

*A Cautionary Tale to Forget: Memory and its Loss in Linda Buckley-Archer's Gideon Trilogy*

The first volume of Linda Buckley-Archer's Gideon Trilogy begins as have many other children's time travel adventures before it: twelve-year-olds Peter Schock and Kate Dyer, thrown together by circumstance, inadvertently find themselves in 18th-century England, far from anyone or anything they know. It seems like classic time-travel fare, what Kim Wilson calls "living history fiction:" it provides its characters with a factual and sensory education about the past which they can usefully apply to their present experiences, and with an opportunity for self-discovery and personal growth.

However, Buckley-Archer's trilogy, consisting of *The Time Travellers*, *The Time Thief*, and *The Time Quake*, quickly exceeds this outline. While Peter and Kate certainly begin their time travelling adventure as displaced observers, mentally comparing 1763 to their modern lives and trying to get home again, the series systematically undermines any simple sense of history, growth, or homecoming. Neither of the children who initially embark on this journey return home at all; in *Thief*, Peter remains stranded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, growing to adulthood there before sacrificing his lived experience so that his twelve-year-old self can be rescued and have a second chance at the life he ought to have lived, while in *Quake* Kate loses her grip on the flow of time and literally drifts apart atom from atom. Both characters must reckon with the radical contingency of time and history, but neither exists to remember their experiences by the end of the series: the culmination of what they have learned and seen (viz., the splintering of reality) is that Peter must prevent himself and Kate from ever leaving home in the first place.

The Gideon Trilogy, in dwelling on the problem of time travel and its attendant metaphysical paradoxes, exceeds the boundaries of 'living history' fiction. Rather than narratively shrinking history into an easily-digestible personal lesson for its characters, discovery and reflection are displaced onto the reader, any consolation about Peter and Kate's regained lives in uneasy coexistence with the haunting sense of what they have lost.