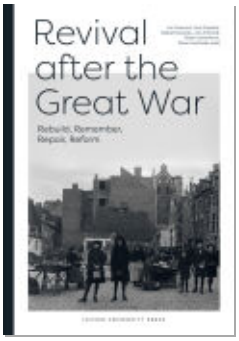
Remembering the War on the British Stage: From Resistance to Reconstruction



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Remembering the War on the British Stage

From Resistance to Reconstruction

Helen E. M. Brooks

One week after the armistice, in an article entitled "Peace and the Theatre: The Outlook for the Future", a columnist for *The Times* confidently predicted that "one immediate result of the armistice will undoubtedly be the disappearance of the 'war play'", adding dismissively that "few productions of this kind will be remembered".[1] Over the next ten years, the declining interest in war-themed plays was a repeated theme in critical commentaries on theatre. "As the war recedes into the past, the less interest do people take in war plays", reported the *Daily Herald* in 1920, whilst in 1923 the *Gloucester Citizen* reflected on the "prejudice attached to plays which bring in the war".[2] In October 1928 *The Scotsman* went so far as to declare that J. M. Barrie's, *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*, then being performed at the Lyceum, Edinburgh, "must be one of the very few literary or dramatic works of art to survive the war period […] Most war plays have been left high and dry by the receding tide".[3]

Alongside contemporary accounts of the disappearance of wartime plays, histories of British theatre also suggest that the decade following the armistice saw the war, and its consequences, being rejected as a theme for new plays. "The war seems to have passed across the stage making little impact outside a handful of plays", concluded Michael Woolfe in 1993, whilst more recently Maggie Gale has argued that 1920s playwrights and audiences seemed "to shy away from the 'war' itself as a setting", with dramatic analyses of the effects and consequences of the conflict becoming common only in the 1930s.[4]

The result of these twin historical threads is a dominant narrative which positions the war as largely absent from – or forgotten by – the British stage in the years following the armistice. It is a narrative, however, which is brought into question when we look beyond London and at the full spread of theatrical activity taking place

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across the nation. As I argue in this chapter, by examining a range of plays staged in both regional and metropolitan theatres and by both professionals and amateurs, we can see that rather than turning away from the war as a theme, theatre-makers repeatedly returned to, remembered and re-staged the war. Equally importantly, not only did they do this through the production of new plays about the conflict and its aftermath, as Rebecca D'Monte has indicated, but they also did so through continuing to stage war-plays first written and performed during the war.[5] Central to this chapter, therefore, is not simply the recovery of a post-war landscape of war-themed theatre, but an analysis of the distinctive ways in which the two different types of productions – revivals/continuing productions of wartime plays; and new plays – functioned in the context of remembrance and reconstruction. Productions of wartime plays, I argue, provided a space of resistance to peace and reconciliation, whilst the production of new plays enabled the exploration of peace-time demands for rehabilitation and reconstruction through, in particular, the figure of the wounded veteran. Whether looking backwards or forwards, what is clear is that the theatre, like the literature and cinema of the period, played an important cultural role in how and why the war was remembered.

The re-evaluation of early 1920s theatre in the context of what Mark Connelly has described as the "Great War's cultural imprint" is long overdue.[6] Whilst scholars of cinema and literary history have begun to question the idea, as Samuel Hynes put it in his seminal *A War Imagined*, that for "nearly a decade, there was a curious imaginative silence" about the war, the theatre has been notably absent from such work.[7] Yet the argument made by Janet Watson, that whilst 1928 saw the floodgates opening on war books, war-themed works had in fact been appearing steadily, although garnering little attention, since the end of the conflict, could be made almost word-for-word about the theatre of the period.[8] As I argue here, theatre-makers, both amateur and professional, repeatedly returned to the war after the armistice, literally and imaginatively "re-membering" the conflict on the nation's stages and, by doing so, positioning the theatre as a space in which the experience of war, its consequences and the challenges of peacetime could be exposed and examined, even if they could not always be resolved.

