Reimagining the War Memorial, Reinterpreting the Great War

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In his analysis of soldiers' narratives Samuel Hynes makes the distinction between the need to report and the need to remember (1997: xiv). Novels, plays and films can be very accurate with regard to historical detail and they may be based on autobiographical facts, but they are not reportage or memory because they are fiction. This is not a limitation. Pat Barker has stated very strongly that "the worth of fiction has to be asserted over and over again. It is the only form that makes you think deeply and feel strongly, not as alternative modes of reaction, but as part of a single unified reaction. There is nothing else that does that" (2010: 168). The depictions of war in text, on stage, or on screen can range from comedy to tragedy, yet they all contribute to the durability of past conflicts in our historical consciousness. Among the diverse modes of fictional representations of war there are also texts, films and plays which take upon themselves the function of commemorating the past. Commemoration is an act of designating people and/or events of the past that deserve to be eternally remembered. It is oriented towards post-memory future generations, and therefore the obligation of everlasting memory is really an obligation to know about the people and the events of the past and to understand the relevance of the past for the present time. Understanding involves both knowledge and emotion. And it is the purpose of commemorative ceremonies and artefacts to convey to us what we should know and how we should feel about history.

James Lansdale Hodson's *Return to the Wood* (1955), John Harris's *Covenant with Death* (1961), Sebastian Faulks's *Birdsong* (1993), and Pat Barker's *Another World* (1998) are novels about war memorials as much as they are about the Great War. Their protagonists take part in a battlefield pilgrimage which leads them to the war memorial: the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres (Hodson), the Sheffield City Battalion Memorial at Serre (Harris), and the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme (Faulks and Barker). The reactions of the protagonists comprise the meaning inscribed into the

war memorial by the author; the meaning, one should add, very strongly influenced by the period in which the text was published. These novels enact a return to the Great War from the temporal standpoint of the aftermath of the Great War (the war memorial) and the aftermath of the Second World War (the author's time which provides the temporal frame for the plot). They reestablish the significance of the war memorial for the contemporary historical understanding. A.P.Herbert's *The Secret Battle* (1920), Hodson's *Return to the Wood*, and its dramatic and cinematic adaptations - John Wilson's *Hamp* (1964) and Joseph Losey's *King and Country* (1964) - take as their subject matter the soldiers who were sentenced to death and executed during the Great War and thus they may be considered the cultural precedents of the Shot at Dawn Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. Novels, plays and films do not need to be about war memorials to perform a commemorative function. But when they do include the war memorial, they introduce another layer of significance. They create a subtle interplay between the historical and contemporary meanings and purposes of the war memorial and, by doing so, they disclose the manner in which our understanding of the past is constructed by the forms of commemorative practice.

This book owes much to memorial studies, which emerged in the late 1970s and has become a crucial field of international scholarly investigation; let it suffice to mention J.M. Mayo's *War Memorials as Political Landscape* (1988), George L. Mosse's *Fallen Soldiers* (1990), James Young's *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (1993), Jay Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (1995), K. S. Inglis's *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (1998), Alex King's *Memorials of the Great War in Britain* (1998), David W. Lloyd's *Battlefield Tourism* (1998), Daniel J. Sherman's *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (1999), Jenny Edkins's *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (2003), and Stephen Goebel's *The Great War and Medieval Memory* (2007). There have been also invaluable collections of essays on commemorative practice, including *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (eds. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 1999), *Commemorations*: *the Politics of National Identity* (ed. John R. Gillis, 1994), or *Memory and Memorials: the Commemorative Century* (eds. William Kidd and Brian Murdoch, 2004). According to K.S. Inglis, the rise of memorial studies has its beginning in the works of French scholars: "Maurice Agulhon's studies of national image, symbol and ceremony, and Antoine Prost's analyses of *monuments aux morts* became founding works of an enterprise which might be called inconographic history" and "[the] broader French project, *Les Lieux de Memoire*, with Agulhon and Prost among contributors and Pierre Nora as director, [was] committed to the interpretation of monuments and other texts

as bearers of collective memory" (2005: 7). The interest in war memorials was augmented by "the creation of the stark and startling Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington" and the "monuments to Hitler's 'holocaust' [which] have been raised in and out of Europe, accompanied much discussion about what such commemorative projects can and cannot do" (Inglis: 8). Arthur Danto's article about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is of special interest due to the epistemological distinction between memorials and monuments, which underlies the thesis of this work. James Young's study of Holocaust memorials has proven invaluable for my interpretation of Joseph Losey's *King and Country* as countermonument.

Memorials versus Monuments

It is customary to treat the words "memorial" and "monument" as synonyms, but the existence of such two words for one phenomenon can easily ignite a discussion of the potential divergences in the forms and purposes of commemoration. The dictionary definitions of memorial and monument appear to be interchangeable. A memorial is described as "anything meant to help people remember some person or event, as a statue, holiday etc" ("Memorial," def. 3.1), whereas a monument is "something set up to keep alive the memory of a person or event, as a tablet, statue, pillar, building, etc" ("Monument," def. 1.1). The memorial appears to be the more encompassing concept, whereas the monument is characterized in more specifically material terms. James Young defines the memorial as the entire field of commemorative forms and practices that include also the monument: "Monuments [are] a subset of memorials: the material objects, sculptures and installations used to memorialize a person or thing. […] A memorial may be a day, a conference, a space, but it need not be a monument. A monument, on the other hand, is always a kind of memorial" (1993: 4). For Arthur Danto, however, there is a crucial difference between the memorial and the monument which resides in how the past is commemorated:

