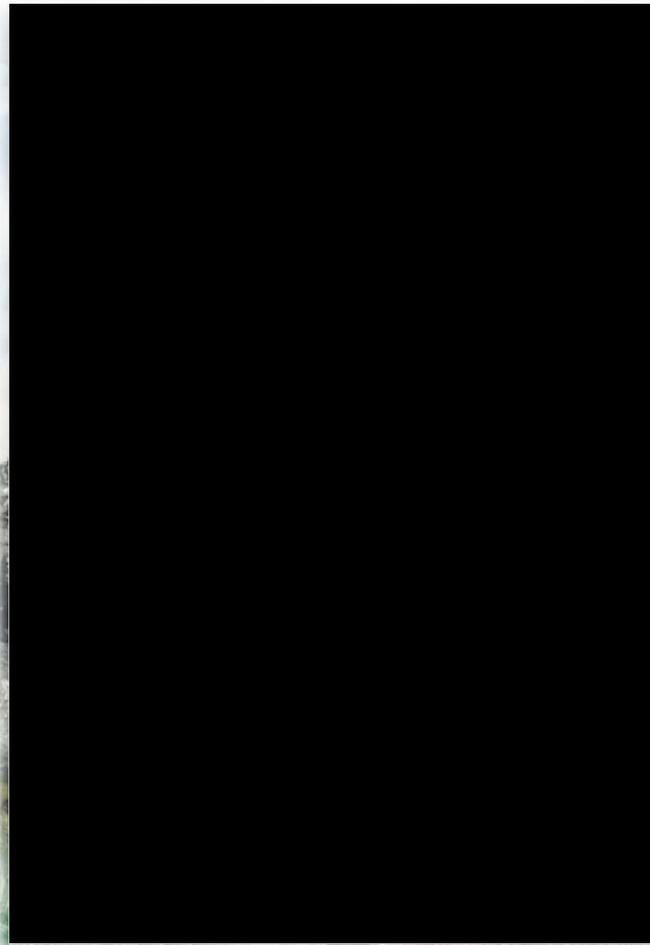


Redemptive Landscape in Rose Macaulay's
The World My Wilderness



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The cover shows *St Giles Church, Cripplegate* by David Tindle, RA, 1955.

On September 7, 1940, the skies over London filled with nearly a thousand German planes. Of those, 348 held the explosives that would fall on the capital city for the next two hours. This was the beginning of the London Blitz, a series of air bombings that lasted day and night until May 11, 1941.¹ London was attacked from the air again “between June and September 1944 and again from September to March 1945.”² During these fearful months, 20,000 people were killed, while over a million homes in the city were either destroyed or sustained some damage brought on by the Blitz.³ In 1946, though the Blitz was over and the bombings ceased, the ruins of bombed buildings remained. The last of the ruined buildings was restored as late as 1989. Thus, for more than forty years, the city’s landscape was marked with the remnants of war, fear, and violence. The city of London and its inhabitants have had no choice but to remember.

To many people, the ruins took on the quality of a memorial, imbued with special significance because of the people who once lived and worked in the now destroyed buildings. Ruins, however, are not static memorials. They are subject to change, more so than buildings that remain intact. The ruins left by the Blitz, neglected for years, became the site for new growth as nature moved in. The bombsites, as they were covered in plants and inhabited by more and more animals, transformed into oases of wilderness in the heart of the city. By 1942, even before the bombings were over, more than 150 species of plants and animals not seen within London for years were catalogued as growing or dwelling within the ruins.⁴ Rose Macaulay sets her 1950

¹ “Remembering the Blitz: The Big Story,” *Museum of London*, 19 Apr. 2005, 19 Feb 2010
<<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/archive/exhibits/blitz/frames.shtml?bigstory.html>>.

² Sarah Beckwith, “Preserving, Conserving, Deserving the Past: A Meditation on Ruin as Relic in Postwar Britain in Five Fragments,” *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes*, ed. Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2006) 202.

³ “Remembering the Blitz: Being Bombed,” *Museum of London*, 19 Apr. 2005, 26 Feb 2010
<<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/archive/exhibits/blitz/frames.shtml?bombed/bombed.htm>>.

⁴ Leo Mellor, “London and Ruins after World War Two,” University of Cambridge Literature Summer School Plenary Lecture (Cambridge, UK), 14 Jul. 2009.

novel, *The World My Wilderness*, within these spaces where the physical reminders of violence and destruction are bathed in an abundance of life in the summer of 1946.

Rose Macaulay, a Londoner during the war, experienced the terror of the Blitz firsthand. Before the Blitz she was, like others in the city, preparing to see the effects of the war. She drove an ambulance with the London Auxiliary Service and turned her focus away from fiction writing. Jane Emery describes in her biography, *Rose Macaulay: A Writer's Life*, that in 1940 Macaulay “put fiction on the shelf. She did not begin a new novel again for eight years.”⁵ The fear associated with the Blitz, combined with Macaulay’s own family struggles at the time, kept her from writing creatively. Instead, she reported “on the Blitz in the London weekly journals of 1940” and spent her time “not only driving an ambulance by night but was also pedaling about between the craters and rubble of London streets by day.”⁶ In this line of work, Macaulay grew to know the London geography very well, especially in its devastated state.

In 1941, German bombs destroyed Macaulay’s apartment, making her one of the many homeless, possession-less Londoners. During the bombing, Macaulay had been in Liss, making arrangements for the family home after the death of her sister, Margaret. Jane Emery writes about the sad series of events in that short span of time that left Macaulay devastated: “On 13 May she left at last to return to London. But on 10 May, the worst bombing raid of the Blitz had hit the British Museum, the House of Commons, Westminster Hall—and [Macaulay’s home,] Luxborough House. When Rose arrived in Marylebone, unprepared for personal disaster, she found her entire building a smoking, blackened ruin.”⁷ Everything that Macaulay had kept in her apartment was destroyed.

⁵ Jane Emery, *Rose Macaulay: A Writer's Life* (London: John Murray, 1991) 265.

⁶ Emery 263.

⁷ Emery 267.

Of her possessions, she missed her books the most. On May 14, after discovering the ruin, she wrote to Daniel George: “I now have nothing. I came up from Liss last night to find Lux House no more—bombed and burnt out of existence, and nothing saved. I am bookless, homeless, sans everything but my eyes to weep with.”⁸ Even years later, in a 1949 talk with the BBC, she recalled the pain associated with the loss of her books, stating, “I am still haunted and troubled by ghosts, and I can still smell those acrid drifts of smouldering ashes that once were live books.”⁹ For an author who had by this point already produced twenty-two novels, the loss of her personal library was devastating.

In losing her books, Macaulay’s writing process slowed to a halt. Eventually, however, she was prepared again to write—this time, with new inspiration. Her personal experiences served as a foundation for her writing: “her underlying grief for the victims of the post-war Waste Land was to infuse her dark and compassionate novel of 1950, *The World My Wilderness*.”¹⁰ The neighborhoods she traversed, destruction she saw, and bombsite plant growth she categorized would appear in this first novel after a ten-year hiatus. During her break from fiction writing, Macaulay “kept her spirit alive by continuing to explore fundamental questions both of history and of private lives: the nature and powers of Good and Evil; the struggle between barbarism and civilization; the problems of rebuilding after destruction; the possibility of mankind’s slow and wavering moral progress.”¹¹ All of these themes and questions are apparent in *The World My Wilderness*. As the main character, Barbary Deniston, and her stepbrother Raoul travel from the south of France to settle with other family members in London, their actions and observations illustrate these queries. Because they are in transition between two

⁸ Emery 267.

⁹ Emery 269.

¹⁰ Emery 264.

¹¹ Emery 264.

very different worlds and embody a confused wartime morality, they are perfect exemplars for the emotions and questions that Macaulay's own London trauma raised for her.

