Chapter Four

Post War Trauma
This chapter traces post war experiences of soldiers and civilians. Pat Barker’s novels *Another World* (1998) and *Border Crossing* (2001) have been analyzed in this chapter. Barker’s fiction is a critical and imaginative reflection of society. She describes, captures, exposes and rebukes social and political anxieties that have characterized twentieth century Britain. In Barker’s fiction, history is a vast and encircling experience of the war.

War is a literary province that has belonged largely to men, for two obvious reasons; they were the ones who have fought it, and they were the ones who wrote about it. This double-edged privilege has produced stories that romanticize war, as well as those that wholly condemn it. Pat Barker, through her thorough research has produced the First World War *Regeneration Trilogy*, which captured the sickening emptiness of the Somme (battlefield) and the ravages of a soldier’s mind. Barker brought to her War Novels a fiercely authentic sense of the losses incurred from the outset: the class distinctions of the British army, the yellowing skin of a munitions factory worker, dominance of old generation, suffering of patients, and the failure of medicine and language. Barker entered the literary world as a writer who takes risks, provides arresting insights. She has opened up new areas of representation to scrutiny. Barker has been exploring ideas of communities and individuals under stress whether in late-twentieth century urban centers or in the trenches, war hospitals, and sanatoriums of the First World War. Barker focuses on the damages on individuals and communities.

Barker’s fiction incorporates wide-angled representations and close-up shots of particular historical moments or events delving into the unresolved tension between memory and history. Barker uses the term ‘shadow of monstrosities’ which is cast across her more recent novels like *Another World* and *Border Crossing*. Barker portrays anxious parents and violent children who are the product of war and forces the public to rethink its response to contemporary social
conditions. Violence cannot always be defeated; it exists not only in war or organized crime but also in the family and at the heart of society. Barker explores the extent to which violence, casual as well as socially sanctioned, has its impact on individuals, and how evil can crack, open complacency and implicate even the most cautious among us. Violence is endemic in society and so cuts through class and gender barriers.

Barker is essentially contemporary novelist for whom the present and the future are founded on the past. In Barker’s fiction ‘the past isn’t over, it isn’t even past.’ (Another World: 241) Her novels are marked, on the one hand, by historical and social aspects, and on the other hand by psychological aspects. Barker questions what separates childhood from adulthood.

**Another World:**

*Another World* may be described as supplement to the *Regeneration Trilogy*. It continues to explore the trauma and effects of disturbing memory of the First World War on one of its survivors, Geordie. It represents the horrors of war and the burden of past in the present and the impact of the First World War and its hold on present and on the mental sufferings of the veterans even after 80 years. In this novel, Barker presents a complex picture of class, gender, and family relationships. It also explores contemporary fear and random violence. Primarily, it is the story of three generations (Geordie, Nick’s grandfather; Nick and his son, Gareth) who suffer from past guilt of crime and present fear of trauma and try to come out of this trauma and rehabilitate themselves. Child violence and sibling rivalry is depicted in the novel through the character of Gareth.

In *Another World*, the veteran called Geordie suffers from war nightmares and hallucinations eighty years after the end of war, which signals the disturbing
eruption of the past into the present. Through Geordie, Barker revisits the same memory landscape such as the rotting skull-lined trenches, the phosphorous-lit nights, crawling across the cratered mud and barbed wire tangles of no-man’s land, the screaming and bloody carnage of the battlefield.

Barker explores multiple dimensions of time and place. She produces complex interrogations of class, gender, and family relationships. Trauma lies at the core of this text. The roots of trauma are located in both the public monstrosity of the First World War and in private dilemma, which takes place in the aftermath of war. Barker explores the contemporary fears of taking risk, the loss of childhood, random violence and unspeakable horrors in *Another World*. It operates as a dialogue with these horrors, these events that violently disturb the cultural order.

The violent child, the abducted child, the specters of murderer, and the aberrant family haunt the text. A contemporary sense of continuous vulnerability and the recurrent fantasy of unprovoked attack that characterize current fears for the self in the social world disturb the society. Characters live in the “Shadow of monstrosities”:

Peter Sutcliffe’s bearded face, the number plate of a house in Cromwell Street [Inhabited by the Wests], three figures smudged on a video surveillance screen, an older boy taking a toddler by the hand while his companion strides ahead, eager for the atrocity to come (3)

Evil was widespread: child killing, rape, prostitution, violence and murder were prevalent in the post-war European society. Society was under constant threat of violence within itself. Bell, the young girl who killed two small boys in 1968; Sutcliff, the serial killer of women in the 1970s and early 1980s; the boys, Venables and Thompson, who were filmed leading two years old James Bugler to his death in the early 1990s; and the Wests, whose systematic sexual abuse and serial killing of young women came to light in the early 1990s – have become
ciphers of “evil” reproduced across the pages of newspapers and on TV screens. All these events present modern post war society, which is full of violence. *Another World* cracks the relationship between individual and collective guilt, personal and social history, violence and the memory of violence, public and private life, loss and silence.

In *Another World*, Geordie, a 101-year old, veteran of the Somme, believes, for example, that he is not dying because of cancer, but because of his bayonet wound, which has reopened. It is not that history repeats itself, but that some historical experiences have never gone away, they keep on haunting repeatedly in present. The novel is not as obviously concerned with psychoanalysis as Barker’s *Trilogy* had been, but the same interest in the repetitive structure of trauma, and the relationship between trauma and representation, remains central to this novel. This novel warns us that ‘It (war) happened once, therefore it can happen again’ (82). This theme runs through all the intertwined stories of the novel.

Like the novels of *Regeneration Trilogy*, *Another World*, largely belongs to the constant flow of writing about the Great War. For the setting of the novel, Barker returns to the depressed, Postindustrial north, specifically Newcastle upon Type, which flourished on the armaments trade in the first half-century. The epigraph to *Another World*, from Joseph Brodsky, admonishes “Remember: the past won’t fit into memory without something left over; it must have a future.” This novel includes many past events: historical, individual and familial. They overlap and interrelate, the past exerting a continual pressure upon the present.

The title phrase is applied in the text to Nick’s sense, when Nick was a child, his father forbid him to pass through Prep School, which was on the other side of a door. Looking back, he thinks his childhood was spent in two worlds, one of his grandfather’s ‘never changed’ world and other his own world. Yet Nick had felt a
disturbing intimation of that world’s meaning when he was visiting Thiepval (graveyard) with Geordie, he sensed ‘the triumph of death’ and the power of old wounds to leak into the present.’ Adult or Child, each individual, it seems, occupies ‘Another World’. The title ‘Another World’ refers, fluidly and repeatedly, to the various realities offered and imposed by our perceptions: the passage of time, the unreliability of memory and the malleability of history.

Another World represents the hatred, violence and the horrors of war remote in time but still present in its consequences. In exploring these themes, Barker demonstrates the extraordinary immediacy and vigor of expression, brilliant touches of observation, unfailing ear for dialogue, a talent for imagery that is darting and brief, but wonderfully apt. The novel examines the hold of time past, over time present, through the prism of three generations of a family, living in Newcastle is one of its theme. However, Barker has used portentous symbolism and some spacious mention of ghosts, her keen attention to psychological detail enables her to reveal how these peoples’ daily lives proceed in the “shadow of monstrosities”, in the shadow of death, loss and casual cruelty, in the shadow of betrayal and self-deception.

Another World continues to deconstruct portrayal of the Great War as an event that destabilizes, rather than endorses, a secure concept of masculinity within the late twentieth century context. The novel strongly implies that the anxieties and conflicts experienced by its masculine characters can be traced directly back to gender crisis initiated by that very conflict. The relationship between the genders in both the public and the private spheres are undergoing increasingly radical change, to the extent that the traditional codes signifying masculinity, already contingent, are on the point of losing their meaning entirely in the twenty first century. The novel has focused primarily upon male perception and male consciousness placed within a precisely delineated North-east setting. The concept of ‘family’ is
reassessed and the male domestic role is being renegotiated inside the home. In this period of intense negotiation between the genders, a secret that has been concealed and denied down the generations is represented in the novel, *Another World*.