> We erect monuments so that we shall always remember and build memorials so that we shall never forget. […] Monuments commemorate the memorable and embody the myths of beginnings. Memorials ritualize remembrance and mark the reality of ends. […] Very few nations erect monuments to their defeats, but many set up memorials to the defeated dead. Monuments make heroes and triumphs, victories and conquests, perpetually present and part of life. The memorial is a special precinct, extruded from life, a segregated enclave where we honor the dead. With monuments, we honor ourselves. (1985: 152)

Marita Sturken, likewise, differentiates between the monument, which "signifies victory," "operates purely as a symbol" and "tends to use less explanation," and memorials which "[refer] to the life or lives sacrificed for a particular set of values" and "demand the naming of an individual" (1991: 120-121). Memorials foreground national loss; they evoke sorrow and convey a warning for future generations. Monuments appeal to national pride and they bestow upon the past an aura of epic grandeur. Regardless of their artistic nuances and national variations, all war monuments are affirmative but, one should add, only on the condition that they are combat (i.e. action-oriented) monuments. Death—even if it reaches millions—can be granted a positive meaning when those who died were the agents (i.e. the driving force) of history because then, and only then, the military and political consequences (be it victory or defeat) can be used to provide the basis for an ethical justification of a nation's participation in war.

Memorial studies have developed two distinctive trends called the grief school and the political school. Jay Winter has explicitly stated the aim of his study to be "one and only one central theme: the form and content of mourning for the dead of the Great War" (2006: 7). His reading of the Trench of the Bayonets, the Cenotaph, the Thiepval Monument to the Missing of the Somme, and Käthe Kollwitz's sculpture at Vladslo military cemetery is subordinated to his central precept which is that he analyses them as "[sites] of memory important for collective bereavement" (98); in other words, they are all memorials and not monuments. George L. Mosse represents the political school which does not see collective mourning as the determinant of post-Great War commemorations: "Mourning was general, and yet it was not to dominate the memory of the First World War as it might have done. Instead a feeling of pride was often mixed with the mourning, the feeling of having taken part and sacrificed in a noble cause" (1990: 6). His comparison of British and German war cemeteries leads him to the conclusion that, despite certain differences in overall design, they performed the similar function of providing national sites for "the cult of the fallen soldier" (80). These two schools of thought in memorial studies are not mutually exclusive and it is useful to view them as complementary points of view. There is a considerable degree of overlapping between the processes of memorialization and monumentalization. The Cenotaph, designed by Edwin Lutyens, is a perfect example. The austerity of its design and its meaning as an empty tomb enhance its memorial function: "by announcing its presence as the tomb of no one, this one became the tomb of all who had died in the war" (Winter, 2006: 104). One must, however, take into account that it was erected for the purposes of celebrating the signing of the Versailles Treaty on 19 July 1919: "it provided an object for the parading soldiers to salute in honour of their comrades who had been killed. […] It was saluted not only

by the marching soldiers but by the Allied commanders, Foch, Haig and Persching amongst them" (King, 1998: 142-143). At that time, the Cenotaph was a monument to victory. Its meaning as monument was not restricted to one ceremony for its location in Whitehall near the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey was not coincidental. It was placed at the centre of the capital of the victorious British Empire.

Monuments invoke the immediate connotation of monumental, i.e. "massive, enduring," "great, colossal," "in art, larger than life-size" ("Monumental." def. 1.2, 1.4, 1.5); hence it is not surprising that monuments are conventionally associated with imposing and grandiloquent architectural forms. The adjective "monumental" refers both to the dimensions of the architectural form as well as the psychological effect of size; in other words, the appearance of monuments is tantamount to their desired denotation. Monuments are best defined as immutable material exponents of a state-consecrated version of history and thus a monumental formal manifestation is one that carries with it an apotheosis of the national war effort, with a decided preference for military victory. The quintessence of the war monument and truly monumental dimension is, beyond doubt, the Tannenberg Nationaldenkmal, designed by Johanness and Walter Krüger, dedicated in 1927. The German name for the battle waged between August and September 1914 was an intended allusion to the battle of 1410 which had ended with the defeat of the Teutonic Knights at the hands of the joint Polish and Lithuanian forces, even though the locations of the first and the second Schlacht bei Tannenberg were not, in fact, one and the same. The overwhelming victory of the German forces over the Russian Second Army was precisely the event befitting a national monument that would take the form of a fortress. The awe-inspiring dimensions and the excessively militant symbolism of the monument were exploited by the Nazis and this ultimately led to its downfall. The monument no longer exists but one may see its visual reconstruction in the CBS miniseries, *Hitler: The Rise of Evil*, directed by Christian Duguay. The climax of the movie is Adolf Hitler (Robert Carlyle) announcing at the Tannenberg Memorial the beginning of the new era of the thousand year Reich after the death of Hindenburg.

The Report of the British National Battlefields Memorial Committee, dated 24 February 1921, illuminates the desired monumental character of battlefield memorials. The territory of France posed a difficulty for the Committee and it was ultimately recommended that "a single monument in France would be inadequate and that to fulfill the double function of commemorating the victory and the battles that made that victory possible, more than one memorial is desirable" (qtd. in Quinlan, 2005: 376). The stress was put on the fact that "any National Memorial erected to commemorate the actions of the British Armies in France must be adequate to the dignity of the