War Plays on the Post-War Stage: Resisting Peace

Even a very brief trawl through engagement notices and reviews of 1920s theatre productions reveals that the end of hostilities did not immediately result in war-themed works being cancelled. Moreover, a number of popular wartime spy melodramas went on to be staged in regional theatres for much of the following decade. These included

the earliest wartime success, Lechmere Worrall and J. E. Harold Terry's *The Man Who Stayed at Home*, a play which had been performed over 1,500 times, not only at the Royalty and Apollo theatres in London but also at theatres across Britain, by late June 1916.[9] After the armistice it continued to prove popular, and not only with professional companies but also with amateurs. With its one-scene drawing-room setting and strong range of parts for both male and female performers, the play lent itself easily to production by amateur groups. Throughout the 1920s it was repeatedly staged in aid of various war-related charities including district nursing associations, hospitals, orphans' homes, regiments and the British Legion.[10]

Less easily adaptable by amateur groups – not least due to its spectacular third act featuring a U-Boat surrounded by British destroyers with guns blazing – but equally popular in the period following the armistice was Walter Howard's 1917 spy melodrama, *Seven Days Leave*. Featuring a captain returning home on leave to his coastal village where two supposed Belgian refugees – in fact undercover German spies – are planning to kidnap the hero, the play premiered at the Lyceum, London, on 14 February 1917. Acclaimed as being "one of the best new melodramas which the Lyceum has had for years", in a review which also predicted the post-war revival of the play, *Seven Days Leave* was performed at the Lyceum over 700 times under the guidance of the melodramatic leaders of the day, Fred and Walter Melville. It also toured nationally and internationally for the rest of the decade and throughout the 1920s.[11] In total it was performed at more than 226 theatres and over 1,400 times, continuing to meet, as the *Burnley Express* commented in April 1923, with as much "enthusiasm as it ever did in the early days of its production" despite the fact that the days of the spy menace might seem "rather remote now".[12]

Seven Days Leave was not alone in continuing to appeal to regional audiences after the armistice. Emilie Clifford's play *The Luck of the Navy*, written under the pseudonym Clifford Mills and first performed in London at the Queen's Theatre on 5 August 1918 – after a preview week at the Theatre Royal, Bournemouth – was another melodrama which continued to attract audiences despite the end of hostilities. This "thrilling little spy drama" which bore, as the *Tatler* put it, "a certain resemblance to *Seven Days Leave*", with its kidnap plot and German spies – in this case a German woman and her son posing as a sub-lieutenant in the navy – featured the popular actor Percy Hutchinson in the leading role. It was an immediate hit in London, where it was performed until spring 1919, before being toured by two concurrent companies until early 1921.[13] In total, between 1919 and 1930 *The Luck of the Navy* was staged in at least 148 theatres over 900 times, not including the international tours or the 1927 film adaptation.[14]

The examples discussed above are just a small selection of the melodramas which, having been performed in London during the war, continued to tour and attract audiences throughout the rest of the country, and internationally, after the armistice.

[195.195.80.197] Project MUSE (2026-03-12 16:08 GMT) University of the Arts, London

For many critics, however, the ongoing popularity of these productions and the apparent desire of new audiences to repeatedly return to and remember the war through theatre, jarred with the perception of a nation – or indeed a world – moving beyond the war. As one Coventry critic commented on going to see a production of *The Man Who Stayed at Home* in August 1924, "when the Armistice was signed there was a widespread determination to forget the war", yet as there was "no sign of declining popularity" for this play or for other recent war-themed hits, it must be concluded that "plays centred around the war are not de trop".[15] Whilst public discourse might be focussed on forgetting and moving forward, regional and sometimes international audiences, it would appear, felt differently and found in the theatre a communal space through which to return to and remember the war.

