

Only Time: time and trauma in *Yellowjackets*

Simon Bowie @SimonXIX <https://simonxix.com>

content warnings

discussions of: PTSD and trauma; cannibalism; plane crashes;
nuclear war; miscarriage; eating disorders
images of: funerals; a plane crash; a nuclear explosion



still from *Yellowjackets*, S01E01, 00

om *Yellowjackets*, S01E01, 00:01:55



From *Yellowjackets*, S01E01, 00:52:07



still from *Yellowjackets*, S01E01, 00:5



still from *Yellowjackets*, S01E01, 00:54:51

from *Yellowjackets*, S01E01, 00:54:51



“Time perception [...] is the conscious, and perhaps unconscious, sensory experience of time.”

Lenore C. Terr (1984), ‘Time and Trauma’, *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 39(1), p. 633. doi:10.1080/00797308.1984.11823446.

“This study of 20 children and ten adults, each of whom was psychically traumatized, describes how time is perceived and remembered during and after an overwhelmingly surprising and terrifying experience. Some of these traumatized people experienced alterations in the perception or memory of time duration, and others experienced confusion in sequencing or in orienting themselves in time.”

Lenore C. Terr (1983), 'Time sense following psychic trauma: A clinical study of ten adults and twenty children', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 53:2, p. 260. doi:10.1111/j.1939-0025.1983.tb03369.x



still from *Yellowjackets*, S01E01, 00

om *Yellowjackets*, S01E01, 00:54:51



*From
Trinity
to
Trinity*

KYOKO HAYASHI

Translated by Eiko Otake

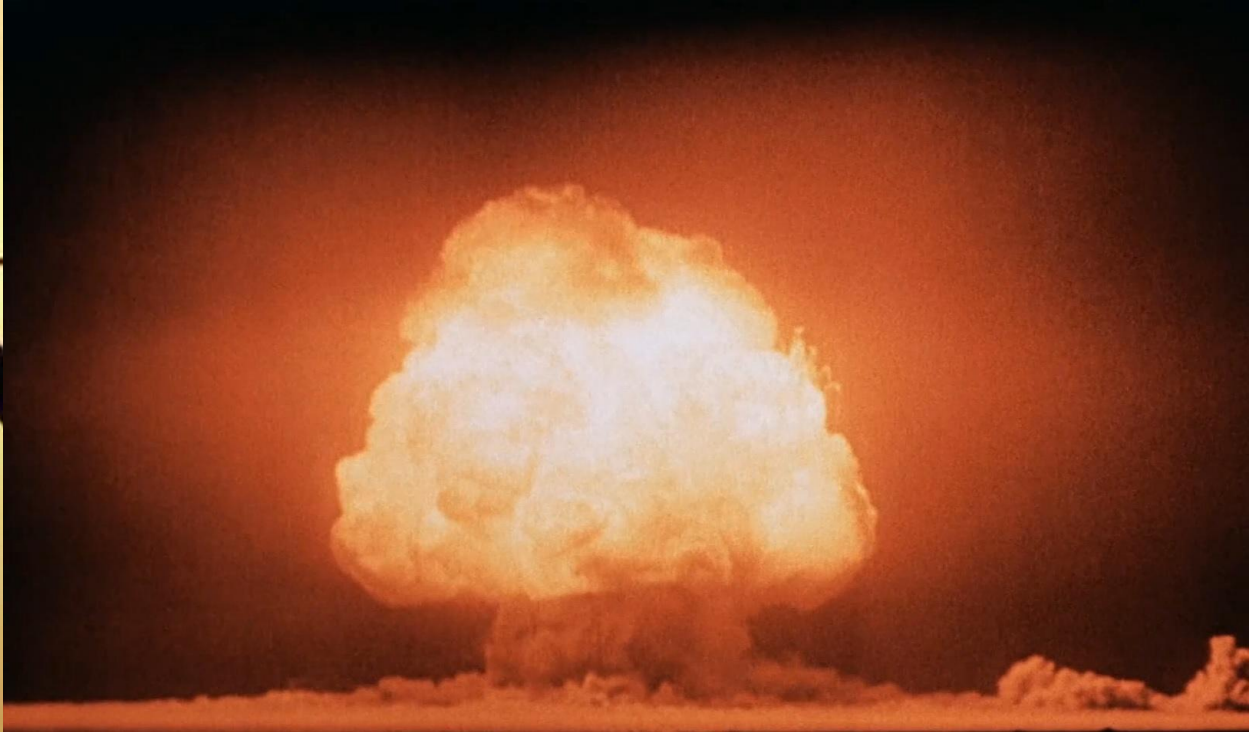


photo by United States Department of
Energy of mushroom cloud over Trinity,
seconds after detonation. licensed as public
domain.

“In an attempt to reflect both the continuity and the unevenness of time, Hayashi’s narration does not maintain a linear structure. In her stories, past and present are not only related, they are intricately united. The lives of both the dead and the living interact. Memories and premonitions are just vessels that travel between past, present, and future.”

Eiko Otake (2010), ‘Introduction’ in Hayashi Kyōko, (2010) *From Trinity to Trinity*, translated by Eiko Otake. Barrytown: Station Hill, pp. xx–xxi.

“Soon my eyes caught some big letters on a panel: “Count Down to Nagasaki.” [...]

I felt time stop in front of the panel.

“Count Down to Nagasaki.” While the time toward death in Nagasaki was ticking, what were Kana and I doing in the Ohashi Arms Factory?

Standing in front of a garbage can and being bitten by fleas as usual, I was separating paper trash collected from the factory for recycling. [...] In my factory, there was no longer much paper trash to recycle, so at the very moment the bomb left the plane, I was trying to locate the sound of a small roar the factory chief told us he had just heard.

