yet been done. Questions of temporality are central in this second chapter, and I draw on the theories of Hayden White’s historiography for a context and a vocabulary for a discussion of how history separates the prospective

and retrospective functions of reading, which Iser describes, into two differing temporal actions in both novels. White's historical agent is similar to Iser's first-time reader whose expectations are continually modified as s/he reads, and the historian is similar to the reader who has taken up the work a second time and retrospectively orders events since s/he has knowledge of the entire story.

White's theories about the way in which an historical agent shapes events prospectively while the historian shapes them retrospectively are particularly significant for Findley's and Marlatt's historical/fictional narratives in which the process of writing is dramatized. For both novels have protagonist-historians who revisit and re-perform the actions of past protagonists--the researcher reliving the life of Robert Ross and Annie reliving and recreating the lives of her mother and Ana Richards. Both plots trace the difference between the prospective actions of the historical protagonists and the retrospective emplotments by narrators who configure these actions in new ways, with new meanings. Each novel also questions the notion of a past history, of history as the "already made" that is built upon a foundation of facts, showing how the process of narrativizing is implicit in all historical narratives (Ana 98). The Wars, which is comprised of a series of documents, eye-witness accounts, and narratorial interjections, inserts private history into the public discourse, dramatizing not only what official documents hide, but also what other histories are concealed in the public record. In Ana Historic, Annie uses Mrs. Richards' journal, which is discounted as "fictional, possibly..." (36), to open up the public discourse and to avoid the occlusion of personal experience by the "closed door" of history. Annie opposes her husband Richard, an economic historian, in his view of history as objective and universal by incorporating personal experiences into her history of Ana Richards. Recognizing that Mrs. Richards has been dismissed by the official documents in which her life seems to have concluded after her marriage to Ben Springer, Annie opens up

her narrative to include private and even fictional documents. Annie thus raises larger questions about why women are so often absent from historical narratives, and why the so-called objective accounts have written them off.

As both narrators in The Wars and Ana Historic attempt to revisit the past by expanding the boundaries of the official discourses, they also dramatize J.L. Austin's speech act theories of performative verbs, by which telling makes a thing happen. Austin's How to Do Things With Words distinguishes between constative utterances, which are merely descriptive, and performative utterances, which enact the significance of the words through their saying. Austin's theory of performative utterances offers a liberating possibility for the construction of historical narrative, suggesting that history happens more than once through its retelling. In Ana Historic, this reopening of the past entails Annie's imaginings of new possibilities for Mrs. Richards' story, as well as Annie's own coming to terms with her mother's death as she converses with Ina in the present tense of the novel. In The Wars, the narrator's reopening of Robert Ross's past entails not only a reconfiguration of past events, but also a fulfilling of Robert's story, since he had been dismissed as a traitor in the official military history.

A final chapter expands upon this reopening of past events in order to reenact and change the past by offering a gendered rereading of history, a way of opening up history to the views of excluded readers. Patrocinio P. Schweickart's "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading" questions the universalization of the reader in male reader-response theories, suggesting that they ignore differences in class, sex, and race. This critique of the universal reader leads to a model of feminist reading strategies. Schweickart suggests that reading can be imagined as visiting, as an attempt to travel back in time to visit with the author in order to hear her voice instead of imposing the reader's own view on the text. This model of reading-as-visiting is relevant to The Wars because of the

narrator's visits to two of the witnesses in the text, Marian Turner and Juliet d'Orsey, in his attempt to revisit Robert Ross, and in Ana Historic, because of Annie's visiting with the dead through her reading of Mrs. Richards' journals and through her imagined conversations with her mother.

In Ana Historic, Annie's visiting of Mrs. Richards is an attempt to try to connect with the existence of the woman behind the journal. Instead of imposing her viewpoint on the absent author, Annie attempts to communicate and connect with her, so that she eventually imagines her thoughts and actions: "i imagine her standing slim in whalebone at the ship's rail as it turns with the wind..." (14). Annie similarly attempts to connect with her dead mother through an imagined conversation with Ina in which she realizes that her mother's voice is a part of her own--"i feel myself in you, irritated at the edges where we overlap" (17). In The Wars, questions of narrative authority are also raised when the narrator visits Lady Juliet and Marian Turner in an attempt to resist the hidden third-person discourse of traditional history by including alternative forms of narration in the text. Visiting, or revisiting, in both novels marks an attempt at a dialogic form of discourse in terms of a multi-voiced conversation with the past.

This model of reading as a kind of visiting is ultimately an anti-imperialist gesture, because it is an act which does not try to appropriate a character's point of view, but instead attempts to listen to his/her voice. This "female" reading of text expands into a "female" reading of history. In The Wars, the entire war-novel genre written as first-person confession in works such as Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms (1929) and Charles Yale Harrison's Generals Die in Bed (1929), is replaced by a more inclusive, multi-voiced portrayal of the wars which are inherent in all aspects of human relationships. The questioning of the male ethos of military valour, in particular by Lady Juliet and Marian, highlights a female rereading of history that exalts compassion over heroism, and bio-

community over jingoistic nationalism.

In Ana Historic, a gendered rereading of history is, in part, a rejection of Annie's husband Richard's view of history as objective and factual. Both by questioning the notion of a "line dividing the real from the unreal," and by refusing the forward thrust of linearity, the narrator searches for a particularly female version of history. Exposing the link between history and "hystery," or "the excision of women (who do not act but are acted upon)" (88), she attempts to find a form which can embody women's history. This writing of women's history includes a remembering of the suppressed stories of both Ina and Ana which had been excluded from more traditional histories.

While Ana Historic and The Wars differ widely in theme and style, they nonetheless complement one another because of their metafictional focus on the process of constructing histories. Since The Wars has not been examined before now from a feminist perspective, a comparison with the female reading strategies developed in Ana Historic helps to highlight both novels' anti-imperialist refusals to appropriate their characters' points of view. Since Ana Historic has only been examined limitedly, and primarily from a feminist perspective, a comparison with The Wars helps to emphasize its similar construction of historical discourse in the novel, and provides a strong context/contrast for the idea of the role of the reader. As both novels ultimately question the sole authority of writers and readers, espousing a collaboration between the two rather than a struggle for control, they relay nicely into one another, providing new readings in terms of an often surprising dialogue.

“Inscribing the Reader: A Relay of Identities in The Wars and Ana Historic”

Daphne Marlatt's Ana Historic is an experimental feminist novel that attempts to rewrite and reconfigure women's history, beginning with the story of a frontier teacher in Vancouver, while Timothy Findley's The Wars is a novel that reconstructs a young Canadian soldier's experiences in World War I. The two works would seem to have little in common. Yet in each novel, the reader is invoked, inscribed, and placed in the role of helping to create meaning in the text. Jonathan Culler uses the phrase “stories of reading” to label different proponents of reader-response theories; his expression proves a useful guide not only for the stories provided for us by literary criticism, but also for those dramatized by Marlatt and Findley .

Given the range of reader-response theories that have appeared in the last twenty years, Wolfgang Iser, who is often touted as a ‘middle ground’ theorist, can serve as a point of entry into the acts of reading in both novels. Iser, in both The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response and “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,” offers a theory that depicts the process of reading by focusing on the reception of the text by the reader. Iser posits a dialectical relationship between text and reader; a text is not a fixed entity, but a series of potentialities which the reader fulfills in order to bring the text into existence (“Reading” 1219). Iser states that within the structure of the text, places of indeterminacy are conditions for communication and that all texts contain gaps which spark the reader's imagination (Act 175). As the reader links the differing scenes and segments of the text, her fulfillment can only represent a configurative meaning, one of many potentials that each reader produces in her own slightly unique way. Part of the process of configuring meaning in a text involves anticipation and retrospection, a continual building up and shattering of expectations. Iser terms this process “illusion-building” and “illusion-

breaking” (Act 129), a “process of continual modification” which is “closely akin to the way in which we gather experience in life” (“Reading” 1223). Iser thus focuses on reading as process and suggests that meaning in texts is not stable but is instead a “dynamic happening” (22).

The structures of both Ana Historic and The Wars would be praised by Iser for an openness that helps to engage the reader’s imagination. While I will be focusing primarily on the inscribed readers in both works, significantly, the structure of both texts also places ‘real readers’ in a role of active participation. Ana Historic, in particular, is a dense, complex book that defies easy categorization. It takes the form of a loosely structured collage of quotations from a variety of sources/discourses ranging from Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex to M. Allerdale Grainger’s Woodsmen of the West, interspersed with the historical Mrs. Richards’ journal and the narrator’s reflections and imaginings. Manina Jones labels Ana Historic a “documentary collage,” a transgressive method of re-citation that “provokes a re-reading of the institutional writings she cites” (141). Reading in Ana Historic, then, becomes a process of rereading, deciphering, recontextualizing, and piecing together ‘the story’ in order to make meaning. The Wars, by comparison, is more traditional, but its structure also demands the reader’s involvement. From the first chapter after the “Prologue,” the reader is placed in scenes of interviews, or in the archives with documents and photographs. The typed, transcript testimony of Marian Turner and Juliet d’Orsey offers other elements of variation in the narration that suggest how the text is not a product of a single sustained narrative voice but is in fact a piecing together of different accounts. The reader is inscribed in the role of the archivist, suggesting that there will be information to be assembled, decisions to be made, and gaps to be filled. The Wars does not aspire to a mimetic illusion of reality but instead conjures up the whole process of its own creation. Elements of indeterminacy in both texts--why

did Robert Ross save the horses and who was Mrs. Richards--are gaps which, according to Iser, spur the reader into action.

In the prologue to The Wars, the reader is intrigued and perhaps confused by the events described, and in the opening sections of the novel, the reader is specifically invoked. The first section of the novel brings us back into the 'present'--"All of this happened a long time ago. But not so long ago that everyone who played a part in it is dead"--and the reader is immediately implicated in the role of the interviewer (10). The witnesses look at "you" as they consider what to tell and "you" ask questions about the horses (10). The reader is placed in scenes that she cannot even recall and the matter-of-fact statement, "In the end, the only facts you have are public," emphasizes how these 'public facts' are as of yet an illusion, but "out of which you make what you can, knowing that one thing leads to another" (10). "You" are thus faced immediately with a moment of illusion-breaking when it is apparent that the narrator is not going to continue being omniscient after the prologue, or let you receive the story passively. But a new illusion is building, one which creates the expectation that you can find how "one thing leads to another." And so, "You begin" again "at the archives," putting together assorted fragments (11). The first sections of The Wars explicitly feature the pictures, the documents, the interviews, and the witnesses that make up the stuff of the narrative. Findley highlights the difficulty of arriving at and deciding upon meaning before the story of Robert Ross even begins.

Reading, in Ana Historic, is even more demanding as a process than it is in The Wars. Iser explains how reading is a process of selection whereby a configurative meaning is assembled (Act 126, 150). Reading involves a breaking and a fulfillment of expectations; when expectations are fulfilled, "gestalt forming" occurs (125). With Ana Historic, the reader cannot be passive and is continuously in the process of what Iser calls "consistency

building,” having to make sense of the text when expectations of reading are not satisfied (17). Upon first reading Ana Historic, the reader is continually deciphering the text, attempting to determine the different voices and discourses that exist side-by-side--a “book of interruptions”--usually without explanation or source (Ana 37). The novel is separated into sections by sparse, poetry-like pages shouting “pay attention!” to the reader, that, while highlighting particular aspects of the novel, serve to ground the reader. One such page, for example, focuses us on the importance of naming in the novel: “what is her first name? she must have one--/ so far she only has the name of a dead man,/ someone somewhere else” (37). In a second instance, Ana’s name is inscribed in handwritten script in an act of renaming and reclaiming Mrs. Richards’ individuality. By the third such dividing page, the link between Ana and Ina is explicitly foregrounded--“Ana/Ina/whose story is this?”--as the reader is forced to focus on both the near interchangeability of the two names, and the connection between the stories of both women (67).

Iser’s theoretical terms give us a model for the reception of such texts by the reader and are particularly useful in a study of The Wars and Ana Historic, because of the way in which both texts explicitly inscribe and invoke the reader as co-creator. From the oft quoted prologue of The Wars, Findley sets forth an intriguing gap in the story which the reader is invited to explore. The novel begins like a curtain rising on an event that is already in progress for which the reader is not given a context. Donna Pennee says that the prologue begins a “reading experience” which “involves a constant effort to reconstruct the events and circumstances which led to the configuration of man-horse-dog and the act of freeing witnessed in the prologue” (38). The statement “It could not be told” (Wars 9), like Findley’s famous line “pay attention!”, is a marker in this opening scene which alerts the reader to the way in which choices and decisions will be necessary, because all will not be revealed by an apparently omniscient narrator. The opening scene in Ana Historic,

much like the prologue in The Wars, is one in which the reader is also left unsituated. The “she” and “he” of the first paragraph are not named, and the repetition of “Who’s there?” resonates--a question without an answer and seemingly without an object. The gaps in both Robert Ross’s and Mrs. Richards’ stories leave the narrative somewhat open, demonstrating the way in which interpretation can vary and the way in which we, to use Diana Brydon’s phrase, must “make meaning” with the characters in The Wars and Ana Historic (62).

The reader not only enters the text as its co-creator, however; she also enters it as its subject. In the scene in which Robert and the other soldiers visit the prostitutes, the reader enters the house with Robert: “On entering Wet Goods, you were greeted by a large male mute... A negro woman took away your coats and called you Capn’ no matter what your rank. Then you were left to stand in the hallway, not quite sure which way to turn” (38). The reader, like Robert, is not only left confused and uncertain, but is directly implicated in the purpose of the visit: “Directly opposite the door, there was a wall that was covered with paintings of Odaliskes and mirrors, so the first thing you saw was yourself, intermingled with a lot of pink arms and pale breasts” (38-39). Another scene demonstrates this intimate link between character and reader even further. The reader is brought into the fog and the mud of the war front and is placed in a dialectical relationship with Robert. No sooner has the narrator stated, “And this is where you fought the war”, than Robert is brought into this same setting, directly implicating the reader in his experiences (72). When the soldier, Levitt remarks, “... somewhere back there you took the wrong turn and you’ve come out onto this dike and the dike is now slowly collapsing,” both the reader and Robert are accountable for the error (78). By placing the reader in this setting, Findley not only demonstrates how we are also in a ‘fog’ about the events, but also the way in which we are entangled in the war and can not simply observe the action from a

safe distance.

Iser's view of the reader's transcendence, however, is far removed from both The Wars and Ana Historic, two novels that explicitly invoke the reader so as to make him or her personally implicated in the text. Donna Pennee states that The Wars offers "no asylum for the reader" (58), and that to read the novel is "to perform an ethical act" (59). In The Wars, the Wet Goods scene emphasizes how the reader, entering the whorehouse with Robert Ross, cannot simply watch the action passively. Left standing with Robert in the hallway of mirrors, "you" mix with the flesh in the paintings to become embodied in the mirror. Later, when Robert is in a room with the young prostitute, he is horrified by what he sees in the adjoining room through the spy hole. As Robert plays the unwilling voyeur, the reader too becomes aware of the dangerous implications of third-person narrative. If the reader is allowed a peep hole into characters' minds and lives, she is spared from seeing herself implicated in the story and can simply watch and judge. Findley exposes the fictiveness of this form of narration which he finds dangerous precisely because it conceals its own construction and offers an illusion of transparency; he invites the reader to be involved in the text and attempts to transcend the illusion of separateness between the perceiver and the perceived (Pennee 58). As Findley's invented source, Nicholas Fagan says, "the spaces between the perceiver and the thing perceived can... be closed with a shout of recognition" (Wars 191). But the recognition involves a sense of complicity, or even identity, between the viewing subject and the viewed object.

By implicating the reader in Robert's actions, Findley also raises larger questions about notions of identity. In the first section after the prologue, the reader is placed in the subject position of the interviewer/researcher as s/he enters into an illusion that s/he not only has prior knowledge of Robert Ross's story, but that s/he will be sifting through information to discover the missing pieces. When the narrator says, with reference to the

pictures, "Shuffle these cards and lay them out: this is the hand that Robert Ross was born with," the second-person imperative identifies us once again with Robert, giving us the "same hand" to play narratively as he plays in life dramatically (15).