In planning and writing *The World My Wilderness*, Macaulay kept herself “richly informed—not by research in the library, but by pondering on the questions which had engaged her for the last ten years and by her lone journeys, the war, her mourning, her conscience, and her spiritual longings.”¹² After thinking, traveling, and recovering, Macaulay converted her wartime experiences, observations, and research into fiction. Penelope Fitzgerald, in her introduction to the 1983 Virago Modern Classics edition of *The World My Wilderness*, recalls “the alarming experience of scrambling after her that summer...and keeping her spare form just in site as she shinned undaunted down a crater, or leaned, waving, through the smashed glass of some perilous window.”¹³ Macaulay fearlessly pursued the information she needed for the novel by immersing herself in the bombsites. Exploring the ruined landscape around St. Paul's Cathedral offered Macaulay rich details in her research of the place and its plant life. The names of the “flowering weeds from these new catacombs...rosebay willowherb, chickweed, vetch, fennel, bramble, bindweed, thorn-apple, and thistle—make up a long rhythmic list of the natural elements which were daily overtaking what was once a bustling, thriving human community.”¹⁴ For Macaulay, getting into the place—the landscape—was the first step to getting into the novel she was writing. As Fitzgerald explains, “Rose Macaulay liked to insist that the ideas for novels came to her as places—‘backgrounds’ would hardly be a strong enough word for them.”¹⁵ Fitzgerald is right in that the places Macaulay describes are much more than backgrounds. The characters interact with their physical location in such a way that the place has a profound effect

¹² Emery 283.

¹³ Penelope Fitzgerald, Introduction, *The World My Wilderness* by Rose Macaulay (London: Virago Modern Classics, 1983) xii.

¹⁴ Emery 285.

¹⁵ Fitzgerald xi.

on the novel. *The World My Wilderness* would be a very different novel if not for the specific ruins where Barbary and Raoul dwell. These ruins shape the plot of the story and allow the characters to develop a sense of identity.

It is imperative to remember that though Macaulay describes most of London specifically and realistically, the novel still takes place in an imaginative landscape. *The World My Wilderness* is not a memoir, despite how it emerges from Macaulay's post-Blitz experience. The landscape and place theory present later in this discussion map onto Macaulay's writing, but the implications of theory are visible through Barbary. Her memories of Collioure are attached to place—to ruins. Her self-identity has been formed by a particular place. In order to illustrate Barbary's experiences with place, Macaulay situates her within this specific landscape. Macaulay's descriptions of the wreckage and geography of the ruined neighborhoods resonate with London's reality and history, but these accounts of place also have fictitious elements. *The World My Wilderness* is not intended to record Macaulay's autobiography or place memories. Instead, the novel presents and alters the landscape to reflect and influence Barbary's experiences.

In *The World My Wilderness*, the reader encounters Barbary and Raoul in the spring of 1946 as they prepare to leave the small French town of Collioure and the Villa Fraises, their home since the “fall of France” during the Second World War.¹⁶ Barbary, age seventeen, and Raoul, age fourteen, are part of a composite family inhabiting the Villa. Raoul's father, Maurice Michel, and Barbary's mother, Helen Deniston Michel, are husband and wife, each coming from a previous marriage. Roland, an infant son, is the product of their marriage. At the beginning of

¹⁶ Rose Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness*, 1950, Introduction Penelope Fitzgerald (London: Virago Modern Classics, 1983) 8.

the novel, however, Maurice Michel is dead, drowned by the French Resistance, or “Maquis.”¹⁷ Because Barbary and Raoul maintain a friendship with members of the Maquis and perhaps had some involvement in the drowning, they are expelled from their childhood paradise and sent to live in London. Raoul will live with an aunt and uncle while Barbary is to reunite with her father, Sir Gulliver Deniston, and his new wife and infant son. Barbary will return to Adelphi Terrace, the house where she lived before she and her mother moved to France. Richmond Deniston, older brother to Barbary and a war veteran readjusted to civilian life, escorts the two to London.

In London and missing the sunshine and freedom of Collioure, Barbary and Raoul “could barely endure the meaningless grey city streets, the dull, respectable, smoke-dark houses.”¹⁸ They escape this confinement, wandering in the city among the ruins of the Blitz around St. Paul’s Cathedral. When Raoul is not in school and Barbary not in her painting classes at the Slade, they take up residence in Somerset Chambers, the ruins of an office situated between the ruins of St. Giles Cripplegate Church and an equally ruined café. Barbary and Raoul come to this place more and more frequently, taking their meals in the rubble and meeting others—described as “*spivs*, and army deserters”—seeking refuge there.¹⁹ In this place, an urban atmosphere resembling the scrubland of Collioure, Barbary and Raoul continue their rebellious ways, shoplifting and resisting authority. Though she maintains her old habits, Barbary also begins to confront her past, especially her activity with the Resistance during the war. After Barbary suffers a dangerous fall in the ruins and Helen rushes from France to her daughter’s bedside, the two have the opportunity to find reconciliation. Their conversation and the ensuing revelation

¹⁷ See page 23 for a discussion of the multiple meanings of the word “maquis.”

¹⁸ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 50.

¹⁹ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 209.

that Sir Gulliver is not actually Barbary's father prompt Barbary's reestablishment within her mother's favor and a promised return to France.²⁰

In her chapter "Preserving, Conserving, Deserving the Past: A Meditation on Ruin as Relic in Postwar Britain in Five Fragments," writer Sarah Beckwith examines how Macaulay depicts the ruinous landscape and the various meanings that can be read from it. For Beckwith, the ruins are the key aspects of the London landscape, more important than street names or neighborhoods that have been left untouched. They evoke complex reactions, giving the ruined areas a nature that is difficult to define singly:

The novel is worth considering in detail, for it contains not only a complex social history of the postwar ruined landscape, along with a uniquely precise topography of east London's devastated terrain, but also a veritable grammar of ruin: ruin as mnemonic, as oblivion, as salve and negation, as redemption and disappearance, as sacred and profane, and finally as barbarian and civilian.²¹

Barbary, who inhabits a dual world—both imaginative and historical—sees the ruins in a similar, dualistic fashion. They inspire her memories of her life in Collioure while simultaneously erasing the evidence of what existed in these spaces before the Blitz. Barbary, hiding from the pressures of home, views this place as a refuge as well as hostile territory that contains real danger. She feels a sense of spirituality and an urge to seek redemption in the empty shell of St. Giles, while Mavis, another Londoner dwelling on the margins of society, sees the ruined church as "all bats and ghosts I shouldn't wonder, and all those windows and doors hanging loose, they're awful. God's houses, I *don't* think."²² In the novel, each of these meanings is legitimate because Macaulay describes the ruins as they are, neither romanticizing nor debasing them. Macaulay's objective description of the specific landscape creates this rich cluster of unified contradictions.

²⁰ This fact, though a major plot point, is not discussed further because it is not particularly relevant to the main contentions of the thesis.

²¹ Beckwith, 201-202.

²² Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 174.

The changes that the ruins of London endure as they are slowly covered by vegetation and inhabited by people and animals parallel the changes occurring within Barbary throughout the novel. As she seeks healing and forgiveness for her wartime activities in France, the ruins themselves are healing from the violence of the war as they are covered, becoming one with the earth. In this state they are sites for new life until the buildings are restored or the rubble cleared away. As Barbary traverses the ruined neighborhoods, witnessing reminders of the fear and pain brought on by the Blitz, she is forced to confront her past and reach a new level of self-understanding and maturity. The place that she inhabits enables this change. The landscape, its ruination, and its recovery mirror Barbary's experiences: her illicit activity in the maquis of southern France, her fall from her mother's favor, and her examination of conscience while exiled in London that eventually leads to reconciliation.

Several critics have analyzed *The World My Wilderness* in the sixty years since its publication. While these analysts offer varied and interesting ways of reading the novel, many focusing on place, none has examined Barbary's development and healing as a result of place. One article, K.L. Anderson's "A Horrid, Malicious, Bloody Flame: Elegy, Irony and Rose Macaulay's Blitzed London," argues against the novel possessing "any sense of redemptive Romantic mythologizing."²³ Anderson is correct in that Macaulay presents the ruins in as accurate a manner as possible, not idealizing the destruction as was done in propaganda at the time. The uncompromising, realistic nature of Macaulay's place descriptions, however, does not preclude places from being redemptive. The ruins are a redemptive landscape for Barbary in that they play a key role in encouraging her to confront her past. The wreckage and summer foliage

²³ K.L. Anderson, "A Horrid, Malicious, Bloody Flame: Elegy, Irony and Rose Macaulay's Blitzed London," *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London*, 5.2 (2007): paragraph 9, 4 Jan. 2010 <<http://www.literarylondon.org>>.

do not only remind Barbary of her time in Collioure. They also push her to face the memories that she would rather forget—to admit to the experiences she would rather not acknowledge.

