

*The War in the Magazines*THE PUBLISHING CONTEXT OF BRITISH
GREAT WAR SHORT STORIES

In the prefatory note to his collection *Far-Away Stories* (1916), William J. Locke stated as his reason for republishing some of his short stories that he did not want them 'to remain buried for ever in the museum files of dead magazine-numbers – an author's not unpardonable vanity'.¹ The writer's remark, casual as it may seem, exemplifies a core problem of the genre: by definition, a short story is a story that will not be published on its own for a variety of reasons, commercial and otherwise, and consequently depends on magazines and collections. Magazines and newspapers are the most ephemeral media in which war stories were published.² The majority of periodicals are read and then discarded, meaning that unless a magazine story is republished in another, more lasting medium, it will disappear into a few libraries and archives, most likely never to be read again. Anthologies and collections of stories by individual authors tend to have a longer shelf life, but appeal to a more restricted audience.³ Story anthologies often target either a specialist audience of critics⁴ or a student audience in an educational context. Authors' collections are most likely to appeal to readers familiar with the respective writer's other work.⁵ All of these, however, are restricted audiences, and as with periodicals and anthologies the impact of the individual short story is dampened by its position amidst other texts.⁶

A brief thought experiment can illustrate the influence of its publication environment on the reading of a short story. Joseph Conrad's war story 'The Tale' lends itself to such an experiment because of its republication in a number of anthologies and collections. Conrad's story is a tale within a tale: a navy officer on leave meets his lover, and to end an emotionally draining conversation, the woman demands a story to make her forget the grim realities surrounding the lovers. The officer's tale, however, inevitably

returns to the war. In the early days of the war, a naval officer (a thinly veiled 'fictional' version of the embedded narrator himself) commands a ship hunting for German spies, submarines and illegal supply ships. He comes across a neutral Scandinavian ship in dense fog, whose captain he strongly suspects of smuggling supplies for German submarines. Talking to the captain of the ship, the officer's suspicions are strengthened into certainty, but he cannot find sufficient material evidence. The captain of the neutral ship claims to be lost, stranded in the fog dangerously near the English coast. Acting solely on his intuition, the naval officer provides the captain false coordinates and orders the suspicious ship to set out again immediately, against the Northman's wishes. The ship duly hits a ledge of rock and sinks. The naval officer finishes his tale by expressing anxiety about the justness of his decision. Because he can never have absolute certainty as to whether or not the crew of the neutral ship was guilty of collaboration, he will have to live with the responsibility of his decision for the rest of his life.

'The Tale' conveys an idealised conception of war and warfare, both indirectly through the naval officer's disgust at sabotage (he is described as being 'in revolt against the murderous stealth of methods and the atrocious callousness of complicities that seemed to taint the very source of men's deep emotions and noblest activities'),⁷ and directly through the officer's statements on war, which he compares to love: 'Everything should be open in love and war. Open as the day, since both are the call of an ideal which is so easy, so terribly easy, to degrade in the name of Victory'.⁸ Conrad here presents us with an idealised vision of how war should be waged, only to show that in war even a man with the best intentions may find himself in a situation where his ideals become questionable and he is exposed to the risk of erring fatally. The intuition that prompts the naval officer to send the suspicious ship to its doom is imbued with a strong sense of righteousness: 'At that moment he had the certitude. The air of the chart-room was thick with guilt and falsehood braving the discovery, defying simple right, common decency, all humanity of feeling, every scruple of conduct.'⁹ According to his instincts, the naval officer is right to act as he does, following as he is his own humanity of spirit – and yet he finds himself tormented by doubt:

I believe – no, I don't believe. I don't know. At the time I was certain. They all went down; and I don't know whether I have done stern retribution – or murder; whether I have added to the corpses that litter the bed of the unreadable sea, the bodies of men completely innocent or basely guilty. I don't know. I shall never know.¹⁰

In a tone that frequently borders on the elegiac, Conrad combines appealing magazine fare – the mystery of a nebulous love affair and thrill of a crime story – with the discussion of serious moral anxiety.

‘The Tale’ was first published in the *Strand Magazine* in October 1917. In this issue, Conrad’s story appeared next to various fiction and non-fiction contributions, including two more war stories and a short one-act play. The two other war stories were both contributed by well-known authors of the time: Frederick Britten Austin’s story ‘They Come Back’ envisions the end of the war and subsequent fraternisation of social classes in Britain, resulting in a utopian version of British society in which each man receives his dues according to his merits. May Edginton’s ‘War Workers’, on the other hand, is a comic story about two prim elderly spinsters who secretly covet a parcel of expensive lingerie donated to their welfare committee by a famous actress. The short play finally is a polemic propaganda effort set in Germany and illustrative of German ‘frightfulness’, in which a scientist presents to the Kaiser a resurrected German soldier whose body has been patched up and who, now a soulless fighting machine, ends up throttling the emperor himself to death. Read in the company of these texts, and considering that the story itself is accompanied by the same kind of melodramatic illustrations as the other contributions, ‘The Tale’ reads like a standard magazine thriller. It has a love interest in the frame narrative, a strong touch of melodrama, the trappings of detective fiction, and the suspense of a mystery story. Its finer points, on the other hand – such as the apt description of a taunting moral dilemma – pale in comparison with the dramatic nature of its plot. Conrad, who had to support a family, would certainly not have refused to write a story appropriate for publication in as lucrative and well-paying a magazine as the *Strand Magazine*.¹¹

When we consider it in a different context, however, our reading of ‘The Tale’ changes significantly. Subsequent to its magazine publication, the story appeared in Conrad’s posthumous collection *Tales of Hearsay* (1925). The collection consists of four stories, written between 1884 and 1917, of which ‘The Tale’ is the only story addressing the First World War. The other stories are set in Russia after the Napoleonic Wars (‘The Warrior’s Soul’, written in 1917), in Poland struggling against Russian autocracy (‘Prince Roman’, 1911), and on a ship bound for Calcutta (‘The Black Mate’, 1884). All of these stories, regardless of their setting and plot, are essentially character studies, exploring in their turn the nature of mercy and compassion, courage and human folly. Placed alongside three other stories by Conrad, it is exactly this quality of ‘The Tale’ as a psychological investigation of ethical behaviour which comes to the fore, while its more

sensational elements become merely instrumental to the portrayal of the narrator's dilemma.