Reading, York notes, is an "active seeking of knowledge" (27): the reader, indeed, is inscribed and even invited to examine and sort through the 'evidence.' The reader is placed in the archives studying documents--"[y]ou begin at the archives with photographs"-- and is immediately inscribed in the process of finding, interpreting, and recounting the story of Robert Ross (Wars 11). We are not simply reading the text but are invoked as a physical presence--"[a]s the past moves under your fingertips, part of it crumbles. Other parts, you know you'll never find. This is what you have" (11). In her first transcript, Marian Turner also directly addresses an audience or reader. She says, "You will understand," "You see," and "I quite understand why you feel it must be told" (16). Within the first ten pages of the novel, then, Findley has explicitly addressed the reader, invoked her in the text, and has begun to define the importance of her role in the formulation of the text. His metafictional novel which contains a series of narratives, documents, and forms is one in which the reader is invited to piece together the story and enter into the life of Robert Ross (Pennee 40-43).

The reader-researcher, however, is called upon to do more than sift like an historian through documents and witness accounts. Imagination becomes crucial to our recreation of Ross's story and as a means of bridging the gap between the past and present (York 28). The scene in which Robert leaps through memory vividly portrays the viewer's animation of the past:

Robert Ross comes riding straight towards the camera. His hat has fallen off.

His hands are knotted to the reins... There is mud on his cheeks

and forehead and his uniform is burning--long, bright tails of flame are streaming

out behind him. He leaps through memory without a sound... You lay the fiery image back in your mind and let it rest. You know it will obtrude again until you find its meaning--here. (12-13)

We are reminded of the mysterious scene of the horses from the prologue and our search for the meaning of that incident, but we are also aware of the way in which the photograph is not a still shot of a moment from the past, but is a live, moving image that, as York and others have noted, is a picture made in the researcher's mind (29). Emphasized in this moment is "your" resistance to Robert's erasure from history, as so many of those have done in trying to forget his story. The "fiery image" keeps Robert Ross alive in "your" memory, just as Robert himself resists his sister Rowena's erasure. Rowena, his hydrocephalic sibling, is not present in the next photograph of Robert watching the band play because she is just outside the official frame, but Robert names her and proclaims her presence, just as he proudly displays her picture on his bureau and carries one with him to the front even though she is absent from most of the family photographs. When the narrator later states, "There is no good picture of this except the one you can make in your mind," we are told of the way in which the reader is required to imagine many of the events that have no witnesses or to present Robert without documentary evidence (71).

This extensive use of "you" in The Wars involves more than the complex process of including the reader in the creation of meaning in the novel, since it finally offers a larger challenge to the notion of fixed identities. Robert's fellow soldier, Levitt, presents one version of a totally fixed identity: the straight-as-an-arrow Levitt, who reads war manuals for pleasure, is summed up succinctly by Robert: "He was the sort of man who when asked who was there ? said me. Who else might there be?" (92). Levitt, a man with little imagination (his contempt for Rodwell's children's books is visible to the other soldiers), cannot imagine anyone being present in the fog but himself. Another soldier, Harris,

whom Robert befriends on the voyage to England, offers a version of identity on the opposite end of the spectrum. In the hospital, the sickly Harris defines his very fluid view as he tells him how he once swam with the fishes: "Then I'd slide... Out of my world and into theirs... And I'd think: I never have to breathe again. I've changed. It changes you. But the thing was--I could do it. Change--and be one of them" (95). His view of identity involves a fluidity between all creatures--"Everyone who's born has come from the sea... We are the ocean--walking on the land" (105-106). Yet even while Harris returns to the sea, and his vision of identity as total flux is offered as an alternative to Levitt's narrow-minded, limited view, Harris's perspective offers a dangerous extreme--he drowns in that same fluidity. The absolute loss of the psyche can ultimately lead only to death.

Both Levitt and Harris's opposing views of identity offer a frame for a perspective in the middle ground that is epitomized by the use of the second person in the novel. The reader is given an alternative view of identity by another of Robert's fellow soldiers, Rodwell, the humanitarian who cares for stray animals and uses them as models for his children's books. Although Rodwell later shoots himself after witnessing a horrible act of cruelty towards animals, he leaves a letter with Robert for his daughter Laurine that offers a more hopeful view of identity: "I am alive in everything I touch. Touch these pages and you have me in your fingertips. We survive in one another. Everything lives forever. Believe it. Nothing dies" (135). Rodwell, unlike Harris, does not portray a nihilistic loss of the ego but instead depicts identity as something which can be relayed from one person to another. Later, when Robert examines one of Rodwell's sketchbooks, Robert finds himself, the only human form, intermingled with a hundred other sketches--"he was one with the others" (138). Rodwell's view of a communal identity that is passed on from one being to another exists within a larger community of all creatures.

Rodwell's maxim, "We survive in one another," is the culmination of the relay of

identities that is depicted in The Wars; the reader is able to participate in the narrative dramatically by moving along a chain of identities. In the first scene after the prologue, the reader moves into the position of the archivist and subsequently becomes involved in the process of deciding upon meaning in the text. Next, the reader moves into Robert's position: the scene at the whorehouse in which we are implicated in the mirror and the scene in which we are lost in the fog with Robert not only remind us how we are subsequently implicated in the apparently omniscient scenes from Robert's perspective, but also demonstrate the unfixing of identity precisely because we can move into Robert's viewpoint. Similarly, when the reader resists the erasure of Robert's "fiery image" from history, s/he assumes Robert's position who himself resists Rowena's erasure from the photograph. The entire narrative can thus be read as a resistance to erasure and as an enactment of our survival within one another.

The whole process of moving into Robert's viewpoint occurs not only dramatically in the novel as a way of personalizing history, but also on the narrative level of story making. Early in the text, we see Robert resisting the conventional codes of behaviour and implicitly those of war when he will not "fight a man [his girlfriend] didn't love and whom he'd never seen" (14). His refusal becomes the teller Marian Turner's refusal of social codes, when she questions the conventional definition of a hero and asks, "Why fight in wars?" Marian's resistance becomes the reader's, as the entire narrative becomes a rereading of traditional war rhetoric through the uncovering of Robert Ross's story. "You" resist the official reading of Robert Ross's actions and the condemnation of him by history just as "you" resist his erasure from the photograph.

While Marlatt's Ana Historic does not have an explicitly inscribed reader/researcher as Timothy Findley does in The Wars, the second-person pronoun is used repeatedly in the text to invoke another reader--the narrator's dead mother Ina. One possible answer to the

opening question of "Who's There"--"my mother"--would place the absent mother, a common figure in literature, as a dialogical presence in her text (10). Sounding out the words as if to test them in her mouth, Annie writes, "I-na, I-no-longer, i can't turn you into a story. there is an absence here, where the words stop. (and then i remember--" (11). The next paragraph moves into a childhood memory in which Ina speaks her presence, "i'm here," to her frightened child (11). Since Ina is dead, the narrator writes that it is "up to [her] to pull [Ina] through" by telling her story (11). Invoking Ina as her audience becomes integral to Annie's telling, and the entire novel, in fact, could be labelled as a letter to Ina.

Yet the novel is not a mere invocation of a dead mother. Through writing, Annie not only keeps her mother's story alive, but Ina's voice also enters the text to participate in conversations with her daughter. Her voice first emerges as one of critique when she interrupts Annie's reconstruction of Mrs. Richards' world with "now you're exaggerating" (22). She becomes Annie's alter ego and even her editor--a critical reader who often represents the voice of an unimaginative society. She says, for example, "the trouble with you, Annie, is that you want to tell a story, no matter how much history you keep throwing at me" (27). Annie is ever conscious of her mother as a history-reader and gauges her reaction as she writes the novel.

The process of Annie trying to get at the story of Mrs. Richards is linked with the conversations with her mother, her imaginary reader. The story is most obviously the unwritten lives of both Mrs. Richards and Ina, but it is also how Annie describes the life that Ina plotted for her daughter--the narrator's past history and her relationship with her mother--or what Ina would term a woman's lot, a story that has abandoned her now that her mother is dead. Yet this story is also obviously her own writing, and the narrator insinuates that she requires her mother's voice as a muse for her writing. While she protests to Ina that she "can't turn [her] into a story" (11), she later writes, "there is a story

here" (14). As Annie begins to reconstruct a scene in which Mrs. Richards is writing in her journal, we begin to see the way in which the pioneer woman's story is intermingling with Ina's: "no, that was the picnic cloth you used to use--did they have oilcloth in 1873?" (29). When Annie writes, "we know nothing about her mother" (29), she emphasizes the way in which her own writing is inscribing her mother and telling her story. Later, Annie asks, "Ana/Ina/ whose story is this?" (67). When Annie adds, "she keeps insisting herself on the telling," the pronoun is ambiguous. "She" fuses Ana and Ina together, and, as distinctions between pronouns vanish, identities lose their separateness--"you who is you or me"--as even the distinction between the writer and subject begins to fade (11).

Written, in part, as a letter to the narrator's dead mother, Ana Historic becomes a novel about communication. Just as so many of the pronouns and subjects in the text are deliberately left ambiguous and resonate with multiple meanings, so, too, do many of the narrator's statements and questions signify in different ways. "i want to talk to you" is a statement that most immediately refers to Ina, but also suggests Mrs. Richards and even the reader herself (18). The narrator's retort, "no, we don't know how she came. we know only that she was appointed teacher for the second term of the mill school's first year," doubly implicates Ina and the reader (15). Even the opening words of the novel--"Who's There"--already invoke the reader as one possibility. "Who's There" is a reaching out to an audience, an appeal, and a question that is almost fearful of a response. The novel itself is filled with a series of questions, a mark of its verbal style to a large extent as the narrator converses with her mother, but it is also characteristic of its status as a narrative that marks an attempt at discovery. Many of the questions are rhetorical or have no answers ("what is her first name?"), but each question emphasizes the gaps in the narrative and the way in which both the narrator and the reader will have to fill in or imagine these gaps. Mrs. Richards, for example, becomes Ana, a mixture of both the narrator and her mother, so that

she is not just named as the possession of her husband but is given her own female identity, one which is not, incidentally, separate from that of the other women in the narrative. Just as the reader in The Wars is inscribed in the repeated use of the second person, in Ana Historic, “you” includes both Ina and the reader. “(W)e couldn’t have imagined the world Mrs. Richards walked into” (21), and “you misspelled her name” (43), are both examples of the way in which the narrator includes the reader in her finding and telling of a story.

Annie as a reader of Ana’s texts also gives us a model for the way in which we read Annie’s own narrative. Marlatt leaves the status of Ana’s writings indeterminate. At the archives, her journal is labelled “‘inauthentic,’ fictional possibly, contrived later by a daughter who imagined (how ahistoric) her way into the unspoken world of her mother’s girlhood” (30). The possibility that it has been written by Ana’s daughter is here raised so as not to let us view Ana’s words as any truer than Annie’s imaginings. Quoting one section of Ana’s journal--“How the rain falls in this place--so thick you cannot imagine” (86)--Annie questions why she keeps up the polite pretence of an audience in her private journal. Yet her comment that no one would ever read her sentences is obviously false since both Annie and the reader are implicated in Ana’s statement. Annie’s objection also draws her own inscription of the reader into question; why is she keeping up the pretence that Ina is following her sentences? Annie answers her question in the next paragraph as she imagines the path of Ana Richards’ sentences and life. When Annie writes, “it was hers alone, leading her on,” the third-person pronoun becomes blurred as Annie enters Ana’s life and envisions her following a trail through the woods and encountering two women at a small lake (86). Imagining this scene obviously represents more than a simple filling of a gap in Ana’s story: it also reflects the writer’s personal need to experience through Ana. The act of reading, of positioning oneself as the “you” in a text, becomes an

act of the imagination and an act of empathy.

Annie thus dramatizes our role as readers through her readings of Ana Richards' journal. Many of Annie's rhetorical questions have no answers at first, but as Annie digs deeper into her own imagination, she begins to fill in some gaps. Marlatt's novel itself is a series of questions, a narrative full of gaps that must be imagined by writer and reader. When Ana crosses out words in her journal, Annie wonders what audience has caused her to censor herself:

what is she editing out and for whom? besides herself?... she is thinking about those possible others leaning over her shoulder as she writes... i lean over her shoulder as she tries, as she doubts: why write at all? why not leave the place as wordless as she finds it? because there is 'into--' what? frightening preposition. into the unspoken urge of a body insisting itself in the words. (46)

Annie's comments most directly relate to theories of the psychology of writing, but also apply to the position of the reader. Is an audience simply a negative presence that causes a writer to edit her own thoughts? Might the audience serve to authorize the writing and give it a purpose? Or is any possible audience envisioned to be like Annie, a friend looking over her shoulder and attempting to understand and sympathize with her thoughts?

Ana does not knowingly have a reader for her private writings, so to project an audience for herself is one means of justifying herself and her writing. That Ana's reader is envisioned as a sympathetic onlooker is corroborated by the community of readers that we find in the novel itself, as the use of the second person continues to expand in concentric circles. Annie converses not only with Ina, but also with Ana: "Ana, what are you doing?" (139), and to Zoe, "you talk about imagining" (131). Annie, then, is not alone in asking, "whose story is this?" (67). When Ina accuses Annie of simply wanting to tell her own story, she replies "and yours, ours" (79). With the proliferation of voices and

readers in the text, telling "our story" evokes the more universal telling of women's stories--"women imagining...women" (131).

Thus, the dividing page to the last section of the novel offers a concise summary of the way in which Marlatt has redefined the reader's role in the text:

she who is you

or me

'i'

address this to. (129)

The dangling preposition leaves the reader free to fill in the blank with his/her name while the "i" in quotation marks further draws standard notions of identity into question and suggests a breaking down of the hierarchy of author and audience. Glen Lowry uses Barthes' theories about the way in which active reading "dislodges the author from his work" and thus upsets a "theme of authority" as a model for Marlatt's dislocation of authority in Ana Historic (93). The small "i" not only emphasizes a post-structuralist questioning of the notion of self, but also denies the reader being grounded in a relationship to an authoritative "I." In fact, the narrator herself, as Lowry remarks, is positioned variously as "i," "she," and "you" (94).

Just as Findley's The Wars poses questions about the formation of narrative through a reader variously inscribed to raise larger questions about fixed identity, Marlatt's Ana Historic also challenges standard notions of the subject. Unlike The Wars, however, Ana Historic specifically delves into the notion of the split subject. This split is depicted through the narrator's identity crisis; her reference to "you who is you or me. she. a part struck off from me. apart. separated" begins her search for her "Lost Girl": "she, my Lost Girl, because i kept thinking, going back to that time with you... and what i did when i was she who did not feel separated or split" (11). Annie's "Lost Girl" existed in a time

“without history,” when “our bodies were ours as far as we knew and we knew what we liked” (19). Annie, through stories of Ina’s motherly advice, emphasizes the way in which young women are taught both to be ashamed of their bodies and also to be constantly fearful for their protection. Annie relates society’s construction of women’s bodies by telling the stories that Ina passed on to her as she was growing up.

The separation of the body and the self entails more than the patriarchal construction of femininity--it tragically occurs with Annie’s mother Ina, who underwent shock treatments because of a mental illness. Ina also became a “Lost Girl,” except that in her case it was because “they erased whole parts of [her]” and “overloaded the circuits so [she] couldn’t bear to remember” (148-149). Annie’s story, then, becomes an attempt to reverse her mother’s “hystery” which she has come to understand as “the excision of women” (88). Patriarchal history, it turns out, is nothing more than “hysterectomy, the excision of wombs and ovaries by repression, by mechanical compression, by ice, by the knife. because we were ‘wrong’ from the start” (88). Annie has somehow to re-member “the life of Ina lost to hysteria” (Lowry 88). The drastic loss of self that Ina undergoes involves more than the mind/body split that Annie views in herself, and Annie resists Ina’s erasure (literally, and from history) by featuring her voice in her own text where she writes a long bedtime story to her mother.

Central to Ana Historic is Annie’s need not only to re-member Ina, but also to re-member her own feminine identity, to write and reintegrate her body and mind. This project involves a process of “putting things back together again, the things that have been split off” (Ana 51). Annie not only has to remember her “Lost Girl,” she figuratively has to re-member her, a process that attempts to move beyond constructions of femininity to self-inscription of the body. With the words “you taught me,” she has accused her mother of complicity with patriarchy, “the uneasy hole in myself and how to cover it up--covergirl”

(60). Now in menstruating, Annie has to read "the mark of myself, my inscription in blood. i'm here. scribbling again" (90). And so she imagines herself "writing the period that arrives at no full stop. not the hand manipulating the pen. not the language of definition, of epoch and document, language explaining and justifying, but the words that flow out from within" (90). The only way to escape her mother's socially-imposed code of self-hatred is to read and write a new code of the female body.