The novel has a main story and a sub-story. The main story deals with 101 years old veteran, Geordie Lucas who is close to his death. The First World War reopens in his psyche as he suffers from hallucination, nightmares, sleepwalk, etc. This story describes the aftermath psychological consequences of war. The sub-story of this novel deals with Geordie’s grandson, Nick’s troubled family. Nick’s family suffers from contemporary fear of trauma, child violence and burden of childcare in modern society. Both stories explore *Regeneration’s* territory, looking at the power of old wounds to leak into the present, whether those wounds were received on the battle grounds of warring nations or of warring families. Barker is the only writer who stuck to the theme of war from the First World War to present wars.

*Another World* deals with many themes, first, it is about post war trauma in which the oldest British veteran Geordie Lucas suffers from horrific and traumatic memories, including hallucinations, nightmares, sleepwalk etc. He is dying of bowel cancer but he believes that it is bayonet wound, which he received in the First World War that is killing him. He has stuck in the past, for him past is not over. His past encroaches in the present and makes his life unbearable. He becomes the problem for his family. Second, the novel is about the family, which is at war. Though the war is over many years have passed but still, the society particularly, families are at war. There is chaos in the society. There are many evils, which are prevalent in the society like random violence, murder, rape etc. Nick, the protagonist of the novel is the grandson of Geordie, who along with his family fights with different evils, which are prevalent in the society.
Third, the novel is about child violence and sibling rivalry. Barker very skillfully presented child violence in the novel, which is the offspring of the violence in the First World War. Gareth, 11 years old son of Fran (Nick’s second wife) from her previous marriage, is a computer guru. He spends 42 hours a week in front of computer, playing violent games and watching movies like *Terminator*. Gareth is violent and jealous of his stepbrother, Jasper who is two years old. The novel reaches its climax when Gareth tries to kill Jasper by throwing stone at him but the parents intervene and save the child. Another example of child violence is presented by Fanshawe family who were the earlier dwellers where Nick’s family currently moved.

Fourth, *Another World* is a gothic story. It is the story about the Fanshawes who lived in Lob Hill at Newcastle. The owner of the family had two children from his previous marriage, Muriel and Robert, who kill their stepbrother James. Later, Robert was also killed in the First World War. Muriel still haunts the house after 80 years of the lost generation who made money by selling arms for the First World War.

Fifth, the novel depicts the degeneration of family, society and in general humanity. Barker describes minutely degenerated landscapes, industries, houses and people.

Sixth, the novel digs deep into the theme of masculinity. It presents how still after the war, masculinity is rooted in the minds of men; still men dominate the family and society in general. The question of gender is challenged in the novel through male characters like Geordie, Nick and Gareth.

Seventh, the novel shows how language is inadequate to represent war and its consequences. Barker is always fascinated by silence and gap in the memory where language fails to fill those gaps. When language fails to represent war through words then it comes out through nightmares, paralysis, mutism,
hallucination, ghost etc. Through Geordie, Barker shows how language is inadequate to represent war; it can be well presented through psychological diseases.

The detail discussion of the above-mentioned themes will give insight into the works of Barker and will enhance the understanding of the readers of Barker.

**Post War Trauma:**

Post War Trauma is as old as war itself. It was present in the epic of Homer’s *Iliad*. Soldiers were torn and suffered terrible consequences. Now in this modern age, war has become more horrible and destructive with the inventions of new weapons and modern technology. Soldiers in the First World War experienced first time unimaginable horrors of the war, which ravished their minds. They suffered long-term psychological disorders even after many years of war, psychological diseases like hallucination, nightmares, sleepwalk and violent behavior were common among the soldiers. Many soldiers of modern war suffered from post-traumatic disorder.

Barker has very skillfully depicted not only the trauma and suffering of soldiers at the time of war but also after many years of war. *Another World* is the best example of post war trauma. The novel’s connecting threads with *Regeneration Trilogy* are all on display here, but treated from fresh angle. The whole novel is written in the present continuous tense in which we live our lives. The use of present tense creates a disturbing effect, especially when we remember that the present is itself historic. For Geordie Lucas, 101 years old veteran of the First World War, the past has overtaken his present. “It’s not like remembering it, it’s like he’s actually seeing it”. (69) Geordie’s past has become a physical and emotional burden, which he carries into the future. Geordie is arrested in time. He
is stuck in the past. He is caught in a moment that is relentlessly repeated. Geordie
is the most striking character in the novel who in his dying days manages to
frighten, frustrate and charm everyone who comes near him. Geordie had returned
from the Great War with a bayonet wound in his stomach and head full of guilty
memories that readers of Barker’s *Trilogy* will instantly recognize. Geordie was
slowly dying of cancer, but he believes that he is dying from a bayonet wound,
which he sustained in the run-up to the Somme in 1916, this event that has finally
defeated his continuous fighting spirit at the end of twentieth century.

He has become famous through sheer longevity, both as a source of
authentic memory and as a warning voice. His story has been printed in a
collection by Helen, an academic historian fascinated by the unimaginable
experience of trench warfare. Even his taped interview was printed in edited form.
He cannot make peace with the past. Barker’s fascination with the effect of war,
and the choking hand of the past upon the present, make this the most powerful
book. She treats the old man, his relationship, memories and disease with
unflinching realism. Her respect and affection for him are infectious, and her
handling of his pain, suffering, trauma and confusion is masterly. Barker
acknowledges that his detail is taken straight from her own grandfather’s
experience near the end of his life; he thought his hemorrhaging was coming from
the old wound, which had been healed for decades when in fact he was dying of
bowel cancer. Barker used to sleep beside him, ‘taking the nightshift’ because her
grandfather was also very ill. She was 15 at that time but vividness of her
memories shine through the telling detail of Nick’s vigils with Geordie. Barker
claims that the novel is not based on her life. Indeed, she was keen to remain
distinct from the storylines of her character that after her first three novels, she
adopted the male persona.
Barker points out, that Geordie’s character is mostly based on the 103 years old veteran whom she met on the battlefield of France while filming documentary for the BBC. The novel is full of ironies that pit the present against the past. War left behind thirty-nine million corpses, the bayonet wound was unusual injury to sustain. Geordie is at the same time unusual and representative of the First World War. He is unusual because he does not fit in this advanced age. He is representative because he stands for a lost generation, whether or not he chooses the responsibility, he is forced to speak of war and its consequences. This is witnessed by his elder daughter, Frieda, his grandson, Nick who is a university lecturer in psychology and his interviewer, Helen who is a writer and historian who waits for his death.

Geordie is the most interesting and vibrant character in the novel. Barker spends chapter after chapter exploring Geordie’s last days. Perhaps Barker having spent three books with the First World War veterans, wanted to know what happened to them later in their life. Geordie witnesses almost every night terrible flashbacks that take him back to the trenches of France, where his brother Harry died in 1916. Geordie’s private reliving of the horror of the war, and specifically the traumatic memory of the killing of his brother, Harry, means that Geordie has not been able to contain the war as something that happened once; the war is clearly continuing to happen for Geordie even in the present. Geordie is a powerful link between past and present. He is haunted by a traumatic past, a secret that he has kept both to himself and to others.

Nick recalls his childhood; his grandfather’s stammer represented silence to his questions about the war.

The stammer was bad in those years. There were times when he seemed to be hocking up words like phlegm, raking them out of his gut. But the silence went deeper than that. His body stripped off in the garden...the wounds in his side suggested questions. Why? How?
What happened? Nick would ask, but there were no answers. The past was hidden, veiled in silence (58).