Empire," and thus they should commemorate "victory over the enemy" and "phases of the fighting" (376). Four phases were distinguished: "the actions of 1914, beginning with retreat from Mons and ending with the battle of the Aisne," "the fighting at Ypres (continuous throughout the war)," "the immense sacrifices of 1916 and 1917 on the Somme and about Arras," and, finally, "the retreat and advance of 1918" (376-377). The first phase was to be commemorated in the area of the river Marne, a place representative of the notable effort of "flower of the [British] Old Army": "there are considerations which would lead to the choice of the Marne as a suitable site for a memorial. It was there that the Germans suffered their first, and perhaps, decisive defeat" (376). It was recommended that a memorial be erected at Le Fertè-sous-Jouarre "at the point where the 3rd Corps crossed the River Marne, giving invaluable assistance to General Maunoury in his operations on the enemy's flank at the crossing of the Ourcq. […] It may also be observed that town has already renamed the boulevards along the river 'Boulevards des Anglais'" (377). The choice of Ypres in Belgium as the most adequate setting for a memorial was justified by the fact that "practically every division on the Western Front passed through Ypres at one time or another," "it was the scene of three desperate battles in 1914, 1915, and 1917" and "its defense stands to the British Army as that of Verdun is to the French." Most importantly, however, it "was the starting point of the great advance in the north in October, 1918" (373) that ultimately brought the Allies to victory. For the members of the Committee there was no doubt that the Somme must be considered one of the most significant sites in any memorial plans: "the Somme stands for France, much as Ypres stands for Belgium in the eyes of the British soldier, and it would therefore be impossible not to include the Somme in any scheme for commemorating the fighting in France" (376). The final phase of the war was to be commemorated at Villers-Bretonneux: "it was here that the 4th Army under General Rawlinson checked the German advance in April, 1918, within 8 miles of Amiens and subsequently drove them out on 8th August, 1918, a day specially marked by Ludendorff in the German Military Calendar" (377). The fact that a British Committee was elected to commission, organize and supervise the erection of memorials abroad is the evidence of the desire to subjugate battlefield commemoration to a unitary meaning where the ultimate military victory was to testify to the justice of the British cause.

The commemoration of national victory incorporated a historical legitimation of the British Empire. Though the report of the British National Battlefields Memorial Committee acknowledged the right of the Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and India to erect memorials to their troops, it also most emphatically stressed the need for a memorial to the fallen of the Empire as a totality. The document expresses a concern that,

considering the proliferation of such undertakings, "it would only be consistent with the dignity of the British Government that it should not fall behind the Dominions and India in paying homage to the Army" (374). We find here an obvious desire to counteract the centrifugal tendencies in the process of commemoration:

> The sense of the Committee was that while individual Dominions and units naturally would wish to commemorate in their own way the exploit of their troops, consideration of sentiment and history were strongly in favour of at least one general memorial at some outstanding locality which would serve to commemorate in an adequate manner the actions of the troops of the whole Empire, and that the memorials erected elsewhere should commemorate the troops of the United Kingdom. There would be thus a single Imperial monument commemorating the unity of the Empire, together with individual memorials representing the individual countries. (374)

Military victory was exploited to uphold and perpetuate the ideal of a transnational unity as the founding principle of British imperialism. The volunteers from the British colonies and the nations of the Commonwealth were interpreted as a global act of imperial allegiance that was proof in itself of the historical and political righteousness of the British Empire. National autonomy was respected insofar as it could be ideologically subjugated to the superior imperial cause. The National Battlefields Memorial Committee is an example of an institutional form of commemorative practice in which politics oriented towards the future supersedes the demands of historical memory oriented towards the past. The monumental-looking national memorials erected on the sites marking the path towards the ultimate military triumph have an obvious ideological purpose. The names of the dead listed on these memorials serve to sanctify the British Empire with their allegedly willing sacrifice.

Overseas national monuments were built on locations adjacent to military cemeteries. There were different governmental policies concerning the killed. The British, German, Australian, and New Zealand soldiers were to remain buried in the military cemeteries on the soil where they had been killed; the Americans and the French allowed exhumation and the return of the bodies to the families. Yet, both the French and American governments put much effort into persuading families to leave their dead buried in national military cemeteries. The primary reason behind the organization of military cemeteries was practical but, as scholars note, there was a political motivation for "the bodies could serve as the focal point not simply for private mourning but for public ceremonies and speeches" (Sherman, 1998: 454). The cemeteries were an obvious destination of battlefield pilgrimages

that became immensely popular in the aftermath of the Great War. David W. Lloyd writes of the British Legion that organized pilgrimages for war veterans and one of its declared purposes was "to keep alive that spirit of fellowship which was so powerful a level and so beautiful an element in the war" (1998: 36). G. Kurt Piehler writes that the rationale behind the pilgrimages sponsored by the American government was to create a sense of national oneness: "War had united women from all walks of life and regions of the country by creating a common bond between them. Socialites and farm women, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, native-born and foreign-born had all sacrificed their sons to the nation and now shared the same feelings of loss" (1994: 178).

Memorials and military cemeteries situated in the once war-ravaged landscapes were one of two types of "commemorative landscapes" (Sherman, 1998: 447). From the beginning of the war, locally built memorials, compilations of rolls of honour, and communally observed rituals of remembrance gradually acquired the quality of an international phenomenon. Mark Quinlan states that the Great War was the "conflict [that] marks the point at which war memorials became a familiar part of the landscape of Britain's towns, villages and cities" (2005: 43). The emergence of two separate realms of commemorative practices has been interpreted as the evidence of a discursive rivalry: "Occasional references on local monuments to important battles, such as the Marne, Ypres and Verdun, appear to cast these monuments as stand-ins for the battlefield sites, implying the priority of the latter" (Sherman, 1998: 447). According to Jay Winter, the primary aim of the memorial boom in cities and villages was to consolidate a community in mourning: "communal commemorative art provided first and foremost a framework for and legitimation of individual and family grief" (2006: 93). The fact there were so-called "thankful villages" which had no memorials because either their men did not serve in the war or, alternatively, all the soldiers returned home (Quinlan: 53) may be used as an argument in favour of the hypothesis that memorials were venues for the expression of collective grief. Local memorials were predominantly modest in design. The listing of names on memorials has been interpreted as the deconstruction of the ideology and discourse of war: "in this semiotically arid world, a solution is to eschew representation and the production of meaning as far as possible and to resort to a sort of commemorative hyper-nominalism" (Laqueur, 1994: 160).