A third context again subtly alters our possible perception of 'The Tale'. After its appearance in *Tales of Hearsay*, the story was included in the anthology *Great Short Stories of the War* (1930), edited by H.C. Minchin with a foreword by Edmund Blunden and comprising war stories by authors of mixed nationality, including German.¹² Collected among sixty-five other stories, all chosen carefully for their critical outlook on the war, emphasis on its futility and the importance of humanity and compassion in the midst of the horror of war, 'The Tale' again changes its focus and becomes an anti-war story. The tormenting doubts of its main protagonist take on a new meaning beyond personal trauma; transformed into a political statement, they reveal the destructive effects of war both in terms of the loss of lives and the emotional scarring of the survivors.

The different publication outlets for short stories affect not only the way a story is read initially, but also the longevity of its reception. From at least the 1880s onwards, magazines promoted the publication of short stories next to serialised novels, and the more periodicals catered for specific audiences, the more varied a selection of stories was published.¹³ In the early twentieth century and particularly in the inter-war period, a plethora of British magazines was published weekly, monthly or quarterly, and their flourishing coincided with a period of immense commercial success for the short story. The magazine market dwindled and never recovered, however, during and after the Second World War.¹⁴ Although their publication in magazine format made short stories accessible to a wider readership, the format was also detrimental to the short story's prestige as a genre. Literary critics in particular regarded magazine publication as a doubtful means of achieving large audiences, a context of purely commercial entertainment 'planned for obsolescence' that aimed to provide 'distracted reception in brief moments between other activities'.¹⁵ The more artistic magazines, such as the *English Review* or the *Criterion*, were certainly too expensive to be discarded immediately and were frequently collected in bound volume format, somewhat limiting the validity of these observations. However, the short story's standing will be lowered rather than improved as long as readers and critics believe in the inferiority of magazine publication. Bourdieu also points to the damaging effect of saleability on a text's prestige. He observes that the economic principle in the field of literary production is reversed: his field of literary production constitutes an environment 'where the only audience aimed at is other producers', in which 'the economy of practices is based, as in a generalized game of

“loser wins”, on a systematic inversion of the fundamental principles of all ordinary economies’,¹⁶ and where the only ‘literary’ capital that is worthwhile to critics is of a symbolic rather than monetary nature. Rather aptly, the dwindling of the magazine market paradoxically decreased the short story’s audience but increased its literary prestige – not least of all because it is now seen as primarily an experimental literary form. Given that the durability and influence a text enjoys depends not only on how many people read it, but also on who these readers are, a short story published in a popular magazine may be commercially successful and read by a wide audience, but unless it is republished elsewhere, it will quickly sink into oblivion. The publication of a short story in an anthology, on the other hand, potentially secures for this story a more lasting reception. In short story anthologies and collections, short stories receive specialised attention, but at the same time they still compete with a greater number of very diverse texts. Although some of the now canonical modernist short fiction stood a better chance of republication by virtue of its authors’ personal connections with literary editors and patrons, and the arguably greater desire on the part of modernist writers to perpetuate their work in a collected (and collectible) volume, most commercial magazine stories at best found their way into a single annual selection of the periodical they first appeared in. Since the Second World War, from the 1960s onwards in particular, story anthologies have frequently targeted an educational audience. In contrast to anthologies of poetry or general literary anthologies like the Norton series, however, there is no such thing as a single authoritative short story anthology widely read and discussed in schools or universities.

Collections of short stories by single authors differ from multiple-author anthologies in that their unifying factor is the writer, not necessarily an underlying theme or subgenre – although many writers, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, wrote short story cycles or sequences with a specific theme and/or recurring characters. In authors’ collections, short stories that have already appeared in a magazine may be supplemented by previously unpublished stories, thus widening the range of texts available. At the same time, the audience of such collections is as limited as that of most anthologies: the more popular the writer, the larger its audience; the more obscure, the smaller the readership. Story collections are moreover harder to publish than novels, because where novels have ‘a good chance to reach and surpass the break-even point for publishers’, short story collections rarely do.¹⁷ Valerie Shaw provides some examples of successful short-story writers, such as Katherine Anne Porter

and A.E. Coppard, who felt they had to 'resist' publishers' wishes for a novel.¹⁸ Most recently, Paul March-Russell summarised a survey carried out by the British Council in 2003, which confirmed publishers' wariness of publishing short-story collections by first-time authors. By contrast, the 1920s and 1930s were a period when 'publishers [were] beginning to look with a more favourable eye on short stories'.¹⁹ Nevertheless, this was seen as an agreeable change in attitude rather than a general trend for the first half of the twentieth century, as early-twentieth-century publishers had previously 'fought very shy of the volume of collected short stories'.²⁰