And so Annie ultimately imagines the birthing act as women's rewriting of the dogma of western patriarchy. Instead of the word made flesh, she imagines the flesh made word, "a massive syllable of slippery flesh" which "slide[s] out the open mouth" of Jeannie's womb in a scene witnessed by Ana Richards and imagined by Annie (126). Annie inscribes a "mouth speaking flesh" in "this other language so difficult to translate" (126). But ultimately, this "mouth" speaks a language which can supply her with a lost homeland, "her country she has come into, the country of her body" (127).

This reintegration of the Lost Girl with her lost body is just the kind of homecoming for which both Ana and Annie long. Annie eventually finds her connection in another house filled with women; with her friend Zoe, Annie finds the "'our' in body" (151). As they make love, they fuse together and give "birth to each other" (153). Identity, in this final scene, becomes fluid. The reconciliation with one's body does not mark a return to an essential self, however, nor does it represent a fixing of identity. Just as The Wars demonstrated the dangers of viewing oneself as absolutely separate, Ana Historic exposes the limitations of society's attempts to fix women into an essential 'femaleness.' After Ina undergoes shock therapy, she becomes absolutely fixed. Annie remarks, "they took your imagination, your will to create things differently" (149). Identity, in Ana Historic, involves 'unfixing'--the right to formulate oneself and to imagine possible selves. Annie's writing of Ana Richards' history, for example, entails imagining

the teacher beyond the narrow range offered to her by the title of Mrs. Springer. She imagines "other selves" for Ana just as Annie later imagines a relationship with Zoe that moves her beyond her identity as Richard's wife Annie (146).

Fluid identity, in Ana Historic, is portrayed not as a dangerous immersion or escape, but as an entry into a world of connection. The final, unnumbered page in the novel depicts a positive image of timeless fluidity. As in The Wars, the unfixing of identity in Ana Historic implicates the reader, but while The Wars uses a relaying of identities through a chain of different subject positions, Ana Historic relays identity primarily through the blurring of pronouns that call for successive subject positions. Annie writes to her mother, for example, "i feel myself in you, irritated at the edges where we overlap" (17). The entire novel involves the overlapping of identities: "you" are simultaneously Ana, Ina, Zoe, and even Richard, just as "she" can evoke all of the women in the text. Zoe challenges Annie with the statement, "who are [the 'characters' of your story] if they aren't you?" (140). "she who is you/or me/'i'/address this to" epitomizes the blurring between the narrator, the characters, and the reader in the text (129). The quotation marks around the lower case "i" call into question both the solidity of the subject position as well as the hierarchical relationship between the narrator as the one who addresses, and the reader as the receiver of information. The "or" suggests multiple possibilities--the reader can move along this chain of subject positions because the boundaries between the subjects are deliberately blurred.

In Ana Historic, "you" becomes the place "where we meet" (153), a part of the bridge between differing identities, and a part of the metamorphosis that occurs between "she who is you" and "she who is me" (129). In The Wars, the reader, along with the characters in the novel, participates in the unfixing of identity, but the chain of identities is not only represented through the reader's entry into the archivist's and Robert's subject

positions, since other characters also lengthen this chain. Mrs. Ross, for example, becomes so concerned about Robert's safety that she enters the experience of his madness. Mr. Ross, realizing that "Maybe you [have] to give yourself away," sympathizes with his wife by putting himself imaginatively in the place of Mrs. Ross as a young woman (137). The next scene, in which Robert finds himself intermingling with the animals in Rodwell's sketchbook, underscores the identification that has just occurred. Later, Mrs. Ross participates with Robert as he becomes more deeply entrenched in the madness of the war: the day of Robert's death, Robert's picture on the Ross mantelpiece begins to fade and Mrs. Ross proclaims herself blind as she physically enacts Robert's death within herself, even before her son's condition has been publicly announced.

The ending of The Wars builds one final chain of identities, that of Rowena-Robert-Lady Juliet-the narrator-"you." While a drunk Mrs. Ross was earlier wheeled around in Rowena's chair, Robert is more desperately in need of a wheelchair when we last see him, because of his many injuries. Robert thus enters Rowena's subject position as the invalid, while Lady Juliet enters into Robert's position as caregiver. With the final words of the novel, "you" have moved into the narrator's position as the teller of the story and into Robert's very position as the source of autobiography--"Look! you can see our breath! And you can" (191). In the total structure of the work, we replace one another on this chain, moving from right to left through various subject positions, from "you" to the narrator to Lady Juliet to Robert. "And you can" makes the reader speak in agreement with Robert even as "you" assume his position in the text by lending him "your" breath. The writing of "And you can" becomes our words, as we are left to read Robert Ross's story "into the page ahead" (Ana 153).

The relaying of identity in Ana Historic is further complicated both by issues of reading and by Annie's attempts to end her novel. Jonathan Culler refers to the way in

which experience turns to knowledge through reading and this process creates a sense of mastery over the text (79). Annie, however, writes against the mastery of history--“history the story, Carter’s and all the others, of dominance. mastery. the bold line of it”--against the closed parentheses of the objectifying male gaze of history/narrative (Ana 25). Annie has difficulty ending her story, in part because she has been resisting the traditional structures of both historical and fictional narrative, and also because she does not want glibly to summarize her characters, to catch them “between the covers of a book” (150). She further breaks down the barriers between life and fiction--“in life we go on”-- as the depiction of the love-making of Annie and Zoe, first written in the present tense, moves into a timeless, fluid episode (150). The scene is one of birthing, parallel to Jeannie’s, and represents the possibility of a new beginning. When she writes, “reading us into the page ahead,” she not only resists closure and the final word of an ending, but she also places the burden of the ending directly onto the reader (153). We are responsible for imagining Zoe and Annie and their relationship as we “read” their future and its endless possibilities. We give “place,” “words,” and “birth” to each other by the end of the novel (153).

At the end of “The Reading Process,” Wolfgang Iser offers potential insight into the relay of identity that is enacted in both The Wars and Ana Historic. Reading is described as an act of discovering “what had previously seemed to elude our consciousness” (1232). The act of reading itself, according to Iser, entails “formulating something unformulated in ourselves” (1232). Reading removes the boundaries of the “subject object division that constitutes all perception” as the reader is “occupied by the thoughts of another” and must renegotiate the boundaries of his/her personality (1231). In extending our own reality, then, we become “other” to ourselves. By becoming “other,” we participate, on the literal level of reading, in the unfixing of identity that is portrayed in both novels. While the act of “formulating” entails learning and an active search for knowledge, Iser emphasizes this

process as something which occurs within the reader. Even though the reader of The Wars and Ana Historic is called upon to help create and formulate the texts, the reader is asked to do more--to participate in the texts and in so doing to extend herself.

The relaying of identities that occurs in both Ana Historic and The Wars serves to question the validity of fixed identity while dramatizing the problem of how an identity can be unfixed without losing its meaning. Ana Historic features the blurring of the boundaries between subject positions in order to open up both possibilities of reading and possibilities of imagining oneself beyond the confines of what is defined as self. In The Wars, the reader occupies differing subjects as "you" move through a chain of positions. People are relayed in one another, portraying a process of moving beyond the strict boundaries of the self, beyond Levitt's unquestioning "Me." Understanding the wars in the novel entails empathizing with different points of view and not merely reading from an objectified, voyeuristic perspective. Dramatizing both the construction of their texts, and the deconstruction of a fixed notion of selfhood, Findley and Marlatt offer a story of reading for "our" role and inscription in The Wars and Ana Historic.

“‘Performing’ History: The Reader’s Experience of Time in Ana Historic and The Wars”

Readers of Ana Historic and The Wars relay more than the identities of characters and narrators in each work; they relay the human experience of separation by time, but also of connection between widely separated moments. In particular, the structures of temporality in these texts move us from the reader’s role in enacting the narrative to the narrative act of writing itself. The double now of the narrators who are in the act of narrating the texts--the researcher in The Wars who is reconfiguring past events from his/her contemporary perspective and Annie, in Ana Historic, who continues to participate in the stories of the past that she is narrating--dramatize the making of history. Findley and Marlatt’s novels ask us in turn to re-read and re-imagine past documents in order to relay the historical moment to new conclusions.

Wolfgang Iser’s “The Reading Process” and The Act of Reading are not only useful, then, in their depiction of the reading process, describing a model of the way in which readers fulfill and enact texts; his reception theory is also very telling about the temporal aspects of reading. Iser notes that a novel cannot be grasped as a whole so the reader is constantly in the process of selecting and grouping meanings in a way that cannot be duplicated on second readings or by other readers. Iser calls the reader’s presence in the text “a point where memory and expectation converge, and the resultant dialectic movement brings about a continual modification of memory and an increasing complexity of expectation” (Act 118). Meaning, Iser notes, has a “temporal character” (148); a second reading of a text can never duplicate the first, precisely because the first reading influences the second. A first reading of a text for Iser is akin to the experience of living; the way in which we are continually modifying as we read is similar to the way in which we gain experience in real life (“Reading” 1223). In a first encounter with a text, one reads

prospectively in anticipation of the events to come, while in a second reading, one reads retrospectively as well as prospectively. The reader has knowledge that s/he did not have in the first reading and can therefore correct, enrich, or simply change his/her opinions during the second. If an initial encounter with a text is like a life experience, then in the second, the reader is put in the position of the historian who retrospectively shapes experiences with the knowledge of the outcome of events.

Iser's model of the temporal structure of reading finds an interesting counterpart in the historiographic narratology of Hayden White. Iser's distinction between prospective and retrospective actions in the reading process is translated in White's theory into the prospective action of the historical subject and the retrospective action of the historian. In The Content of the Form, White's historical agent is similar to Iser's first-time reader who is involved in a process of illusion-building and illusion-breaking; even as his/her expectations are continually being modified, s/he "prospectively prefigure[s] [his/her life] as a story with plots" (White 173). But historical agents cannot always foresee the meaning of their deeds, "because human actions have consequences that extend beyond the purview of those that perform them" (174). As White puts it, "A meaningful life is one that aspires to the coherency of a story with a plot. Historical agents prospectively prefigure their lives as stories with plots. This is why the historian's retrospective emplotment of historical events cannot be the product of the imaginative freedom enjoyed by the writer of fictions" (173). And so the historian takes up the action a "second" time, emplotting and configuring historical events retrospectively into a story. But what the historian shares with the agent at the deepest level is the profound human experience of temporality in the structure of existence. The structure of historical narrative therefore contains the basic structure of human experience, inasmuch as "temporality is 'the structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity'" (171).

While White and Iser do overlap on issues of anticipatory and retrospective reading of actions and events, White delves deeper into issues concerning temporality and narrative. In his chapter entitled "The Metaphysics of Narrativity: Time and Symbol in Ricoeur's Philosophy of History," White quotes Ricoeur as referring to narrativity as "the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate referent" (171). "Historical discourse" is thus the process of "endow[ing] the experience of time with meaning" (173). Ricoeur views time itself as fundamentally narrativistic in nature; the way in which humans configure and experience their lives as stories already anticipates historical narratives which configure events as "lived stories" (177). White's and Ricoeur's theories, then, do not simply question historical representation for depicting a unity that does not exist in the mere chronicle of events; White suggests that, because of the structure of temporality itself, narrative history imitates life and the way in which human beings both emplot their lives and seek to endow their lives with meaning. History is not merely the neutral translation of a series of events--it is shown to be "constructed rather than discovered" (Smarr 2).

The experience of temporality is a crucial aspect of the narratives of Ana Historic and The Wars. The double narrative structure of The Wars dramatizes the process of its creation as the archivist/narrator sorts through the information in order to arrive at the story. In the first scene after the prologue, the illusion of a transparent realistic narrative is broken and the reader is brought back into the narrator's present: "All of this happened a long time ago. But not so long ago that everyone who played a part in it is dead" (10). The reader is made aware from the first chapter after the mimetic prologue that history--Robert Ross's story--is made up of photographs, documents, and eyewitness accounts that must be interpreted (York 27). The mimesis of action, in other words, shifts from the historical subject to the historian "making" history. Now the narrator begins in Chapter 2 to assemble some of the documents in the archives that s/he will sift through, an entire age

which “lies in fragments underneath the lamps” (Wars 11). The dusty, yellowing, crumbling past in the archives is what the researcher must assemble and emplot. The very selection of photographs which are described is the first such emplotment, but near the end of this passage, the narrator emphasizes the inherent randomness of the “pictures” themselves--“(s)huffle these cards and lay them out: this is the hand that Robert Ross was born with”--suggesting that the sequencing of events is always open to interpretation (15). Ana Historic similarly dramatizes its creation through the double narrative of Annie and Ana, but the frames are not set up as clearly as they are in The Wars, since the reader is deliberately disorientated as she tries to find her place in the text. The narrator is writing personal history (autobiography), a personal letter (to a dead mother), as well as the biography of a woman from local history whose own autobiography (journal) is on deposit in the archives. Mrs. Richards’ journal and letters invite Annie’s rereading of the young teacher’s story, just as the pile of documents begin the researcher’s rereading of Robert’s story. In both cases, however, it is what the documents do not or cannot say that inspires a critical rereading and an imaginative entry into the past lives of both Mrs. Richards and Robert Ross.

The Wars is built upon such parallel actions performed by the “historical agent,” Robert Ross, and the historical researcher who narrates the story. In the first section after the prologue, we become aware that the prologue is the narrator’s recreation of a long-dead past. We are thus brought closer to this “presence” of the past only to be reminded of our distance from it. Lorraine York notes how Findley stresses the “double framework of the novel” with interjections into the transparent narrative of Robert Ross that remind us that we are viewing his story from a contemporary perspective (29-30). One such intrusion is the narrator’s explanation of Robert’s request for a pistol: “Lest Robert’s having to ask for his own side arms make[s] no sense to those of you who weren’t around or haven’t read

this part of history, it should be pointed out that this was a 'people's army'--not an army of professionals" (Wars 36). York notes that this "trick" of adding historical explanations to the narrative locates us in the late Twentieth Century, and helps to preserve our distance from the war (30). But there is also a sense in which the reader is projected into a "double now" of history and fiction. By highlighting the gap between Robert's experience and a contemporary perspective, Findley emphasizes the necessity of catching up with "lost time," since it is the reader, as I discussed in chapter one, who provides a link between the two narrative viewpoints.

The narrative action of closing the gap between past and present in The Wars begins as a simple blurring. The first-time reader of the text is placed in a position of assumed knowledge about the infamous Robert Ross. When "you" ask about Robert Ross and "they" tell you that he is dead, "This is not news" (Wars 10). While we do not yet know the details of Robert's life, we do learn early on that he was "consumed by fire" (11). The text places the reader in the position of the historian who knows the frame of events but must find, interpret, and order these events in order to tell the story. The narrative act is thus a strange blend of retrospective and prospective stances. On the one hand, the reader is placed in the position of the researcher who orders the events from a distant, contemporary perspective, but, on the other hand, the reader is also positioned, through a relay of identities, into the role of the historical agent Robert Ross. Robert's story is written as if it were occurring in the present. He acts prospectively and the narrative is filled with suspense and tension. The reader, who knows of Robert's eventual death, nonetheless enters into the prospective position of Robert, who cannot foresee his own future, because the events leading up to Robert's death remain a mystery to us. Findley here questions the notion of narrative omniscience, forcing us instead to participate in the suspense of Robert Ross's actions and to become involved in the emplotment and

interpretation of his story. The narratorial interjections, then, do not serve to remind us that we are reading fiction, but instead to emphasize the dual position of the reader who spans both the past and present.

In Ana Historic, the blurring of chronology is even more explicit, although the separate time frames are much more tenuous than they are in The Wars. Ostensibly, the novel is concerned with three distinct periods--Hastings Mill in the late 1800s, the narrator's childhood in the same city in the 1950s, and the present of narration, still in Vancouver, in the 1980s. But the reader of Ana Historic is not even sure of what time it is in frequent leaps in the opening pages between all three temporal levels. The blurring occurs, in part, because Annie, the narrator, is simultaneously historical agent and historian. For Annie's writing of the story/history of Ana Richards coincides with the writing of her own life story, which is both retrospective as she looks back on her childhood and her relationship with her mother, and prospective as she projects her life from her crumbling marriage into the future. Ana Richards, the historical agent who is closest in this novel to the position of Robert Ross, is seen through her journal writings in a continuing past, recorded in her present--to express her concerns about her new life as a teacher as well as those for her larger future. Annie, however, writes of Ana's experiences not only from a retrospective view of these past documents and the context of the historical period, but also with a prospective reimagining that carries her beyond the statement that "history married her to Ben Springer and wrote her off" (Ana 134). At the same time, Annie the historian carries on a conversation with her dead mother Ina which recalls their conversations of the 1950s, but also brings the dead woman up to date with Annie's present life in the 1980s. The historical Ana Richards is also permitted to speak directly to the reader through her journal, emphasizing not only the interconnection between women of different generations, but also the arbitrariness of literary structures themselves. Ana

Historic thus demonstrates the tenuous and artificial nature of the borders between past, present, and future by representing narrative time as fluid.