The version of the war which audiences remembered, or reimagined, through these productions was, however, to draw on Michael Booth's description of melodrama, an "idealisation and simplification of reality".[16] Presenting a thrilling world where heroic British men (accompanied by plucky British heroines) faced up to the barbaric, villainous Hun, these melodramas existed apart from the complexities of post-war reconstruction and reconciliation in which the former enemy was now to be seen, as S. N. Sedgwick put it in his 1929 peace-play, *At the Menin Gate*, as part of "a League of bruders who haf all suffered and learnt der lesson".[17] For those suffering in the wake of the war, whether through bereavement, disability, unemployment, strikes or the reinforcement of traditional gender roles, the melodramatic "world of absolutes where virtue and vice coexist in pure whiteness and pure blackness" provided a temporary, contained and safe outlet for resistance to reconciliation and reconstruction.[18] Here audiences could, and indeed did, cheer the patriotic sentiments of the heroes, and boo and hiss at the villainous Hun. As one critic commented after watching a performance of *Seven Days Leave* in Burnley in April 1923, "there is still a considerable public for plays of the sensationally patriotic order".[19] Nor was the appeal of patriotism confined to the regions. At the Queen's Theatre, London, in November 1920, the popularity of a revival of *The Luck of the Navy*, was evident, as one critic put it, through "the enthusiasm with which the incidents in the play and the patriotic sentiments are received nightly", adding that "the German sentiments appeal so strongly to the playgoers that one realises that hostility to the Hun is still profound among the British people".[20]

With their expression of patriotic ideals and anti-German attitudes, post-war productions of wartime melodramas provided a space in which audiences could express their ongoing antipathy towards the former enemy. Yet melodramas were not alone in resisting the demands of post-war reconciliation, as we see with Maurice Maeterlinck's 1918 drama, *The Burgomaster of Stilemonde*.[21] Particularly popular between 1919 and 1923, *Burgomaster* is set during the invasion of Belgium, and depicts the last hours of the titular burgomaster who is executed at the end of the play

as a reprisal for the shooting of a German officer. Written during 1917, *Burgomaster* was translated into English by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos and first performed in English at the Lyceum, Edinburgh, on 1 October 1918. It was an immediate success and the Burgomaster soon became an iconic role for the celebrated actor John Martin Harvey. For the following five years he performed it repeatedly in regional theatres across Britain and during a one-year tour in Canada, as well as reprising the role in a 1929 film of the play.[22]

For some, the appeal of *Burgomaster* was its examination of the impotence of men caught up in the military machine. It was a play in which, as the Examiner of Plays Ernest A. Bendall noted, "murderers as well as murdered are shown to be victims of a hideous system of militarism".[23] Throughout, the Burgomaster refuses to blame the Germans for their actions, describing them as men "caught in the cogs of the machine" (131) who "can't act differently" (121) and who are "to be pitied" (141). Yet whilst through its titular character, Burgomaster calls for an understanding of the mechanisms of warfare and their impact on men, as well as for reconciliation and forgetting, it was not this which appears to have resonated with the majority of spectators. Rather it was the figure of the Burgomaster's daughter who, traumatised by her father's death, is fuelled with an inexpressible rage and hatred of those who have destroyed her life. As one ex-soldier put it in 1920, "Maeterlinck's play simply reeks with hate, acrid, flaming hate of the German, of all Germans".[24] As another commented, in a review which speaks to a conscious resistance to the wider rhetoric of forgetting, the play was "performing a national service in helping to perpetuate in the minds of us all what the politicians would like us to forget – the horrors of military aggression".[25] Audiences certainly seem to have responded to this reminder. As a critic at a performance at the Lyceum, London, commented in 1921, audiences watching the play were "roused to demonstrations reminiscent of unhappier times" and the play was serving to "fan the old antagonisms now slowly waning into well-deserved oblivion".[26] Whilst the text of the play called for reconciliation and reconstruction, in live performance *Burgomaster* created a space of resistance to these demands. It is hardly surprising that the German press expressed serious concern when the play was being adapted for the screen, ten years after the armistice.[27]

New Plays: Reconciliation and Reconstruction

Where post-war productions of wartime plays returned to the war, and in doing so gave audiences a space in which they could temporarily resist the demands of post-war reconciliation, new plays about the war and its aftermath spoke to the need to move forward and adapt to post-war society. Most often they did so through the

[195.195.80.197] Project MUSE (2026-03-12 16:08 GMT) University of the Arts, London

central character of a wounded serviceman whose impaired or damaged body, ultimately rehabilitated, became a proxy for the nation and its reconstruction. Indeed, so ubiquitous was the stage character of the wounded or maimed serviceman that in May 1927 the *Era* could go so far as to state that "everyone has, of course, the deepest sympathy for the maimed or blinded soldier, but regarded strictly as a stage character, he has become stale".[28]