The devastated landscape does not inspire this change in Barbary by being a welcoming, clean hideaway. While she takes refuge in these spaces, the wrecked margins of London society are not a completely safe haven. They are crumbling, decaying buildings associated with disreputable figures and danger. Barbary flees to this place because she fits in nowhere else. Because the ruins remind her of her childhood landscape, they become her preferred territory. At the same time, they also recall the danger and destruction of the war, reminding Barbary of her trauma. The reality and the pain associated with the ruins prompts Barbary to confront and reevaluate her life so that she can heal. Specific streets, buildings, and environments are not just the background to Barbary's activity but profoundly guide the course of her thinking, reflection, and development throughout the novel.

The influential nature of place is a tenet of J. E. Malpas's "Place, past and person," the eighth chapter of his book *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*. Malpas's main thesis is that "memory, and identity, are tied to spatiality, to embodiment and to worldly location."²⁴ A specific location, such as a fishing village in the south of France or the ruins of St. Giles Cripplegate Church in London, becomes a site where an individual can connect with the past or come to a new understanding about his or her identity. Though "Place, past, and person," published in 1999, makes no mention of Rose Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness*, or London amid the horrors of the Blitz, its theories apply to various ways of conceptualizing the bombed city and its inhabitants. While nearly fifty years separate the two publication dates, what Malpas contends concerning memory and the acquisition of self-identity is especially relevant to Barbary and Macaulay's penultimate novel as a whole. Thus, an understanding of Malpas's place theory

²⁴ J. E. Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1999) 184.

is critical for grasping the relationship between characters and place as portrayed in *The World My Wilderness*.

Malpas claims that “memories, particularly memories that have some personal or autobiographical component, are typically keyed to particular spaces and places.”²⁵ Remembering a specific event conjures a recollection or image of that event occurring in place. Malpas quotes Georges Poulet, author of *Proustian Space*, to illustrate how a sense of place makes memory possible: “Without places, beings would be only abstractions. It is places that make their image precise and that give them the necessary support thanks to which we can assign them a place in our mental space, dream of them, and remember them.”²⁶ Because place has the power to convert an abstraction into an accessible recollection, a sense of place is especially important with regards to a person’s conception of his or her history. A “personal or autobiographical” history is made up of memories, which in turn depend on place. In order to situate oneself in time and history, one also must have an understanding of place—how one’s physical surroundings compare to one’s past locations.²⁷

Malpas’s theory on the connection between place and memory speaks to Barbary’s experiences in the ruins. Her memories of her past are very much situated in place—primarily the maquis environment of Collioure. When removed to London, Barbary’s sense of displacement makes her memories of France even more dear. As Richie comments to Barbary on her first day in London, “this must all be pretty dim for you. London, I mean, after Collioure, and

²⁵ Malpas 176.

²⁶ Poulet, Georges, *Proustian Space*, 26-7 as quoted in J. E. Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1999) 176.

²⁷ The connection between a sense of place, time, and history relates to philosopher Edward S. Casey’s contention that “Time and Space, Body and Mind, reside *in* place and are resumed there.” See pages 25-27 and 34-37, where Casey’s philosophy of place will buttress my argument.

Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back Into Place: Towards a New Understanding of the Place-World* (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1993) 313.

leaving mother and Roland and Raoul and all your friends.”²⁸ Though Barbary has a history in London, her affinity is for France, her home from 1939 to 1946. Her new place in London is different from Collioure in that it is grayer and more restrictive, but Barbary simulates the landscape of the past by traversing the ruined neighborhoods around St. Paul’s. Because of how alike “London was to Collioure, the maquis of the city to the maquis of the Forêt de Sorède,” Barbary’s experiences within her new location suggest memories from the wilderness of her past.²⁹ She is able to recall the past seven years because they are memories grounded in place, while her specific location, in its strange familiarity, facilitates the process of remembering.

The connection between place, memory, and history contributes to one’s sense of self-identity. “Particular places,” writes Malpas, “enter into our self-conception and self-identity inasmuch as it is only in, and through our grasp of, the places in which we are situated that we can encounter objects, other persons or, indeed, ourselves.”³⁰ Just as a sense of place allows for memories of events and people to take form, place also is necessary for the development of the individual’s idea of self. The surrounding environment is the most basic “other” from which the individual distinguishes him- or herself. Because of the interactions an individual has in an environment, he or she learns to differentiate self and other, and thus begins the process of defining “self”:

I am not arguing...that we generally think of ourselves as defined by reference to the particular places in which we have lived or about which we have certain strong memories or attachments...Instead, the claim is that we are the sort of thinking, remembering, experiencing creatures we are only in virtue of our active

²⁸ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 43.

²⁹ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 210.

³⁰ Malpas 177.

engagement in place; that the possibility of mental life is necessarily tied to such engagement, and so to the places in which we are so engaged.³¹

Many aspects of how an individual understands the self derive from place. One's experience with place becomes the foundation for structures of thought and the conceptualization of history. Malpas is not simply claiming that specific places and personal experiences within these places determine how people identify themselves, though he writes that "such a psychological claim may indeed be true."³² What he emphasizes is that a person's interactions with place in general are crucial for that person's development as a thinking, conscious being. Within the novel, Barbary travels from France to civilized London to ruined London, and by the end of the novel she gains a promised return to France. In her adolescence, Barbary moves from place to place, confronting her displacement and need to find a welcoming environment to call home. Finding a place and facing the memories that these places suggest are part of Barbary's process of understanding herself and becoming mature.

The development of Barbary's identity within this ruined space would be impossible were it not for the challenges Barbary faces in having to relocate and establish her own sense of place anew. To illustrate Barbary's process of growing and defining herself in relation to the landscape, Rose Macaulay combines one of her many references to T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* with an original response:

Here, its cliffs and chasms and caves seemed to say, is your home; here you belong; you cannot get away, you do not wish to get away, for this is the maquis that lies about the margins of the wrecked world, and here your feet are set; here you find the irremediable barbarism that comes up from the depth of the earth, and that you have known elsewhere. 'Where are the roots that clutch, what branches grow, out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, you cannot say, or

³¹ Malpas 177.

³² Malpas 177.

guess...’ But you can say, you can guess, that it is you yourself, your own roots, that clutch the stony rubbish, the branches of your own being that grow from it and from nowhere else.³³

This passage, which comes after a long litany of all the plant life growing amidst the ruins, all the merchants forced out of the area by the bombings, and all the “empty shells of churches with their towers still strangely spiring above the wilderness,” marks Barbary as a member of this enumeration.³⁴ This place is the “maquis,” the same marginal territory that Barbary has called “home” for the past seven years. Out of the earth in this specific location comes “barbarism,” no doubt a word chosen for its connection to Barbary. Something like Barbary’s name, a mark of her identity, is coming “up from the depth of the earth.” The image of barbarism seeping up from the earth connects to the “roots that clutch” and “branches” growing from the “stony rubbish.” Because these are “you yourself, your own roots” growing from this place, the image evokes the sense that Barbary’s name, history, and identity are all products of this kind of land. Barbary’s self stems from the “stony rubbish,” signaling that, at least for now, she can grow in his environment hostile to others. In growing, Barbary will learn and advance, reacting to her surroundings in order to survive. She has power in that she “can say...can guess” who she is and what her mission must be. Her agency exists in that she must think and make decisions to navigate this wasteland.

What does it mean that Barbary’s identity is best expressed by a reference to *The Waste Land*? How does this poem in particular help the reader to comprehend Barbary? On close inspection, Barbary’s character and the poem have some striking similarities. Primarily, both are placed in a landscape that is inhospitable to human life. The ruins, though they are Barbary’s refuge and inspire her to seek redemption, are crumbling, dangerous places on the margins of

³³ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 129.

³⁴ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 128.

society. In *The Waste Land*, there “is no water but only rock / Rock and no water and the sandy road / The road winding above among the mountains / Which are mountains of rock without water.”³⁵ Water, necessary for life, cleansing, and renewal is not present in this space until the end of the poem. Similarly, Barbary cannot be renewed—redeemed—until the end of the novel when, prompted by place, she confesses her past to her mother.