WARTIME AND INTER-WAR PUBLICATION: THE *STRAND*
MAGAZINE AND THE *ENGLISH REVIEW*

During the 1910s and 1920s, the *Strand Magazine* was one of the most popular magazines in Britain to publish short stories. The *Strand Magazine* was largely apolitical with a focus on entertainment and self-improvement, but during the war years it displayed the staunchly patriotic attitude adopted by the British press generally. Each monthly issue contained between five and ten stories by British and international authors, often in serial or semi-serial form. Its proprietor, George Newnes, was the son of a minister and worked as a haberdasher before making his fortune with his first publication venture, *Tit-Bits*, in 1881. His endeavour 'to give wholesome and harmless entertainment to hard-working people craving a little fun and amusement' stemmed from a first-hand knowledge of the reading tastes of the working population.²¹ As a rule, most of these stories either describe feats of physical daring, miraculous escapes, exotic adventures or romance overcoming varying obstacles. Although the *Strand Magazine* had started off as a periodical primarily of interest to male readers, most issues by 1914 also contained one story expressly aimed at children, and a range of romance stories designed to appeal to female readers, making the *Strand Magazine* a family magazine with content suitable for all ages and interests. This desire to offer stories for a range of tastes continued during the war, when most stories followed the same basic patterns and simply adopted a wartime setting for standard romance, adventure or detective plots. Short fiction in popular magazines such as the *Strand Magazine* was almost invariably formula literature, following specific generic conventions. As Jane Potter observes for popular romance, such pre-war formulae were 'easily transformed for use in wartime' by the writer of magazine fiction.²² Modelled on American fiction magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Strand Magazine* quickly became 'a perennial best-seller',

and arguably 'exercised an important and beneficial influence upon English short-story writing'²³ by offering lavish remuneration to those writers whose stories met its editorial requirements.²⁴

Besides short stories, the *Strand Magazine* published reportage and celebrity commentaries on current affairs, as well as interviews, informative and lifestyle articles. In his introduction to a 1992 collection of short stories first published in the *Strand*, Frank Delaney outlines the magazine's editorial policies:

Readability was all. Newnes's success lay in taking care that each reader should emerge from the pages having shared easily in public entertainment, while privately – though not furtively – having acquired socially useful knowledge.²⁵

Delaney estimates the number of readers who perused the magazine every month at two million in the immediate pre-war period, multiplying sales figures by the number of readers assumed to have shared each copy sold.²⁶ On the basis of these figures, Delaney claims that '[h]ardly an adult of measurable literacy could have been unalert to the magazine's existence'.²⁷ Although the editorial choices of the *Strand Magazine* certainly reflect the opinions and political outlook of its proprietor and editorial staff more than the public consciousness of Britain in the abstract, the selections in the *Strand Magazine* nevertheless may be seen to have shaped and reflected public opinion of its middle-class readers to some extent. These middle-class readers included those who had volunteered and were on active service in the army: like many periodicals, the *Strand Magazine* encouraged its readers to sponsor gift subscriptions for soldiers at the front or donate their own copies after reading, and in March 1917 published a special 'Humour Number' for soldiers at the front.

The *English Review* had a much smaller circulation than the *Strand Magazine*, but it was one of the commercially more successful and longer-lived literary magazines in Britain. Whereas many artistic magazines were of short duration – the best-known example is the much more radical *Blast*, of which only two issues were published – the *Review* survived for twenty-nine years, founded in 1908 by Ford Madox Ford (then Hueffer) and discontinued only when it merged with *The National Review* in 1937. The *English Review* published a wide range of avant-garde authors from Britain and overseas.²⁸ Before the outbreak of the First World War, in the early 1910s, it had a peak circulation of 15,000 to 18,000 copies.²⁹ During the war years, the *English Review* was edited (and from September 1915 onwards partly owned) by Austin Harrison. Harrison had studied languages in France and Germany and had previously worked as editor

and journalist for *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* and Reuters news agency. In these jobs, he spent several years in Germany and some time in Russia. Before being invited to edit the *English Review*, Harrison edited and wrote for Lord Northcliffe's *Observer* and *Daily Mail*, first as political editor, later as drama critic. In his editorial choices, he was not only a convinced internationalist and champion of authors censored at the time for their sexual explicitness – his unofficial title for the magazine was 'The Great Adult Review' – but also a keen political observer who used his position as editor to comment at length on the war and the state of the British nation. On the basis of his first-hand knowledge of pre-war Germany and particularly German press censorship, Harrison was a harsh critic of the country. He had published a critical book on the German political agenda, *The Pan-Germanic Doctrine*, as early as 1904, and after the outbreak of the war published a second volume of political commentaries and articles, most of which had first appeared in the *English Review*, under the title *The Kaiser's War* (1914). Unlike the *Strand Magazine*, the *English Review* did not primarily publish short fiction. Out of an average number of twelve to sixteen items, only two or three would generally be short stories (although this is admittedly still a comparatively large percentage compared to the editorial policy of other magazines) and three to four poems, which were consequently outnumbered by non-fiction contributions. This reverses the policy of the *Strand Magazine*, where the straightforward entertainment provided by short fiction was interspersed with non-fiction articles. The *English Review*, by contrast, placed a stronger emphasis on (as its name suggests) reviewing and political commentary.