The complex treatment of temporality in both novels serves to pose broader questions about the notion of a 'past' history. Ana Historic is more explicit than The Wars in its challenge to traditional historiography with its notions of impersonal narration and its privileging of facts. Annie's husband Richard is an historian whose voice in the text serves as a model for the "male" writing of history. Richard, who seems to be an economic historian, states that "history is built on a groundwork of fact" (134). History, according to Richard, is the "already made" (98); to the historian it seems that material conditions such as "lot numbers and survey maps" have only to be pieced together to give him "the picture he wants" (79).

Annie's mother Ina sides with the historian's view of "objective" history by dismissing her daughter's history as "story" (27). But Annie maintains that she "learned that history is the real story the city fathers tell of the only important events in the world" (28). In order to question and present other possibilities for writing, Annie must break open the "(f)acts" of history, which she sees as "(voice-over), elegiac, epithetic. a diminishing glance as the lid is closed firmly and finally shut" (48). She begins by questioning documents, asking where are the women in this supposedly objective history-- "where are the city mothers?" (28). She later interprets the gaze of history as being like the defining male gaze in which women are viewed as being merely passive and as existing to be looked at and not to act. Annie counters the male gaze by making it subject to inspection. She inserts passages of "male" history into her narrative without contextualizing them or ascribing ownership to them (she imagines Richard protesting "that's not how to use quotations" (81)). The excerpts she quotes, such as the "Ex Star of Jamaica" list, expose the male idea of history as an exchange of goods.

Most tellingly, Annie juxtaposes the story of Jeannie's birthing with a male story of a boat race. While the women join together to support their friend, the men, in their vessels that are appropriately given female names, are competing with one another and are involved in a contest of power. Annie similarly examines a photograph of five men in business suits who are standing in front of Hastings' sawmill. The photograph is an outside view of the Alexanders' first house which defines it as a public space, male property in a grid of land titles, rather than as the private, domestic space of the mother giving birth to a child whose existence also belongs to the public. By questioning the absence of Jeannie Alexander from the picture, Annie questions the external, objective view of the official frame and suggests that we must go inside in order to discover the other half of the story.

Annie counters the defining male gaze of history by opening up a space for women's history. But Annie's project also involves dismantling the public/private binary that extols history as objective, significant, and universal while dismissing personal experience as subjective and inconsequential. She imagines a complement of "interior history" (90), a hidden "personal history" (55) which is obscured by the external, objectifying historical narrative. In order to tell the story of Ana Richards and Jeannie Alexander, Annie must not limit herself to the official documents, because they only tell her that Mrs. Richards was a young, widowed school teacher who arrived in Hastings Mill in 1873, purchased a piano from Mrs. Schwappe, and later married Ben Springer. Recognizing that this woman's life could not be so easily summed up, Annie questions why Mrs. Richards has been written off by the official documents, thus raising the larger question of why women are written out of history. Ana's journal, deemed by the archives as potentially inauthentic--"fictional possibly, contrived later by a daughter who imagined (how ahistoric) her way into the unspoken world of her mother's girlhood"--opens up new

possibilities of reading the young teacher's life (36). Annie thus questions why women's personal accounts are considered less significant as she exposes the biases of the so-called objective accounts.

In a widely different context, The Wars also challenges the divisions between public and private, official and personal, objective and subjective, as the novel enacts a questioning of historical narrative itself. Lorraine York notes how Findley offers us only brief glimpses of military history and the historic "great names and events" of World War I, turning instead to the personal experiences of individuals (38). The narrator's claim that, "In the end, the only facts you have are public" is contradicted throughout the novel as the story moves beyond documented "fact" and into personal reflections and interpretations (Wars 10). The narrator's statement that "the corner of the picture will reveal the whole" presents a new method for examining documents that strives to look outside of and beyond the official frame (10-11). The method is demonstrated shortly after this statement: in a picture labelled "Meg-- a Patriotic Pony," Stuart, Robert's younger brother, who is carrying a baseball bat, is standing "(j)ust at the edge of the picture" (14). Later, we learn of the narrative intentions that lie behind the photograph: Stuart, whether the picture was taken on the day of Rowena's death or on another, was teasing Meg with the baseball bat and this was the reason for her flat ears. Similarly, the picture in which Robert is watching the band and Rowena is outside of the picture is extremely revealing of what in fact gets "framed" and what is left untold, just as Rowena is excluded from all of the official family pictures. The forced merger of private experience with public information (with emphasis on the individual) is summed up in a passage at the end of section four: "So far, you have read of the deaths of 557,017 people--one of whom was killed by a streetcar, one of whom died of bronchitis and one of whom died in a barn with her rabbits" (158). We are reminded that private cannot be separated from public experience in a time of war; but

neither can subjective and objective experience be separated in the time of reading.

The Wars, a novel that is ostensibly comprised of several documents, eyewitness accounts, and narratorial interpretations, dramatizes the problem of documents themselves, and what, for various reasons, they do not or cannot say. One clear example of what documents hide in the novel is a letter from Robert to his parents in which he simply tells them that "someone put [him] in charge of the horses" (68). By contrast, the narrator imagines or describes (which one is not clear) the harrowing ordeal in which Robert had to shoot an injured horse. Commenting on the reticence of Robert's letters, the narrator states that Robert wrote to his family each week with "unnerving formality" (70). Robert's letter itself reveals a nearly stilted formality of language; his sentences are short and his brief descriptions read like a postcard: "I think perhaps you'd like this place where we are... The war seems awfully far away. Even further off than when we were at home" (68). The very manner in which Robert addresses the letters--"Miss Margaret Elizabeth Ross" and "Master Stuart Montgomery Ross"--attests to the careful, polite conventions that Robert follows. So, too, the reception of his letters by family members--those to his parents are carefully tied and placed in a lacquered box, and those to Peggy are neatly kept in a separate drawer in her room--reveals the almost sacred formality of these written exchanges, which, like Robert's 5x7 photograph on the mantle, have little connection to the Robert Ross at the front. Perhaps Stuart's treatment of his brother's letters is the most forthright in the Ross family: both his launching of the pages from the roof and his exchange of the letters at school as war memorabilia treat the letters as mere artifact, meant for consumption in terms of the social conventions which speak for the recipient.

Since Robert is not quoted at any length in The Wars, unlike Ana Richards in her journal, we cannot help but question why a cache of documents from the protagonist do not authorize his biography, given that they are the only surviving remnants of his voice. The

reaction of Robert's family to his letters (excluding Stuart's), as well as the glimpses we get of the Ross's uncommunicative family relationship before Robert's departure, suggest that Robert's letters tell the Rosses precisely what they want, and expect, to hear. He writes home in clichés, comparable to the social maxims he had to endure from writers such as Booth Tarkington which required him to "fight a man" Heather Lawson "didn't love and whom he'd never seen" (19). But while he resisted such clichés at home, he now must censor war experiences for a family that does not want, or cannot bear, to hear about pain and suffering. The autobiographical "source" of the letters, then, cannot be accepted at face value and must be examined for its hidden motivations, just as Annie questions the moments in Ana's journal in which words are crossed out and thoughts are censored. Robert's letters, the narrator implicitly recognizes, depict his public self, and the narrator must seek an imaginative interpretation of the events in order to move beyond the public facade and into the private self of Robert Ross.

The entire novel not only questions what documents hide, but what of private history is hidden by the public record. Findley deliberately pluralizes his title, as many have noted, in order to expand his novel to include the private battles--"And this was what they called the wars" (*Wars* 70). The scenes that precede Robert's departure for the front comprise only a small segment of the novel, but they are among the most memorable. When Robert gets off a train in Kingston in preparation to go overseas, he thinks back to that scene in which Heather Lawson got angry at him for not fighting a man who claimed to love her. This scene is similar to Mrs. Ross's strange logic; after Rowena's death, Mrs. Ross says that her rabbits have to be killed "Because they were hers" (22). The killing of the rabbits by the mindless "soldier" Teddy Budge after Robert struggles with him is summed up by the narrator as a meaningless convention: "All these actors were obeying some kind of fate we call 'revenge.' Because a girl had died--and her rabbits had survived

her" (25). Later, in a conversation with his mother while he takes a bath to soothe his wounds, another battle is evoked, and Robert says that his mother always used his childhood as a weapon. These early scenes not only foreshadow Robert's departure for France, but depict the wars that are always present 'on the home front.' The home itself is no safe refuge, because "the wars" are always already present in all human relationships. Sexual relationships are similarly depicted as another form of battle. In the whorehouse, Robert is unable to "perform" and then watches, horrified and afraid, the sexual scene between the Swede and Taffler. Later, when young Juliet catches Robert and Barbara, she, too, does not understand what she is watching (or perhaps understands it only too well), and interprets the scene as an act of mutual hate and violence. Robert's brutal rape at the hands of his fellow soldiers is characteristic of the manner in which sex and violence are made equivalent in the novel, suggesting that the public experience of war is only a mask for the private experience of conflict which goes unrecorded.

The way in which characters and narrators in The Wars and Ana Historic resist their personal history being "written off" by official history is an intricate process that requires more than the opening up of the frames to incorporate personal experience into historiographic narrative. Both novels, in fact, actually dramatize their resistance to the notions of the "closed door" of history through their sense of time as a two-way street held open by performative language. J.L. Austin's speech-act theories offer a useful model for explaining this performative dimension of both texts. In How To Do Things With Words, Austin formulates the important distinction between constative and performative utterances. He begins his argument by questioning the assumption that "statements" are merely descriptive or serve to state facts, either truly or falsely. Austin labels this type of descriptive statement as constative and distinguishes it from other statements which do not describe anything, cannot be deemed true or false, and cannot be described as "just"

saying anything" (5). In these performative utterances, as he names them, the act of saying is the "performing of an action" (6). He gives the example of saying "I do" in a marriage ceremony as an act which performs the marriage in the words themselves rather than reporting on an action outside of language. Austin goes into great detail in order to define performatives and to explain the way in which they can be determined through different conventions, including serious and nonserious uses.

In "The Discourse of History," Roland Barthes was the first to take up Austin's theory of performative language "to attack the vaunted objectivity of traditional historiography" and to challenge "the distinction, basic to historicism in all its forms, between 'historical' and 'fictional' discourse" (White 35). But White does not follow Barthes in reducing the language of history to "spectacle," indistinguishable "from imaginary narration" (White 37, 35). While he dismisses the "realist" view of narrative as merely a vehicle for content, his view of "the content of the form" suggests that a chronicle of events will produce a different meaning from the narrative of the same set of events, because they will be configured on differing principles. For the chronicle is structured by a linear sequence which puts events in a sequential, but not a causal, order. While both forms of historical discourse offer "an apparatus for the production of meaning" (42) and are not merely a vehicle which passes on information, the performative character of narrative history brings the historian much closer than the chronicler to the site of real action: "historical narrative, which takes the events created by human actions as its immediate subject, does much more than merely describe those events; it also imitates them, that is, performs the same kind of creative act as those performed by historical agents" (White 178-179). The act of writing historical narratives thus produces meanings in much the same way that "human actions produce meanings" in everyday life (179).

The idea that doing and writing are both performative actions opens up a number of

possibilities for historical narrative. For Ana Historic and The Wars, this model not only suggests the possibility of a variety of interpretations but also the possibility of 're-doing' events through their 're-telling.' The idea of the performative brings us back to central questions that each novel poses--how do you write/represent a past life and how do you bring to life someone else's story? Both novels, in fact, question the notion of a purely constative form of discourse. In Ana Historic, the narrator questions the idea of constative fact as she breaks open the word itself to reveal an ongoing action: "what is fact? (f)act. the f stop of act. a still photo in the ongoing cinerama" (Ana 31). Similarly, in The Wars, the narrator's statement that "People can only be found in what they do" opens the novel with a rejection of the notion of documented fact, in favour of an action which remains to be completed (11).

The double narratives of "doing" on past and present levels emphasize the way in which historical narratives in both novels seek to reenact or perform history through the act of retelling. While The Wars depicts the process of unearthing the story of Robert Ross within the narrative frame of the historian sitting down with documents or with persons to be interviewed, Ana Historic focuses more succinctly on the physical act of writing. As Annie sits down and attempts to write about Mrs. Richards, and as she holds the pen in her hand in the same way that the other woman did so long before, she begins to feel the presence of Mrs. Richards and even to relay the presence of the other woman, imagining her writing the entry: "I try again..." (46). The narrator then separates herself and begins to question why Mrs. Richards edited her own thoughts and who could have been her audience. Many of Annie's most interesting comments about writing, in fact, come out of her readings of Mrs. Richards' journals. Questioning why the teacher wrote privately, she suggests that "she is writing her desire to be, in the present tense, retrieved from absence" (47). For a woman, Annie suggests, writing entails constructing oneself in a world that

has “written you off.” But Annie also feels that the desire to write stems from a bodily need--“the unspoken urge of a body insisting itself in the words” (46). In both examples, Ana’s writing involves more than a mere recording of events--the act of writing oneself into presence is indeed an example of a performative event. Even more explicitly, Annie recounts a time in her childhood where her mother’s “saying” she was gone had made “it so... you had gone in the moment you thought to say it, separating yourself even as you stood there, making what wasn’t, what couldn’t be, suddenly real” (11). The narrator tells her dead mother that her “fiction” came true, that the saying was also the doing. The entire novel, this bedtime story for Ina, thus becomes an attempt for Annie to say her mother into being. While Annie speaks of her still-living father in the third-person as if he is dead, she converses with her mother as if she were alive, as if, by speaking with her, she can conjure up her presence.

Annie’s reading and writing of the story of Ana Richards likewise follows a performative model. When the narrator reads Mrs. Richards’ journal entries, she finds herself intrigued by what Ana does not say. Ana’s rebuke to her father, for example, in which she says that she cannot be his handmaiden, hints at the reason she has left home to become a teacher, but leaves the details sketchy. Annie finds herself having to read and to amplify the traces of Ana’s texts because so much is left unsaid. Annie remarks that Ana’s “real story begins where nothing is conveyed. where she cannot explain, describe” (83). When Ana marvels at Mrs. Patterson’s “courage” only to alter the word itself to “strong-mindedness,” courage, like the Heideggerian *Being* which simultaneously attests to its presence and to its erasure, allows Annie to analyze Mrs. Richards (65). She says that she “lack[s] a certain proper sense of self. worries that she is too easily impressed” (65). The gaps in Mrs. Richards’ texts, as well as the traces of self-editing, allow Annie a gateway into Ana’s thoughts so that she can speculate about her personality and even about her inner

fantasies. For example, Annie moves from feeling kinship with Mrs. Richards' thoughts into actually thinking them. When Annie writes of the two women by the mystical pond who beckon Mrs. Richards into their presence, her words are not a description of a past event but are instead a performance--they 'lead' Ana along a path that she probably could not have imagined herself. But Annie 'follows' Ana's sentences and brings them into unexpected new tracks.

As Annie attempts to expand the story of Mrs. Richards and read beyond the limited view left of her by the official records, she comes up against her mother's objection that she is just telling a story and "making things up." Annie can only challenge the inherent value judgments within this binary of history/fiction: the first term is associated with truth and the second with lies. So she plays with the idea that she is merely telling stories by exposing the stories that the supposedly objective historical narratives tell. Many of the excerpts from early Vancouver histories look very different when taken out of context. One, about the 'good old days' of logging, reveals a master narrative of the virgin frontier and of a golden-age past in which "the country bristled with opportunities" (63). An earlier excerpt, which tells of a "world event"--the closing of the last gap on the Canadian Pacific Railway route--gives statistics in an effort to demonstrate the magnitude and significance of the event. Annie rereads this "factual" statement, questioning what signifies a "world event" by exposing the fact that these definitions were determined by men and are not simply innocent statements of fact. She counters the story of the CPR with one of the first piano in the settlement, suggesting that it too, was a world event, a fact that has been "rescued against the obscurity of bush" (29). Annie thus reveals that all history is made up of stories and suggests that we have to examine not only which stories get told and preserved and who gets to tell the stories, but also what does not get told.