One of the earliest post-war plays to use the figure of the wounded soldier to explore the demands of reconstruction was Major C. T. Davis's one-act play, *The Silver Lining*, performed at the Ambassadors Theatre, London, in a charity matinee for British refugees from Russia, on 24 February 1921. Set in a hospital where blinded soldier-artist Harry has been undergoing surgery to repair his sight for the last two years, the play gives voice to the pain and despair felt by many wounded veterans. Physically and mentally stuck in the war, Harry may have survived but there is, as he puts it, "nothing before me but years of blankness", with life being "one long endless tunnel" (5). He only wishes, he tells his nurse, that as a blind man it were easier to commit suicide: a bold statement considering the criminal nature of this wish.[29]

The response of the nurse – as well as of Harry's sweetheart – makes clear how Harry should deal with these feelings. He must, as the nurse points out, not give in but go on "bearing it with a smile" (4). You must "think more of others and less of yourself" (6) she advises, whilst Harry's sweetheart goes further and describes the thrice-decorated wounded veteran as a coward for wallowing in the past and refusing to face life beyond the war. With British soldiers being expected to experience pain stoically, as Wendy Gagen has demonstrated, and those who did not being "thought of as cowardly or childlike", the attitudes expressed by the women in the play directly reflect those of wider society.[30]

By encouraging Harry not to remember but to forget and look to the future, the women in the play voice an important message about national reconstruction and the individual's role within it. "The past is past and you and I can't alter it", the nurse admonishes Harry:

> But we can look to the future and we can help in the reconstruction […] You must start by reconstructing your own life. […] Banish all these morbid ideas. Reconstruct your own life and then you will be able to help in the reconstruction of others. (6)

Accepting the love of his sweetheart is the first step in this self-reconstruction. Being reassured that "blindness today is not a great infirmity" and that his sweetheart's "womanly tenderness" will be dedicated to caring for him and will "make up to him for his loss" (11), Harry is able to turn away from his wartime experience and look to the ways in which he can contribute to post-war society. In a clear signal of

his rediscovered masculinity and virility, his first contribution, as he tells the nurse euphemistically, will be to embark on a large reconstruction scheme to "rebuild the empire" (11). Ending on this hopeful note, with Harry transformed through the care and love of the women around him and turning away from his past to work towards the production of a new post-war generation, the play offers a clear message. And whilst the theme of love as cure would have been familiar to audiences from a number of wartime plays, unlike in those plays, where blinded soldiers would often miraculously recover their sight, here it is not physical recovery that love enables, but rather a mental recovery from a temporary failure of courage: a temporary failure to cope with the consequences of war.[31]

Whilst *The Silver Lining* appears to have been performed only once and there is little evidence of its reception, a year later the theme of "love as cure" and the exploration of post-war rehabilitation through the figure of the wounded serviceman was developed further in Arthur Pinero's "fantastic fable", *The Enchanted Cottage*.[32] Premiering at the Duke of York's Theatre, London, on 29 February 1922 and running there until 22 April, including a "flying visit" to the King's Theatre, Portsmouth, on 13 April 1922, *The Enchanted Cottage* did not have an extended run.[33] It was, however, subsequently staged by both professional and amateur companies, as well as premiering in New York in 1923 and being adapted for film in 1924.[34] At the heart of the play are two "relics of the war": Major Hillgrove, who was blinded at Vimy in August 1917, and Lieutenant Oliver Bashforth, who was wounded at La Boiselle in August 1918.[35] Serving as an exemplar of the "correct" way of dealing with the wounds of war, Hillgrove is cheerily reconciled to his new state, despite being a former champion tennis player who is now unable to play (an echo of the blinded artist who can no longer paint in *The Silver Lining*). Oliver, on the other hand, represents the dangers of remembering and failing to move beyond the war. Described as a "wreck of a handsome young man, broken by the war", who loathes his "shrivelled face and shrunken carcass" (19) and cannot even bear to catch sight of himself, Oliver hides himself away in a remote cottage, with his "chief object for the future" (12) being to "avoid those who have known me as I was!" (19). In a parallel to accounts of wounded soldiers like Second Lieutenant C. E. Healey who found it "a terrible strain to try and be normal and not show I was in pain",[36] Oliver physically hides himself away in order to avoid having to perform the acceptable face of the wounded soldier to the world. As such he offers, as one reviewer commented, "a poignant exhibition of that loss of hope and interest in life which is begotten in so many war victims by physical affliction".[37]