Though she is the main character, Barbary’s past is never fully revealed to the reader. It is uncertain, even after her confession, what Barbary’s exact role was in the drowning of her stepfather. Her day to day activities remain a mystery, while the traumatic moments of her wartime experience, though alluded to, are never fully explained. Even her memories of being raped by a German soldier are given no more than a passing reference: “A thin, fair young face, the face of the enemy, the harsh, broken French of the conqueror, the smell of the forest in October, of wild apples and wood fires and heath...later the maquis had killed him.”³⁶ Barbary’s past is conveyed in allusions and fragments, similar to those found in *The Waste Land*. She is a complicated, difficult character to unpack; it is fitting that *The Waste Land* is what best maps her identity.

Despite the complexities and ambiguities surrounding Barbary, K.L. Anderson refuses to classify her as an agent. Anderson’s reading of *The World My Wilderness* labels Barbary as always naïve and static. Though the critic admits that “Macaulay toys with the possibility that naivety and creativity enable survival in gutteral, illogical times and thus Barbary is well-adapted to her epoch,” this view is not accepted in the end.³⁷ Instead, Anderson argues that Barbary has very little power or influence over her situation: “Macaulay refuses to let Barbary-as-Romantic-heroine to pass muster. Depicted without genius, agency, or even much self-awareness, Barbary

³⁵ T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, ed. Michael North (New York: Norton, 2001) 331-34.

³⁶ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 77.

³⁷ Anderson 7.

is what Forster might term a ‘flat’ character that survives through no heroism or adaptation of her own. Indeed, there is no heroism in this book—merely circumstance.”³⁸ To Anderson, Barbary’s survival and subsequent successful reentry into her mother’s favor are due more to situation than action on her own part.

Though most of Anderson’s arguments are helpful in reading *The World My Wilderness* and witnessing its connection to place, the claim that Barbary is “flat” and has no agency is not an accurate assessment of her role in the novel. One can certainly see Barbary as a product of her environment, but the landscape’s strong influence on Barbary does not mean that she is neither self-aware nor independent of circumstance. The reader observes Barbary as she slowly matures, reevaluating her choices and confronting her past. When Barbary is so affected in the ruined church, hearing Father Roger preach of hell, there is no question that she is experiencing a conflict that requires her to assert her agency. Without any agency, Barbary would be unable to realize her need for redemption or give a confession to her mother. If Barbary were merely a product of circumstance, she would not have completed the tasks needed in order to gain deliverance from ruined London and a return to her beloved home in France. While her place in the ruins certainly helped her come to these decisions, the influence of place does not negate the will and agency of an individual.

Because everything one undergoes is situated within place, the way that place influences an individual’s experiences often remains unconsidered. The importance of place goes unnoticed if one conceives of a place as a mere background to the events of life. Malpas argues that because place completely permeates daily life experiences, issues of place are disregarded until something brings them to the forefront of one’s consciousness: “[T]hough it seems ridiculous to say so, the places in which we live are always with us and usually they call upon our attention

³⁸ Anderson 7.

only in unusual circumstances—when our situation radically changes, for instance, or perhaps when we find ourselves in certain moods and frames of mind.”³⁹ When the landscape endures a radical change, like London after the Blitz as depicted in *The World My Wilderness*, then place-related concerns are actively regarded. In the novel, issues of place and landscape are prominent because the world that Barbary inhabits has just been turned upside down, leaving her evicted from her paradise childhood landscape of Collioure and forced into the foreign environment of London. Furthermore, because of the Blitz damage, the city itself is not the same London where Barbary was born, nor is it the same London to which her father is accustomed. The innumerable changes to the landscape of *The World My Wilderness* force the reader to consider place when examining the novel’s characters.

That London’s landscape could be so devastated connects with Malpas’s thoughts on the mortal nature of place. Though a building is constructed with brick or stone, it is still no match for the ravages of time or human violence. Like anything human or connected with humanity, a place will inevitably face some sort of end, or at least a change that alters its identity to the extent that it is no longer seen as the same place. As Malpas contends, “[i]f one accepts the principle...that human identity is inseparable from place and locality—then the fragility and mortality of human life must be seen as nothing other than the same fragility and mortality that attaches to the places and spaces of human dwelling and just as inevitable.”⁴⁰ The places from which we as humans derive our identities are potentially as mortal as we are. It is in their change—including their destruction—that concerns of place become salient. While “the places and spaces of human dwelling change and disintegrate,” these places “are themselves disclosed only in relation to movement, agency and, one might say, to change...the idea of a place immune

³⁹ Malpas 177.

⁴⁰ Malpas 191.

to change, immune to decay and disintegration, is the idea of a ‘place’ in which nothing at all can appear—neither self nor others, neither the things of the world nor even the place itself.”⁴¹ While the destruction brought upon the city of London is painful and unfathomable, it must be acknowledged as part of the “life cycle” of a place. People derive their memories and identities from the landscape because it changes and because they can change it. For London to be a place in which people engage with landscape—learning, growing, and experiencing life—it cannot be immortal or a kind of city outside of time.

J. E. Malpas’s place theory is so relevant to Rose Macaulay’s *The World My Wilderness* not only because the novel depicts a time of immense, catastrophic change in the landscape but also because it is very explicitly grounded in clearly defined places around the city. The characters do not inhabit the general ruins of London or traverse through nameless streets and churches. The majority of the locations in the novel, especially those around St. Paul’s Cathedral, have actual place names. Using these names, Macaulay lists the streets and buildings of the neighborhood with the same detail that she uses to catalogue the plants growing over the rubble:

A cat—or was it a wolf?—leaped from beneath his feet and fled scuttering among rocks. He started, and hurried on, running down Monkwell Street, past Barbers’ Hall, past the Coopers’ Arms at the corner of Silver Street, past St. Olave’s churchyard, past all the ruined halls, down the narrow alley of Noble Street that cut across the jungle to Gresham Street, past the church of St. Anne and St. Agnes⁴² with its gardens full of fig-trees, and the churchyard of St. John Zachary, bright with dahlias and sunflowers, and so down Foster Lane into Cheapside,

⁴¹ Malpas 191-92.

⁴² Rev. Dr. Johann R. L. Schneider writes on the history of the church during the Blitz for the parish’s website: “Almost three centuries after it had been destroyed in the Great Fire of London, St Anne and St Agnes was severely damaged by incendiary bombs during the night of 29-30 December 1940. A temporary roof enabled Anglican services to resume, but from 1963 to 1968 the church was restored through contributions from the international Lutheran community for use by Lutheran congregations.” Johann Schneider, “Early History of the Church of St. Anne and St. Agnes,” *St Anne’s Lutheran Church*, n.d. 8 Mar. 2010 <<http://www.stanneslutheranchurch.org>>.

where streets were paved and buildings stood up, and a solid, improbable world began, less real, less natural than the waste land.⁴³

Using this description and a map, one can follow the cat's—or perhaps wolf's—path south from the area of St. Giles Cripplegate. By naming the streets, Macaulay presents a precise neighborhood, placing her novel in a very real landscape. The ruined landscape is at this point slowly being recovered by the efforts of the community.⁴⁴ In its decay and restoration, the landscape marks itself as a real, changing place as described in “Past, place, and person.” Because *The World My Wilderness* is so grounded in place, it has clear access to the themes that Malpas raises. The locations mentioned, obviously mortal as seen by their ruinous state, have a rich history that is made accessible to the characters through their memories, interactions with the environment, and constant search for identity.

While Barbary inhabits the ruined areas around St. Paul's, her father, Sir Gulliver, enjoys “leisurely survival” along with his second wife and new child in the London neighborhood called the Adelphi Terrace.⁴⁵ Understanding this location, with special consideration for its contrast to the ruins that Barbary inhabits, gives an interesting portrait of Sir Gulliver and suggests why Barbary feels so uncomfortable in his home. The location of the house is itself symbolic. As Anderson describes, “transforming what was previously a swampland deemed unwholesome into luxurious four-storey houses and an extension of the Strand at street-level, the

⁴³ Rose Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 74.