Geordie’s nightmares of battle return vigorously after decades of relatively undisturbed sleep. One episode in particular draws out the power of memory. One night Nick stays with his grandfather, he is awakened when the old man sleepwalks out into the cold and begins inching his way across the cobbles as if crawling through the trenches. This nightmare takes him 80 years back into the same horrible trenches. Geordie is living in a mental world of war. Finally, after witnessing the episode, Nick holds his grandpa and says, “We’ve got to get back. It’s nearly light (162) and brings the weeping veteran back into the house. Nick cannot protect Geordie from the past that overwhelms him like a living nightmare, nor can Nick console him that the experience is truly or finally past. In the last days of his life, Geordie suffers terribly. Nick knows that Geordie had a brother, Harry, who did not survive the war. Geordie near his death confesses that he was his brother’s killer as ‘obviously delusion’ (164). Nick comes to know about it when he hears the recordings of Geordie’s memories made by Helen, Nick’s historian colleague, as part of her work on survivors’ memories of the Great War through which Nick comes to realize that his grandfather was telling the truth.

Geordie claims a terrible burden of responsibility for his brother’s death. “All Geordie’s words... orbits round a central silence, a dark star... It’s Harry’s name on the front; he shouts in the night” (158). We learn that Geordie killed Harry on the front line as he lay dying in agony, snagged on Barbed wire. Geordie’s taped, almost hallucinogenic; recollections of his crawl from the trenches to his injured brother in the muddy battlefield are played back for his grandson Nick after his death.
Just as I’m crawling the last few feet a flare goes up, he’s screaming, all I can see is the mouth, little blue sleety eyes, and his guts are hanging out... all I can see is the open mouth, and my fingers are digging into his chest finding the right place and then I ram the knife in and the screaming stops. (263-64)

The reality is that it was a mercy killing, necessary in order to put an end to the unendurable pain of a fatally wounded man and to stop his screaming, which could have attracted German soldiers who would have killed all the remaining people in Geordie’s group. Still Geordie is haunted by a fear that he killed Harry simply because as he puts it ‘I hated him’ (264). Shortly before his death, however, the traumatic memory comes once again to the surface as he deals not only with fratricide itself but also with the recollection of his mother’s comment at Harry’s memorial service, when she told Geordie “It should have been you”. (59) This traumatic personal memory, with its painful indeterminacy, its slippage between accuracy and distortion, real event and fantasy is the ‘hell’ that Geordie lives in and imparts to Helen, who is the historian:

You see when I’m remembering all this, it’s like falling through a trapdoor into another room, and it’s still all going on. I don’t remember the mud on my face, I feel it, it’s cold, gritty and I see everything like that until I get to Harry’s wounds, and then what I see in my mind’s eye is something like fatty meat coming out of a mincing machine... It’s... I know that what I remember seeing is false, It can’t have been like that, and so the one thing I need to remember clearly, I can’t ... so how do I know I couldn’t have got him back (264-65).

Geordie shares all his secrets with Helen who digs deep into the history of the First World War. Geordie was her firsthand source of information. ‘His past is rearticulated for a generation interested in the subjective story and importantly in the truth that is believed to lie concealed below the level of language, revealed in the fettering sentence or display of emotions’ (257), although the public audience,
listening attentively, does not and cannot understand the profound, horrible truth that Geordie is unable to articulate. Since, ‘they do not share the same experiences, the same realities; they also occupy different words of meaning’. (Eber, 2001: 176) Geordie expresses pure truth to Nick and Helen in an interview. It is used as background research by Helen for her book. This taped interview is a sort of confession or talking cure of which readers of Regeneration Trilogy are well known. Geordie has same difficulty that an artist might, ‘Struggling to give narrative form to raw memory’. (Parson, 2004: 176-96) However, Helen promised to destroy these tapes but she still shares these tapes with Nick after Geordie’s death. Helen is a historian and Nick is a professor of psychology, and it is this interchange between history and psychology that, Troy suggests, “raises questions about individual characters’ access to and construction of their own memories, especially of traumatic experiences, as well as the possibilities and dangers involved in sharing memories and gaining access to somebody else’s psychic world”. (Troy, 2004: 103)

Geordie’s guilty memories that floods on his present psychological wounds remain as scars, they continue to leak, stretch, and weep; they embody the war. Harry’s body remains in no man’s land in 1916, but it continues to be present in nightmares in which Geordie finds himself falling into Harry’s screaming mouth. Geordie’s last words are ‘I am in hell’ which are in present tense, show the suffering of veteran even after 80 years of war. Geordie and so many like him experience time as it “coagulates around terrible events, clots over them, stops the flow”. (271) Despite the crushing weight of such collective trauma, the novel ends on an optimistic note.
Family at War:

Barker introduces complicated modern family structure in the novel. Geordie’s grandson Nick’s family is also grappling with fallout from the past. Nick and his wife Fran have just moved to a Victorian house in Newcastle. Their family consists of Fran’s 12 year old son Gareth, from her previous marriage, Nick’s 13 year old daughter, Miranda, from his earlier marriage who mostly live with her mother, who is hospitalized with a nervous breakdown, and Nick and Fran’s toddler, Jasper. Fran is pregnant and Nick is spending most of his spare time helping look after Geordie. His last illness occurs at a critical time in Nick’s new marriage. Geordie is Nick’s beloved grandfather who, after 101 years of life is finally close to death.

The novel begins with Nick’s own version of hell – the center of Newcastle on a Friday night, stuck in traffic jam surrounded by violent, yelling gangs of boys and tortured by fears of what might happen to his daughter who is waiting alone at the train station. Another World functions as an afterward to the Regeneration Trilogy, bringing into parallel contemporary fears of social life with terror and the historical experience of war. Another World is a social and realistic novel of an extended middle class family. One of the extraordinary achievements of the novel’s opening is the complicated network of relationship of Nick’s family, which Barker introduces brilliantly in the first chapter.

The complicated history of family relations gives the opening of the novel a fairly full and dense sense of social realism. Barker has established a familiar, credible modern family setting. The opening chapter introduces a number of familiar social themes such as alcohol-induced violence, abortion, absent fathers, the increased sense of children’s vulnerability, the passage from childhood to adulthood, and the burden of childcare. Barker represents meticulously the
emotional life of the family, the tensions between Nick and Fran about parental responsibilities, Nick’s role as a father, the perpetual moodiness of Gareth, and resentment of Gareth towards Miranda and Jasper, and Fran’s pregnancy. Nick’s disenchanted eye registers Fran as a drained face, the huge belly, the skinny, sharp boned cat look. Gareth is weak himself, but still he terrorizes young Jasper.

Gareth, Fran’s hostile son, spends all his free time playing violent video games and tries to undermine his stepfather. His favorite play is to run Nick’s toothbrush under the toilet bowl rim before replacing it in its holder. To complete this dysfunctional family, Nick’s 13 years old daughter Miranda, has come to stay while her mother is being treated for depression. She nurses secret resentments and fears. She finds it hard to forgive Nick for leaving her mother. Adolescent jealousy of the new family and the parent’s mutual irritation blend, create confictions for conflict. Barker presents the condition of Nick’s family, Fran’s stomach swelling, the children grouping, the house rose blooming and decaying, Geordie dwindling into death before his eyes. To symbolize that the power of the past continues to exert over the present, Barker uses Fanshawe’s family episode in the novel. Nick’s family moved in Fanshawe house in which Fanshawe family lived at the time of the First World War. This family has murderous history. Nick’s family does not know about it. Nick’s family wanted to redecorate the house; they strip the old paper from the parlor wall in the Victorian house, into which they have moved. This uncovers astounding members of a family group in Edwardian dress

Barker attempts to draw parallels between the Fanshawe family and Nick’s family. Later, Nick’s research reveals that Fanshawe was a weapons manufacturer who profited from the Great War, in which his older son died; Nick also learns that the youngest son was murdered by his older stepbrother and sister. Nick keeps this knowledge away from his own divided family. Thus, he reburies the past. The Fanshawe’s violent history prefigures and shadows Nick’s family. Another World
is determinedly domestic, plainly written but with scenes of tremendous emotion, that surpasses the intensity of the *Regeneration Trilogy*.