Annie similarly reopens her dead mother's story as she converses with her in the

present tense in an attempt to come to terms with both of their pasts. Ina's voice, "lucid and critical," is interspersed throughout the text and serves both as a catalyst and as a critique for Annie's writing. Only later in the novel do we learn of Ina's depression and of the shock therapy treatments that she underwent which obliterated the mother that Annie knew. The doctors erased parts of Ina, taking her imagination and her "will to create things differently," stifling her within one reality (149). Annie's definition of "hystery"--"the excision of women (who do not act but are acted upon)"--is close to her portrait of the objectifying gaze of history (88). The link between hystery and history suggests not only the forgetting but also the erasure and excision of the "a-historic" woman from history. Ina had her memory literally taken away from her, so Annie re-members her by re-imagining her voice in the text. In writing Ina's story, Annie is not as concerned with the gaps and the untold and unimagined desires as she was in writing Ana's story. Annie is more concerned with the literal gaps in her mother's mind and the potential for her to become a "missing person(s)" of history (134). Annie also attempts to understand her mother through writing her--to fulfill a tenuous and turbulent past relationship. The pain of losing her mother is a feeling of loss which informs the narrative and which increases as Annie comes closer to speaking of her mother's death. Opening up history to hysteria--to the other, to untold stories--Annie 'untells the real' precisely by questioning the fixed nature of reality itself.

In blurring the boundaries between history and story and deconstructing the notion of a fixed and determinate past, Annie does not hide her personal agenda and involvement in both Ina's and Ana Richards' story. When Ina accuses her of simply wanting to tell her own story, she responds with the simple addition, "and yours. ours" (79). From the outset, Annie's telling of Ana's story is revealed as being as much about Annie's coming to terms with her past and with her mother as it is about her self-discovery in new

relationships. Late in the novel, her friend Zoe even asks Annie what she wants from Ana. Annie makes no pretense of being an objective narrator--her personal reflections and stories are continually intermingling with her statements about Mrs. Richards. Instead of trying to maintain a distance from her subject, Annie questions the very notion of a fixed identity as she reveals the inherent subjectivity involved in narrative and the way in which personal reflections, though masked, are always present. In giving Mrs. Richards a first name, Annie literally combines her own name with that of her mother, revealing her personal tie with the character who becomes like an offspring. Writing the word Ana in script, she is accused of misspelling her name (43). But in insisting "that's her name:/ back, backward, reversed/ again, anew," she actually performs the act of naming the woman "anew." Ana, a prefix of inversion and regression, turns out to be progressive; with no beginning or end it can be pronounced both forwards and backwards. The name becomes a link between the past stories of Mrs. Richards and Ina and with the present story of Annie.

As Annie names Ana and imagines much of her story, she discovers that Ana begins to take on a life of her own. "(S)he keeps insisting herself on the telling," we are told at one point; the statement refers to both Ana and Ina and is a suggestion of the way in which these past stories are not at all fixed or final (67). Ana reminds Annie of her younger self when she was not dreaming of the "already-made" of history, "but of making fresh tracks [her] own way" (98). As Annie writes of Ana, and as she likewise imagines possibilities for her life in order to fill in the unwritten gaps, she finds that Ana is also making herself anew. For Ana's own journal writings reveal that she, too, was expanding herself beyond the limitations of her story as a gentle schoolmarm by coming to question the limits imposed upon her as a woman in her society. Mrs. Richards surprises the town, for example, when she stands up to the school trustee, Miller. As Ana bemoans the freedoms she lacks as a woman, Annie writes, "Ana, what shall i make of you when you

make of yourself more and more?" (104). Annie discovers that Ana lies somewhere "in the gap between two versions," somewhere between history and fiction (106). Ana is simultaneously imagining and creating other possibilities for herself while Annie writes and creates her.

While The Wars does not focus as explicitly on the actual process of writing as does Ana Historic, it does take a performative view of language to revisit and redo the past. In this way, The Wars challenges the idea that history is composed of stable, unchanging facts, and instead depicts historical narrative as involved in an ongoing process of creation. While the narrative frame, which carries over into the largely transparent sections of the novel, emphasizes the two time frames and the fact that the novel is in the process of being constructed, the narrative itself enacts this reconstruction of events through their telling. While the researcher says early on that "In the end, the only facts you have are public," the novel itself reveals that the public facts are often the most misleading and that the private testimonies are often far more revealing (10). The only way to counter the public facts, then, is to go inside the private events, both as told by the eyewitnesses to Robert Ross's life and by the narrator who recreates Robert's experiences. The researcher/ historian is thus shown to be acting in tandem with the historical agent by reshaping his life through the telling of the story. If people are only found in what they do, then they can also be found in what narrators do in the retelling and redoing of these events.

One form of historical telling is actually dramatized in the transcripts of the conversations with Juliet d'Orsey and Marian Turner. The tapes, which emphasize the 'speaking' voices of the two women, provide an oral model for the narration of stories. The two women give their versions of Robert Ross in their own voices, and, as in Ana Historic, emphasize that history is not impersonal, and that events do not simply speak for themselves, but are spoken by a variety of voices and through a variety of different

perspectives. These conversations explicitly highlight the personal perspective. Marian Turner says, "My opinion was--he was a hero. Not your everyday Sergeant York or Billy Bishop mind you!... But a hero nonetheless" (Wars 16). Before Lady Juliet begins her own reading of her diaries (which are transcribed for us), she forewarns us with the statement, "I was ears and eyes and that was all. The conclusions are for you to make" (143). The diaries, interspersed with comments from the elderly Lady Juliet, expose the limits of Juliet's statement that she herself was merely an observer and did not narrativize the events themselves. The entries reveal the concerns and biases of a young girl who has fallen in love with a soldier and who undergoes a sibling rivalry with her beautiful, cold sister Barbara. Yet Lady Juliet's transcripts depict the inherent subjectivity of narration without dismissing her story as ahistorical, because she, in fact, is one of the primary authorities in the novel. When Juliet says, "You live when you live," suggesting that one cannot explain or understand a past moment without having been there, she urges a contextual view of history and suggests that events are not merely transparently revealing or universal (103). Yet The Wars, and even her own transcripts, counter this statement by demonstrating that history is not something which is dead or final but can, through the act of telling it, be performed and enacted once again.

The narrator/researcher who performs the role of an historian through his/her recreation of Robert's story is, therefore, not the sole narrator in The Wars--Lady Juliet, whose words and readings of her diary entries are transcribed in the text, also narrates a large portion of the story from her own perspective. As she gives her rendition of events, however, she reveals an attitude towards history that is much different from the narrator's version of historiography. When Lady Juliet states, "You cannot know these things. You live when you live... Then was then. Unique" (103), she is suggesting that history is closed and complete and that it can not be 'done-over' through its retelling because human

beings are completely separate individuals who cannot ever be understood by others or severed from the time in which they lived. Lady Juliet's words reveal that she not only denies the possibility of reliving the past, but that, in questioning the possibility of an outside party telling the past, she is denying history itself. Instead, Lady Juliet could be described as a chronicler who submits to the mastery of time. Her narrative begins from the moment that she met Robert Ross and continues, using the day-by-day form of the diary, to recount the events in her life that concerned Robert Ross. In adhering to the purely sequential nature of events, Lady Juliet, unlike the principal narrator, denies the possibility of changing the past, of resisting determinism. Significantly, the final image of the novel (before the epilogue) is Lady Juliet's inscription on Robert Ross's tombstone. As a chronicler who attempts simply to relay the sequence of what happened, her last words are fittingly written in stone. Conversely, the narrator ends his/her narrative with an image of the breath of life. The photograph of Robert, Rowena, and Meg, while chronologically out of place, prevents Robert's life from being summarized in stone, and instead reaffirms his continuing life in the words of the narrative.

The scenes in which the researcher recreates the fiery image of Robert in his mind is thus a key moment in the performative history of The Wars. The picture, which contains a 'dead' moment from the past, is animated by the researcher's imagination. Through the writing of the words, for which there is no documentary source, no "original," Robert's action is recreated and not merely described. The imaginative act of the narrator/researcher provides a model for the reader to engage in a parallel act of animation. In one description of the muddy terrain of the front, the narrator states, "There is no good picture of this except the one you can make in your mind" (71). While the narrator proceeds to give us a description of the surroundings, his statement highlights the creative act of the imagination that is required by both the reader and the researcher. As the narrator/researcher imagines

and animates Robert's surroundings and actions, the reader is also involved in a similar process of imagining and performing the events in his/her mind. The novel emphasizes, as Linda Hutcheon notes, that "history... is made by its writer, even if events are made to seem to speak for themselves" ("Historiographic" 66). While The Wars does not, like Ana Historic, keep us constantly aware of the lack of distance between the events being narrated and the fact that they are being narrated, the illusion-breaking moments in The Wars do serve to emphasize that the novel is in the process of being told. These excerpts, which often tell us small historical details, not only stress the temporal gap between the reader and the narrative events, but also remind us of the continual process of telling that is occurring. Writing, then, follows a performative model because the events are not merely being told or described--they are being reenacted and recreated in ways which suggest that "saying it makes it so," as the narrator of Ana Historic would help to confirm (Ana 11).

The Wars, in depicting historical narrative as something that is made and not simply revealed, also demonstrates how historical agents and historians both narrativize or make meaning out of events that is not intrinsic to the events themselves. Historical discourse, according to Hayden White, involves transforming a series of historical events into a story about time itself, evoking "the universal human effort to reflect on the mystery of temporality" (180). The most immediate part of the mystery to be solved in The Wars is the meaning of the "still" shot with which the narrative begins: the configuration of man, horse, and dog in a landscape charged with hidden significance. The early sections of the novel thus accentuate the importance of finding meaning as the researcher searches through the fragments of an age in the archives. But the very fragmented nature of the past signifies that there is no inherent truth to be uncovered, and that there are only various interpretations and stories--"This is what you have" (Wars 11). Writing the narrative, imitating the events and "making what you can" out of the information, will always entail making decisions and

judgments.

Consequently, the end of The Wars exposes many of the ways in which the narrative has been selected and shaped. Sorting through various eyewitness accounts, the narrator decides upon the most likely version of what happened to Robert that fateful evening. He then simplifies events, stating that everything “hereafter” was “clear and precise,” as he attests to the number of witnesses to the events (184). The narrator, however, does not leave Robert’s actions incomplete, and attempts to discriminate, among the differing versions of events, the “muddled mythology” of official history. Significantly, while we are given various, often contradictory, eyewitness accounts, the court martial transcripts are omitted from the text. These transcripts, which condemn and indict Robert Ross, are therefore not given the authority which they would usually demand. Instead, the narrator attempts to fulfill the incomplete actions of Robert Ross by explaining his point of view and by showing the nobility of his actions which would be viewed officially as merely treasonous and mad. The entire novel, in fact, attempts to understand and explain Robert’s experiences, his suffering and his mind-set at the time of the freeing of the horses, since the official historical documents, which condemn Robert Ross, are shown to obscure much of Robert’s story. In the context of the madness of the war and the madness and violence of human relationships, Robert’s actions cannot be interpreted as any more mad than the actions of the unquestioningly obedient Major Mickle. The researcher/narrator chooses to include other sources, including private testimonies, in order to reread the official documents and attempt to fulfill Robert’s intentions through the act of writing. The researcher’s bias is not hidden precisely because objectivity is not possible; the reader who has been involved in Robert’s story is also inclined to share his point of view.

While Ana Historic similarly foregrounds the narrator’s shaping and narrativizing

of historical events, the novel more specifically resists the conventional emplotment of history itself. In a discussion with her friend Zoe near the end of the novel, Annie despairs that one cannot “rewrite what’s been written,” “like fate... [or] the writing on the wall” (142). Annie continually struggles with this deterministic view of history as the already-written: “and so you went on, a character flattened by destiny, caught between the covers of a book” (150). Struggling under the “weight of history” (146), Annie ponders her responsibilities towards the “historical personage(s)” about whom she is writing as she resists the urge to succumb to the authority of the already-written (140). Rewriting the past, then, is an explicitly political act: Annie’s denial of a deterministic view of history is simultaneously a denial of the “pre-ordained” stories by which women’s lives are constructed. The novel itself is constituted as a history of women that is not chronological or linear, but is instead inclusive, circling, and “disruptive” (Jones 145).

Annie’s writing must likewise resist “that fiction, that lie that you can’t change the ending! it’s already pre-ordained, prescribed” (147). While Annie acknowledges the power and authority of writing to fix and limit people and events, Zoe reminds her “that’s the trouble with history--it never is [past]” 132). Just as Annie shows, through Ina’s continuing influence on her life, that past events are always affecting one’s present life, she demonstrates how subjective are the distinctions between beginnings and endings, given that the past is always open to new performances of it. Just before the section entitled “Not a Bad End” in Ana Historic, Annie confesses that she has been writing a bedtime story for her mother, Ina, and that she has been “telling, untelling, unravelling all the stories” (137-8). She questions how to end her story or even if there is an end, adding that Ina’s story has not concluded with her death. In the next section, she imagines a new ending for Ana, one in which she and Birdie become attracted to one another. In the midst of this scene Annie stops and asks, “Ana what are you doing?... you’ve moved beyond what i can tell of

you, you've taken the leap into this new possibility, and i can't imagine what you would say" (139).

The official history ends with Mrs. Richards' marriage to Ben Springer but, in Annie's rewriting of history, she imagines Ana as being attracted to another woman and even surpassing what Annie herself thinks she could have imagined. Zoe, making another succinct comment about Annie's work, challenges her doubts about fidelity to 'real' characters with the question, "who are [the characters] if they aren't you?" (140). Annie recognizes that she has simply written or freed one of the other selves of Ana Richards that would have been sublimated because it was unacceptable even to consider sexual feelings towards another woman at the time. Annie breaks through her doubts about historical fidelity to the factual or already-written: imagination, Annie decides, is the "will to create things differently" (149).

Once Annie has created a new ending for Ana, she can then begin to imagine new possibilities for her own life. She realizes that her marriage to Richard had allowed her a false sense of security in belonging to history, and decides that she wants to break open the closed parentheses of history to include other possibilities by imagining and performing a new story for herself together with Zoe. She thus resists endings: not wanting to catch Ana between the covers of the book, not wanting Ana to limit herself, Annie carries Ana's story on into her own life as she fulfills a relationship with Zoe, one which she had difficulty imagining for Ana. The last words of the novel, "reading us into the page ahead," project her into a future of unlimited possibilities. The reader is even invited to imagine these possibilities, just as Annie has done for Ana. Ana Historic demonstrates that history, like life, can be re-read and re-done; it is not final or closed just because it has already been written.

The ending of The Wars offers its own resistance to historical determinism, to the

idea that “you can’t change the ending.” By rejecting the court-martial transcript’s version of the events, the narrator rejects the indictment of Robert Ross as a traitor. Instead, the narrator makes Robert a hero, and, by contrasting him with the unbending Major Mickle, portrays Robert as the leader of a new movement of peace, not war. Robert also becomes a hero of the environment: pictured as one with the animals in Rodwell’s sketch and as a figure who represents a fraternity between humans and animals, he questions the industrial conquest of the natural world. The narrator’s portrait of Robert Ross locates him in a later cultural paradigm, the ecological and peace movements of the last third of the century, which is constantly set against the old clichés of imperial heroes such as Captain Taffler and Major Mickle. Looking back on past events, the narrator thus wrests a new meaning from apparent failure: The Wars depicts the way in which an actor/performer from a later generation (who understands Ross) is needed to realize Robert’s best intentions and to make him into a hero of the new age. Robert’s unfulfilled intentions, his ordeal by fire, and his death in virtual isolation all are figures for the pain of living in time. As Hayden White reminds us, “the human experience of time is tragic in nature” (182). And yet the “performance” of history shows as well how an inheritor, removed in time from the hero, can finally realize in narration the hero’s best intentions. As an historian, the narrator can change the ending of Robert Ross’s story by arranging and reconfiguring events with new meanings instead of chronicling the events as purely sequential and deterministic.