⁴⁴ The churchyard is, in 1946, no longer a churchyard, but a garden. Emily Mealey and Ilene Sterns offer information about the garden's construction for the London Parks and Gardens Trust: “The garden is on the site of the former churchyard and church of St John Zachary, which was partly destroyed in the Great Fire. In 1339, The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths had acquired land here and built the earliest recorded livery hall on this site. Following the destruction of part of the Company's property during WW2, in 1941, firewatchers laid out the first Goldsmiths' garden, which won Best Garden on a Blitzed Site in 1950.”

Emily Mealey and Ilene Sterns, “London's Green Heritage” *A Walk Through the City of London*. London Parks and Gardens Trust, 2006, 8 Mar. 2010 < <http://www.londongardenstrust.org/guides/city.htm>>.

⁴⁵ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 38.

Adelphi Terrace represented an architectural conquering of an unstable geography.”⁴⁶ Thus, where Sir Gulliver lives peacefully in luxury has a foundation of unusable, ruined land. This fits the overly optimistic, propaganda-like view that Sir Gulliver and others like him represent. He is not left homeless or damaged by the Blitz in any way and can easily imagine that something of greatness—like his home—will come after ruin—like the swamp on which it is built.

What the reader does not know from the text of the novel, however, is that “Adelphi Terrace (originally known as Royal Terrace)...was demolished during 1936,” ten years before the time in which *The World My Wilderness* is set.⁴⁷ Thus, these residences could be described as “a reliquary shard or a ghostly shell...Serving as a synecdochal symbol of London’s age of progress, Macaulay’s [Adelphi] Terrace is part satire and part elegy, a post-war memorial to a questionable and remote past.”⁴⁸ The place where Sir Gulliver dwells does not really exist in London at the time of the novel. Unlike the other streets and buildings described accurately, Sir Gulliver’s world is not a part of reality, but separated from what Barbary and many other Londoners experience each day amid the ruins of the city. It only makes sense that Sir Gulliver does not live in a more accurate geographical and historical context.

Macaulay describes the ruined neighborhoods where Barbary dwells, hides, and plays in a more detailed, realistic fashion. The novel’s depiction of the area around St. Paul’s Cathedral “represents a more accurate historical palimpsest, evolving haphazardly over two millennia with a sprawling, illogical organicism appropriate to the impersonal, random devastation of the Blitz.”⁴⁹ The destroyed areas around St. Paul’s do not have the anachronistic and artificial order associated with Sir Gulliver and the Adelphi Terrace. While Adelphi Terrace was gone by the

⁴⁶ Anderson 17.

⁴⁷ “Adelphi Terrace,” *Survey of London: St Martin-in-the-Fields II: The Strand*, Vol. 18, Ed. Gater, G.H. and E.P. Wheeler, London, 1937, *British History Online*, British History Online, 2009, Web, 25 Mar. 2010.

⁴⁸ Anderson 19.

⁴⁹ Anderson 20.

time in which the book is set, St. Giles Cripplegate Church, where Barbary spends her days, was “hit on the north door in the summer of 1940, and in the following December the church was showered with so many incendiary bombs that even the cement caught alight. All that remained was the shell, the arcade in the chancel, the outside walls and the tower.”⁵⁰ Macaulay’s historically accurate description of St. Giles lends a quality of legitimacy to Barbary and her experiences. The authenticity associated with the description of the church, Barbary’s “primary refuge, her *maquis* home,” establishes Barbary as a character engaged in reality.⁵¹ Instead of shutting out the ruin, destruction, and pain, Barbary lives within it and lets the place live within her.

Why is maintaining historic and geographic accuracy more important when describing the ruins and not when describing the Adelphi Terrace? Both are London landscapes, and both somehow affect Barbary as she appears in the novel. The main difference between these two landscapes is that in the novel, one is marked by war while the other landscape ignores the destruction. In her father’s home, Barbary feels suffocated and farthest away from the sunshine, nature, and freedom that she once enjoyed in the Villa Fraises in Collioure. In the wreckage from the Blitz, Barbary is able to find independence, adventure, and foliage. As she and Raoul travel from the intact parts of the city into the ruined areas, wild plant life reminiscent of Collioure appears: “They got off in Cheapside, and walked up Foster Lane. Having crossed Gresham Street, the road became a lane across a wrecked and flowering wilderness, and was called Noble Street. Beyond Silver Street, it was a still smaller path, leading over still wilder ruins and thicker jungles of greenery, till it came out by the shell of a large church.”⁵² Barbary can identify with

⁵⁰ Major, Frank, “History of St Giles without Cripplegate,” *St Giles Cripplegate*, St Giles Cripplegate, n.d., Web, 25 Mar. 2010.

⁵¹ Anderson 23.

⁵² Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 52.

this sort of landscape—neglected, wild, and somewhat dangerous. Because the landscape she traverses is accurate to the time, readers familiar with London can recognize and identify with the place as well. In fact, according to biographer Jane Emery, “Rose’s descriptions were so exact in locating every bombed shop that a successful charge of libel was brought against her and her publisher for an adjective she used implying the questionable business methods of one firm, although she did not name it.”⁵³ Though Macaulay clearly had something to lose from writing so accurately about the environment and the people living and working there, her realistic descriptions have a critical role in the novel. By including such specific information about the ruins, Macaulay makes Barbary’s world a complex interplay of imaginative and historical landscape.

The complicated nature of the landscape depicted in *The World My Wilderness* and enumerated in Beckwith’s “grammar of ruin” agrees with Malpas’s theory that “[e]mbedded in the physical landscape is a landscape of personal and cultural history, of social ordering and symbolism...the narratives of the land as encultured and humanised cannot be prised away from its physical structure.”⁵⁴ The ruins can have what Beckwith calls a “complex social history,” though the term “social” generally denotes societies, communities, and associations of living things. What Malpas says is that the social cannot be separated from the physical landscape. Londoners cannot understand the varied symbolic meanings of ruined storefronts, homes, and churches without viewing, dwelling within, or thinking about the ruins themselves. Seeing the ruins as a symbol must be preceded by seeing the ruins as a part of the actual landscape.

The connection between the social and ruinous landscape is described at length in Rose Macaulay’s *Pleasure of Ruins*, a nonfiction text published in 1953. In this text, Macaulay

⁵³ Emery 285.

⁵⁴ Malpas 187.

questions the source of the pleasure that someone like Barbary takes in viewing or inhabiting the ruins. How much of one's pleasure in viewing ruins is "association, historical or literary, what part is played by morbid pleasure in decay, by righteous pleasure in retribution...by mystical pleasure in the destruction of all things mortal and the eternity of God...by egotistic satisfaction in surviving—by masochistic joy in a common destruction"?⁵⁵ The ruins become Barbary's refuge, reminding her of a place where she felt more at home. Thus, they bring pleasure through "association" in that the ruins allow Barbary to reconnect with her past.

The rubble that other Londoners see as a mark of pain and destruction does not have the same effect on Barbary. While Londoners associate the ruins with certain buildings and the people who lived and worked there, Barbary associates the ruins with a past disconnected from the Blitz. These buildings, immediately after the Blitz, are "for a time stark and bare, vegetationless and creatureless; blackened and torn, they smell of fire and mortality."⁵⁶ When Barbary encounters the ruins, however, they are not newly destroyed. They have already begun to be transformed from scarred "murdered bodies, their wounds gaped and bled" to structures that are reclaimed by nature, revered as history, and will eventually be absorbed into the earth and oblivion.⁵⁷

The Londoners who were familiar with the city before the Blitz cannot have the same experience with the ruins that Barbary does. As Macaulay explains, "ruin pleasure must be at one remove, softened by art...or centuries of time. Ruin must be a fantasy, veiled by the mind's dark imaginings."⁵⁸ A new ruin cannot be beautiful without some "remove" created by the viewer, whether through art, literature, or imagination. This remove exists for Barbary in both her

⁵⁵ Rose Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1953) xv-xvi.

⁵⁶ Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* 453.

⁵⁷ Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* 454.

⁵⁸ Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* 454-55.

imaginings and the physical changes brought onto the ruins by time and natural forces. As nature moves into the ruins of man-made spaces, the transformation begins. When Barbary and Raoul first encounter the destroyed neighborhood, they “stood still, gazing down on a wilderness of little streets, caves and cellars, the foundations of a wrecked merchant city, grown over by green and golden fennel and ragwort, coltsfoot, purple loosestrife, rosebay willow herb, bracken, bramble and tall nettles, among which rabbits burrowed and wild cats crept and hens laid eggs.”⁵⁹ The plants that invade the space become a covering or bandage for the wreckage. The destroyed buildings, devoid of constant human activity, are open to other forms of life. The plant growth acts as a protective layer, allowing the ruins to become the “refuge” that is Barbary’s maquis.