The meaning of local memorials becomes more complex when we look at the rhetoric of their inscriptions which served not only to commemorate the dead but also to console the living. Individual and communal loss is endowed with a national significance. The soldiers are never referred to as "killed" but they are defined as "the heroic dead," "the victorious dead"

or "the fallen." The dedications tend to have an ostentatious quality and they invariably speak of the community's indebtedness to the men who went to war and did not return: "in proud remembrance of," "to the glorious memory of," "to the glorious and immortal memory of," "in honour of," "in honoured memory of," "in loving and grateful remembrance of." There is emphasis on the positive outcome of the soldiers' sacrifice: they gave their lives "for England," for King and Country," "for Peace," and "so that we might live." Though most inscriptions were concise there were also instances of quite extended versions. The example of the Wigton War Memorial in Cumbria is worth citing because its inscription is an elaborate tribute to the exceptional conduct of the men representing that particular community: "THIS MONUMENT COMMEMORATES THOSE WHO AT THE CALL OF KING AND COUNTRY, LEFT ALL THAT WAS DEAR TO THEM, ENDURED HARDNESS, FACED DANGER, AND FINALLY PASSED OUT OF THE SIGHT OF MEN BY THE PATH OF DUTY AND SELF-SACRIFICE, GIVING UP THEIR OWN LIVES THAT OTHERS MIGHT LIVE IN FREEDOM. LET THOSE WHO COME AFTER SEE TO IT THAT THEIR NAMES BE NOT FORGOTTEN" ("Wigton War Memorial").

One of the most distinctive features of post-Great War commemorative practice was the degree of "inter-cultural transfer" and its most vivid example was "the meteoric rise of the institution of the unknown soldier throughout (and beyond) Europe—with the exception of Germany—illuminates the high degree of cultural exchange on the inter-war period" (Goebel, 2007: 8-9). The unidentified soldier, who forever must remain unknown, was to represent all the nations' dead in the war: "rested bones […] were construed, quite literally, as the generic body. […] by being so intensely a body, it was all bodies" (Laqueur: 163). The British were the first to initiate the trend with The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior situated at Westminster Abbey, the resting place of the only British soldier whose remains were brought back to his homeland. The French were next with La tombe du Soldat Inconnu set beneath the Arc de Triomphe. Other European countries as well as the United States were soon to follow, with similar sites created throughout the 1920s. The location of the tomb of the Unknown Soldier had an obvious political meaning in every single instance. Daniel J. Sherman has analyzed the significance of the French location and he argues that "the unknown affirmed the continuing legitimacy of the nation-state in whose name he had died and validated all narratives of the war that took the national policy as their basis […].The consecration of anonymity as the center of commemoration stood for the unity of the French nation over and above struggles to interpret its history and define its identity" (1998: 465-466). The same principle held for Italy: "the tomb itself was part of

the Victor Emmanuel Monument erected in 1910 to celebrate Italian unity. Thus the triumph of the nation and the war dead were linked" (Mosse: 96). Stefan Goebel has pointed to the significance of the British designation of their unidentified soldier as the "the Unknown Warrior" and the choice of Westminster Abbey as the resting place: "by means of high diction, the authorities drafted the 'Warrior' posthumously into the armed force of a heroic age. […] The cabinet emphasized historical continuity rather than human catastrophe […]" (34). The meaning of the location is duplicated by the rhetoric on the tomb itself—the British Warrior was brought home "TO LIE AMONG THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS OF THE LAND;" he is buried "AMONG THE KINGS" because his death was a sacrifice "FOR KING AND COUNTRY; FOR LOVED ONES HOME AND EMPIRE; FOR THE SACRED CAUSE OF JUSTICE AND THE FREEDOM OF THE WORLD" ("The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior").

The Literary, Dramatic, and Cinematic Modes of Commemoration

Samuel Hynes writes that the posthumous publication of soldiers' letters and diaries were "acts of commemoration": "they are the most immediate and the most fixed of literary texts of commemoration. In a sense they are monuments, constructed by bereaved friends and relatives to memorialize the man who died" (2000: 209-210). Memoirs belong to a different category of war narratives. Hynes states that war memorials and war cemeteries create a different effect upon the onlooker than memoirs have upon the reader: "Meaning in narrative is that process in time, and not a frozen gesture; and because that is so, the relation between artifact and the person who experiences it is different from other cases. You participate vicariously in Robert Graves's war when you read *Goodbye to All That*; you don't experience a cemetery in that way" (2000: 206). He allows, however, that memoirs can act as monuments in two restricted meanings. First and foremost, the memoir can act as monument for the community of war veterans: "for them these narratives will re-constitute memory, and stand as monuments to shared experience, bringing their wars back down out of generalization of collective action into the narrow realm of human acts, where individuals live and die." Secondly, the memoir may function as monument for post-memory generations if readers look upon the narrative as a text that "commemorates one life lived in the mass action of modern war, that each is a monument of a kind to that one soldier, or pilot, and to no one else, and that by existing they refute and subvert the collective story of war that is military history" (2000: 220). According to Evelyn Cobley,

the memoir is the closest textual equivalent to the architectural memorial: "the word 'memoir' has the same etymological root as 'memory', which in turn refers to remembering in the sense of 'recollection' and in the sense of 'commemoration'" (1993: 8). She has pointed to the tendency among authors of memoirs and autobiographical fiction to dedicate their works to the dead (the examples include Ernst Jünger, Charles Yale Harrison, Erich Maria Remarque, Richard Aldington, and David Jones) and she contends that "the impulse to record the experience of war represents a memorial act," with the reservation that the desire to commemorate the dead is interwoven with the "functions of apology and excuse" as the veterans need to alleviate survivor guilt (8-9).