In the end, The Wars changes even the image of the beginning, transforming the picture of the man, horse, and dog back into the picture of man, horse, and handicapped sister: “Robert and Rowena with Meg. Rowena seated astride the pony--Robert holding her in place” (191). But this time, the meaning of the picture is given by the subject himself: “On the back is written: ‘Look! you can see our breath!’ And you can.” The subject is finally allowed to speak for himself, to live on in his own terms in words which

we speak (or read) for him as well. Even in dramatic time, the last we see of the doomed hero is his refusal of death. As Marian Turner tells us, she has offered to give him his death to relieve his terrible suffering. But he replies, "Not yet." These words offer a philosophy of life for Marian Turner, summing up "the essence of what it is to be alive" (189). "Not yet" is also a motto for the novel: outcomes are never final and can always be deferred, because, just as the agent performs actions, the writer of history can always similarly perform or re-tell these actions. "Not yet" offers an extremely positive view of a history which is never past, where new endings are always possible. The novel does not close with Robert's death and the inscription of his name on the tombstone, but instead ends with our viewing of the characters' breath in the photograph. We are here reminded of the dedication at the beginning of the novel in which Findley quotes Euripides: "Never that which is shall die."

A performative view of language thus allows the narrators of both The Wars and Ana Historic to demonstrate the way in which history is made by the historian as well as the agent, and is not simply the innocent ordering of facts. Both novels question the finality of the stories of their historical agents and open up the past in order to 'make history' once again. In Ana Historic, the narrator challenges the power of facts to fix and limit people and their stories as she expands and reimagines new endings for Ana Richards' history. In The Wars, the researcher attempts to fulfill Robert Ross's unfulfilled intentions by rewriting the official, condemning version of his story. The possibility of always being able to 'perform' history once again offers a positive and powerful alternative for marginalized figures who have been dismissed or condemned by the historical record.

A performative view of history in which the past is never dead but is open to change through the process of writing also presents a powerful interpretive model for a gendered rereading of history. Yet Hayden White's universalizing sense of history as "a timeless drama" with universal "humanity at grips with the experience of temporality" (183) holds the danger of depoliticizing and of ignoring differing experiences of gender, class, and race. In "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading," Patrocinio P. Schweickart similarly criticizes reader-response theorists for their universalization of the reader. Schweickart states that such accounts of the process of reading "overlook the issues of race, class, and sex, and give no hint of the conflicts, sufferings, and passions that attend these realities. The relative tranquillity of the tone of these theories testifies to the privileged position of the theorists" (21). In both The Wars and Ana Historic, readers and writers in each text question the "universality" of what they read as a specifically male version of history.

As she questions the false universality imposed upon the reader in "utopian" reader-response theories, Schweickart states that "reader-response criticism needs feminist criticism" so as to avoid the privileging of male experience as universal and the neglect of other historical realities (21). Schweickart takes a step in meeting that need by linking different methods of feminist reader-response analysis to the different movements in feminist theory. During the early stages of feminist criticism, the focus was on a "feminist critique" or a reading of male texts, and on exposing the androcentric literary canon and its harmful effect on women readers (23). The movement into a female-centred mode of criticism, or "gynocriticism," marks a shift to the study of the woman as writer, yet is nonetheless still constituted by *readings* of these female texts. Reading women's writing in

order to open up and revise the canon, Schweickart suggests, requires specific strategies to accommodate women's unique "concerns, experiences, and [the] formal devices that constitute these texts" (29).

An essay on Emily Dickinson by Adrienne Rich provides Schweickart with a model for a feminist reading of women's writing. Rich employs a metaphor of visiting to account for the way in which she approached Dickinson's work:

For years, I have been not so much envisioning Emily Dickinson as trying to visit, to enter her mind through her poems and letters, and through my own intimations of what it could have meant to be one of the two mid-nineteenth century American geniuses, and a woman, living in Amherst, Massachusetts.(qtd. in Schweickart 30)

Visiting Dickinson is for Rich an attempt to connect with her, to relate to her from their common position as women and as writers, but it also involves travelling back to Dickinson's own time in order to understand the historical and cultural context from which she was writing. Schweickart adeptly summarizes Rich's project: "To read Dickinson, then, is to try to visit with her, to hear her voice, to make her live in oneself, and to feel her impressive 'personal dimensions'" (31). The reading of the text is not entirely subjective, however, because when a reader is truly visiting, she "must observe the necessary courtesies" and must be careful "not to impose herself on the other woman" (32). In other words, Schweickart's model of reading-as-visiting seeks to avoid the imperialism of reading-as-appropriation, or the act of imposing one's own readerly view on the text.

In The Wars, this metaphor of reading-as-visiting is actualized through the narrator's social call on two of his witnesses, Marian Turner and Juliet d'Orsey. While Marian Turner's transcripts are only briefly contextualized by the narrator, we do learn that he is visiting the eighty-year-old woman in her "wide green apartment overlooking a park" (Wars 16). Marian's direct addresses to "you" and her easy tone also evoke a casual

conversation over a glass of sherry, rather than a formal interview. In *Lady Juliet d'Orsey's* transcripts, we discover that the narrator is literally visiting over tea. The narrator's italicized comments in fact depict the passing of time--the interview is even interrupted by Charlotte Krauss bringing in tea, and by the choir from across the street singing the Mass. The narrator's visits to these two women's apartments in part become a visit back to the past for both of the women (who even revisit their younger selves through the telling of their stories), as well as for the narrator who accompanies them on these returns.

Both Juliet d'Orsey and Marian Turner's dialogues are nonetheless presented as documents in the novel, as written transcriptions of their oral accounts. And yet, in the case of *Lady Juliet's* second transcript, the very act of her reading her earlier writing is reproduced in our reading the documents, thus producing an alternate mode of discourse in the novel. But even Marian Turner's accounts, like those of *Lady Juliet*, are filled with laughter, pauses, and even looks and gestures, and are often steeped with explanations and ramblings. These 'oral' discourses do not primarily follow a linear ordering of events, but instead work associatively through memories and through the narrator's dialogical interventions. The language also imitates orality with its constant questions, exclamations, and interjections. In these sections, the emphasis is on the private memories of the individual and on personal reflections rather than on those of a distanced observer. The journal entries of the twelve-year old Juliet, while not specifically oral except in the fact that they are being reread, are written in the style of a sharply observant young girl conversing with a friend. *Lady Juliet's* reading reveals a strange discrepancy between times--"what you hear is the voice of someone near to death--and the wisdom remains a child's" (139). While we primarily hear the "voice" of the child during these readings, Juliet's interjections, such as "Wasn't I an awful child!", keep us ever conscious of the dual time

perspective (148). This gap between voice and transcript emphasizes both the orality of the witnesses and the way in which it is the historian who must translate these women's words into print. This stress on sound is ultimately a stress on breath, as the reader will have to think and feel with the two narrators, occupy their bodies, as it were, and assume their values. As in Schweickart's model, our visiting of Marian and Juliet involves making their thoughts live within ourselves.

These oral readings by Juliet and Marian are instinctively feminist, according to Schweickart's model of difference in female reading. On one level, Marian Turner's readings are those of the "first chapter" of the feminist story because of their critique of the "male" texts of the histories of war. In Marian's first transcript, the war is situated specifically within the realm of personal experience and ordinary passions. She compares the war to her sister's fights with her over who would make dinner. She elaborates, stating that we are mistaken if we think that there is some magical difference between war leaders such as Churchill and Hitler and the rest of the population, and that we tend to define these figures wrongly as extraordinary. In turn, she defines Robert Ross as a hero because he "did the thing that no one else would dare to think of doing," adding that the war was crazy, not Robert Ross (16). She then reverses another binary, suggesting that it is the ordinary men and women who have prevailed upon the madness of the Twentieth Century, not the unique, extraordinary ones like Robert Ross. Marian thus questions the traditional view of military history as a grand theatre full of important actors whose decisions alter the fate of the world, instead reducing the leaders to "the butcher and the grocer" (17). Her shocking statement that "Robert Ross was no Hitler. That was his problem," suggests that Robert's actions could easily be dismissed as crazy because he was only an "ordinary" soldier (17). The strong presence of laughter in Marian's transcripts also contributes to this subversion of the official discourse of history as extremely serious business.

In a later transcript, Marian Turner similarly brings the war back down to ordinary experience. In this brief statement, she reflects upon how the “Great War for Civilization” forever changed sleep everywhere, and thus domesticates “epic” conventions by bringing their unsettling consequences home to the bedroom. She speaks against the official narratives that tell of bravery, victory, and death with the simple image of sleeplessness that evokes the profound and lasting effects of war. She also significantly uses this image to include women in the war; the experiences of the nurses like herself, the mother back home like Mrs. Ross, and all of the other women touched by the war are gaps in the official histories of the war that Marian Turner includes in her account of the past.

Marian Turner’s last transcript not only questions the ethos of war, but also contains a questioning of language itself as an instrument of colonization-as-pacification (or even passive-ication). She begins the transcript by reflecting on the strangeness of language and soon after remarks: “It was under these conditions we received Robert Ross. Received. The language again. Like a package. Or a message. Or a gift. We received him” (187). Marian is not here reflecting upon the power of language to construct reality, but on the latent imperialism of the subject-verb-object construction, for language reduces the soldier to a mere object, to a sort of commodity which can be wrapped up and shipped away when damaged.

Lady Juliet’s entries contain fewer explicit statements about the war than Marian’s, but instead focus intently on the human relationships and interactions of soldiers at home during the war. Her stories subsequently contain details about this domestic front that gives the title its pluralised form. Just as Marian Turner compares the war to an argument with her sister, Juliet depicts the way in which there is nothing extra-ordinary about war because violence and conflict is always present in all human relationships. Lady Juliet nonetheless claims that the war heightened experience and that “ordinary credos and

expectations vanished" in the midst of so much death (104). Juliet's accounts of these relationships in the voice of a child provide a frank perspective that, like the voices of women, is usually excluded from the official narratives. She provides some very intimate details, particularly during an account of her stumbling upon Robert and Barbara having sex, or, as she views it, "(t)wo people hurting one another " (156). Earlier, the older Lady Juliet had given an account of the violence inside Robert and of his terrible temper, offering a view of Robert that is not otherwise given in the text. Young Juliet's reading of history likewise subverts the epic conventions of war, literally bringing it home to the bedroom. When Juliet tells the story of her sister Barbara's jealous possessiveness towards her brother Clive, Juliet comments, "If you substitute the war for Clive in that story....," thus providing an early model for the way in which she tends to domesticate war experiences. Lady Juliet only refers elliptically to the actual battles in World War I, focusing instead on the personal battles and demonstrating the direct correlation between these personal conflicts and the conflicts between nations.

As Lady Juliet reads her old diary entries aloud, she literally does reread history--both through the act of telling orally, and through her framing of the stories with her own perspective and comments. When Juliet says that "The thing is not to make excuses for the way you behaved--not to take refuge in tragedy--but to clarify who you are through your response to when you lived" (103), she implies that learning from one's past is a purely personal affair. Yet Lady Juliet's comments appear highly defensive--"You cannot know these things. You live when you live" (103)--and her final comment, "All I hope is--they'll remember we were human beings" (158), succinctly sum up her narration and the way in which she tries to exonerate the public man by giving her account of his private life. Lady Juliet seems oblivious, however, to the way in which any framing (even of her own story) is a reconfiguration, and she is therefore blind to the empowering potential of rereading the

past in order to resist the determinism of a certain kind of history.

Both Lady Juliet and Marian Turner do find ways, nonetheless, to resist war narratives and the traditional definition of the warrior hero. Their storytelling could even be labelled as anti-Homeric for its resistance to the imperialist master narrative of war as a struggle between heroic men. For they reject the model of the warring hero typified by Achilles whose valour and virtue stems from his bravery and violent aggression, and instead redefine the hero as humane and as unconcerned with glory. Robert, for example, does not die valiantly in battle as a great war hero--he simply chooses to go on living. When Marian offers Robert death and he chooses life instead, his words "not yet" are read by Marian as a simple affirmation of life that gives her a philosophy by which to live her own life. Robert is not content to limit his view of the sacredness of life to human life alone; he is portrayed by several people as being at one with the animal world in ways which make him a pioneering eco-humanist. The two women narrators thus challenge the sexual stereotype of the male's role as the aggressive warrior, and redefine our public view of the hero by emphasizing feminine values of sympathy, synergy, and service to others.

Lady Juliet and Marian's questioning of the notion of the warrior hero leads to a more general questioning of the "male" reader's expectation of "conquest" in battle narrative. The mustard gas scene, for example, in which Robert sees his mirror image in a German soldier who allows Robert and his men to go free, ironically subverts the notion of conquest when Robert unintentionally kills the soldier. Robert's reaction is not one of pride but of horror, and instead depicts the "female" expectation of "compassion" in his aversion to having killed this man who had shown him mercy, apparently because the sound of a bird's song revealed to the German their connection within a larger community and not just as members of warring states. The male ethic of heroic nationalism, which would have condoned and rewarded Robert's actions, is here contrasted to the new ethic of

eco-humanism. Even Rodwell's sketchbooks, which are filled with his drawings of Robert as another one of the suffering animals, provide a sympathetic portrait of people living in harmony with animals. "The likeness was good. Unnerving. But the shading was not quite human... Of maybe a hundred sketches, Robert's was the only human form. Modified and mutated--he was one with the others" (138). The sketchbook, in fact, becomes a legacy for the narrator, given to him by Lady Juliet. Marian Turner similarly gives the narrator a photograph of her and her friend Olivia Fischer with the white cat who had become the mascot of the hospital she was working in. The cat, which Marian remembers licking its paws serenely after the hospital had been bombed, becomes another emblem for the way life goes on. Robert's "Not yet," the cat's gesture, and Rodwell's depiction of Robert at one with the animals all portray an extended bio-community that resists the notion of man's conquest of the natural world and of other peoples in war, and depicts humans within a larger community on earth, transcending any national or ethnic community.

Juliet's diary entries, along with her own comments and Marian's transcripts thus provide another alternative form of narration and documentation in The Wars. In an effort to resist the hidden third-person discourse of traditional history, the novel is literally multi-voiced and filled with the stories of those who are conspicuously absent or voiceless in so many war novels and histories. The two women are explicitly evoked as "authorities" who are given some of the final, and most significant words in the novel, and thus subvert the erasure of women from the traditional war stories by placing them in prominent speaking positions (York 83-84). Both women provide a counter-discourse to the epic narrative and to earlier colonial forms as they reread history in their own voices and from their own perspectives.

Both narrators challenge the tacit imperialism of all war narratives while

simultaneously offering a “female” reading of conventions, expectations and outcomes, a task that Schweickart suggests involves “that of recovering, articulating, and elaborating positive expressions of women’s point of view, of celebrating the survival of this point of view in spite of the formidable forces that have been ranged against it” (33). Their rereading of history subverts the plot of military heroism as the tellers inscribe female values of compassion rather than conquest, of synergy rather than empire, and of bio-community rather than nationalism. Marian and Juliet thus enact Schweickart’s model of difference in the female readings of conventions, expectations, and outcomes as they reread the imperial narrative of male heroism, praising not glory and power, but compassion and human kindness.

The narrator himself is also dramatized in the act of rereading history in order to challenge Robert’s characterization in the official discourses as a traitor. According to the plot of military heroism, Robert’s act of freeing the horses and of shooting Private Cassles was both inexplicable and cowardly. While the army demands conformity and rewards soldiers for following orders well, or for going beyond the call of duty, Marian names Robert a hero because he was an “homme unique” who “did the thing that no one else would ever dare to think of doing” (16). Robert’s act of compassion towards the horses is thus deemed honorable and brave. The narrator’s rereading of history, based largely on the authority of Marian and Juliet, is shaped from the outset as a “female” reading of history.

In Ana Historic, Annie’s reading of Mrs. Richards’ journals also dramatizes this sort of reading-as-visiting. But more explicitly than in The Wars, Annie’s reading is “a matter of ‘trying to connect’ with the existence behind the text” (Schweickart 36). When Schweickart suggests that male reader-response theorists are absorbed with issues of control, whereas feminist theorists are more concerned with a dialectical relationship of communication and connection, her theories might have been drawn from Ana Historic,

especially in the way in which Annie both reads Ana Richards' nineteenth-century journal and forms a relationship with the woman that carries over into her own life. It is clear from early on in the novel that the narrator is not merely duplicating the archival diary entries, but is in fact translating them for the reader. She begins by musing upon Ana's arrival at Hastings Sawmill: "i imagine her standing slim in whalebone at the ship's rail as it turns with the wind, giving her her first view of what would become home as she imagined it, imagining herself free of history... there is a story here" (Ana 14). In the next section, entitled "Arrival at Hastings Mill," she actually describes Ana's arrival, and the passage appears to be written from Ana's perspective as a record of her thoughts and impressions, except for the narrator's interjection, "no. we don't know how she came. we know only that she was appointed teacher the second term of the mill school's first year" (15). Annie is positive that "there is a story here," so she works from the bare archival details and expands upon them to imagine how Ana would have felt arriving inexperienced in a strange new land.