Although the *Strand Magazine* and *English Review* are different types of magazine, there are similarities which make both publications particularly suitable as examples of the publishing context of Great War stories. Given their respective target audiences, both magazines were perused by a large readership. Likewise, both magazines reflect the patriotic, anti-German stance that dominated British public opinion into the 1920s, despite the fact that the *English Review* combined its professed abhorrence for German militarism with ample criticism of the British government. At the same time, the different editorial programmes of the two magazines – light entertainment on the part of the *Strand*, serious reading and criticism in the *English Review* – allow an insight into two divergent target groups of readers. Although it might be argued that a focus on these two magazines excludes the working-class experience of the war, this is only partly true. The 'middle-class' readership of the *Strand Magazine* encompassed a much wider section of early twentieth-century society than the term suggests,

from ‘the most humble shopgirl to newspaper proprietors’.³⁰ Moreover, as Carol Acton and Michael Paris have shown for working boys’ and girls’ magazine fiction, working-class war fiction differed from its middle-class counterparts in degree rather than kind.³¹ Whereas the *Strand Magazine* was light reading for a wide variety of readers from the lower-middle to (potentially) upper classes, the *English Review* was pitched at an intellectual audience with an interest in international politics and art. Harrison’s envisaged audience comprised ‘a wide range of readers, from graduates of the Board schools created about the time of his birth to university and professional men and women’,³² in London and beyond. Although advertisements and the subject of many articles betray a bias towards the upper middle class to whom Harrison himself belonged, he explicitly desired as readers those ‘who have made Dent’s Everyman series a success’.³³

The Strand Magazine

The *Strand Magazine* did not immediately react to the war with the same fervour as *Punch* or *John Bull*, although it had published Arthur Conan Doyle’s sensationalist invasion tale ‘Danger!’ as recently as July 1914. The October number of 1914 featured a reportage on an American girl’s zeppelin flight over Germany with no reference to the war whatsoever – a rather remarkable fact considering that fictional responses to the war such as Arthur Machen’s ‘The Bowmen’ appeared as early as September 1914 in the pages of the *Evening News*. The first war story to appear in the *Strand Magazine* was Frederick Britten Austin’s adventure story ‘The Air-Scout’ in the November issue. Even this story does not specifically relate to the ongoing conflict; the two opposing nations remain unnamed and any relation to the war that had begun only three months previously is implied rather than explicit. The most likely reason for the *Strand Magazine’s* delayed reaction to the war is that it had to plan ahead to ensure lasting good quality in its contributions: the *Strand Magazine* at that point went to press five weeks ahead of publication.³⁴ Consequently, stories and articles were bought in advance, and were not always up to date. In addition, authors as well as editors had first to react to the war, and stories addressing the conflict needed to be written and submitted before they could be published. During the last months of 1914 and the whole of 1915, the war is reflected in the *Strand Magazine* for the most part in articles and commentaries on topics as varied as German cultural achievements, English war heroes, military decorations and similar issues, such as a short series introducing the British Empire’s Indian allies and their determination to aid the British war effort.

In terms of fiction, the war found its way into the December 1914 issue in the shape of only one war story, Edgar Wallace's 'The Despatch-Rider', in which an emancipated and headstrong English 'flapper' is caught up in the war during a motoring tour of France, and is reunited with her estranged fiancé when she carries dispatches for the army in an unofficial capacity during the first turbulent weeks of the war. 'The Despatch-Rider' is a typical example of an adventure story with added love interest in the usual style of the *Strand Magazine*, and employs the war setting as a means of heightening suspense before the lovers are reunited.

Throughout the year 1915, the war is represented on the fictional side almost solely by a series of stories by popular writer Richard March, whose pre-war (anti-)hero, humble office-worker Sam Briggs, enlists in the army and is dispatched to France after a series of humorous and edifying exploits in training camp.³⁵ Only five out of the twelve 1915 issues include other war-related stories, most of which use the war as a mere backdrop for romance or humour and are set on the home front. From January 1916 onwards, however, March's Sam Briggs serial is replaced by one to three (rarely more) independent short stories per issue addressing the war in various ways. There is a clear tendency for these stories to fall into established categories: comic stories or romance using the war as a backdrop, science-fiction stories involving new war technology, 'heroic' stories contrasting Allied courage and chivalry with German atrocities, and perhaps the most popular category, spy stories about German agents in Britain. Some stories, most notably a number of shorter tales by professional soldier-writer 'Sapper', are also set at the front, but although they do not attempt to hide the unpleasant aspects of warfare, they stress its comical or bizarre aspects rather than its horrors. Authors also began to prematurely envision the end of the war: Britten Austin's stories 'They Come Back' (October 1917) and 'Peace' (September 1918) describe the end of the war from a British and a German point of view respectively.

Following the Armistice, there is a sudden increase in stories dealing with alleged German atrocities in Belgium and Northern France, such as E. Temple Thurston's 'The Nature of the Beast' (December 1918), Lewis da Costa Ricci's 'The English Way' (January 1919) or Britten Austin's 'A Problem in Reprisals' (March 1919), all of which direct readers' attention back to perceived crimes of the former enemy and speak out against forgetting these past proofs of German 'frightfulness'.³⁶ A wish to influence public opinion with regard to the impending peace treaty may have prompted the publication of such stories at this point in time. It is moreover interesting to note that stories set partly or entirely during

the war continued to appear in the *Strand Magazine* until well into 1919, particularly romance stories. Again, a possible explanation is that editorial choices were made in advance, and that material which had been bought or commissioned before the war ended had yet to be published. The publication lag of war fiction in the *Strand Magazine* reflects the situation of a society that had grown accustomed to war only to find itself suddenly and disconcertingly confronted with the task of returning to peacetime conditions. Of the large body of stories published between August 1914 and December 1920 that do not address the war in any way, many are set either in the United States (frequently written by American authors) or in other neutral countries. Alternatively, their action unfolds in a preserved pre-war Edwardian Britain, most notably in the frequent contributions by P.G. Wodehouse, whose only *Strand Magazine* short story with a (civilian) wartime setting was 'A Prisoner of War' (1915). It is particularly striking that the special 'Humour Number' of the *Strand Magazine*, published in March 1917 and expressly recommended as ideal reading material to be posted to the trenches, includes no war story whatsoever – despite the fact that an ample supply of humorous war stories were written and published both before and after this issue. The most likely explanation is that the editors felt soldiers on active service would rather be distracted from the war than reminded of it.