The varied ways of understanding ruins are evident in Barbary calling the ruined landscape the “maquis.” The word itself has two definitions, as described by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Along with indicating the “French resistance movement formed during the German occupation of 1940-5” or “a member of this movement,” the word also suggests a specific type of landscape.⁶⁰ In “certain Mediterranean coastal regions,” like Collioure, the maquis is “a plant community dominated by evergreen shrubs and small trees with thick, leathery leaves or spiny foliage.”⁶¹ In London, however, the maquis is “any remote or inaccessible area used as a refuge.”⁶² To Barbary, the ruins are associated with the Resistance and Collioure as well as a place of sanctuary, forgiveness, and even a means of escaping the law. The foliage-covered ruins

⁵⁹ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 53.

⁶⁰ “maquis, n2,” *OED Online*, Sept. 2000, Oxford University Press, 11 Feb. 2010, <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00301738>>.

⁶¹ “maquis, n1^a,” *OED Online*, Sept. 2000, Oxford University Press, 11 Feb. 2010, <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00301738>>.

⁶² “maquis, n1^b,” *OED Online*, Sept. 2000, Oxford University Press, 11 Feb. 2010, <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00301738>>.

surrounding St. Paul's Cathedral are labeled "maquis" because for Barbary, they embody all that the word signifies.

A primary aspect of the definition of "maquis" is that the area is "inaccessible." To many Londoners, the ruins are a place to avoid. Barbary's older brother, Richie, who saw the horrors of war as a soldier, holds a "civilized" view of the ruins. He "hated mess and smashed things; the squalor of ruin sickened him...he was aware of an irremediable barbarism coming up out of the earth, and of filth flung against the ivory tower. It was a symbol of loathsome things, war, destruction, savagery; and earnest, perhaps, of the universal doom that stalked, somber and menacing, on its way."⁶³ Richie could never inhabit the ruins as Barbary does because to him, the ruins only symbolize the fall of civilization. He cannot tap the healing power that the ruins have for his sister but simply waits for the day when "sites would be cleared for rebuilding, tottering piles would be laid low, twisting flights of steps destroyed."⁶⁴ To Richie, the ruins are not places to dwell or grow but places to travel through and subsequently remove.

Sir Gulliver similarly considers the future, wondering if Barbary "would eventually qualify as salvage, or would remain drifting by the wreckage, drifting beyond his reach."⁶⁵ When Barbary chooses to inhabit the ruins instead of her father's house, she renders herself "beyond his reach." He cannot comprehend her, nor can he force civilization upon her. As Barbary can physically conceal herself in the overturned church bells or behind a screen of foliage, she hides her thoughts and past experiences from her father. She relocates to a place he cannot follow, thus insuring her privacy and preserving the secrets of her past.

As Barbary dwells in the ruins, she creates another protective layer between herself and the pain of the destructive act that crumbled the buildings. Her imaginings related to the ruins—

⁶³ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 252.

⁶⁴ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 253.

⁶⁵ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 139.

how she conceives of them as her own—make the ruins into something other than the vacant shells of churches and storefronts. She can find pleasure in the ruins because she eventually thinks of them as her home. When she dwells in the wreckage of the Blitz, Barbary is caught between what Edward Casey calls “homesteading and homecoming.”⁶⁶ He defines homesteading as a journey “to a new place that will become my future home-place. The homesteading place is typically unknown to me...But I am determined to settle down for the long term in this novel place.”⁶⁷ Homecoming, alternatively, is a “return to *the same place*.”⁶⁸ It is going back to the original home, even if there is a different, “*contemporary home*...in one’s newly adopted home-place.”⁶⁹ Barbary’s situation is difficult in that her definition of what is home is inconstant.

Barbary was born in London and spent her first ten years of life in the Adelphi Terrace. London, therefore, is her original home. After homesteading in Collioure for seven years, Barbary clearly identifies France as her rightful home, even though it is not her place of origin. Thus, when Barbary comes to London in 1946, she experiences both a homecoming and a homesteading. At “home” in the Adelphi Terrace, “[e]ngulfed and assaulted by the resurrecting past, Barbary sat on the new bed, tears pricking against her eyes; her face disintegrated into the quivering chaos of sorrow.”⁷⁰ Her original home has changed so much that it only reminds Barbary that her past is gone. Her parents are no longer together and she no longer sees her mother, the person she admires and adores most of all. The unbearable reality of homecoming leads Barbary to seek refuge in the ruins—to homestead until she finds a place like Collioure.

⁶⁶ Casey 290.

⁶⁷ Casey 290.

⁶⁸ Casey 290.

⁶⁹ Casey 291.

⁷⁰ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 42.

Barbary's feeling more comfortable in the ruins, her place of homesteading, falls under what Casey calls the structure of "*habitat-habitus*."⁷¹ In this phenomenon, "[b]y the time we end and linger in a certain place, that place has become a habitat for us, a familiar place we have come to know (or to re-know)."⁷² The ruins, because they are initially familiar and eventually a constant dwelling place, take on the feeling of home, a place seen "at once for a first and for a second time."⁷³ Her adventures around St. Paul's Cathedral, though a homesteading, are "in effect a homecoming, a coming home to the habitualities of the place and the habitudes of its history."⁷⁴ The connection between London in ruins and Collioure, though broached earlier in the discussion, is most evident in Barbary's own reflections. While traversing the wreckage, she comes to the critical conclusion that because of the resemblance between the two places, London's maquis can be her new habitat:

Strange it would be, and frightening, the lost waste maquis in the dark, haunted by who knew what of wandering, sinister, lurking things of night. For it was there, surely, that such beings would foregather, as they had foregathered in the Forêt behind Collioure, the uneasy fringe that hung about the Resistance, committed by their pasts to desperate deeds. Where should the London Resistance movement have its headquarters but among the broken alleys and caves of that wrecked waste? It had familiarity, as of a place long known; it had the clear, dark logic of a dream; it made a lunatic sense, as the unshattered streets and squares did not; it was the country that one's soul recognized and knew.⁷⁵

Barbary's reflections on her new location and her analysis of why she views the ruins as a dwelling place is a critical passage for understanding Barbary as she attempts to find her own sense of place. While the ruins are Barbary's London home, they also have a dual nature. She

⁷¹ Casey 292.

⁷² Casey 292.

⁷³ Casey 295.

⁷⁴ Casey 295.

⁷⁵ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 61.

imagines them as “strange,” “frightening,” and “haunted,” a place of danger that one might avoid. At the same time, more than any other location in the city, this is “the country that one’s soul recognized and knew.” Her love of the place defies rationality. Her “soul” knows this land, feeling in this particular place a connection with the Collioure home from which Barbary was displaced. Though it is not welcoming or even safe, Barbary knows nowhere else in London that provides the same feeling of comfort.

Barbary’s first day back in the Adelphi Terrace triggers her emotional memories of other times she spent in that specific place. In a comparable fashion, the ruins prompt Barbary’s memories of events that occurred in a place that is similar but not the same. In the wreckage around St. Paul’s, Barbary expects to find “lurking things of night,” individuals like those in Collioure who are “committed by their pasts to desperate deeds.” The members of the Maquis, who resisted the German occupation during the war, continue their acts of mild terrorism even though the war is over. These men and women, for example, continue to block train lines, a habit “contracted in the enterprising days of the Occupation, and now automatically continued; these Resisters still waged their war, resisting policemen, factories, rentiers, capitalists, collaborators, mayors and trains.”⁷⁶ A fixation in the past keeps these individuals from a more peaceful life.

Like the Maquis, Barbary too is led to desperate deeds, a reflection of the violence she witnessed during and immediately after the war. Her detached mother, Helen, observes Barbary’s tendency to continue her wartime activities: “During the last years, Raoul has rather occupied himself with les enfants du maquis than with the Lyceé. He still does so, and so does Barbary. The young people regard it as a kind of club, and now that the war is over, it still absorbs them.”⁷⁷ Barbary cannot escape from the behaviors to which she was accustomed during

⁷⁶ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 40.