**Child violence: an offspring of War**

Barker’s characters are frequently the victims, survivors or uncomprehending subjects of terror. A survey of this theme across her writing finds her connecting, in specific and critical ways, the traumatic effects of combat experience with the unspeakable experiences of rape, murder, violence in more domestic settings. Both *Another World* and *Border Crossing* have a subtext, the murder of toddler, James Bulger, by two children. This event was a recent instance of a child killed by children, which caught the public imagination. This murder is remembered through the symbolic image of terror. The public and media reactions to the murder of James Bulger raised many questions, as David James Smith reports:

If the boys were guilty, what had possessed them to commit such a terrible crime? Were they evil, born bad, led on by adults, influenced by violence on television, desensitizing computer games, video nastiest? Were they playing a game that went wrong, were they lords of the flies acting out the wickedness of children (the latent cruelty in us all), or were they just plain possessed? These theories were offered less as speculation than as statements of fact. Many people, it seemed, needed to explain James Bulger’s death to themselves and to others and if there was no ready explanation what then? ¹⁴⁰(Smith, 1994: I).

In *Another World*, the murder of James Fanshawe in 1904 is one such monstrosity, one such family crime of the kind that incited the public imagination due to its lack of closure, no one was ever condemned for the murder, though James was brutally beaten and killed by his two older siblings, Robert and Muriel. The children maintain their innocence and are acquitted but Robert is later killed in Great War at Somme and Muriel remains in the house and still after 80 years hunts
the present dwellers of the house, the boundaries between family and war according to Maria H. Troy is:

Thus, while explicitly and implicitly engaging with contemporary notions of memory, *Another World* explores the relationships between the family and war. Although the family is often seen as private, or even constituting the private sphere, and war as public, often national endeavor, Barker’s novel breaks down any simple division between the two and lays bare how war is all pervasive in everyday family life, both in the past and in the present. In doing that, the novel offers a subtle critique of the patriarchal middle class underpinnings of the family, society and nation. (Troy, 2004:102)

William Fanshawe is emblematic of the fathers who failed to make good human beings of their children. He was the arms merchant willing to trade young lives for great wealth, which invoke Kipling’s quotation that appears near the end of the novel: “If anyone questions why we died/Tell them, because our fathers lied (277). Writers of the First World War, from Wilfred Owen to Virginia Woolf, would agree that those who sent boys off to war are guiltier than the boys who went, no matter what atrocities they may commit on the battlefield. However, Barker widens the scope of this moral issue, asking questions that are more difficult. Barker’s work is known for asking such questions, which are difficult to answer such as what separates a child from an adult, especially a child who commits an adult crime. Are all children inherently violent? If so, are they guilty?

Gareth, an eleven-year-old adolescent boy, is the contemporary version of Robert Fanshawe, full of hate and capable under the right circumstances, of murder. He has many encounters with ghost. He is a computer guru. He locks himself in a room and spends 42 hours a week playing violent games on computer, more at home in virtual reality, although the border between realities is not distinct. Gareth’s favorite computer games deal with combat and terror: “Crash, Fighting Force, Mortal Combat, Shock, Riot, Alien Trilogy, Rage, Street Fighter, Return
Fire, War Hawk, Nightmare Creatures, Shadow Master, Exhumed” (19) while his favorite movie is Terminator (118).

Gareth, however, prefers this virtual, dehumanized world. So far, he has made no friends after the family move. He is misanthropic to the point of violence. He has a history of sadistic bullying of smaller children; he throws terrifying tantrums in public places. In the new school, he has no friends but a number of dreaded enemies. Gareth’s misbehavior at the mall, as his frustrated mother tries to buy him new shoes, becomes a poignant window onto schoolchild and brotherly cruelties:

Gareth reaches for the bag that contains his school shoes, and lifts the lid. They nestle in white tissue paper, big, black, shiny like bombs. And they make school real. He’s been pretending it won’t happen, but it will. He closes his eyes and Darryl’s face floats on the inside of his lids, all the faces, the ring of faces crowding in, looking down at him on the floor, jeering, and the iron taste of the blood in his mouth...

Gareth waits till he’s sure he’s not being observed, then drops Jasper on to the ground... There’s a graze on Jasper’s forehead with three dark beads of blood. “Chicken”, Gareth jeers, watching him scream. And then he kicks him (139-140)

Barker’s narrative hints at how such “monstrosities” happen and how sometimes it escapes narrowly. Child violence is well depicted in the scene of family’s outing to the sea, where Gareth nearly kills Jasper for no apparent reason. There, ‘Gareth seems genuinely torn between wanting to help Jasper sail his lollipop stick boats and wanting simply to wallow in spite’ (189) without ever seeming to make a conscious decision to kill his half-brother. His violent nature forces him to do such acts. First, the game starts with throwing small pebbles at Jasper, then bigger stones, until one finally hits the two-year old, panicking, Gareth realizes the situation. This begins as a game but later it becomes a violent act of killing:
He didn’t mean this. The stone catches Jasper on the side of his head, knocks him over and yet still he gets up. He’s got to make him stay down. Stop crying... Gareth doesn’t understand this. He can’t understand why Jasper’s crying. From the moment the first stone hit his head Gareth’s known he was dead. He was dead already after the first stone; it’s just that he wouldn’t lie down. He’d thrown the other stones out of despair because he wouldn’t stay down. He’d wanted it to be over quickly (191-92).

Gareth is sincere when he says he did not mean this; he seems to be a victim of a fatalist predetermination, of a traumatic family past from which he cannot escape, the entire scene “supervised” by Muriel’s ghost (190). In the novel, Gareth represents the contemporary generation, which is haunted by lost generation of the First World War. Gareth represents all those children who indulge in virtual violence like computer violent games and movies.

Another World: a Gothic Fiction

There are many gothic elements in the novel, though the novel is not completely a gothic novel. Geordie is haunted by the First World War soldiers. His nightmare, hallucination and sleepwalk are terrible and frightening. Especially, one episode in which, Geordie sleepwalks and crawls on the road going back to the trenches he was 80 years ago. The ghosts of war, which crowd at night in Geordie’s dream also have an effect on his grandson’s family. Nick settles in Fanshaw’e’s house, which has murderous history, which comes to surface through Fanshaw’e’s portrait painted on the wall.

In sea-outing episode, Gareth almost tries to kill his half-brother Jasper by throwing stones at him. There, Gareth believes that Miranda appeared before him on the cliff top and ‘urged him to throw stones at Jasper’ (190-1). However, when Gareth confronts Miranda about this, she denies that she was there. The novel offers one possible rational explanation for the contradiction when Nick discovers
that Miranda, like Geordie, sometimes sleepwalks. However, this remains unsatisfactory explanation to the problem. If Miranda sleepwalks, why did Gareth blame her presence as encouraging him to kill Jasper? Did Miranda, in her sleeping state, take on the form of a sinister other, an evil persona, similar to the Jekyll and Hyde manifestations of Prior in *Regeneration Trilogy*? The novel forces us to think that she might have been possessed in some way by the Fanshawe girl depicted in the Victorian wall painting in Nick’s new house. At many other occasions in the novel, we are led to believe that spectral presences do exist. Gareth has most frequent encounters with the ghost. One of his encounters with Muriel’s ghost comes immediately after reading an advertisement of his computer game package.

He feels that someone is watching him:

> He feels pressure on the back of his neck. The sense of somebody in the room behind him’s so strong he almost turns round, thinking it must be Mum telling him for God’s sake switch the damn thing off and get dressed. But she has spoken by now, and Gareth’s too frightened to turn round. Instead, he goes on looking straight ahead. He sees his own shadowy reflection in the screen, but can’t be sure there’s nobody else there. In a small voice he hardly recognizes as his, he says, ‘Please go away.’ Nobody answers, after a few moments the pressure on the back of his neck is lifted and he knows he’s alone (96)

Temporarily the ghost leaves, but will return to accompany Gareth as he transposes virtual violence to the real world. Miranda also deserves special mention as the character who fuses past and present. In the most frightening scene of the novel, to which Nick alone is the witness, a ghostly apparition comes into Jasper’s room, a girl, who must be Miranda, although Nick needs to be reassured, asking himself who else it could be (219). The girl has her hand over Jasper’s nose and mouth, although she does not seem to be suffocating him. Terrified, Nick intervenes and realizes that she is sleepwalking as she declares: “I didn’t do it... I wasn’t there”. (220) Ann Whitehead an eminent critic links Miranda’s
sleepwalking with Geordie’s nightmares as organic evidence of psychological trauma.