These contemporary views on the potential memorial and monument functions of literary texts are not out of tune with the purposes bestowed upon war narratives in the inter-war period. In 1918 there appeared a commemorative book entitled *For Remembrance: Soldier Poets Who Have Fallen in the War* written by A.St. John Adcock. It opens with a list of soldier-poets killed in the war, followed by their biographies and fragments of poems. It is a tribute to the gifted men of Great Britain:

> These men, these boys, who died that Freedom might live and that the higher hopes of mankind should not be trampled under by the lower, knew why they made the great sacrifice, and made it willingly in such a cause. And it is part of our pride in them that in this they have done nothing new, have taken no new way, but have trodden instinctively and worthily in a beaten track; their courage, chivalry, love of justice, are theirs by inheritance, the ideals that led them are the common ideals that have led the best of our race through the past. (1918: 11-12).

The emphasis on race is deliberate for Adcock includes a comparative analysis of Great Britain and Germany arguing for the moral superiority of the former. The soldier poets that he chooses to include in his book are British, Australian, and Canadian, and he concludes with an apotheosis of the British Empire. This is a text that performs the function of the monument that honours the nation by honouring its dead. A comparable book-as-monument appeared in the USA immediately after the war, entitled *What the Boys Did Over There*, edited by Henry L. Fox. It is a compilation of war stories told by American and Canadian war veterans. The book begins with a list of the contributors called "heroes" and provides information about their war service, stating specifically where and how they were wounded. The editor writes that the aim of the book was to "give its readers some idea of real conditions in the field, and bring to those of us who remained at home a realization of the debt we owe to the men who have suffered for us" (1919: 10).

In the "Introduction" to *War Letters of Fallen Englishmen*, published in 1930, Laurence Housman makes a vivid comparison between the architectural and the literary memorial. He describes the Cenotaph as "a block of stone" which possesses "the very design suggestive of the silence which has fallen on the most continuously devastating conflict that the history of man has ever known." It is silent and yet "could each stone have a voice proportionate to the whole, it would cry out for a thousand lives laid down, with the hope held, or with the hope lost, that war might be no more." That is why the letters of the soldiers need to be published, being a composite voice that a war memorial ostensibly lacks. The Cenotaph is a silent memorial to the silent dead; the publication of letters is a form of resurrection—a memorial to the living men who had fought in the war: "a memorial that speaks, and that speaks the truth" of those who wrote from the depth of their own experience (2002: xxiii). One can detect in Housman's introduction a certain distrust of the war memorial. The war letters of British soldiers are a memorial-substitute that allows one to understand the cause for which the men fought and died. A similar concern about the capacity of war memorials to ascertain the eternal memory of soldiers killed in war appeared in the "Introduction" to *German Students' War Letters*, published in England in 1929. A. F. Wedd summarizes Philipp Witkop's "Foreword" to the German edition and describes the editor's declared purpose in publishing the letters as "an antidote to [the] tendency to oblivion" inscribed in the building of war memorials: "only ten years after the end of the World War, the remembrance of those who made the Supreme Sacrifice is in danger of growing dim and of being soon confined to mere memorials in bronze and stone" (2002: xxv). The letters are "the living memorial" though a more appropriate term would be "monument" because they are a tribute to the "Sons of the Fatherland […] as an example of devotion to duty, of self-sacrifice and patriotism, and as a spur towards the realization of the ideals they had cherished" (xxvii).

In the preface to *Death of a Hero*, Richard Aldington defined his account of the life and death of the fictional protagonist, George Winterbourne, as "a memorial […] to a generation which hoped much, strove honestly, and suffered deeply" (1984: no page number). The creation of this textual memorial is said to have been prompted by the inadequacy of the erected monuments and established commemorative rituals:

> I know there's the Two Minutes' Silence. But after all, a Two Minutes' Silence once a year isn't doing much—in fact, it's doing nothing. Atonement —how can we atone? How can we atone for the lost millions and millions of years of life, how atone for those lakes and seas of blood? Something is unfulfilled, and that is poisoning us. […] What can we do? Headstones and

> wreathes and memorials and speeches and the Cenotaph—no, no, it has to be something in us. Somehow, we must atone to the dead—the dead, murdered, violently-dead soldiers. (Aldington: 35-36)

Aldington refused to define his book as a novel: "this book is not a work of a professional novelist. It is, apparently, not a novel at all. Certain conventions of form and method in the novel have been erected, I gather, into immutable laws […] they are entirely disregarded here" (no page number). *Death of a Hero* is autobiographical fiction. Aldington may have disdainfully disclaimed any allegiance to novelistic conventions, yet there is one that he abides by, namely the creation of a type of an anti-hero. George Winterbourne is, concomitantly, a highly individual personality and an epitome of the generation that was doomed to perish in war. He is a unique character and an amalgam of war experiences. From this perspective, *Death of a Hero* is comparable to the anthologies of letters that create the sense of a universal predicament by means of an assemblage of individual voices.