⁷⁷ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 11.

the war. In France she has some connection to her stepfather's drowning, and even when relocated to London, she disobediently avoids her father's house, steals, and resists the police, whom she labels "Gestapo." The ruins and their connotation as being a lawless landscape enable Barbary to continue living this way.

In its resemblance to the maquis of Collioure, the rubble simulates Barbary's childhood experiences of the war. Place, then, becomes the link between Barbary's present and her history. While she explores the destruction of the Blitz, Barbary is simultaneously reliving and confronting her past. At the end of the novel, Helen reflects upon this sentiment, acknowledging the connection between London and Collioure and its effects on her daughter's behavior: "How much at home Barbary must have felt, hiding and being chased about the ruins with Raoul and spivs and deserters. *Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt*: the maquis is within us, we take our wilderness where we go."⁷⁸ Helen sees the maquis as something within Barbary, a part of her personality. This inner maquis, however, would not be visible or even possible without the effects of the landscape. Barbary develops her wild qualities in France, while the ruined state of Barbary's new haunts is what allows her to bring her own childhood wilderness with her to London. Place allows the past and the present come together in her mind.

Despite their association with war and lawlessness, the London ruins also have a special spiritual significance to Barbary. Though the ruins are home to military deserters escaping the law, thieves, and wayward children, when Barbary and Raoul are alone in the ruins, the landscape becomes a site for reflection and meditation. To them and others gazing upon or dwelling in the crumbled buildings, "ruin became more than an artistic fashion: it was a mystique, almost a religion; it gave its devotees the most ecstatic satisfaction."⁷⁹ Barbary and

⁷⁸ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 210.

⁷⁹ Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* 20.

Raoul recognize some connection with the divine while exploring the remains of St. Giles Cripplegate. Even though the church itself is destroyed, there still exists the sense that “the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”⁸⁰ The destruction of the Blitz only amplifies this feeling. When Barbary and Raoul first encounter the ruined church, its windows shattered and its floors littered with pages from hymnbooks, they feel a strange sense of peace. From a rooftop, “they surveyed the gaping shells, the tall towers, the broken windows into which greenery sprawled, the haunted, brittle beauty, so forlorn and lost in the wild forsaken secrecy of this maquis: it was their spiritual home.”⁸¹ The destruction of the neighborhood and its subsequent reclamation by weeds, wild flowers, and animals is beautiful to them. As nature moves in to cover and heal the damage done by nights of bombing, the ruined buildings are redeemed. The foliage provides a protective covering, allowing these spaces to once again be beautiful. Barbary and Raoul, as witnesses, are receptive to the spiritual nature of this process.

As the ruins are reclaimed by the protective covering of flowers and weeds, Barbary also seeks renewal in this wrecked environment. The spiritual nature of her surroundings, alongside the emotions associated with seeing the neighborhood utterly destroyed, evoke in Barbary an urge to reflect upon her past and consider what healing she needs. While the similarities between the London and Collioure maquis—the greenery, lack of authority, and clandestine activities common to the ruins—initially give Barbary the illusion that she does not have to change, she soon experiences a transformation. The wreckage around St. Paul’s, especially the ruins of St. Giles, change from a place where Barbary can continue her life of resistance and mild violence to a physical reminder of her own mortality. Barbary knows enough about Christian belief to comprehend the charred literature she finds strewn about the church floor. In her playing, she

⁸⁰ Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* 336.

⁸¹ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 57.

becomes her own fire and brimstone preacher, delivering the Dies Irae: “‘Day of wrath,’ she read aloud, ‘O day of mourning! See fulfilled the prophet’s warning, Heaven and earth in ashes burning! Oh what fear man’s bosom rendeth when from Heaven the Judge descendeth.’”⁸²

Barbary is in the perfect location to encounter the Dies Irae. She stands within a building that has already experienced “Heaven and earth in ashes burning.” It is in the ruined church that the Day of Judgment resonates the most for Barbary.

Because Barbary visits and dwells within this abandoned place, she adopts it as her own and takes on duties that one generally associates with a church. She decides that in this church, “I shall preach.”⁸³ What she preaches derives from her own experiences—her resentment regarding her fractured family and fear of hell. She tells Raoul, “I shall say how divorced people can’t really marry again. And I shall preach about hell...we’ll have hell in our church.”⁸⁴ Even when Barbary has the chance to choose what is included in her church and what is not, hell remains. It is a sign that here, amidst Christian symbols of life, death, and life after death, Barbary is considering her own life and beginning to fear the consequences that her deeds may incur.

While Barbary’s maquis past prepares her for the challenges she faces scrambling through the ruins and avoiding the authority of her father, Barbary is not as at ease in the ruined St. Giles. She feels excluded from what the church represents because she was raised without religion. As Barbary begins to consider the immoral nature of her wartime activities with Raoul, she realizes that there is only forgiveness for him. She urges, “Raoul, you must repent, so that you don’t go to hell. You can repent, because you were brought up a Catholic. I can’t, because I’m a heretic, and heretics can’t undo what they’ve done.”⁸⁵ She sees Raoul’s Catholicism as his

⁸² Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 65.

⁸³ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 57.

⁸⁴ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 58.

⁸⁵ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 66.

way to undo the past, an option that is closed to her. Though both have fallen from the paradise of Collioure, only Raoul can be reconciled and avoid the judgment that Barbary encounters in the *Dies Irae*.

Being in this environment is what directs Barbary's thinking about the past and how it affects her present and future. What happens to Barbary within the ruins of St. Giles aligns with Malpas's theories about the power that place has in enabling people to consider temporality: "In place, and only in place, can we encounter the possibility of past and future, of nearness and distance, of temporality and spatiality—only within the complex unity of place is any such encounter at all possible."⁸⁶ It is Barbary's location in St. Giles specifically that links the past and present. St. Giles occupies an ambiguous position for Barbary; it is part of the ruined neighborhood where she escapes the suffocating atmosphere of her father's house, but at the same time Barbary feels excluded from what the church symbolizes. It has a connection to her past and simultaneously urges her to think about her future—whether she should continue in sin or repent. To Barbary, the church is associated with morality; it exalts the righteous and urges the sinner to turn away from his or her wrongdoing. Barbary cannot help but feel pressure to confess and be reconciled.

The pressure to confess her past, mainly whether or not she had any connection to her stepfather's drowning, is most visible in Barbary's fixation with and fear of hell. She and Raoul alter the ruins to reflect this fear, since "most of the space they covered with paintings of the Last Judgment and souls in hell, such as churches have."⁸⁷ The scene of the Last Judgment is deemed an appropriate subject because the youth are in a church. Barbary feels no connection with most

⁸⁶ Malpas 181.

⁸⁷ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 129.

aspects of religion, but she can proclaim, “I believe in hell.”⁸⁸ This is where her greatest fear originates: she believes in hell but sees no way that she can avoid it. She may confess and repent, but absolution is not accessible to her. She explains her reasoning to Raoul, arguing that because she is not a Christian, she cannot be forgiven:

[I]f we others do wicked things, they stay done. Christians can undo what they’ve done by confession and absolution...If you are a Christian, you just think how you have sinned against God, and God will forgive you if you repent. But we others can’t be forgiven, because we sin only against people, and the people stay hurt or killed, or whatever it is we have done to them. It would be better to be a Christian and get forgiveness, and only mind about God and hell.⁸⁹

Barbary’s explanation reveals her as especially vulnerable and isolated. She does not have a god against whom to sin and she cannot ask the people she has hurt, like her stepfather, for forgiveness. While Barbary thinks of her own acts of violence committed during the war, she sees the wreckage of London begin to heal from its own violent wartime experiences. She witnesses “dense forests of bracken and bramble, golden ragwort and coltsfoot, fennel and foxglove and vetch, all the wild rambling shrubs that spring from ruin” gradually covering the rubble.⁹⁰ The earth is the first to forgive the war’s brutality, restoring the wounded landscape with new life and plant growth. Instead of human effort repairing the wreckage, “nature itself is engaged in salvage, a regenerative retaking of the city from human destruction.”⁹¹ Though the landscape itself can find restoration from nature, Barbary, in her fear and guilt, has none.

The connection between Barbary’s fear and place is most clear when Father Roger climbs through the window in St. Giles and begins to preach. Barbary is obviously affected by hearing

⁸⁸ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 174.