In other passages, we see the way in which the contemporary Annie reads texts, moving beyond their surface in order to get to a hidden story. The passage about the arrival of the first piano at the Mill which was eventually sold to Mrs. Richards leads the narrator to insist that the arrival of the piano was a world event and that this newspaper clipping provides the "skeletal bones of a suppressed body the story is" (29). The next passage moves into the way Annie visualizes "the story" itself as beginning. Annie's interjections and remarks reveal that most of this is her imagining--"did they have oilcloth in 1873?"--as she recreates the scene of Ana's journal writing (29). The next paragraph is a quotation from one of Ana's letters to her father on which Annie once again comments, imagining a context for it, and even expanding upon it. When Ana writes, "I am not a Proper Lady perhaps," Annie exposes the relationship between proper and property,

reading Ana's words and even reading beyond them to ponder on the hidden meanings in the words themselves: "Proper, she says, Lady capitalized, and it is barely sounded, the relationship between proper and property" (32). But in "she says" we hear a double-voicing of Ana Richards speaking the phrase "Proper Lady," and then Annie, the historian, amplifying the phrase to catch its barely sounded depths. Annie most obviously enters, then, into Ana Richards' time.

The passage in which Ana strikes out the word "courage" is another clear example of the way in which Annie amplifies Ana's words. Annie begins the passage by questioning, "what would Ana Richards' think," and uses quotation marks to highlight the words that are specifically taken from the journal, mingling them with her own explanations and remarks so that the two texts become almost one. The paragraph which follows is a further elaboration of Ana's writing as Annie muses on the writing process itself. This passage highlights the way in which Annie has read and translated the other woman's words and has become an interpreter of her place in the world, much in the same way that the journals may already be a daughter's interpretation of her mother's experiences. For at the archives, Mrs. Richards' journal is not even credited as an historical document: "they think her journal suspect at the archives. 'inauthentic,' fictional possibly, continued later by a daughter who imagined (how ahistoric) her way into the unspoken world of her mother's girlhood" (30). Annie has thus "stolen" a page from the daughter's "book," if that is what it is, by refusing the monological authority of the historical monograph to engage instead in a dialogical relationship with "communal history," or a "multi-" graph.

As Annie elaborates on Ana's writings, she begins actually to enter into the mind of the other woman. Much as Adrienne Rich "travels through space and time to visit [Emily Dickinson] on her own premises," the narrator visits Ana Richards and "make[s] her live in

[herself]" (Schweickart 31). Annie thus literally enters into the other woman's mind and begins to think her thoughts and to imagine other possibilities for her than the ones that she has written or have been written for her. Many sections do not reveal which passages have been quoted or what gaps there are between the two texts, and by "Not a Bad End," Annie has literally entered into Ana's "history" to change its outcome. Annie, for example, imagines that Ana does not marry Ben Springer, but instead falls in love with Birdie Stewart. After Annie has written this scene and then questions whether or not she owes her characters some fidelity, Zoe asks, "who are [the characters] if they aren't you?" (140). Earlier, Zoe had asked another succinct question when she said, "so what is it you want from her," touching on the relationship between Annie and Ana and the way in which Ana's story has begun to merge with Annie's. Annie ponders the relationship between Birdie and Annie and then writes a new ending for herself with Zoe. Questioning the notion of a "line dividing the real from the unreal," Annie's projection of a new ending onto Mrs. Richards has thus created a ground for her decision to join Zoe. But she remains faithful to the possibilities of Mrs. Richards' own history by dramatizing her resistance to being a "Proper/ty Lady." In such fashion, she resists the temptation to appropriate Mrs. Richards as her own literary property, or to impose an imperial self on the blank screen of the other.

The linearity of male-centred history also comes into question in Ana Historic in its formal refusal of chronological structure. Annie imagines her historian-husband questioning her own writing of history, "looking up from the pages with that expression with which he must confront his students over their papers: this doesn't go anywhere, you're just circling around the same idea--and all these bits and pieces thrown in--that's not how to use quotations" (81). Annie writes in response, "i find it difficult to explain, Richard, what this scribbling means--and was there any way she could?" (83). But she can

imagine no space in history to accommodate a woman's history, no form to do justice to it, if "hystery" is "the excision of women (who do not act but are acted upon)" (88). And so the very form of the story in Ana Historic becomes a search for a form which can embody "hystery."

A part of this search for a female version of history entails coming to terms with her absent mother. Trying to connect with Ina involves a "visiting" of her dead mother in which she attempts to avoid imposing her viewpoint on her mother's story. The novel begins with the question, "Who's There?" and with Annie whispering the name, "I-na... Mum-my, Mom-eee, Mah-mee," musing upon her mother's absence like the little girl who waits for the reassuring response, "don't be silly, darling, i'm here" (10-11). Annie laments her belated impulse to connect with her dead mother: "i want to talk to you. (now? now when it's too late?) i want to say something" (18). But she fears she will be unable to address her mother directly: "I-na, I-no-longer, i can't turn you into a story. there is this absence here, where the words stop," stressing Annie's desire not to objectify her mother by recounting her life from the perspective of a distant observer. Annie nonetheless tries to talk Ina into existence, conjuring up her image with the words, "Ina, i remember you with flecks of pain, hair wisps escaping from under your peasant scarf..." (26). In this sense, the entire novel can be read as a letter or as a confession to the absent mother as the narrator attempts to bring her mother back from the dead, however much she feels disabled by that crushing absence: "and now you're dead, Ina, the story has abandoned me. i can't seem to stay on track, nor can my sentence, even close its brackets" (17).

And yet the effort at ventriloquism begins to pay dividends as the mother does appear at points to talk back to her daughter. At first, Ina's words are quoted from past events (such as "don't be silly darling"), but they quickly begin to move into the present tense of Annie's writing. At one point, as Annie imagines a scene in the town of Hastings

Mill, Ina interrupts with, "now you're exaggerating" (22). With increasing frequency, Ina offers a running commentary on Annie's writing, objecting to what she sees as the liberties Annie takes with Mrs. Richards' history, privileging a traditional view of history as factual and as separate from fiction. Ina becomes Annie's critic, her editor, and even her alter ego during these scenes. When Ina says, "the trouble with you, Annie, is that you want to tell a story, no matter how much history you keep throwing at me" (27), and "this isn't history, it's pure invention" (55), her objection serves as a counter-discourse in the novel which voices the traditional view of the historian as mediator and not creator. Annie's questioning of the distinction between fact and fiction, and of "history [as] the real story the city fathers tell of the only important events in the world," is one of the basic principles in the novel and is written against Ina's notion of history as the self-revealing truth (28).

Ina's and Annie's conversations also reveal other intensely personal disagreements, full of bitter accusations, such as Ina's, "yes, you were the Perfect Little Mother, weren't you? you could have replaced me. you tried hard enough" (49), to which Annie writes, "yes i tried to efface you, trace myself over you... now i'm remembering, not dis- but remembering" (51). Annie's rebellion against her mother, which she recognizes that "all daughter's do," is in fact intrinsic to her individual development, whereas her father is hardly mentioned in the text (49). This conflict between the mother and daughter which is ongoing, even after the mother's death, is depicted as a creative force for Annie's writing and thought, since her disagreements with her mother about a "woman's lot" in particular have helped her to define her own feminist position.

Annie, however, does not simply use Ina as a scapegoat for the way in which patriarchal society conditions women, because Ina's words appear as part of a dialogue in the text. As Annie reads her mother, she attempts to hear her mother's words and to listen to her point of view. Annie's reading thus becomes an anti-imperialist gesture: instead of

taking over Ina's viewpoint, she attempts to listen to her mother and to continue an unfinished dialogue with her. While traditional history tends to be monological, Annie sets up a discourse that is explicitly dialogical. The predominant use of the second person voice throughout the text is an attempt by Annie to allow Ina a voice after her imagination has been taken from her during her electro-shock therapy. Annie also learns to "hear" her mother more clearly and to sympathize with her and recognize Ina's own bitterness: "the truth is, that's a woman's lot. it's what you learn to accept, like bleeding and hysterectomies, like intuition and dizzy spells--all the ways we don't fit into a man's world" (79). But Ina's voice also carries on in her daughter's voice when Annie recognizes her mother in her own words, "that's your voice, Ina, lucid and critical, seeing through the conventions that surrounded you" (135). When Annie says, "i feel myself in you, irritated at the edges where we overlap," she is both talking to and confronting her mother, yet she is always aware of how her mother's voice is a part of her own (17). Earlier, Annie had remarked how one's head is always full of other people's voices: "echoing your words, Ina--another quotation, except i quote myself (and what if our heads are full of other people's words? nothing without quotation marks" (81). By blurring the boundary between self and other, Annie suggests that her writing is not an appropriation of her mother's voice, but is an attempt to hear her voice and to think her mother's thoughts. Ultimately, she hears in Zoe's voice an extension of this dialogue with her mother: "she hates this fiction i've been forcing on her, is tired now of being its only reader, of being only a reader-in. she's shifted ground without warning. turned the tables, and i recognize Ina in that phrase" (141). With her head full of other people's voices, Annie writes a dialogical narrative which challenges linear conceptions of history.

Marlatt, of course, is herself well versed in feminist theories which question male paradigms of time and history. In her theory of "Women's Time," Julia Kristeva develops

an alternative view of temporality that both counters the universality of historians such as Hayden White and offers a gender-specific redefinition of temporality. Kristeva contrasts linear time--the time of history, project, and progression--with the cyclical time of repetition and the monumental time of eternity (Huffer 247). The two later terms are linked with female subjectivity, which Kristeva defines through the "cycles, gestation [and] the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm which conforms to that nature and imposes a temporality... whose regularity and unison [is] with what is experienced as extra-subjective time, cosmic time... and unnameable jouissance" (Kristeva 445). Kristeva suggests that while cyclical and monumental time are "traditionally linked to female subjectivity," they are more specifically associated with spatiality rather than temporality, because of women's ties to reproduction. While Kristeva goes on to discuss three phases of the feminist movement in Europe in relation to these three types of temporality, what interests me here is her conceptualization of a non-linear time outside of history. Although we must be careful to recognize that she does use "woman" not in the deterministically biological sense but with recognition of sex as a symbolic construction, her conception of "Women's Time" still provides an alternative to both the traditional linearity presupposed by historians and even to White's view of the plot-like nature of temporality itself.

Kristeva ends "Women's Time" with reference to a third "generation" of women (which she stresses is not an actual group but is in fact a signifying space) who would recognize the binary of man/woman as a metaphysical construct, acknowledging "the relativity of his/her symbolic as well as biological existence" (459). This generation is contrasted with the second group who affirm the cyclic and monumental temporality that is often associated with women in an attempt to "give a language to the subjective and corporeal experiences left mute by culture in the past" as they reject the linear time of patriarchal history (447). Kristeva is undoubtedly here referring to the writers of "l'écriture

féminine” whom she criticizes for being essentialists who reduce sex to irreducible difference. Yet the central theorists of this movement--Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray (Kristeva herself is often grouped among them)--nonetheless provide a necessary critique of male humanism.

The writers of l'écriture féminine have in common a critique of western thought, claiming that it has silenced and mis/represented women and their experiences. To counter the repression of women in male discourse, they posit a female-centered language which focuses on the body and on sexual pleasure. Luce Irigaray's "This Sex Which is Not One," one of the best-known essays of this movement, counters the psychoanalytic notion of woman as "lack," claiming that female sexuality has only been conceived of in terms of a male fantasy. She in turn redefines female sexuality as multiple and unnameable--"woman has sex organs more or less everywhere. She finds pleasure almost anywhere" (353). But biology also metamorphoses into culture, linking sexuality with textuality, and associating female desire with female language. Using the image of the woman speaking through the lips of the vagina, she posits a female language that escapes the limits of male logic and reason. Since female sexuality and language is diffuse and multiple, the female experience of time is likewise plural. Irigaray counters phallogentrism with this plurality while always being careful not to put forth simply a matriarchal formation that reduces everything to sameness. She refers to "(a) sort of expanding universe to which no limits could be fixed and which would be incoherence nevertheless" as a spatial representation of the female defiance of phallogentrism (354).

Hélène Cixous similarly finds a link between woman's desire and her language. Her famous essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" is an almost apocalyptic manifesto in which her style announces the fluid, non-linear, subversive writing that she imagines for women: "Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it" (1091). She

contrasts the multiplicity of “femaleness” with the single-mindedness of male sexuality which “gravitates around the penis” in a centralization of power that she links with dictatorships and other monopolizing systems (1099). This centralization of the “male”--“(n)early the entire history of writing is confounded with the history of reason... that same self-admiring, self-stimulating, self-congratulatory phallocentrism”--implicitly relates to the question of time because of the way in which the lineal time of historical narrative is deemed phallogentric. Cixous consequently imagines a new history for women: “Woman un-thinks the unifying, regulating history that homogenizes and channels forces, herding contradictions into a single battlefield. In woman, personal history blends together with the history of all women, as well as national and world history... She must be farsighted, not limited to a blow-by-blow interaction” (1095). She later refers to woman as being “cosmic” with a worldwide unconscious, suggesting a space-time relationship that is similar to Kristeva’s notion of women’s time (1099). For Cixous, then, male time is monological and phallogentric, while female time is plural and simultaneously multiple, a “body without end” (1099).

In their treatises evoking a female language, both Irigaray and Cixous explicitly challenge the hierarchical binary structure of Western metaphysical thought in which the first term of a binary is always privileged over the second. Light/dark, good/evil, God/human, culture/nature, and man/woman are only a few examples of such binary structures of thought. Irigaray attempts to refute such binary structures by refusing to let female sexuality be defined against male sexuality--valorizing male sexuality as active, so that female sexuality is subsequently deemed as passive. Instead, Irigaray privileges female sexuality as multiple and as incapable of being confined to a single position as opposite to the male. Cixous also attempts to reject the phallogentric privileging of the “male” principle in language and thought by reversing the binary hierarchy in favour of the

deposed term. "Woman" is thus valorized in terms of her body (not mind), and Cixous uses a number of binaries in which the male is defined against the female. For example, woman is giving (the male takes); she is bisexual and multiple (the male gravitates around the penis); and she subverts and "unhoards" (the male therefore implicitly hoards). Cixous's writing is thus deliberately subversive as she humorously implodes binary systems of thought in order to reveal the violent hierarchies that are inherent in language.

Ana Historic attempts to write a history of the female body which is faithful to such conceptions of female language and history. The entire act of remembering in the novel is in fact linked to a sort of bodily urge which cannot be stopped, since both Ana and Ina are "insisting [themselves] on the telling" (67). Similarly, the process of Ana's writing is called by Annie "the unspoken urge of a body insisting itself in the words" (46). Annie interprets Ana's desire to write even more radically when she says, "she is writing her desire to be, in the present tense, retrieved from silence... she is writing against her absence" (47). Writing, then, can involve both inserting and asserting one's body in discourse; Annie's narrative is itself an attempt both to retrieve these women from their silence in the official discourses and to reinscribe them within a particularly female discourse. The writing of the body is linked with the particular history of the woman's body: "there is even now the innate pleasure of seeing on a fresh white pad the first marks of red, bright red when the bleeding's at its peak. innate because of a child's astonishment, i made that ! the mark of myself, my inscription in blood. i'm here, scribbling again" (90). Annie suggests that this "interior history" is not the language of documents and explanations, but that the words "flow out from within, running too quick to catch sometimes, at other times, just an agonizingly slow trickle..." (90).

While Annie links women's bodies to an internal history that can be translated and written, the entire novel, in fact, foregrounds the remembering of the suppressed and

absent stories of Ana and Ina and links this process to the re-membering of their bodies--in particular, Ina's which had been literally dismembered because of her hysterectomy.

Annie, as an historian reading as a woman, exposes the relation between history and hysterectomy, in order to reveal the suppressed "her" in history and to write in a language that voices this woman's history. Its negative function is to expose the relation between history and hysterectomy: the literal excision of the uterus is compared to the absence of women from history which prompts Annie to call women the "missing persons" of history (134). When Ina underwent her hysterectomy and shock therapy, she literally went missing also: "when Harald brought [her] home, he brought home a new fear (who's there?) that no one was there at all" (148). Not only were parts of Ina's body missing, but whole pieces of her mind and her imagination were destroyed. By revealing the link between the mutilation of her mother and the excision of women from history--an active exclusion and not a simple, neutral telling of facts--Annie condemns traditional history as hysterectomy. Her rereading of history as not only colonizing women, but as surgically removing their voices exposes the suppression of women's bodies as signifying merely the nameless "vessels of [the men's] destin[ies]," much like the nineteenth-century newspaper accounts of "the ships men ride into the pages of history," which Annie counterpoints to Jeannie Alexander as the literal vessel of men's destiny, conveniently ignored by male writers who avert their eyes from such birthing scenes (121).