Documentary and fictional war narratives may be designated as memorial or monument. But representations of war memorials also appear in texts. Henry Williamson's *The Wet Flanders Plain* is an account of the author's battlefield pilgrimage taken in 1927. The veterans' memories of the war are arranged according to the itinerary that leads through St. Omer, Hazebrouck, Poperinghe, Vlamertinghe, Ypres, Langemarck, Wytschaete, Messines, Hill 60, Passchendaele, St. Julien, Ploegstreet Wood, Armentieres, Lille, Arras, Bethune, Vimy, Bullecourt, Miraumont, Aveluy Wood. Williamson's personal recollections are set against the official forms of memory. The Menin Gate Memorial belongs to Ypres and not Wipers, it looks too new to be a reminder of war and the bustling life surrounding it is in stark contrast to the staggering soldiers walking through the ruins of Ypres (63). Williamson participates in the unveiling of a war memorial in a Belgian village and he is repelled by the ostentatious rhetoric of commemoration: "The phrases and words Glorious Achievement, Superb Military Feat, Incomparable Ardour of the British Soldiers, Incalculable Sacrifice, Without Parallel in the History of the War etc., etc., fell one after the other from the uneasy but dutiful tongue of the Belgian general" (1929: 76). The author is impressed only by the Canadian Memorial at St.Julien with its aesthetic of suffering (97-98) and the Ulster Memorial Tower standing above Thiepval Wood where "thousands of our men perished on July 1st from the machine-guns of the Schwaben Redoubt" which created the effect of "a giant hand severed at the wrist and upheld as a warning" (138). At La Targette he discovers that military cemeteries of former enemies are situated next to each other, another reminder of the senselessness of war. Williamson returns to France and Flanders to symbolically resurrect the dead and it is through their

suffering that he reads the war memorials. He constructs the meaning of war as the ultimate evil.

For the characters in D. H. Lawrence's autobiographical novel *Kangaroo* (1923), the war memorial is a means of understanding national identity. Richard Somers is an Englishman who tours New South Wales with his German wife. Somers's description of an Australian war memorial is an attempt to capture its distinctiveness and, simultaneously, an effort to familiarize it by writing it into the codes of British commemoration. Somers refers to the statue of the soldier as "Tommy" even though with the "turned up felt hat" he was, in fact, the mythical Australian Digger. Somers recognizes, however, the unique Australian meaning inscribed in the memorial though his attitude is somewhat patronizing: "wonderfully in keeping with the place and its people, naïve but quite attractive, with the stiff, pallid, delicate fawn-coloured soldier standing forever stiff and pathetic" (230). The memorial is located on Thirroul and, as K.S. Inglis notes, "Lawrence notices the monument's communal character, naming townspeople and bearing on separate white slab the names of the fallen and of men who served […]. Lawrence has discovered an Australian icon. For once the word can be used with no stretch of meaning: a bodily image, created to be revered" (6).

Katie Trumpener provides the examples of May Sinclair's *The Rector of Wyck* (1925), Henry Wade's *The Duke of York's Steps* (1929) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) as representative of a specific trend in post-Great War literature: "Preoccupied with public commemoration yet cognizant of its conceptual limitation, these texts respond to the abstractions of the public memorials by modeling a more multilayered, ambivalent kind of memory work, conceived both in reaction and in relation to official templates. Their central concern, indeed, is how British civilians experience, react to, live with, and reconceive the memorial landscape itself" (2000: 1097). David W. Lloyd discusses Vera Brittain's novel *The Honourable Estate* (1936) in the context of the meaning of the battlefield pilgrimage for women who also bore "the scars of war" and "their visits to the graves of the dead were an important means of coming to terms with the war experience" (46). These novels are about commemoration and its meaning for those who had a radically different experience of the past than the soldier. These novels do not have a commemorative purpose, yet the authors make the war memorial and the battlefield pilgrimage important by including them into their fictional worlds.

William K. March's *Company K*, published in 1933, is autobiographical fiction based on the author's service in the U.S. Marine Corps that saw action at the Aisne, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne. It would be pointless to seek any affirmative aspect in the book that has been described as "a litany of callousness, brutality and degradation" (Beidler,

2006: xvii). The officers in charge are bullies, idiots and incompetents. The soldiers have nothing commendable about them. Their moral degradation is blatantly put forth. The recollections of Sergeant Julius Pelton, Corporal Clarence Foster, Private Walter Drury, Private Charles Gordon, Private Roger Inabinett, and Private Richard Mundy foreground the novel's pivotal experience of war which is the execution of German POWs, ordered by the commanding officer. Little can be said of comradeship among soldiers, a value emphasized in so many war narratives. Even the ideal of duty, the last resort for a war narrative, fails to break through the bleakness of the novel. The recollection of Private Andrew Lurton, for example, is a list of court-martial offences including the crimes of desertion in the face of the enemy, a self-inflicted wound, insulting an officer and a homosexual act. Each soldier tells his own story of the war. There are no chapters. The book is divided into the reminiscences of the men of the company. The list of the soldiers at the beginning of the novel brings to mind the listing of names on war memorials; the more so when the reader realizes that many of the soldiers are dead at the time of speaking. Private Stephen Carroll is given voice to describe the moment of his death: "just as a shell landed squarely in the hole with us" (2006: 64). Private Christian Geils lost his nerve and attempted to run away, his story finishes with the words: "I heard the crack of Sergeant Donohoe's pistol, and I fell in the mud, blood gushing out of my mouth" (77). Private John Townsend recalls having being caught in the middle of an enemy raid: "I stood upright and raised my hands to shows that I was not armed […] and then somebody jabbed a bayonet through my body and somebody clubbed me with the butt of a rifle and I fell down the stairs and into the dugout again" (83). Lieutenant Archibald Smith tells of his death by hands of one his soldiers: "the bayonet entered my body slowly. Then he withdrew the bayonet and struck me quickly again and again" (92). Private William Mulcahey is hit: "I'll never know how the war comes out. I'll never know, now whether the Germans win or not" (122).