As in *The Silver Lining*, *The Enchanted Cottage* allows sympathy for the wounded soldier but ultimately demands that he move beyond his war-wounds and reintegrate into society. Once more it is women who facilitate this. Under the "magic" influence of the cottage and its housekeeper, Oliver falls in love with Laura, an unattractive

[195.195.80.197] Project MUSE (2026-03-12 16:08 GMT) University of the Arts, London

young woman from the village. It is through this love that his perception of his disfigurement, as well as his actual physical experience of it, is transformed.[38] To each other, although as they discover to their surprise, not to others, the couple are beautiful. The moral, as one reviewer commented, was that "beauty lives in the seeing eye, and that love's illusion is a reality".[39] What no review commented on, however, was the way that the play spoke to the figure of the wounded soldier. Through love Oliver's experience of his injury is transformed and he is emboldened to re-enter society rather than hiding himself away. And in the ultimate sign of his rediscovered masculinity and contribution to social reconstruction, the final scene of the play sees the figure of a tiny baby being placed in the arms of the sleeping Laura by an angel.

These romantic, reassuring narratives present love as the medium by which the physically wounded could move forward, leave the war behind and be reincorporated within the gender and social norms of post-war Britain. A notable absence within post-war drama, however, is the facially wounded soldier. As Suzannah Biernoff has argued, the disfigured face is almost entirely absent from British art.[40] The same is largely true of the theatre of the period. Playwrights on the whole were reluctant to tackle facial injuries and their consequences, and in the few cases where they did there was a marked difference from the way in which other physical injuries were treated. Charles McEvoy's play, *The Likes of Her*, is an apt example. First performed by the Lena Ashwell Players during their Bath season in 1923, and receiving rave reviews in London where it was performed at the St Martin's Theatre in August and September of the same year, the comedy is set in the East End during demobilisation. Attitudes towards the wounded run throughout, yet a distinction is drawn between bodily and facial wounds, as is clear when Alfred, himself a wounded veteran, describes a man he has found in a shell-hole. He has "got one leg left", he tells his friend, Sally:

> this arm was blowed away at the shoulder, he's got just a little sight in one eye, and that must go in time. And – and – something worse than that […] It ain't nice to tork abart, but his fice is all gorn like. (873)

Alfred can list the physical wounds this soldier has received; yet he can barely find the words to describe the facial disfigurement. Listening to the account makes Sally feel "faint and sick". "Why do they sive them like it?" (874), she asks: a provocative question which taps into the concern over how those men suffering what was described as the "worst of all injuries" could be rehabilitated and reintegrated within society.[41] The answer is given at the end of the play when this wounded man returns home with a glass eye, and a new face and voice. He is "tall, bronzed, and seemingly intact […], a pleasing figure" (887): literally having moved beyond his war wounds. Ultimately, and in a marked contrast to *Silver Lining* and *Magic Cottage* where veterans can move forward *with* their bodily wounds, in *The Likes of Her* the facially

mutilated soldier can only be rehabilitated when his wounds are "patched up" (874).

A very different treatment of the facially wounded veteran is offered in *The Person Unknown*. First performed in 1920 for the Grand Guignol season at the Little Theatre, London, H. F. Maltby's one-act horror play features as its main character a "hopeless – incurable" (15), facially disfigured veteran. Set in the early hours of the morning, after actress Daisy has returned from a masquerade ball, *The Person Unknown* depicts the fatal attack on this "bright young thing" by the wounded veteran she had inspired to sign up when she kissed him and sang "Your King and Country Need You" à la Vesta Tilly. Now, having returned from the war, wounded so badly that he can not even be helped by "bits of wax" (15) and with the lower half of his face covered in bandages, he seeks out the woman who promised, in the words of the song, to "love you, hug you, kiss you, when you come back home again". Removing his bandages to her horrified screams (although the audience are left to use their imagination) he cries out "I ain't so pretty as I was – but that is what you 'ave got to love and hug and kiss – 'cause I've got back home again" (15-16). In the final moments of the play he then attempts to hold her to her promise: struggling to kiss and hug her and, through his forced intimacy, killing her.