Their publication even in as widely circulated a periodical as the *Strand Magazine* did not ensure lasting fame for these war stories. To secure long-term reception, they depended on republication in collections and anthologies, but only two out of the approximately 140 war-related stories that appeared in the *Strand Magazine* between August 1914 and December 1920 were chosen for Geraldine Beare's anthology *Short Stories from the 'Strand'* (1992): Conrad's 'The Tale', and D.H. Lawrence's 'Tickets, Please'.³⁷ In his introduction to the volume, Frank Delaney reveals that they were not chosen for their connection with the war (which, especially as far as 'Tickets, Please' is concerned, is tenuous in any case), but because of their literary quality and capability to reveal insights into the respective writer's literary development as well as their authors' status.³⁸ Three other, more specialised anthologies of stories published in the *Strand Magazine*, Geraldine Beare's *Crime Stories From the 'Strand'* (1991) and *Adventure Stories From the 'Strand'* (1995), and Jack Adrian's *Detective Stories from The Strand* (1992), display similar editorial choices, in that most popular authors of the time are also noticeably excluded.

The vast majority of stories included in the *Strand Magazine* take the war as a backdrop rather than a central subject, and are essentially formula

literature following Ken Gelder's definition of popular fiction: they are clearly aimed at a mass audience, and written for commercial purposes.³⁹ *Strand Magazine* short stories are for the most part entertaining tales that employ the war as a setting for standard plots and often formulaic conflicts and resolutions; they cater for home-front needs, provide a welcome distraction, reinforce a sense of the justness of the British cause and address the realities of war in a manner designed to reassure readers. These stories rarely delve into the realm of psychological or political observation beyond a general approval of Britain's war aims and policies, and the value of soldierly sacrifice. Even Lawrence's 'Tickets, Please' did not startle its magazine readers with undue formal innovation; although the subject matter of vengeful women ticket collectors may have been disquieting, the story's narrative structure is straightforward and relies on a traditional third-person narrator.

The English Review

Considering Austin Harrison's background in journalism, it is not surprising that the *English Review* addressed the war mostly through the non-fictional genres of reportage and commentary. As early as September 1914, the *Review* introduced a new section headline separating general contributions from explicitly war-related pieces. Initially, this rubric was titled 'The Kaiser's War' (September 1914), rapidly changed to 'The Kaiser's World War' (October 1914) and finally to 'The War of Liberation' (November 1914) – an ambiguous headline that might refer both to occupied Belgium and France, and to notions of liberating civilisation from the threat of German militarism. This latter heading remained in use until 1917, when it was changed first to 'Imperial Reconstruction' (April 1917) and then to 'War and Reconstruction' (June 1917 to July 1918) before the concept of a special war rubric was abandoned in mid-1918.⁴⁰ This section contained almost entirely non-fictional contributions, including, in September 1914, two scathing editorial commentaries by Harrison denouncing the cultural politics of the German emperor and setting out the tasks of the Allies as liberating Belgium and stamping out German militarism.⁴¹ Nevertheless, later articles and commentaries prove that the magazine was by no means uncritical of how the war was conducted on the part of Great Britain. In a series of articles published in the summer of 1915, Harrison agitated for the introduction of conscription, and claimed in all his war-related articles that recruitment on a voluntary basis would be no use against the highly organised German war machine. In his

column on financial issues, regular contributor Raymond Radclyffe rarely failed to criticise the handling of war expenses by the government, both before and after Lloyd George took over as prime minister from Asquith in December 1916. Regular reports from the war zone by correspondents such as H.M. Tomlinson, and by active service personnel writing under a pseudonym (as those on active service were prohibited from publishing) supplemented these political commentaries from the home front and provided first-hand insights into life at the front.

The dominance of non-fictional contributions is not to imply that no war-related literary contributions found their way into the *English Review*. Indeed, the magazine's poetry section was the first to respond to the outbreak of war: in the August number for 1914, Aleister Crowley contributed a sequence of humorous poems parodying the style of various English poets from Chaucer to the early twentieth century, rewriting the chorus of the popular nineteenth-century music-hall 'Jingo War Song' by G.W. Hunt. The September issue opened with John Masefield's poem 'August, 1914', now famous for its wistful celebration of a pre-war idyll. Poetry by active service personnel was published continuously throughout the war, although it did not always have the war as its subject. In January, March and September 1918, and once more in February 1919, the poetry section of the *English Review* was given over entirely to 'Soldiers' Poetry', featuring exclusively poetry by active soldiers and officers, with Siegfried Sassoon as the best-known but by no means the most prolific contributor.

Although most short stories in the *Review* did not touch upon the war, some war-related stories were published at intervals, such as a sketch by R.B. Cunninghame Graham entitled 'In a Backwater' (October 1914). This piece is more or less indistinguishable from reportage and centres on the reception of the war news in a rural community. A farmer in the Home Counties, preoccupied with his wheat harvest and the recent death of his wife, is further troubled by the war news he gleans from his *Daily Mail*. He is particularly horrified at reports of hundreds of dead soldiers and horses lying in Belgian cornfields, and his somewhat slow and rambling conversation with the story's unnamed narrator returns to this image time and again. Another story by Cunninghame Graham, 'Brought Forward', appeared as the second war-related story in the February number of 1915 and describes how the death of his close friend and colleague in action prompts a Scottish worker to enlist, seeking to avenge his friend. The story can be read as recruitment propaganda complicated by Graham's socialist background, visible in its appeal for a working-class solidarity that was

more commonly evoked as part of an internationalist, pacifist Labour rhetoric. D.H. Lawrence's well-known story 'England, My England' (October 1915) also appeared in the *Review*.