Significantly, *Company K* includes the story of "The Unknown Soldier." This is the only soldier who has no name. The voice in this passage tells about his patrol caught by machine gun fire when coming back from a wiring party. The soldier is hit and falls into the wire: "I saw my belly was ripped open and that my entrails hung down like a badly arranged bouquet of roses. The sight frightened me and I began to struggle, but the more I twisted about, the deeper the barbs sank in" (178). The trapped soldier recalls the official ceremonies at the Soldiers' Cemetery at his home where the mayor spoke about dignified sacrifice: "These men died gloriously on the Field of Honour!... Gave their lives gladly in a Noble Cause!... What a feeling of exaltation was theirs when Death kissed their mouths and closed their eyes for an Immortal Eternity!" (179). The contrast between the words

that he had once heard as a boy and the reality of his own imminent death allows him to understand that faith in those words had led him to his present predicament. In a gesture of defiance, the soldier destroys everything by which he could later be identified: his identification tags, helmet, letters and photographs. He wants to be completely obliterated from the face of the earth but since that is not possible he discards his identity epitomized by the name: "I've beaten them all!—Nobody will ever use me as a symbol. Nobody will ever tell lies over my dead body now!" (181). This symbolic gesture of self-destruction is also a defiant gesture against the war memorial. It is, however, futile. The unknown soldier will become the favourite subject of commemorative practice: "what [the soldier] cannot know, however, is that it is exactly his anonymity that will lead to his dead body's enshrinement as the ultimate icon of patriotism" (Beidler: xvi).

The novel portrays the destructive impact of warfare on man's integrity and, by doing so, it warns against the sanitizing effect of commemoration. March questions the idea of anonymity which was the sole criterion for selecting the Unknown Soldier to represent all the dead in war. Let us add in the manner of digression that this was an issue successfully tackled in Bertrand Tavernier's film *La vie et rien d'autre*/ *Life and Nothing But*, released in 1989, which includes an extended scene of the selection of the French unknown soldier. A soldier must select one of the eight coffins by placing a bouquet of flowers from Verdun upon it. Major Delaplane (Philippe Noiret) is repulsed by ritual: "They had 1,500,000 killed but now they will think only of this one. This sham is a scandal" (2004). The memory of one soldier means forgetting all the others. For March anonymity is treacherous because it means lack of knowledge about the soldier's conduct. There is not a single soldier, NCO and officer in *Company K* that deserves tribute or even pity. We do not know anything about the soldier who chose anonymity but that only means that we do not know why he enlisted, how he fought, i.e. we do not know whether he deserved to be honoured. What if the Unknown Soldiers across nations are soldiers who raped women, killed prisoners of war, or tried hard to evade duties and danger? March's novel includes, so to speak, a subtle desecration of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by forcing upon the reader the question of who exactly is buried there. I deliberately use the adjective "subtle" because there have been more overt and ostentatious desecrations of war memorials across decades and nations. Let us make a leap in time and space to Australia in the 1980s when feminist groups sabotaged the celebrations of the Anzac Day in various cities across the country. The object of their attack was, among others, the cult of the Unknown Soldier: "in Sidney the Unknown Victim of Rape [was] carried by her sisters to the Anzac Memorial; […] in Canberra, wreathes [were placed] on the Stone of Remembrance outside the Australian War Memorial and a

song declaring "For every hero in his grave/ there's a woman raped living in her pain" (Inglis: 466).

Inter-war drama also readily embraced both the subject of war and the war memorial. Paul Raynal's play *Le Tombeau sous l'Arc de Triomphe* dating from 1924 was translated into English by Cecil Lewis. It was published under the title *The Unknown Warrior* and first performed in 1928. There are three characters in the play, the Father, the French Soldier who is his son, and Aude who is the soldier's fiancé. The Father and the Soldier have no names. The Soldier comes home on leave in order to marry Aude and thus symbolically fulfill his life before a most certain death in the trenches. The Soldier has lost his illusions about the war. He tells his father that "War has lost its prestige. Men used to worship its banners and trumpets, its blood and bravery! But now they give it its real name: drudgery. The most wearing, monotonous, disgusting of drudgeries. […] That is war, far more dreary than terrible, far more stupid than glorious" (1928: 42-43). He accuses his Father who represents the generation of old men of willful murder for they had sent the young to their death. Despite the weariness, pain and death that he had witnessed, the Soldier knows that he must return to the front: "If I ever listen to the blessed silence of Armistice Day, I want to be able to look back and know that I have done neither more or less than anyone else" (40). There is a purpose in the suffering and the Soldier tells Aude about the great mission that must be carried to its end: "I am not jealous of the happiness that will come after us. I know quite well that it is for the future that we undergo this disgrace of war, that out of our renunciation will spring their gladness" (165),"War may kill us; but we shall kill it. Both of us will die together. […] We must die that the world may have a life and have it more abundantly" (170). He asks for nothing other than remembrance: "But our memory! At least let that remain! Let not the sand of the centuries hid the great monument of our outpoured agony. […] so Europe must rebuild itself on the great tomb of all those dead who have no other epitaph. Let her remember and pity us. Let not our suffering be forgotten!" (165). The play performs the function of memorial (pity) and monument (tribute to willing sacrifice); it demands memory and itself constructs it. Cecil Lewis translated Raynal's dedication which clearly shows the commemorative function of the drama: "TO/ THE CHILD OF OUR BOSOM/ TEN THOUSAND TIMES SACRED TO EVERY/NOBLE HEART WHO FOR ETERNITY/ THE ETERNITY OF FRANCE FOR WHICH HE DIED/ SLEEPS FOR EVER BENEATH/ THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE/ AND THE FOUR WINDS OF HEAVEN/ AND DREAMS/ OF THE GLORY AND MYSTERY OF PAIN/ AND OF LOVE" (no page number). Lewis added his own dedication which reads "I made this translation to unite once more in honourable memory that sacrifice and suffering in which He who sleeps beneath the Arc de Triomphe

is linked imperishably with the Warrior in the Abbey" (no page number). His dedication extends the meaning of the Unknown Soldier and creates the idea of a brotherhood of soldiers in death. By translating the play, Lewis also translated the national dimension of Raynal's play into a more universal call for memory which is the duty of the living towards the dead.