In a deliberately horrific twisting of the trope of love rehabilitating the wounded and enabling them to move past the war, here the wounded veteran's attempt to reintegrate into society through "love" does not create life, as in previous plays, but rather destroys it. For a man suffering "the worst of all injuries" there is, the play suggests, no escape from the war and no reintegration within post-war society through love.

In undercutting romanticised accounts of the rehabilitation and reintegration of the war-wounded, *The Person Unknown* tapped into post-war anxieties around the competing demands of remembering and forgetting. Questioning the limits of reconstruction with its ominous ending in which the unrepentant murderer disappears into the darkness, the play leaves unresolved the threat posed by unrehabilitated figures within society. At the same point, the audience were prompted to consider the dangers of forgetting. The wounded veteran, physically and emotionally stuck in the war, hiding in the shadows and obsessed with the promise made in the recruiting song, is placed in sharp contrast to Daisy and her friends who begin the play returning from a party, drinking champagne and laughingly dismissing the song as "that old thing" which it was about time "everyone had forgotten" (9). It is a contrast that offers a stark warning as to what might happen if society moves on from the war and leaves behind, or fails to remember, those who cannot. As one critic reflected on seeing *The Person Unknown* a second time and once they had got past the horror of it, it was a play which highlighted the extent to which "the world easily promises, easily forgets", adding thoughtfully that "the hero of yesterday has lost his halo. The feeling of intense pity, the feeling of enthusiasm, the feeling of interest in the fate of

[195.195.80.197] Project MUSE (2026-03-12 16:08 GMT) University of the Arts, London

the men who fought and bled for us has faded fast".[42]

Through the genre of horror, which as Joseph Grixti argues provides a "safely distanced and stylised means of making sense of and coming to terms with phenomena and potentialities of experience which under normal […] conditions would be found too threatening and disturbing", *The Person Unknown* forced audiences to face the limits of social reconstruction and the dangers of forgetting.[43] In the titular character, "turned […] adrift" and having to keep in the shadows (15), audiences were presented with a figure of both pity and terror. "Men want to spew when they see me", the Person Unknown tells Daisy, "but I'm a man just the same, and 'as feelings same as other men" (15). He is, at one and the same time, both a victim of the war as well as a monster created by it. As such he is the ideal figure through which to explore the contradictory and complex challenges of peacetime.

It seems appropriate to end with this analysis of *The Person Unknown*, a play that exposes the tensions between remembrance, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Over the course of this chapter I have argued for a distinction between the ways in which revivals of wartime plays and new post-war plays engaged with these competing demands: suggesting that whilst wartime plays clung on to the past and provided a regressive space in which to resist the demands of peace, new plays examined the possibilities for reconciliation and rehabilitation through the figure of the wounded soldier. The number of plays examined here is, however, necessarily limited. Far more work remains to be done in examining the ways in which post-war theatre engaged with the experience and aftershock of the Great War, both in national and transnational contexts. By looking at regional and amateur productions, international tours and film adaptations, new and revived plays, and middlebrow and popular theatre, it is clear that there are plenty of plays and productions which might be the subject of such analysis. Rather than being absent from the theatre of the period the war was a recurrent theme. It is time, therefore, that we reinstate the theatre within our cultural histories of remembrance.