Further war stories published were Stacy Aumonier's 'The Grayles' (March 1916), a bittersweet tragicomedy about a pacifist family whose only son enlists out of a mistaken belief that his father and sister want him to fight, and returns disabled; Gilbert Frankau's 'A Rag-Time Hero' (January 1917), a scathing satire on cowardice and patriotic hypocrisy; and 'Casualty' by Arthur Eckersley (April 1917), dealing with the anguish of a young recruit who is disabled in an accident just before his dispatch to the front and suffers in the knowledge that he cannot uphold the long military tradition of his family. Two short stories by Hugh Pollard, 'Morphine' (February 1918) and 'Hazard' (May 1918), address the small yet painful tragedies and moral dilemmas of war, dealing with a doctor whose attempt to cure one man from a drug habit leads to horrific suffering for a dying soldier, and a desperate game of cards which determines who is to command a suicidal attack. Alec Waugh's 'An Autumn Gathering' (May 1918) already adopts a sympathetic attitude towards Germany, as it relates the story of two young German lovers parted by the war. D.H. Catterick's 'Reginald' (October 1918) depicts the esteem felt by a group of British marksmen for a particularly devious German sniper, and their regret at having to kill him. Other, later stories scrutinise the effect of war on human behaviour and character, such as Blamire Young's 'Clarence' (December 1918), in which a boisterous officer is put to shame by the far more real, if less glamorous, achievements of a lowly NCO. Arthur Mill's 'Wreckage of War' (March 1919) is a short, disillusioned sketch of a soldier returning from war service in the Near East to find England a sad and desperate place and his friends and acquaintances all altered for the worse. "For it", by A.E. Mander (October 1919), which follows a young lieutenant from training camp to the front and his eventual death, begins with the explicit warning 'When we are drifting into the next war – *let us think of the last*'. A more psychological interest in coming to terms with loss, injury and circumstances altered by the war is visible in three further stories: Baroness von Hutten's 'Mothers' (January 1920) compares different ways of coping with the loss of an only son, ranging from suicidal despair to grim determination; 'The Old Dovecote' by David Garnett (February 1920) shows how even those who returned from the war to a loving home sound and whole may yet feel that the home to which they were looking forward to returning has changed beyond recognition, and D.H. Lawrence's 'The Blind Man' (July 1920) is a study of how war-related blindness has subtly

changed the relationship and power balance between a husband and wife and the wife's best friend.

The long intervals at which these stories were published during and especially after the war show that Harrison continued his pre-war policy of promoting diversity and artistic quality, as does the fact that the many stories published without any reference to the war include works in translation by internationally renowned authors such as Anton Chekhov and Yone Noguchi, whose story 'The Skin Painter' appeared in the December issue of 1917. The war was dealt with in articles and commentaries on current affairs, but largely kept out of editorial selections of literary contributions. On the whole, war-related stories were even scarcer in the *English Review* beyond December 1918 than during the war, as the war and its after-effects, particularly the peace conference and Treaty of Versailles, continued to be addressed in articles and commentaries rather than short fiction. Those war stories that were included for the most part differ strikingly from those published in the *Strand Magazine*, in that they do not simply adopt a wartime setting for a pre-conceived adventure or romance plot. Instead, these stories concentrate on a psychological analysis of motives and reactions, attempting to shed light on issues such as the decision to enlist, on war-related fears and the sense of social obligation the war inspired in many.

Lawrence's 'England, My England' is a representative example of an *English Review* war story. Its basic plot is easily summarised: a young married couple, who have been slowly growing apart as the result of fundamental differences in character, are irrevocably estranged when the eldest of their three young daughters is crippled in an accident. When the war breaks out the husband enlists with his wife's approval. Mentally more than physically unsuited to be a soldier, he suffers from the crudities of military life and his wife's readiness to feel dutiful towards him as a soldier but not as a man, and he is killed soon after being sent to Flanders. This story exists in two versions, an early version published in the *English Review* and an extensively revised one published after the war in *England, My England, and Other Stories* (1922).

In the early magazine version, whose mere 5,900 words make it less than half as long as the collected version of almost 13,000 words, the focus on the war is conspicuously stronger.⁴² This earlier version is divided into two parts. The first and shorter part is set in England and describes the process of marital estrangement, whereas the second and considerably longer section of the story is set in training camp and at the front. In the *Review*, the closing paragraphs of the story describe not only the husband's death in

great detail, but also his killing of three German soldiers with his service revolver before he himself is stabbed to death and viciously mutilated. In the revised version, more than three quarters of the story are devoted to describing the early relationship, marriage and gradual estrangement of the couple, while only a short section at the end of the story describes the husband's enlistment, training and death at the front, where he is killed by a shell and found already dead by passing German soldiers. The focus of both versions of 'England, My England' is on the emotions and psychological motivations of the protagonists' actions, but whereas the early version published in the *Review* shows a greater interest in the main protagonist's reaction to the war, the later version places greater emphasis on the disintegration of his marriage and the intricacies of the estrangement between two lovers.

'England, My England' in its earlier version reflects the overall nature of war stories in the *English Review*. Like Lawrence's story, most stories in the *Review* dealing with the war address it as the source of interpersonal or psychological problems rather than using it as a backdrop for romance or adventure plots, and strive to convey 'the horror of what one becomes through participating' in war rather than the horrors of war itself.⁴³ Although they are otherwise as diverse in their choice of subject matter and setting as the stories published in the *Strand Magazine*, their focus on the effects of the war in a psychological sense sets them apart from the typical *Strand Magazine* tale. Whereas *Strand Magazine* stories are largely specimens of formula fiction, stories in the *English Review* are more likely to deviate from a plot-based, generic structure. Some of these stories for instance adopted a sketch-like structure and resemble reportage in their focus on observation rather than action. Even plot-based stories do not fit comfortably into the moulds of formulaic subgenres. Despite its subject matter, Lawrence's 'England, My England' certainly cannot be read as an adventure or romance story. Of the much smaller number of stories published in the *English Review*, a larger percentage still ring familiar with a modern audience. This is mainly because the *Review* published a number of authors who have come to be associated with the modernist movement whose stories were subsequently reprinted in topical collections.