In the novel, the ghost represents a powerful force of memory. Nick, Miranda, and Gareth each see a girl, it is expected that they may be seeing the same girl, a specter of the Fanshawe daughter whose guilt for killing her baby brother coalesces as her own physical shape persisting into the present. Miranda herself sees a girl through the window, who vanishes when Miranda chases her, was the girl in the window a reflection, a real girl who just happened to be passing, the spectral presence of the Fanshawe girl, or a figment of Miranda’s overactive imagination? So, too Nick believes he has hit a girl running across the dark road in his car, but can find no trace of her when he stops, and explains the experience rationally as a hypnologic hallucination (89). Another ghostly presence depicted in the scene of the novel after Geordie’s death is, there lingers the smell of the aftershave, which Geordie wore on his last day alive, and Nick cannot quite explain why the smell persists so strongly. (254) All these events are tropes of haunting, of impossible presences, which, because they are multiple, seem to imply the existence of the paranormal. This is where the novel abounds with playful allusions to the gothic as well as to specific gothic texts.

Many characters imagine the ‘other world’ of the title, as an unreal or paranormal world. However, the novel closes by returning readers peremptorily to ‘this world’, and its concrete social and historical conditions. The graveyard, which Nick visits, is quiet; suggest closure, it suggests that the dead do not return that there is no such thing as haunting. However, even in this final scene, Barker doesn’t fully resolve the question of whether the dead stay dead, or whether the living are solely the silent agents of this world, for the final line of the novel again personifies the dead, as they ‘lie together... side by side’ (278). Barker suggests that the dead are never wholly dead, that history is never fully settled in the grave.
Barker leaves the issue of ghost on the readers to decide and do not give her final judgment on it.

**Masculinity in *Another World***:

*Another World* destabilizes the concept of masculinity. The novel strongly depicts the anxieties and conflicts experienced by its masculine characters. It focuses on male perception and male consciousness. Barker is delineating in *Another World* the late modern family, in which masculine identity and authority are placed under threat both inside and outside home. Her focus in this book is almost wholly on her male protagonists – Nick, Gareth and Geordie - all of whom undermine the concept of masculinity. Nick’s point of view is dominant in the novel. He is engaged in a constant struggle to define himself as father, stepfather and husband. Gareth’s position as the watcher at the window reproduces the theme of surveillance so dominant. Gareth’s surveillance of Nick may be read as an implicit challenge to Nick’s assumption of paternal authority.

The female characters like Fran, Barbara, Miranda and Frieda are carefully removed to the background in *Another World*. Endangered masculine subjectivity and male power and experience are also important themes in this novel. The childhood fascination with the ritual of watching a man shave signifies the act as emblematic of masculine adulthood. After Geordie’s death, Nick looks into his trench-shaving mirror, failing to recognize his own reflection, which is a motif of transmission of masculine pride, guilt and vulnerability. Geordie’s steel mirror is unbreakable. It seems that the story of Geordie’s death is also the story of his struggle against the emasculation, which accompanies death in the modern world. It is a tale of masculine shame, anxiety, and discontent. The women in *Another World* lack the complexity of consciousness and depth unlike the male characters. Fran, Miranda and Barbara are entrenched in the conventional physical and
emotional sign of feminity: maternity, illness, fraught pregnancy, menstruation, nascent sexuality. The final words of Geordie “I am in Hell” keeps rupturing Nick’s thoughts as he mourns, signifies that male loss, pride and power. Barker is preoccupied with the theme of masculinity right from her *Regeneration Trilogy*.

**Inadequacy of language to represent War:**

Barker has already pointed out that language is inadequate to represent war in her *Regeneration Trilogy*. In *Another World*, Barker shows the possibility of forming meaningful narratives about the emotional current between the grieving Geordie’s mother and a guilty son. Geordie’s telegram reporting, ‘I am quite well’, just ten days after Harry’s death, suggest that something is wrong. There is a crucial gap in Geordie’s memorial narratives: ‘All Geordie’s words, Nick realizes suddenly – and there are thousands of them in this interview alone – orbit round a central silence, a dark star’ (158). In the last days of his life, Geordie has begun to talk voraciously about the war, to make public appearances as a veteran. He gives interviews recalling his experiences, but at the center of his narratives is a silence, which he cannot fill with words. Barker registers history as a catalogue of unspeakable traumas, before which witnesses are reduced to silence. Nick feels this when he visits the Somme cemeteries in Thiepval. At the time of visiting Nick and Geordie awed into silence. It registers the impossibility of narrative, the failure of stories and language to represent the experiences commemorated in the cemetery adequately. Only the aprotic architecture of a monument reaching to and from emptiness can begin to record the weight of human history, a history which violently dehumanized its agents, separating bodies from names, matters from meaning. Barker depicts a scene of commemorative architecture, which, instead of marking human presence, testifies to absence and emptiness. *Another World*
represents an aesthetical and ethical problem, which was not important in Barker’s previous novels.

Pat Barker’s interesting novel, *Another World* leads us on an uncanny voyage, to the First World War and the problematic histories of two families (Nick’s and Fanshaws’) and their “crimes [that] echo across time and place”. (Nunn and Biressi, 2005:261) The present circumstances become all the more important as the story unfolds in *Another World*, since memories of the past include memories of murder and attempted murder, never proved and never sanctioned, yet unable to be forgotten, with all the psychological baggage that accompanies unresolved traumatic memories, not to mention the social forces.

The resolution of *Another World* attempts to refute any deterministic model of familial betrayal and violence, insisting on individual autonomy and the adaptation of personal responsibility for the action undertaken. Nick does not accomplish reconciliation with either Gareth or Miranda. Instead, they are simply sent away, Gareth to her grandmother and Miranda to her mother. Nick’s family consists: Nick, Fran, Jasper and their second, yet unborn child. In the same way, Geordie’s funeral doesn’t solve his miseries, since his final ambiguous words, ‘I am in hell’ – continue to haunt Nick, leaving him trapped within Geordie’s words in the present tense, the tense in which his memories of the war went on happening.

The story of Fanshaw’s Family remains concealed as Nick hides the book in the boot of his car. The source of Miranda’s and Gareth’s murderous anger is never traced; the question of Geordie’s guilt remains unresolved. Despite the crushing weight of such collective trauma, the novel ends on an optimistic note, suggesting that escape from his predestination is possible.

Nick fails to shoulder the responsibility of his family along with stepchildren and grandfather, Geordie. He decides to divide his family: ‘Miranda will return
home to her mother’ (274), ‘Gareth will live with his grandmother and attend a different school’ (218), and ‘Frieda will move in to Lob’s Hill and Lend a hand when the new baby is born’ (275) after Geordie’s death. Questions of guilt and innocence are left unjudged, largely because in any case all the actors will be forgotten in the span of two or three generations, when none are left to remember, when time has rendered its gravestones illegible. As in the final scene, Nick wanders around the cemetery after Geordie’s funeral and finds the Fanshawes’ graves:

He wanders off down the path that leads round the outer perimeter of the churchyard, taking the long route back to Geordie. Some of the graves, here under the trees are so old the names are hidden by moss. They’re forgotten, and the people who stood beside their graves and mouthed for them are dead and forgotten in their turn. He remembers the trip to France with Geordie, the rows upon rows of white headstones, ageless graves for those who were never permitted to grow old. He’d walk round them with Geordie marveling at the carefully tended grass, the devotion that kept the grave young: But now, looking round this churchyard, at the gently decaying stones that line the path, he sees that there’s wisdom too in this: to let the innocent and the guilty, the murderers and the victims, lie together beneath their half-erased names, side by side, under the obliterating grass. (278).