Notes

1 "Peace and the Theatre: Outlook for the Future". *The Times*, 18 November 1918.
2 *Gloucester Citizen,* 8 November 1923; *Daily Herald*, 2 September 1920.
3 *Scotsman*, 9 October 1928.
4 Michael Woolfe, "Theatre: Roots of the New," in *Literature and Culture in Modern Britain: Volume 1, 1900-1929*, ed. Clive Bloom (London: Longman, 1993); Maggie Gale, "The London Stage, 1918-1945," in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre, Volume 3 Since 1895*, ed. Baz Kershaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 144.
5 Rebecca D'Monte, *British Theatre and Performance 1900-1950* (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 118.
6 Mark Connelly, *Celluloid War Memorials: The British Instructional Films Company and the Memory of the Great War* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2016), 1.
7 Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined. The First World War and English Culture* (London: Pimlico, 1992), 423.
8 Janet S. K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 188.
9 *Era,* 21 June 1916; for more information and a full list of performances, see: https://www.greatwartheatre.org.uk/db/script/122/, accessed 30 May 2020. My thanks go to Michael Waters for his work in tracing these performances for the Great War Theatre project.
10 To give a few examples, in April 1920 it was performed by a mixed cast of soldiers and women at the Royal Marine Barracks in Devon; in 1921 by the Burnley Amateur Comedy Company in aid of the 5th East Lancs Regiment and the House of Help; and in 1927 by the Sidmouth Amateur Dramatic Society in aid of the Waifs and Strays Home and the local Benevolent Fund of the British Legion. For further examples, see: www.greatwartheatre.org.uk/db/script/122/, accessed 12 August 2019.
11 *Tatler*, 28 February 1917. During the autumn of 1917 *Seven Days Leave* played in both Melbourne and Sydney, Australia. In January 1918 it opened at Broadway's Park Theatre where it played until June 1918 for a total of 156 performances. It then toured several major American cities.
12 *Burnley Express,* 28 April 1923. For a full list of performances, see: www.greatwartheatre.org.uk/db/script/1776/, accessed 12 August 2019.
13 *Tatler*, 28 August 1918.
14 For a full list of performances, see: www.greatwartheatre.org.uk/db/script/2700/, accessed 12 August 2019.
15 *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 26 August 1924.
16 Michael R. Booth, *English Melodrama* (London: H. Jenkins, 1965), 14.
17 Sidney Newman Sedgwick, *At the Menin Gate: a melodrama* (London: Sheldon Press, 1929).
18 Booth, *English Melodrama*, 14.
19 *Burnley Express,* 28 April 1923.
20 *Western Morning News,* 1 November 1920.
21 Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Burgomaster of Stilemonde* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1919), 121.
22 *The Burgomaster of Stilemonde*, dir. by George J. Banfield. Walthamstow Studios: British Filmcraft Productions, 1929.

[195.195.80.197] Project MUSE (2026-03-12 16:08 GMT) University of the Arts, London

23 Ernest A. Bendall, Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library, Add MS 66198 HH, in *Great War Theatre*, www.greatwartheatre.org,uk, accessed 1 October 2018.
24 *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 17 March 1920.
25 *Western Morning News,* 3 June 1922.
26 *Daily Herald,* 27 October 1921.
27 The *Daily Herald,* 27 June 1928, reported that "several German newspapers have protested that the film should not be exhibited" and quoted one paper calling it a "new war and hate film".
28 *Era*, 25 May 1927.
29 Suicide was illegal in Britain until the Suicide Act of 1961.
30 Wendy Jane Gagen, "Remastering the Body, Renegotiating Gender: Physical Disability and Masculinity During the First World War, the Case of J. B. Middlebrook," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'Histoire* 14, no. 4 (2007), 530, https://doi.org/10.1080/13507480701752169.
31 See for example: Anon. *The Rapid Cure,* 1916, Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library, Add MS 66128 G, in *Great War Theatre,* www.greatwartheatre.org,uk, accessed 1 October 2018.
32 Arthur Wing Pinero, *The Enchanted Cottage* (London: William Heinemann, 1922).
33 *Era*, 1 March 1922.
34 On 19 April 1923 the *Stage* reported a performance on 31 March 1923 at the Ritz Theatre, New York, presented by William A. Brady.
35 *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 2 March 1922.
36 Healey, C. E. Second Lieutenant, *My Terrible War*, 1960, IWMD 94/50/1 quoted in Gagen, "Remastering the Body," 530.
37 *Aberdeen Press and Journal,* 2 March 1922.
38 Laura is described as "a thin, exceedingly plain young woman with a sallow, unhealthy complexion, colourless lips, and poor flat chest […] dull, scanty hair is drawn tightly from her temples and she is so pronouncedly round-shouldered as almost to give the impression that she is deformed". Pinero, *Enchanted Cottage*, 5.
39 *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News,* 11 March 1922.
40 Suzannah Biernoff, "The Rhetoric of Disfigurement in First World War Britain," *Social History of Medicine* 24, no. 3 (2011), 667.
41 "Worst Loss of All", *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, press clipping dated May-June 1918, London Metropolitan Archives, cited in Biernoff, "Rhetoric of Disfigurement", 670.
42 *Illustrated London News,* 3 February 1921.
43 Joseph Grixti, *Terrors of Uncertainty: The Cultural Contexts of Horror Fiction* (London & New York: Routledge, 1989), 164.