WAR STORIES IN BRITISH WARTIME AND INTER-WAR ANTHOLOGIES

Whereas the selection criteria of fiction magazines tend to depend on fairly loosely defined editorial policies, story anthologies assemble short fiction

under often arbitrary common denominators such as their writers' nationality or gender; topic or genre; ideological outlook or time of writing.⁴⁴ Both, however, must be seen as primarily commercially motivated. When many established periodicals, including the *Strand*, ceased publication, editors and publishers tried to establish new outlets for short fiction. As a consequence, inter- and post-war Britain witnessed the publication of a range of anthology series such as John Lehmann's *New Writing* series (1936–1943), or the English Association's *English Short Stories of To-Day*,⁴⁵ but between 1918 and 1945, only very few stories addressing war were included in these new story anthologies. In three 1920s anthologies,⁴⁶ no stories are included that address the First World War in any way despite the continued publication of war stories in magazines. Published at the end of the decade, Edward J. O'Brien's *Modern English Short Stories* (1930) does include a small number of tenuously war-related stories amongst its twenty-eight contributions, but these stories, such as 'Mr Franklyn's Adventure' by J.M. Allison, as a general rule merely allude to the war. Only Katherine Mansfield's 'The Fly' and 'The Lock' by Edward Sackville West scrutinise the after-effects of the war on the human psyche. The only other story dealing straightforwardly with the Great War appeared in the first anthology of the *English Short Stories of To-Day* series: 'Defeat' (1939) by Geoffrey Moss deals with the friendship between the English narrator and a German officer, interrupted by the war for more than ten years and revived in French-occupied Rhineland. The story appeared at a politically sensitive time after the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, as it describes in sympathetic detail some of the complications of occupation and popular sentiment in defeated Germany, particularly among returned army officers who face the complete breakdown of their careers. General anthologies and annual collections of short fiction were clearly not a fruitful outlet for war stories, as they quickly oriented themselves to either established classics of the genre, or new fiction that no longer cared to address the war.

However, as general anthologies abandoned the theme of war, dedicated collections of war fiction continued to publish short stories addressing the First World War. The anthologies considered in this chapter were published between 1915 and 1936, and specialise either in First World War writing or in texts about war generally. Many anthologies of war writing are mixed collections not of short fiction, but primarily excerpts from longer works such as novels or histories, often mixed with war poetry. This preference for excerpts from longer prose works over genuine short fiction is, as we will see, a recurring theme, which illustrates both the marginalised position of short fiction and the dominance of a pacifist-realist bias

with regard to the canon of First World War literature. A large number of the anthologies examined here are directed explicitly at children and young adults, just as a high proportion of war literature generally is aimed at young readers. Because of the marked tendency of war writing towards the historiographical or autobiographical, most war anthologies include a significant number of excerpts from longer works of non-fiction or autobiographical fiction.

Considering the political outlook of stories published in wartime periodicals, it is not surprising that those anthologies of war stories published during the war itself also took a positive, patriotic stance towards the war and focussed on tales of heroic conduct, courage and endurance. Jane Potter has argued that although commercial viability was an obvious necessity, most of the London publishing houses during the war felt obligated both by a general sense of social responsibility and by personal stakes in the war – such as the war service of close friends, family or employees – to consider patriotic issues. Even those publishers who opposed the conflict understood the need to support soldiers and civilians under the burden of war.⁴⁷ The fact that preference was given to texts that took a positive slant on the war and stressed the value of patriotic sacrifice has been noted repeatedly for anthologies of war poetry and holds equally true for story anthologies.⁴⁸ Indeed, the most important aim of these anthologies seems to be to stress the valour and daring of the British troops, a goal eloquently put in their titles, ranging from *Thrilling Deeds of Valour: Stories of Heroism in the Great War* (1916), *The Post of Honour: Stories of Daring Deeds Done by Men of the British Empire in the Great War* (1917), to *Wonderful Stories: Winning the V.C. in the Great War* (1917). Emphasis is also put on the veracity of the accounts given in the short stories, corresponding to post-war concerns about the authenticity of war writing. Implicit in most titles, and explicit in a number of prefatory notes and introductions, is the claim that these stories can be taken as eyewitness accounts of what has really happened. Walter Wood, editor of the collection *Soldiers' Stories of the War* (1915), claims in his introduction:

All of the stories in this volume are told by men who were there personally, and who, with one or two exceptions – cases of soldiers who had returned to the front – read the typescripts of their narratives, so that accuracy should be secured. The narrators spoke while the impressions of fighting and hardships and things seen were still strong and clear; in several cases full notes had been made or diaries kept, and reference to these records was of great value in preparing the stories. When seeing an informant I specially asked that a true tale should be told, and I believe that no unreliable details were knowingly given.⁴⁹

The fact that Wood was able to publish a second volume as a sequel to his collection only a year later – *In the Line of Battle: Soldiers' Stories of the War* (1916) – seems to prove that his concept was successful. Arthur St John Adcock's collection *In the Firing Line: Stories of the War by Land and Sea* (1914) represents its stories as quasi-journalistic accounts of the war in its earliest stages. Supplementing his own writing with ostensibly real letters and diary entries by British soldiers, Adcock paints a gruesome picture of German atrocities in Belgium. His anthology was part of the *Daily Telegraph War Books Series*, begun prior to the outbreak of the First World War and consisting to that date of fifteen volumes, mostly dealing with the British colonial wars. The Great War was thus placed securely in the context of previous conflicts.