The narrator's writing of the body also operates positively; not only does Annie expose the relation between hysterectomy and history, she attempts to re-member these lost bodies and to reinsert the "hyster"--"putting things back together again, the things that have been split off, set aside" (51). Throughout the text, Annie gives a story of her own body--from her first experience of her self as unified to the shame and fear that was instilled in her by her mother to the joyful exploration of the closing pages. Her mother repeats history by

teaching her daughter to both hate her body and to fearfully protect it. Ina's view of women as fixed in and by their bodies and as destined to bear their burdens is reiterated in a quotation near the end of the novel from Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex: "(Her body) is a burden: worn away in service to the species, bleeding each month, proliferating passively... it is no certain source of pleasure and it creates lacerating pains; it contains menaces: woman feels endangered by her 'insides'" (133). The whole citation represents the old view of women's bodies as dangerous, shameful, and in need of concealment.

While Annie learns from Ina to feel alienated from her body, she resists her mother's teachings so that by the end of the novel she presents a potentially liberating view of the body as a country, not to be possessed and controlled, but to be explored and enjoyed. Zoe suggests that a communal view of women's history is possible, one not based purely on biology but on "women imagining all that women could be" in order to bring women into the world (131). Annie's writing of Ana's story is the most explicit example of reimagining the potentialities in another woman's life, justifying Zoe's contradiction of Ina's and de Beauvoir's reading of women's history. Zoe depicts women as a community, but implies that they are not limited and fixed within their bodies, since the imagination and the will to create things differently is their most powerful tool. Annie links the body with the self while maintaining the possibility of multiple selves, such as her own releasing of Ana's other selves which could not be completely realized during her own historical moment through the writing of Ana's story--"[what] if all the other selves she might be were erased" (146)-- as well as her own discovery that her body is multiple during a lesbian experience with Zoe.

While the idea of women's history is explicitly inscribed in language--Ana is Annie's offspring in writing for example--the novel itself takes a form that is often defined as a "female" form of narrative because of its attempt to follow bodily rhythms. In this

way, Marlatt imitates "Women's Time" through a challenge not only to the linearity of conventional narrative, but also to the linearity and determination of a succession of events in history itself -- "the incontrovertible logic of cause and effect" (147). Annie's narrative subsequently circles at least three distinct periods, and while there obviously is a story here (or rather, multiple stories), Marlatt opens up the "boundaries of dominant discourse to write [herself] anew" (Lowry 91). The body of the plot thus changes with the model of a plural body so that a feminist reading of history is not merely linear, but instead follows divergent strands and alternative possibilities--it is inclusive rather than exclusive. Annie even resists ending her text, desiring not to sum up or fix her characters. Indeed, the narrator resists closure in the last page of the novel and even renounces her control over meaning with the words, "reading us into the page ahead" (Ana 152).

While Ana Historic offers a feminist reinscription of the female body through language, it also, like The Wars, resists the master narrative of history as colonization. The resistance in Ana Historic, however, is double, as Annie highlights the defiance of Ana's writing and writes herself against male dominance. Ana Richards, who is a colonial who has come to settle in the "new world," in fact sees herself (in Annie's interpretation) as "ab-original" (30). The prefix "ab," meaning "off, away, from," is suggestive of her position as an outsider with reference to the original residents of the land who are also reduced to a marginalized position. Annie's reading of certain strands of Ana's writing implies that resistance to the norm, at some level or other, is always taking place and that our contemporary perspective is not more progressive, but is simply better equipped with a discourse with which to construct our reality.

As Annie reads and expands upon the traces in Ana's texts, she discovers that many of Ana's entries do reveal a deep resentment of the masculine authority that she is constantly finding herself struggling against. In Annie's reading of Mrs. Richards, Ana

continually challenges the masculine construction of the female subject by refusing to accept her position as an object to be looked at and by refusing to be defined as male property. As she walks through Gastown, she is angered both at the way in which men look at her as if she is trespassing, and at the way in which men are allowed so much freedom (to rent rooms in the Granville Hotel for example), while she feels restricted simply walking down the street because she is under the ever-watchful male gaze. But Ana Richards does not only resist masculinist ideology and the restricted position which is provided for her through its definitions, she also resists the colonial authority that simultaneously imposes limitations upon her. Annie writes a scene in which Mrs. Richards must confront young Miller, whose father's position on the school board guarantees him a position of power, when he refuses to sit next to a "stinking halfbreed" in class (92). With her challenge to Miller ("the Government of this Colony declares that Siwash and Scott are both registered pupils of this school") she nonetheless recognizes that she is challenging the hierarchy of the system and the unwritten laws of "British Justice" (92). As an historian reading as a woman, Annie reads Ana's resistance to patriarchal authority and dramatizes those scenes which depict Ana's struggles against dominance.

Many of Annie's own struggles likewise consist of her practical resistance to being colonized as the property of a man. In refusing to continue in the role of secretary for her husband Richard, for example, she rejects the role of the wife as the patient assistant and as her husband's possession, and decides instead to do her own writing: "you, the daughter of a man of God. explain yourself" (84), she imagines Ana Richards having to meet her detractors; "Ana, struggling to account for herself, writes: 'What is it I might say?'" (83). But it is Annie who writes that "what she has left unsaid" is what is most important: "her real story begins where nothing is conveyed. where she cannot explain, describe--" (83). So, too, Annie writes of herself: "i find it difficult to explain, Richard, what this scribbling

means" (83). In the end, she will reject her role as a handmaiden to history/the historian, and reject the role of a wife altogether, participating in a new relationship with Zoe, proclaiming that "Annie isn't Richard's" and renaming herself "Annie Torrent" (152). She no longer finds herself defined as the property of another but instead sees herself as a fluid torrent breaking loose from its bonds. When Annie announces her new name she seems to release herself and her desires, reflecting the way in which there are "whole wardrobes of names guard(ing)" her limitations (152). The "Torrent" suggestively releases her body as if it were an occupied territory, as if "saying it made it so."

Yet when Annie reads the traces in Mrs. Richards' journals and letters toward a conclusion which cannot be documented (her lesbian relationship with Birdie Stewart), is this not an example of an imperial appropriation of history? Annie does reread Ana's journal entries, imagining different possibilities for her and even rewriting the past, but Annie suggests that she is not colonizing her subject, but is instead releasing other selves for Ana that were not possible at the time in which she was living. But Annie nonetheless projects her own desires onto Ana: Annie's writing of Mrs. Richards' refusal to be a proper/ty lady by having a relationship with Birdie Stewart sets a precedent for Annie's own relationship with Zoe. Nevertheless, Annie recognizes the subjective nature of writing history, suggesting the impossibility of avoiding some degree of appropriation because the characters are always "you," so that the most imperialistic historians are those who would still deny their personal involvement in the text. Annie's writing of history, instead of attempting to objectify her subject by observing her from a falsely neutral, removed position, reveals an ongoing connection between people in the past, present, and future.

Both Ana Historic and The Wars, then, use their female characters and narrators to enact a resistance to a master narrative of history as patriarchal colonization. Yet both texts inevitably contain traces of their own repressions of the "others" against which they are

defined. In The Wars, the colonial view that the narrator resists is expressed by Barbara, herself a conqueror and consumer of young men, when she says that General Wolfe “grew up and got your country for us” (108). Nonetheless, the trace of the story of the aboriginal marathon runner Tom Longboat whom Robert imitates as a child, but who is not given a voice in the text, is an example of the way in which this text also colonizes its subject. The native American comes to represent the natural world, and Robert enters this role when he runs with the coyote to feel in tune with nature before he leaves for the front. The “indian” thus functions as a signifier for a supposedly natural existence before the war and becomes the other by which the horror of the “civilized” war experience is contrasted. As Edward Said remarks in his famous definition of post-colonialism in Orientalism, the demarcation of another culture as manifestly different and other has less to do with this other culture than it has to do with the dominant culture (22). Even so, the trace of the aboriginal story in The Wars has less to do with Tom Longboat than with the ‘development’ of Robert’s character.

In Ana Historic, the Siwash indians similarly emerge as other to Ana: they are depicted in Ana’s journal as an incomprehensibly different people whom she wishes to understand, yet idealizes as natural and uncultured. Yet she also fears them because of this difference: while she bravely remarks that she is not afraid to walk in the woods, because if she encounters a bear she will play dead as the Siwash do, she is nonetheless frightened when she encounters two Siwash men on one of her walks. Towards a Siwash woman, Ruth, she feels compassion as she reflects upon the woman’s innocent fascination with the writing on the slate, suggesting that her people have a “Grace of direct perception... untroubled by letters, by mirrors, by some foolish notion of themselves such as we suffer from. I cannot find the words for this the others would dismiss as Pagan--perhaps our words cannot speak it” (69). However benevolent Ana’s feelings towards the Siwash, she

nonetheless colonizes them through her gaze which reduces an entire race to a state of child-like innocence. Nevertheless, Ana does seem to recognize the way in which many of her Western cultural suppositions are wrongly imposed on the Siwash culture; in one scene in which Ana attempts to teach Lily to write, she realizes that Lily does not understand the letter “a for angel” or “a for ark” because these are meaningless Biblical references for the girl. The trace of the Siwash stories do not let us forget that, however much Ana is marginalized and repressed within her own culture, these aboriginal women are doubly colonized by the dominant ideologies and thus warn Annie not to impose an enlightened view upon a British emigrant from the past.

A gendered reading of both Ana Historic and The Wars, while opening up a series of problems about how to talk about sex differences, does lead to a necessary critique of language and of imperialist historical narratives. Both novels in fact resist colonial master narratives, providing a contra-diction to these narratives with their counter-discourses that write against the norm. In The Wars, Lady Juliet and Marian Turner subvert and reread the master narratives of war by interjecting feminine values of compassion, community, and eco-humanism into the story of Robert Ross. In Ana Historic, the narrator rereads and rewrites history as she resists the dominance of history as the colonization and suppression of women. Both Ana Historic and The Wars thus provide more than negative readings of male history; they both end with their own positive affirmations. In The Wars, the narrator resists determinism by ending with a picture of Robert in which his breath implicitly mingles with the reader’s, and in Ana Historic, the narrator resists endings by projecting into the future and leaving meaning up to a reader who is left “reading us into the page ahead.” In rejecting the determinism of history as the “already-made,” both novels write against the notions of the universality of time (and narrative structure), and against the notion of a universal reader while offering positive redefinitions through their own counter

Conclusion

The counter-discourses in The Wars and Ana Historic, which resist the notion of a fixed reality and any kind of social or economic determinism, work to interrogate traditional historiography. From the perspective of Canadian fiction, the contradiction of colonial master narratives is nothing new, for Canadian writers have long been attempting to define their own unique experiences through language, writing against a powerful and even hegemonic tradition of English literature. Robert Kroetsch, for example, theorizing on a Canadian grammar of narrative, asks, "How do you write in a new country?" ("Moment" 5) and "How do you grow a prairie poet?" Dennis Lee similarly focuses on the difficulties of writing in "the language of others," yet offers a possibility for writing: "...perhaps our job was not to fake a space of our own and write it up, but rather to find words for our space-lessness... Instead of pushing against the grain of an external, uncharged language, perhaps we should come to writing with that grain" (qtd. in Ashcroft 142-143).

A number of theorists have still attempted to articulate a unique space for Canadian literature, often placing writers in relation to their landscape, such as in Eli Mandel's Out of Place or Laurence Ricou's Vertical Man/ Horizontal World. Others, such as Margaret Atwood in Survival, describe the Canadian artist as a colonial victim who is inevitably a failure because the artist is always "other" in Canadian culture, lacking a tradition that comes from his/her own people. Such traditional, and very often thematic, commentaries on Canadian literature could be complemented by more recent critical theorizations about post-colonial writing, narrative authority and the reader, and issues of gender, so that the approach that I take towards literary historiography could extend into theorization about Canadian literature in general, as well as into discussions of particular texts.

Canadian writing's position as post-colonial space is a site that can be examined from a variety of perspectives. An analysis of Canadian historiographic metafiction, for

example, such as in The Wars and Ana Historic, demonstrates how the novels provide a critique of imperialist historical narratives through their rewriting of history. The Wars questions the ethos of the battle narrative by depicting a hero who espouses “female” values of compassion, synergy and bio-community over conquest and nationalism. In Ana Historic, the historian, Annie, similarly exposes the bias of male, imperial history; she not only writes from an intensely personal perspective, but also exposes how our colonial history continues to define our present definition of history as the objective, universal male experience. In its place, she inserts the story of Ana Richards, a woman displaced by the official discourse.

Examining the strategies recent writers have used to counter imperialist historical narratives can lead to questions about the way in which Canadian writers open up a space for their literature against a colonial background. Timothy Findley’s The Wars, with its explicitly historical ground of World War I, provides a model for reading other historiographical metafiction. The Wars, in which the narrator’s reopening of the story of a dead soldier, Robert Ross, in order to interrogate the past, offers a powerful revisionist methodology for marginalized figures, and opens up a new context for a reading of another of Findley’s novels, Famous Last Words. While the latter novel focuses on more overtly historical personages (though combining them with fictional and literary characters), Famous Last Words, like The Wars, centres on both personal history and on the writing of history. Although the novel has been studied as historiography, as in Linda Hutcheon’s The Canadian Postmodern, the limits of the writer in the text, Mauberley’s voyeuristic writing (he dies with a pen in his eye) could be contrasted with the researcher in The Wars, who, unlike the aesthete Mauberley, performs and reenacts the events about which he is telling, giving them breath once more. Writing as appropriation is exposed as a false aim in both novels, so that a reading which is aware of the potential colonization

implicit in historical narratives can help explain Findley's critique of the independent artist figure in Famous Last Words.

Other Canadian works can be examined in terms of the way in which they pressure the notion of history itself. Ana Historic's questioning of the boundaries between fact and fiction leads to expanding notions of history that are relevant in terms of other feminist theories. Marlatt's novel raises questions about history as a past that actually happened. So a gendered reading of Ana Historic which examines the suppression of the histories of women within the official discourse could be applied to alternative forms of discourse, pushing questions of women's history even further. As critical anthologies such as Amazing Space: Writing Canadian Women Writing attest, much of contemporary women's writing is concerned with crossing and challenging a number of borders, including those between life and text, between history and fiction. Linda Hutcheon, for example, writes: "In literature written by women in Canada and elsewhere today, we find the same kind of radical critique of totalizing systems and so-called universal truths as is to be found in contemporary post-structuralist philosophy and literary theory" ("Shape" 220). Many such texts, like Roberta Rees' experimental long poem Eyes Like Pigeons which combines the stories of several different women from a variety of perspectives, could be studied in terms of the boundaries they test--Rees' text could even be studied for its historiography. Issues of readerly involvement and narrative authority could be applied to Rees's text which is integrally concerned with the act of writing poetry, with questions of voice and questions of finding meaning. A study of the text not simply as an example of *écriture féminine*, but as an alternative writing of history, could help to apply pressure to the ideas of women's history that Marlatt's novel raises.

Any "history" of Canadian literature must be aware of multiple contexts, including not only issues of the country's colonial heritage, but also those of the writer's gender,

race, and class. "Making" such a history ultimately entails an awareness of the fact that history and indeed all narratives are discourses that are deeply embedded in their cultural contexts. A comparative analysis of Ana Historic and The Wars, then, allows not only for an examination of how history is made, but also raises numerous questions about what, in fact, constitutes history. The New Historicist aim to reveal the textuality of history and the deep interconnection between history and literature supplies an alternative model for both revisionist readings of histories and for fictional reconstructions of historical narratives. Including issues of the reader and gender in the writerly process of the construction of history likewise politicizes the process by inserting alternative voices into the third-person narration of "mainstream" history. In The Wars, the fictional critic Nicholas Fagan's comment that "Nothing so completely verifies our perception of a thing as our killing of it" (191) is countered by the breathing picture of Robert, Rowena, and Meg and thus leaves us with an image of a history that is not fixed and absolute. Ana Historic similarly espouses open endings, challenging the idea that "you can't rewrite what's been written" (142) and "that lie that you can't change the ending!" (147). Both novels write against any notion of a fixed and determined past, suggesting that events can always be reopened, reexamined, and rewritten once more.

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