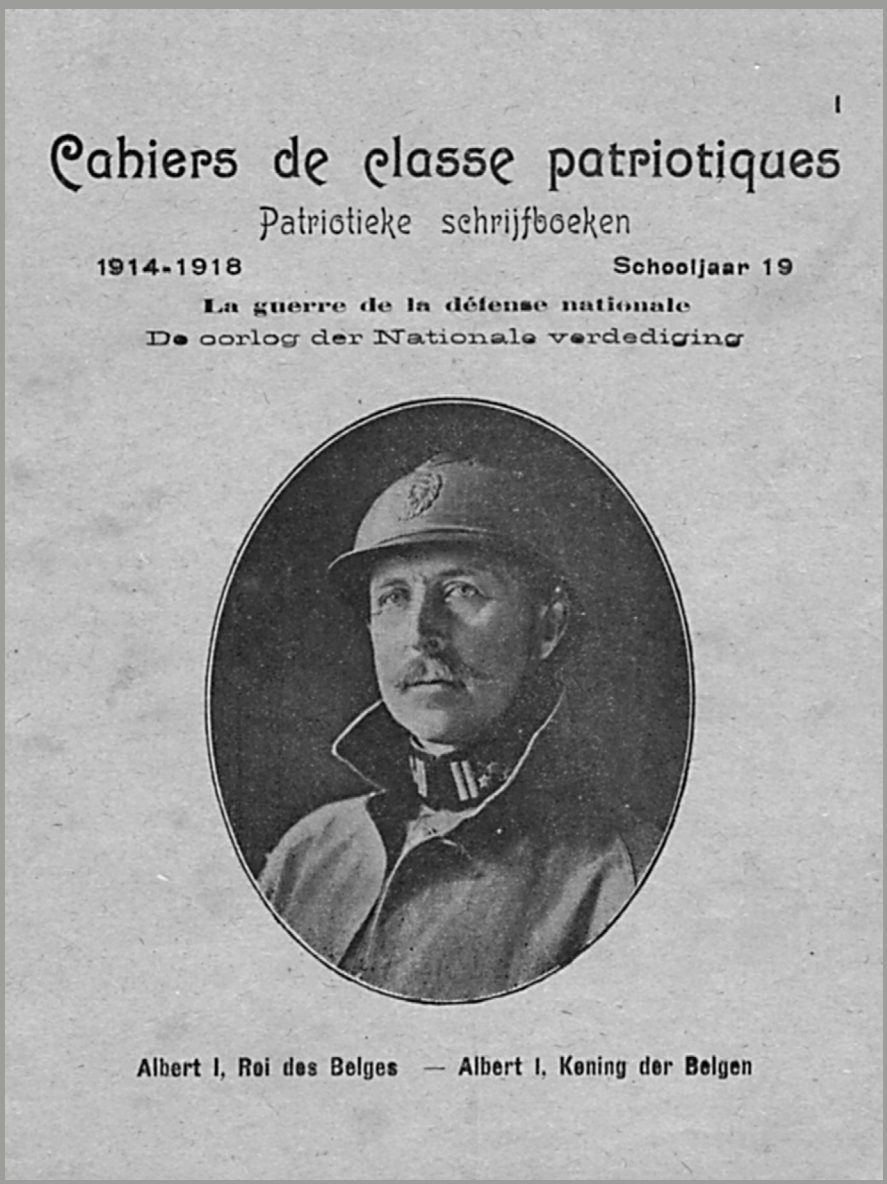

Fig. 1. Patriotic school notebook with King Albert I in uniform. (Ghent, Fonds Municipal Schools, Primary School Hippoliet Lammenstraat, Notebook Suzanne Braeckman).