⁸⁹ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 58.

⁹⁰ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 128.

⁹¹ Mellor, Leo, “Words from the Bombsites: Debris, Modernism, and Literary Salvage,” *The Critical Quarterly*, Hull: 2004, 46.4, 77-89, Web, 20 Dec 2009, 84.

Father Roger proclaim, “Hell is where I am, Lucifer and his legions are in me. Fire creeps on me from all sides; I am trapped in the prison of my sins; I cannot get out, there is no rescue possible, for I have shut myself from God in the hell of my own making.”⁹² To see a man of faith so tormented is frightening to Barbary. Like Father Roger, she also feels like “there is no rescue” for her, as a self-described “heretic.”⁹³ In the destroyed church, before her own painting of the Last Judgment, the sermon is particularly poignant. Like Barbary’s fear, Father Roger’s hell is also the product of place. The young clergyman coming into St. Giles to retrieve Father Roger explains, “He often wanders around the ruined churches, looking for his own. His church was bombed in 1940; he was trapped in the wreckage for two days; he could scarcely move, and the flames raged around him...He thinks he’s in hell and can’t get out.”⁹⁴ Father Roger’s mental instability comes from the trauma of being trapped in a horrific place. His attempts to heal himself bring him to other churches. If he could find his own church—his own place—he might regain some of his sanity. Because he is displaced, a part of him is missing. He cannot acknowledge that the 1940 bombing, fire, and entrapment in his old church is past. Along with his sense of place, his sense of time is gone.

By the end of Father Roger’s sermon, “Barbary, also on her knees, was crying. It was true, then, about hell; there was no deliverance.”⁹⁵ Barbary fears that she can never escape her sins, primarily failing to rescue her stepfather from the hands of the Maquis because of her constant bitterness towards her parents’ separation. For Barbary to consider confessing as a means of deliverance is surprising because of her previous resistance to discussing her past. Earlier in the novel, she became enraged explaining to her father why she avoided her Uncle

⁹² Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 166-67.

⁹³ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 66.

⁹⁴ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 168.

⁹⁵ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 167.

Angus's questions about France: "I didn't want to talk about it...about the maquis, and the Germans, and what we did. Lots of things. I don't want to talk about it. I won't.' Her voice rose shrilly. I *won't* talk, I won't, I won't; dumb refusal armed itself behind her closed lips."⁹⁶ Barbary's experiences in the landscape of St. Giles have the power to convert this vehement opposition into a willingness to share her memories and find comfort.

A chance for this confession comes after Barbary's accident in the ruins, when, fleeing from the police, Barbary "ran along a broken edge of wall; startled, she forgot to look where she trod, stepped forward into nothingness, plunged steeply down a chasm into the stony ruins of a deep cellar, and there lay still beneath a thorn-apple bush, among the medieval foundations of Messrs. Foster, Crockett and Porter's warehouse."⁹⁷ Though they are primarily her refuge, the ruins are also an adverse environment. This dual nature, however, is characteristic of ruins. Sarah Beckwith classifies ruins "as salve and negation," places that heal and redeem as well as places that destroy.⁹⁸ Even "home" in general has no single meaning. As Casey argues, a "home can be experienced at one time as perfectly amicable, at another time as hostile; yet it remains one and the same place."⁹⁹ The ruins themselves have not changed. Instead, the accident changes Barbary's relationship to the ruins. They can still be counted as a home, but are no longer the home where she feels safe and welcome.

The accident that threatens Barbary's life and alters the sense of comfort she feels in the ruins is another link in a chain of displacements that she has experienced. Barbary was first separated from home at the age of ten when she and her mother left London for Collioure. When

⁹⁶ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 132-33.

⁹⁷ Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 194-95.

⁹⁸ Beckwith 201-202.

⁹⁹ Casey 294.

sent away from this paradise, Barbary is “forced out of a place,” displaced and alienated.¹⁰⁰ When her next location, the Adelphi Terrace, is found to be suffocating and confining, Barbary is left with one last option. She homesteads within the ruins, making them a substitute for the place she misses the most. When the ruins too are no longer safe—no longer conceived as a welcoming home—Barbary is left in the a state of placelessness that Casey describes: “my place is not *this* place. By the same token, this place is no longer *my* place: indeed, my place has become other to (and other than) me.”¹⁰¹ In this situation, Barbary’s sense of place and identity are both threatened. Injured and unconscious with no refuge, she is set adrift, in desperate need of a return into place.

Barbary’s one hope for regaining a sense of belonging anywhere is to return to France, a journey that requires her to be reconciled with her mother. Helen has the power to deliver Barbary from two kinds of hell. Barbary believes that if she can confess her wartime sins, she will be saved from the literal hell that terrifies her throughout her time in the ruins. Helen is the one person who can hear “heretic” Barbary’s confession. The reward for this confession—a promised return to France—would also be a deliverance from the hell of having no place and being permanently without a safe home. When Barbary does give a vague confession of what happened regarding her stepfather’s drowning, her divulgence is very grounded in place: “‘Mummy,’ she said, speaking low and quickly, ‘we weren’t there when Papa Maurice was drowned. Raoul and I weren’t there.’”¹⁰² She does not say “we did not participate” or “we were not complicit,” but “we weren’t there.” The wild landscape enabled her lawlessness, while the ruined landscape encouraged her search for redemption. It makes sense that place has a role in the act of confession as well.

¹⁰⁰ Casey 308.

¹⁰¹ Casey 308.

¹⁰² Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* 230.

Barbary's dwelling place in the ruins of London, her substitute for her former home in Collioure, is simultaneously a comforting place of reflective identity and a failed home. Though this neglected, marginal space allows for Barbary to escape the unhappiness she feels for being separated from her mother, it cannot be a permanent home. Barbary's moving into the ruins enacts what Casey describes as an effort to "re-place" herself after being forcibly removed from a place or witnessing the destruction of a place.¹⁰³ Dwelling in the wreckage left from the Blitz makes available to Barbary a method for re-placing herself in Collioure. She is moved to action in the "first place by *place itself*," inspired by her longing for Collioure and the strangely familiar landscape around St. Paul's.¹⁰⁴ The significance that Casey associates with Barbary's actions and other methods of re-placement is ultimately manifest in the identities of those enacting the re-placement: "what goes on when I (or anyone else deprived of place) undertake such concerted actions of re-placement, actions having so little ostensible utilitarian significance? The answer is: a re-creation of the self who inhabits (or will re-inhabit) the place in question."¹⁰⁵ In her state of placelessness and quest for a welcoming home, Barbary finds, primarily, and profoundly, herself. In order to be able to re-inhabit Collioure or her beloved France, Barbary must recreate herself, a change that depends on the unity between the old and the new. She must confront her past and find redemption. Once she is forgiven for her wartime sins, Barbary is prepared to re-inhabit France, the home once taken from her.

The physical landscape of the ruins of London enables Barbary to go through this change. As she seeks a substitute for her beloved childhood landscape, Barbary finds the inspiration to reconsider her life. She watches nature slowly reclaim the wreckage left by the London Blitz, covering the ruins with a healing layer of vegetation. In these spaces, she finds a kind of

¹⁰³ Casey 311.

¹⁰⁴ Casey 311.

¹⁰⁵ Casey 311.

spirituality, one that leads her to ponder morality, civilization, and the threat of hell. Without the landscape in which to homestead, remember, and form an identity, Barbary would have no hope of confession, redemption, or a promised deliverance. The wounded, wild places she traverses are key to her development and process of maturation.

In crafting the relationship between Barbary and the landscape, Rose Macaulay affirms the power and importance of place. She documents the streets, buildings, vegetation, and place history with accuracy, allowing for complex and multiple ways of interacting with and understanding the landscape. At the same time, she creates an imaginative landscape, the novelistic space in which her characters can live and grow. In *The World My Wilderness*, place serves not as a background, but as an agent. Characters live within the landscape, but the landscape also lives within them and changes them. In this space, Barbary finds a home and loses a home. She recognizes her past mistakes and is enabled, finally, to gather the strength and courage required for confession. Through Barbary's experiences in the landscape, Macaulay shows that there is hope for healing and redemption, not only for Barbary and Macaulay, but also for London and ultimately even civilization itself.

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