A further striking feature is the wide geographical range of the short stories included in wartime anthologies. Modern popular memory of the war centres almost entirely on the Western Front, and it is the poetry and prose of soldiers who served in France and Belgium that is remembered as canonical war writing today. The texts collected in wartime anthologies stand in stark contrast to this selectivity in that they cover the war in all its theatres, from Flanders to Mesopotamia, and a wide variety of branches of the British military. The anthology *Thrilling Deeds of Valour* (1916) alone, a richly illustrated, patriotic collection aimed at children, includes stories set amongst the Royal Engineers, among British midshipmen in the Dardanelles, Australian soldiers on the Gallipoli Peninsula, on a war cruiser in the Atlantic, and among Russian troops capturing a German general. It also comprises an account of the exploits of the flying corps, of British army nurses and doctors in the Balkans and of British troops in Mesopotamia, and even includes a home front story set on the Shetland Islands. Similarly, *Wonderful Stories: Winning the V.C. in the Great War*, which had gone into a second edition by 1917, contains stories from all fronts, including the Balkans, Mesopotamia and service branches such as the navy and the submarine corps. Through their wide range of settings, these stories offer a means of imaginary participation for all readers. Regardless of where friends and relatives were deployed, readers were certain to find a corresponding tale. In wartime anthologies of Great War short stories, there is no sign of editors' and writers' choices being narrowed down to the Western Front, although there is a visible emphasis on the combatant experience of the war. However, all aspects of the war, including home front and nursing, find consideration and are included in collections in what may be an attempt to portray the war with all its facets, particularly for young readers. The way in which the war is represented is

part of a continuing tradition of heroic war writing and the comparatively new field of war reportage that developed during the colonial wars of the mid to late nineteenth century.⁵⁰

The end of the war did not bring about a sudden, radical change in short story anthologies and their editorial choices. Collections such as Sir James Edward Parrott's *The Path of Glory: Heroic Stories of the Great War* (1921) retain the wartime focus on heroism and British moral and physical superiority. This particular anthology comprises nineteen stories and sketches, all written by Parrott and selected from his *Children's Story of the War* (1915–19) in ten volumes. A foreword by the author dedicates the book to 'The Unrecorded Brave of the Great War' and describes in great detail how Britain, believed by the Germans and its own citizens to have lost its strength and patriotic valour, rose to the challenge of the war, made the most gallant sacrifices and emerged from the war victoriously.⁵¹ The stories are all purportedly true accounts of actual events during the war and supply names and dates for a greater appearance of authenticity. They are obviously written for children and strive with great pathos to provide positive role models. As was the case with most wartime anthologies, this collection includes stories on a wide range of services and theatres of war: from Allied women and children assisting British soldiers, over flying corps, navy and British submarine crews (dramatically dubbed 'Heroic Toilers of the Deep'), to medical officers, nurses and colonial troops from India. Even after the end of the war, and in the midst of public debate over issues of public commemoration and private grief, a positive evaluation of the recent conflict seems to have been possible, especially in the light of having to make sense of loss and change.⁵²

A number of anthologies of war stories published in the early 1930s continue this trend of positive evaluation. These form a striking contrast to the harsher, disillusioned interpretation of the late 1920s war memoirs and several collections of stories published around the same time by the same authors who had reworked their war experiences into novels and autobiographies. Whereas Richard Aldington's collection *Roads to Glory* (1930) paints an unremittingly dark picture of the war, Junior Allan's anthology *Humorous Scottish War Stories: Selected from the 'Daily Mail'*, published in the same year, takes pains to illustrate the humour and wit with which Scottish soldiers supposedly encountered the hardships of the Great War. Although the 'bitter experiences of that eventful time'⁵³ are acknowledged in the editor's foreword, his selection of stories does not present the war in the light of utter futility that informs Aldington's prose. In a similar vein, Wingrove Willson's anthology of sea stories, *Naval Stories of the Great War*

(1931), expressly does not seek 'to glorify warfare', but to provide its audience of young readers 'with some idea of the perils and privations faced by the sturdy men who kept the seas for Britain in the dark days of 1914–18' and to inspire in them 'a kindly thought for the heroes who sacrificed so much and fought so bravely 'neath our glorious flag'.⁵⁴ Here, too, war is not presented as a matter to be trifled with and its costs are acknowledged, but the moral necessity of British involvement in the war is not questioned. The collection once again stresses heroism and comprises stories by various authors, dealing with feats of (in this case naval) daring such as the blocking of Zeebrugge harbour in April 1918.

Not all inter-war anthologies, however, continue this positive evaluation of the war. The year 1930 also saw the publication of H.C. Minchin's aforementioned hardback anthology *Great Short Stories of the War* (1930). This substantial volume, introduced by Edmund Blunden, collected a wide selection of Great War short stories (and some excerpts from novels) by authors of different nationalities, including German and Austrian. Although it also includes a small number of stories in a traditional heroic mode, such as Bartimeus's 'The Port Lookout', it is dominated by stories of the 'school of disillusionment'⁵⁵: Richard Aldington and Liam O'Flaherty are represented by particularly disturbing depictions of the frontline, as are their French and German counterparts Henri Barbusse and Erich Maria Remarque. Even those stories included that were contributed by usually more light-hearted authors such as Stacy Aumonier ring a tragic note: Aumonier's 'Them Others' stresses the tragedy of personal loss and the universality of grief and anxiety across national boundaries. In his prefatory note, Minchin claimed that *Great Short Stories of the War* was 'the first substantial collection of short stories of the Great War to be published', hoping that it would have a lasting value and influence while admitting to the fact that '[m]uch that has been written recently about the war is for the hour only and will cease to be'.⁵⁶