Time does not stop; it runs like a flow of river. Everyone has to taste death: murderers, victims and all who came in this world. Anyone who does anything wrong in his/her life, suffer terribly at old age. Their crimes do not let them lie peacefully. While there is wisdom in forgetting, one must first be able to remember before one is able to forget. All those who are born, die after certain years, their close one remembers them for a few days and forget afterwards. After death, nothing is remembered except their good deeds.
Barker’s novel, *Border Crossing* (2001) returns to the territory, which is familiar to her readers, the world of psychiatry. Instead of exploring the effects of war on the human psyche, Barker here explores child violence. *Border Crossing* is a novel of great psychological depth and intensity. It is not the same hell as her First World War, *Regeneration Trilogy* depicts. It is full of the sublimity of love, bravery and the care for others. *Border Crossing* is a short contemporary novel, which shows humanity. Tom Seymour is a child psychologist and the central character and Danny Miller is the patient in *Border Crossing*. Barker explores the mind of a child criminal, Danny, now grown up and in therapy with the psychiatrist, Tom who helped convict Danny in the first place. In the therapy session which turns into an engaging cat and mouse game in which the patient forces the psychiatrist to question his own notions of criminality and rehabilitation like in *Regeneration Trilogy*, Prior, a patient forces Dr. Rivers to question his own morality.

The book examines the genesis of evil and its different forms. Barker deals with the topics that matter: War, domestic violence, the path one chooses in a world fraught with cruelty and danger. In *Border Crossing*, she has taken the subject of evil. It is her keen psychological insight that makes this novel a memorable meditation on crime, punishment, and redemption. The novel explores the controversial issue of children who have committed murder. It investigates the aftermath of a ten-year old boy’s suffocation of an elderly woman, Lizzie Parks. It is a tense psychological thriller, which investigates the crime, a deep meditation on liberal values in the form of a thriller. Barker exhibits a complex awareness of the flaw in individuals that can threaten any hope for a new beginning. *Border Crossing* asks a complex question how is rehabilitation possible if it takes place in
a society that may not be good enough to reward a new self. It examines the causes and cures for violence without diminishing the story’s suspense. It is a rich re-write of the police procedural. It is one of the classic subgenres of the detective novel, in which the novelist renders minute details of police practice and we see how detection is done. In the novel, investigators, beat cops, pathologists, and laboratory technicians. All work together to catch a killer and justice always remain on the side of pursuers. However, in *Border Crossing*, Barker shows the opposite: how the state can work to save a person and release rather than catch person.

Barker’s early novels of working class women, her First World War *Regeneration Trilogy*, her family study, *Another World* and child violence in *Border Crossing* are all angry, impressive and sometimes life changing novels. The events of *Border Crossing* are quite possibly inspired by real tragic murder case that took place in Britain in 1993. On February 12, 1993, James Bulger, two years old boy was taken from his mother’s side whilst at the supermarket, pelted and beaten to death with stones at railway line. The two murderers were found to be Robert Thompson and Venables, both were ten years old. This event caused considerable controversy both in Britain and worldwide. Thompson and Venables were tried and sentenced as adults, in the same way as Danny in the *Border Crossing*.

The novel is both topical and timeless. It is topical because it carries out issue, which has been much in the news recently: the child crime and violence. It is timeless because it provokes unanswerable questions about human nature like, why does one person kill another? To what extent can children be held responsible for their actions? Should someone who murders as a child be given a second chance as an adult? Do people truly change? Is it possible to change criminals?, etc. The exact nature of evil cannot be explained. However, the intellectual people and their
works have great influence on the society. They critically examine good and evil. According to Alan Sinfield, intellectual work is the critical agency through which a society is imagined, represented and maintained. ‘Intellectuals, cultural producers, are important because they help to maintain or undermine belief in the legitimacy of the prevailing power arrangements. They help to set the boundaries of the thinkable. They confirm or change the stories through which we tell ourselves who we are’ (Sinfield, 1997:272).

Intellectuals such as social workers, psychologists, university teachers and journalists do not decide the fate of the world but they do exercise degrees of authority in the course of their professional function. They shape the prevailing beliefs and cultural practices of a society, albeit often in subtle and necessarily limited ways. Barker focuses on the middle class intellectuals like Dr. Rivers in *Regeneration Trilogy*, Nick in *Another World* and Tom in *Border Crossing*. These novels are about the role of intellectuals and authority, which are used to maintain or to change the world they live in. Rivers in *Regeneration* knows that his role as an army psychiatrist is to silent protest and to return officers to mental health so that they can continue to fight, for their country, whereas Sassoon signifies the opposite tendency, the use of intellectual authority to articulate dissent and refusal to serve. Most of Barker’s intellectual workers are almost powerless to affect any kind of change in the world. Her novels increasingly make clear that ‘intellectuals are critical agents in the contest for meaning and understanding’ (McCrum, 2001: 126). Barker’s novels are marked, on the one hand, by their clear-sighted evocation of distinctive social and historical milieu and on the other by an acute interest in the psychologically opaque and intransigent. Barker in her novel questions what separates childhood from adulthood.

*Border Crossing* is a psychological novel that studies the nature of evil, which is a subject many of us tend to distance ourselves from. *Border Crossing*
starts in highly melodramatic fashion. Tom and Lauren are walking on the riverside of New castle. They see a man taking a handful of pills and diving into the river. Tom understands that the person is trying to commit suicide. Tom jumps after him and saves him from drowning. Lauren helps Tom to take the person on the land. They call the ambulance and take him to the hospital and the person is saved. Tom later comes to know that the young man whom he has saved is Danny Miller. Tom had testified Danny’s trial for the murder of an old woman, 13 years ago when Danny was just 10 years old. Now Danny is 23 years’ young man, on parole from last ten months in a false identity as Ian Wilkinson. Before 13 years, after interviewing Danny, the psychologist decides that the boy is fit to stand trial as an adult. He is found guilty and sentenced accordingly. The novel begins 13 years later. Tom learns that Danny has been out of prison from less than a year; he is depressed, troubled, and suicidal. Tom invites him to come and talk to him informally, if he thinks it would help him.

In the course of time, the psychologist and patient relationship develops and becomes more complicated. Though the novel is written from third person point of view, most of the action takes place inside Tom’s mind. We never have access to Danny’s inner thoughts. Our perspectives are Tom’s perspectives. We never know when Danny is telling truth; his motives are ambiguous. It was Tom, who ruled that Danny should be tried as an adult, thus condemning him to harsher punishment. He may have renewed contact with Tom deliberately; in order to exact some kind of revenge or Danny may view Tom as a link to his past and thus more likely than another psychologist to be able to help him come to terms with himself. Tom attempts to get at the root of Danny’s question.
Child violence: a modern issue

Barker creates a child murderer in the form of Danny Miller/Ian Wilkinson in *Border Crossing*. Barker raises the question of what happens when society begins to fear children. John Major’s infamous statement that we must condemn a little more, and understand a little less, reminds us of how “anxious” contemporary society has become. In *Border Crossing*, Tom researches into ‘children who kill’ as part of a Youth Violence Project which draws the readers into an uncomfortable world in which the rational and moral can be overturned. Tom mentions the cases of child killers in his book, for example, Michelle has bitten off the nose of her foster mother’s natural daughter; Jonson started a fire in which four people died; a group of small boys have thrown a security guard down an escalator in a shopping mall, and on and on. Siegfried Kracauer has argued that ‘the detective novel shows a civilized society its own face in a purer (and therefore more disturbing) way than society is usually accustomed to seeing it’ (Siegfried, 1995: 71).