I closed my eyes and bowed my head to the photograph.”

Hayashi Kyōko, (2010) *From Trinity to Trinity*, translated by Eiko Otake.
Barrytown: Station Hill, pp. 16-17.

“introduc[ing] something that happened in the past with the past tense, then within the same paragraph shift[ing] into the present tense [...] as if, with some small trigger from daily life, the narrator suddenly remembers and relives scenes from her childhood, from August 9, or from the days subsequent to the atomic attack”

Eiko Otake (2010), ‘About the Translation’ in Hayashi Kyōko, (2010) *From Trinity to Trinity*, translated by Eiko Otake. Barrytown: Station Hill, p. xxxvi.

LOST

titlecard from *Lost*, multiple episodes

“the protagonist[s are] autonomous unified subject[s] who [continue] to live in the time of ‘their present’ while returning to a past that once was”

Karen Barad (2017), ‘Troubling time/s and ecologies of nothingness: re-turning, re-memembering, and facing the incalculable’, *new formations: a journal of culture/theory/politics*, 92, p. 70. doi:10.3898/NEWF:92.05.2017

“the undoing of time, of universal time, of the notion that moments exist one at a time, everywhere the same, and replace one another in succession”

Karen Barad (2017), ‘Troubling time/s and ecologies of nothingness: re-turning, re-memembering, and facing the incalculable’, *new formations: a journal of culture/theory/politics*, 92, p. 70. doi:10.3898/NEWF:92.05.2017

from *Yellowjackets*, S01E10, 00:30:46



still from *Yellowjackets*, S01E10, 00:3

“[o]n the same page or even within the same paragraph, the narrator can simultaneously be the child who is experiencing the bombing and the adult who is writing about it decades later.”

Eiko Otake (2010), ‘Introduction’ in Hayashi Kyōko, (2010) *From Trinity to Trinity*, translated by Eiko Otake. Barrytown: Station Hill, p. xxi.



still from *Yellowjackets*, S01E10, 00:3

om *Yellowjackets*, S01E10, 00:36:45



“Trauma is just a fact of life, to some extent, particularly for women, and so we really wanted to get personal as opposed to clinical and explore it that way.”

Ashley Lyle quoted in Danielle Turchiano (2021), “‘Yellowjackets’ Bosses on Threading the Effects of Trauma Through Multiple Timelines”, *Variety*, 15 November 2021. Available at:

<https://variety.com/2021/tv/features/yellowjackets-showtime-melanie-lynskey-lyle-lisco-nickerson-1235079521/> (Accessed: 25 April 2022).

“chronology has no p(l)ace, [...] multiple temporalities present themselves without any one of them being present [...] disassembling the allegedly determinate distinction between individual and collective, memory and history”

Karen Barad (2017), ‘Troubling time/s and ecologies of nothingness: re-turning, re-memembering, and facing the incalculable’, *new formations: a journal of culture/theory/politics*, 92, p. 74. doi:10.3898/NEWF:92.05.2017



still from *Jackie*, 01:30:24

still from *Spencer*, 01:32:29



still from *Spencer*, 01:32:34





still from *Yellowjackets*, S01E10, 00:3

from *Yellowjackets*, S01E10, 00:36:45



references

Auerbach, William (2014), 'Time and Timelessness in the Psychoanalysis of an Adult With Severe Childhood Trauma', *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 15(3), pp. 199–213. doi:10.1080/15240657.2014.939020.

Barad, Karan (2017), 'Troubling time/s and ecologies of nothingness: re-turning, re-membering, and facing the incalculable', *new formations: a journal of culture/theory/politics*, (92), pp. 56–86. doi:10.3898/NEWF:92.05.2017.

Gold, Jessi (2022), 'I'm a Psychiatrist and 'Yellowjackets' Is One of the Best Portrayals of Trauma I've Seen On TV', *InStyle*, 18 January 2022. Available at: <https://www.instyle.com/lifestyle/yellowjackets-trauma-portrayal> (Accessed: 25 April 2022).

Hayashi, Kyōko (2010), *From Trinity to Trinity*. Translated by Eiko Otake. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press.

Jackie (2016), directed by Pablo Larraín. Fox Searchlight Pictures.

Lost (2004–2010), created by Jeffrey Lieber, J. J. Abrams, and Damon Lindelof. Burbank, CA: ABC.

Otake, Eiko (2010), 'Introduction', in Hayashi, Kyōko (2010), *From Trinity to Trinity*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, pp. ix–xxxii.

Saltzman, Leia Y. (2019), 'It's about time: Reconceptualizing the role of time in loss and trauma.', *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 11(6), pp. 663–670. doi:10.1037/tra0000435.

Spencer (2021), directed by Pablo Larraín. STXinternational.

Terr, Lenore C. (1983), 'Time sense following psychic trauma: A clinical study of ten adults and twenty children', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 53(2), pp. 244–261. doi:10.1111/j.1939-0025.1983.tb03369.x.

Terr, Lenore C. (1984), 'Time and Trauma', *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 39(1), pp. 633–665. doi:10.1080/00797308.1984.11823446.

Turchiano, Danielle (2021), "'Yellowjackets' Bosses on Threading the Effects of Trauma Through Multiple Timelines', *Variety*, 15 November 2021. Available at: <https://variety.com/2021/tv/features/yellowjackets-showtime-melanie-lynskey-lyle-lisco-nickerson-1235079521/> (Accessed: 25 April 2022).

Yellowjackets (2021–), created by Ashley Lyle and Bart Nickerson. New York City, NY: Showtime.

Zimbardo, Philip, and Boyd, John (2009), *The Time Paradox: The New Psychology of Time That Will Change Your Life*. New York: Atria Books.