During a counseling session, Danny has gone back in his memory, to the day when he killed Lizzie Parks, a recollection that is, of course, extremely difficult for him. As he remembers that he was rummaging through Lizzie’s house where nobody was present, by chance he looked in a mirror and saw a face that did not look like his. As his recollection of the day’s events continue Danny becomes child up to certain extent. Lizzie unexpectedly returns to her house and Danny, in his attempt to escape, pushed her from the stairs. Danny in panic suffocated her with a cushion. In the session, Danny is not only suffering from painful memories, but he is also terrified during this session as he realizes that he himself is haunted by a similar childhood event and if things had gone just a little differently then, he too would have been charged with murder and would have been punished like Danny when he was ten years old.
During the session, Tom recollects that spring day in his childhood, when he and his friend were asked to look after a four-year-old boy, whom they take with them to the pond. They begin with some harmless teasing, pouring frogspawn into his boots, but the situation degenerates into throwing rocks and the terrified boy backing further into deep water nearer and nearer to the flooded water in the middle:

The more he screamed, the more they panicked. They couldn’t take him home like this, and they couldn’t clean him up... Jeff threw first stone. Tom was sure about that. Almost sure. Little stones, pebbles, plopping into the water around the screaming child, who backed further out towards the center of the pond. Why did they do it? Because they were frightened, because they shouldn’t have been there at all, because they knew they were going to get into trouble, because they hated him, because he was a problem they couldn’t solve, because neither could be the first to back down (47)

Both Tom and his friend Jeff were afraid regarding the punishment they will receive from the adults regarding their irresponsibility of little child. Both Tom and his friend were not motivated by any desire to harm the little boy, yet the action is interpreted as such by an adult mind, in this case by ‘the passenger who gets off the passing bus and intervenes’ (48). A potential tragedy was averted that day, for which Tom is even now grateful. This even forced him to think on the boundary between child and adult, and guilt and innocence;

Had he known at the time that what he was doing was wrong? Yes, undoubtedly... What interested him was how little sense of responsibility, he felt now. If somebody had asked him about that afternoon, he’d have said something like, ‘kids can be very cruel! Not, “I was very cruel”. ‘Kids can be very cruel.’ He knew he’d done it, he remembered it clearly, he’d known then, and accepted now, that it was wrong, but the sense of moral responsibility was missing. In spite of the connecting thread of memory, the person who’d done that was not sufficiently like his present self for him to feel guilt. (48)
If we compare both child violence episodes, first, Danny’s killing of an old woman Lizzie Park and second, Tom’s childhood episode of droving a little four years old boy into deep water, we will find little difference between both events. In the first episode, nobody came to rescue Danny from killing but in second episode an elderly man came to intervene and rescued Tom from killing the little boy. Both the events show that the line between crime and innocence is very thin. Danny was charged with the crime of murder and was sent to prison, whereas Tom was considered as innocent. In an interview with Sheryl Stevenson, Barker herself comments on the fine line that separates murderers from “normal” kids: “some children push it all the way, and then you have a tragic outcome, but the minor forms of bullying are very, very common... And yet those children who would become killers were not necessarily very different” (Sheryl, Interview: 180-81). Tom also feels like Danny, as though he was two different persons.

The borders between child and adult are bizarre, the region between guilt and innocence is never absolute; exceptions, changing perceptions, differing degrees of social influence, all have an impact on the institutional decrees of “guilt” or “innocence” and official pronouncements that seem so clear-cut and inflexible. There are various senses of the concept of guilt: Literal, legal, moral and even a street sense of guilt. In the literal sense, there seems to be no question throughout the novel that Danny killed Lizzie Parks. Danny was ten years old at the time of the crime; one of the court’s tasks is to establish the degree of psychological maturity of the accused. Tom’s task is to determine whether the accused can distinguish between fantasy and reality. In an original assessment, Tom understands the difficulty of making an unqualified judgment when so many questions remain impossible to answer:

His job was simple to decide on the degree of Danny’s mental and moral maturity... could Danny distinguish between fantasy and
reality? Did he understand that killing was wrong? Did he understand that death is permanent state? Was he in short, capable of standing trial, on a charge of murder, in an adult court? And to all these questions Tom had answered, Yes. Not without doubt, not without qualification, not without many hours of soul searching, but in the end, yes (36-37)

Tom was a court psychologist who was presenting the facts of his assessment as he has interpreted them, in good faith without the arrogance of absolute certainty. He is not much surprised when Danny blames him for his conviction, however he was more surprised to hear the same conclusion from his friend Nigel Lewis, who had been Danny’s solicitor at the time of trial; Nigel understands that cultural influences are everywhere even in the domain of “objective” science. Though Tom protests that he had only presented pure fact, Nigel reminds him of something that he already knows; facts can be interpreted differently, reality can be created:

And you came along, and you supplied them with another perspective... you changed the way they saw him. You scuppered him. And I can tell you the exact moment it happened. Smithers was asking you whether Danny understood that death was permanent state. Do you remember? And you quoted Danny’s exact words. “If you wring a chicken’s neck, you don’t expect to see it running around the yard next morning.” (86)

And the jury, which had until then seen Danny as a normal, naughty little boy incapable of committing the crime of which he stands accused, ‘convicted him on the forensic evidence’ (84). There was no eyewitness of that murder. Nobody knew what actually happened in Lizzie parks house that day, but Tom’s position as an expert witness increases the likelihood that he will influence the jury’s interpretation. Tom was a person who helped the court to convict Danny as a mature adult and so criminal.
**War and Crime:**

The novel, *Border Crossing* is set in the post war society. After the war, crimes were prevalent in the society by elders or children. As Barker says, society was under the shadow of evil. Violence was inherited from old generation. Tom writes a book on children’s crime. Since the children in his study somehow fail to acknowledge a distinction between right and wrong, the doubt is, if they are permanently defective, blind to what others see, or as Tom witnesses every day, are there inconsistencies in society’s morality that threaten a child reared in the wrong place: in a slum, an abusive home, or a “warrior” society? Danny committed murder at the age of ten because his life was miserable on a chicken farm. He was beaten regularly by his father. These were the facts of young boy’s childhood.

Danny’s father was a horrible person, a veteran of army service in Northern Ireland and Falklands. He was a person who brought up his son on grim stories of slaughtering the enemies. The boy’s past widens the meaning of his crime without excusing it. Barker’s themes in *Border Crossing* extend from her earlier work. She writes about social reproduction of violence. Maleness is still an issue: Tom’s role as Danny’s psychiatrist is to create a nurturing relation and fill in where Danny’s murderous, masculine father failed so badly. The opening scene in which Danny is pulled from the mud of Tyne River is transparently one of rebirth. Danny, in his childhood lived with his father on a chicken farm and listened to his war stories, as a child he learns that apparently killing is sometimes justified:

For Danny’s father dogs, cats and most people were inside the circle. Chickens, convicted murderers, rabbits, enemy soldiers, farm animals, enemy civilians (in some circumstances), game birds, children (in uniform), burglars, if caught on the premises and Irishmen, if suspected of being terrorists and providing the appropriate warnings had been given, were outside. (97)
All these things forced the psychologist, Tom to examine his judgment, that the ten years old child understood that killing was wrong, or whether much of Danny’s responses during the assessment were contaminated by outside sources. In this case inside or outside the moral circle, seeks to simplify and justify the act of killing, while Tom and Danny both seem to realize that it is often not that clear-cut. There is wide disagreement within groups of people as to where the boundary of the moral circle begins and ends. In an interview, Maria Russo asks Barker:

Do you think something has changed in how we treat children? How much are adults to blame when children do terrible things?

Barker: I think we have got two conflicting ideas about children right now. I think there’s great nervousness about children and what they are capable of. The question in the air is, “How did we raise a generation of monsters?” I think that’s very new, that degree of anxiety about children, as distinct from adolescents, whom all human society watch closely, particularly the adolescent male... certainly there are gangs of children in run down areas who do present an actual physical threats for adults, or can do, simply because they operate as a pack. But at the same time, there’s a sort of over protectiveness among good responsible parents. There is a feeling that a pedophile lurks around every corner. Children in our society are living almost totally couch-potato lives. That, or their mothers and fathers are ferrying them around from class to class after school so that their whole life becomes a matter of being educated. There’s no time to sit around and dream. There’s certainly no time to go out onto the streets and play with other children, which is how you find out what the limits are the hard way other children react if you treat on their rights. (Russo, Interview, 2001)

Barker takes the contemporary issue, exposes it fully, analyses it and leaves it on the readers to decide what is wrong and right. Border Crossing too is haunted with the war trauma, inherent violence and the fear of death.
**Barker’s attack on authority:**

Tom was responsible for convicting Danny as a mature adult and sending him to prison. Danny accuses him of professional error. Tom defends his judgment, and by extension defends the reputation of the institution behind his authority: “Yes, ‘Tom said steadily. ‘And I think it’s quite true - a lot of ten-year-old boys don’t understand death. They don’t realize it’s permanent. But I think you did.’” To which Danny replies, accusingly, “You just don’t want to admit you got it wrong” (184). Tom once again finds his professional self-image under attack, his authority questioned by someone who does not accept his crime. Danny come to know that moral boundaries are the construction of dominant culture that exist to justify a logic of binary opposition in support of current cultural codes and to protect institutions and the practitioners within those hallowed confines. Tom straddles two powerful institutions that of medicine and that of the legal/justice system as a psychologist.

Tom understands that the domain of psychology exists largely in service of the state, and the current social norms under which it operates. Tom seems much like Dr. Rivers in *Regeneration Trilogy*, negotiating a space between a professional, scientific role and a man of compassion, an enlightened person who understands the contradictions inherent in his position. In *Regeneration Trilogy*, Sassoon and Prior were critics of dominant culture and ideology and in *Border Crossing*; it is Danny, who mocks at the institution of psychiatry and legal system. Danny is even more objective social critic, disbelieving in any sort of ‘reality’, which is defined by current ideology. He refuses to occupy his allotted place. Tom is skeptical about religious and supernatural explanation of random occurrences, but he remains un-consoled by his own authoritative statements invert the order of his opposition. Tom’s confidence in his own profession is undermined throughout the novel. He cannot prevent an irrational physical repulsion from his wife’s desire
to have a child, which causes separation; he cannot talk about his own problems in the way as he encourages his patients to do.

Tom is supposed to help others through disturbed relationships and divorces; he is no better equipped to deal with his own pains and disappointments. Danny observes that Tom is failing in his role as a therapist. Tom alienates and detaches himself even from those closest to him in order to do his job. The work, he is employed to perform necessitates a psychical state in which repetition and difference, damnation and salvation, good and evil, the rational and the irrational, must be tolerated as irreconcilable oppositions. To live in such contradictory situations, Tom produces a kind of splitting of the self, the detachment of his rational from his emotional self, ‘the clinician’s splinter of ice in the heat’ (13). Barker is exploring in each case the paradoxical inhumanity or damaged humanity produced in the very people charged in our societies with humanist tasks. The figure of the psychologist or social worker has become central to her work that enables her to examine the fragility of modern society. Barker is the critic of the sophisticated and intellectual people. She challenges the authority and criticizes the hollowness of authority.

**Child violence and psychological treatment:**

Barker’s readers of *Regeneration Trilogy* are very much familiar with psychological sessions between doctor and patient. *Border Crossing* is also replete of such sessions. Danny like Prior is patient and Dr. Tom like Dr. Rivers is a doctor and psychologist. There is a lot of dialogue in *Border Crossing*. Barker writes dialogues very well. The session between William Rivers and Billy Prior in the *Regeneration Trilogy* are among the finest moments in her oeuvre, and the meeting between Danny and Tom has a similar intensity and complexity. Barker chooses her characters’ words with care; she brings the speakers to life by
providing concise descriptions of their body language, their silences, and their expressions.

*Border Crossing* focuses on post war period in which Barker continues her exploration of the analytical process like Rivers and Prior, Helen and Geordie and in this novel Tom and Danny. Barker is interested in talking cure therapy. Tom’s role in Danny’s conviction was to provide a psychological assessment of whether or not the boy knew that killing was wrong, and that death was a permanent state. Danny re-enters Tom’s life as an adult, dangerously close to mental breakdown and suicide. Tom is compelled to dig deeper into Danny’s psychic state. The novel is an interesting journey to discover the psychological causes of Danny’s horrific murder of Lizzie Parks. Danny explains his personality as ‘permeable’, not always able to distinguish his own feelings from those of others (77). When Tom starts re-assessment of Danny’s personality, he visits his school and his teachers to get more details about Danny. His former teacher describes Danny as a ‘bottomless pit’ who ‘wanted other people to fill him’ (164):

[He] borrowed other people’s lives. He... it was almost as if he had no shape of his own, so he wrapped himself round other people. And what you got was a... sort of composite person. He observed people he knew a lot about them, and at the same time he didn’t know anything because he was always looking at this mirror image. And of course everybody let him down, because you couldn’t let Danny down. Being a separate person was a betrayal (171).

Danny’s most intimate confessions are not genuine at all, but calculated, imitated and manipulated. Danny has produced a split personality like Tom, a disassociated self, in order to function normally. At the core of Danny’s personality is the empty mirror, the primal quest for identification, a vertex that sucks in everyone who comes close to Danny. Throughout the novel, Danny can produce no reason for killing Lizzie. He confesses, ‘I don’t know why I killed her. I didn’t know then, and I don’t know now. And I don’t know how to live with it
The novel provides a detailed psychological profile of his personality and upbringing, an equally detailed account of his social circumstances and the ‘warrier’ mentality of children from poor social backgrounds, but it cannot find out these rationalizations of Danny’s life into an explanation of why he murdered an old woman. The whole novel is filled with psychoanalytic interview and confession, but it arrives at no clear revelation of the reason for murder.

**Redemption and Rehabilitation:**

According to the liberal point of view, the criminal should be given second chance for redemption and rehabilitation because environment helps to shape human destiny; the individual is something more than his crime. The novel, *Border Crossing* shows that bad deeds and bad self also make successful rehabilitation especially after the most brutal, baffling and unmotivated crime that is much harder to imagine. The whole novel is a series of episodes of the massive effort of re-creating a human being. Therefore, rehabilitation relies not on miracles but on a task that is always risky, a task that the overstretched state may not be able to carry through. Society itself is imperfect where the parole return to poverty and brutality, society may never be a fit place for rehabilitation for them. Danny finally poses the question to Tom, “Do you believe in evils?” at the end of the book. Tom gives the interesting answer:

“In the metaphysical sense? No. I don’t. But as a word to describe certain kind of behavior, I’ve no problem with it. It’s just the word we’ve agreed to use to describe certain kinds of action. And I don’t think it’s an alternative to other ways of describing the same things. There is no logical reason why ‘mad’ and ‘bad’ should be alternatives.” (255)

There are evil acts, not evil people. Danny’s first ten years of life were spent in bad social environment, which have led him to commit a murder. If, the same period would have been spent in a good social environment it would have left the
child sacred and socialized. Some offenders can return to society and slip gratefully into a new life, while others will be trapped in the past. Social hopes walk a razor’s edge in Pat Barker’s books; she wants us neither to be less hopeful nor more in illusion than we really are. What makes Barker so exemplary, as a writer and as a social critic, is her ability to think about both the poles of any situation at once: good and evil, male and female, the supposedly ugly and the beautiful. She views issues from every side.

*Border Crossing* concludes with Danny’s redemption, as he makes his way in the world with a new identity, ‘He was looking at success precarious, shadowed, ambiguous, but worth having never the less, the only possible good outcome’. (281) The novel is not only the sign of redemption, rehabilitation and regeneration but also the derelict riverside setting of Tom’s flat is changing too, ‘the crumbling jetties and quays were demolished, paths laid, trees planted’ (276) Tom marvels when he sees others playing along the river bank. Throughout the novel, we see the collapse of Tom’s marriage, the concluding chapter finds Tom beginning to find love again, this time he has relationship with Martha. It is hardly a romantic resolution. It is a cautious optimism about each sign of healing and redemption, but still it is probably the happy conclusion of all Barker’s novels. The novel ends with the only possible outcome, which is itself an acknowledgement of its fragility, of the uncertainty with which Tom must still regard Danny’s new life as a sign of success.

The novels, *Another World* and *Border Crossing* are set in contemporary England, and both have haunting acts of murderous violence at their center. The novels turn on violent crimes committed in the past, which were caused by the dynamics of the family and the pressures, which it faced. The novels show how
past has its hold on present. These novels deal with crime and rehabilitation, past and present, old and new generation, and the effect of trauma on the family.