Hans Chlumberg's *Wunder um Verdun* was first performed in Leipzig in 1930. The play was translated into English as *Miracle at Verdun* by Edward Crankshaw, it was first published and first performed in 1932. The time of the play's action is set in the future , in the year 1939. The cast of characters is pretty impressive. Scene One begins with an international group of tourists including Americans, English, French, Germans, Austrians, Japanese and one Italian. They are participating in a battlefield tour and they have come to a military cemetery situated in the Argonne. Initially it is a sightseeing attraction but soon the tourists, grouped by nationality, begin to quarrel about the causes for which their countries fought and which nation suffered the worst. This is a symbolic argument that shows how the tensions of the past resurface in the new generation. The caretaker by the name of Vernier is very proud of the cemetery for reasons that have nothing to do with memory of the dead: "Before the War there was nothing here. The village came into existence with that cemetery, and now consists of a church, several farm–houses, and the hotel" (1934: 119). The living have prospered on the deaths of thousands. Scene Two takes us to the Arc de Triomphe where the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is covered with flowers. This is where the Prime Minister of France delivers a speech to state and Church officials as well as the general public. He speaks of "the heroic dead of France," "sublime sacrifice for the noblest of causes," "glorious victory," "our glorious country," and "the enemy [who] was forced to his knees, disarmed, deprived of his lands" (129-130). He exalts over the present greatness of the French army which "is prepared to do battle and to conquer" (130). The memory of the French dead of the Great War is an obligation to prepare for another victorious war. Scene Three changes the location which is now Berlin where the Reich's Chancellor makes a public speech at the War Memorial. He speaks about how other nations throughout the years have rejoiced over "our downfall; our profound humiliation; our military impotence; our economic weakness" (134). Although Germany has no army or fleet, it is not powerless against its enemies. It has scientists who will facilitate the development of chemical weapons of destruction. The memory of the dead of Germany is an obligation to take revenge upon Europe. In these three scenes the military cemetery and the war memorials appear on stage as sites where the abuse of memory is enacted. That is why, in Scene Four, the Messenger comes to a military cemetery and summons the French and German dead of the Argonne and Verdun to rise from their graves. This

is the eponymous "Miracle" ordained by the Lord, borrowed from the Book of Ezekiel, a fragment of which serves as the epigraph to the play: "and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (no page number).

Chlumberg's play is about the relationship between memorials and memory in its official, communal and personal dimensions. In his analysis of the play, Brian Murdoch writes: "A war memorial […] is a place of memory, designed to remind those coming after the events of the war which it commemorates. But a simple injunction to remember (or more often put negatively, not to forget) is fraught with difficulties. What is to be remembered?" (2004: 92). The Messenger tells the resurrected soldiers that that they must undo the hatred that the memory of them has brought about: "The victorious are withheld from generosity of heart by the bitterness of their memory; the conquered cannot forgive the senseless tragedy of your sacrifice" (1934: 138). In Scene Twelve they interrupt an international conference in Paris, with the most important world leaders from Great Britain, France, Germany and Belgium, the ambassadors of USA, Italy and Japan, as well as the Archbishop of Paris and the Chief Rabbi. They are told by these great men of the world to return to their graves because they are an economic encumbrance as "surplus population" (222) and they are a detriment to official collective memory: "You are exalted in innumerable school-books;" "The youth of the world grows up with your example constantly before its eyes!;" "You are celebrated with divine service!;" "Special Memorial Services are in your honour!;" "Over your graves we lead the nations towards higher achievements!" (221). The representatives of the respective governments feel betrayed by the dead. Chlumberg captures here the quintessence of the political purposes behind the commemoration of the dead, which have been so strongly emphasized by contemporary scholars. G. Kurt Piehler has written that European and American governments "looked to make the war dead a central symbol of a national identity […]. Moreover, they wanted the commemoration of the fallen to exemplify the willingness of males to serve and die for their country" (168-169). Thomas W. Laqueur has pointed out that "both during the war and after, the [states] poured enormous human, financial, administrative, artistic, and diplomatic resources into preserving and remembering the names of individual common soldiers" (155). This is exactly what the French Prime Minister and American Ambassador tell the dead: "At great expense we have kept your graves in good repair. The erection of memorials to you has greatly exceeded the estimated cost! And the tomb of the 'Unknown Warrior' draws crowds from all over the world;" "The Government of the USA has set aside a large sum for the preservation of your memory. For years past we have sent parties of war widows and bereaved mothers to visit the battlefield

cemeteries of Europe—sent them over and brought them home again. It costs a hell of a lot—but we do it!" (1934: 215). The presence of the French and German Ministers of War at the conference is telling. As Brian Murdoch has noted, "the miracle is accepted but it is too little and too late; the dead have already left the stage, and a world which does not really want to think about the last war when it is busy preparing for the next one" (100).

War memorials belong to the precinct of official memory, as opposed to the personal memory of the dead among families and war comrades. The resurrected soldiers have names and this fact is highly significant: "we are reminded that the war was fought not by millions of soldiers as an entity, but by individuals, with individual lives and personalities" (Murdoch: 98). The French soldier, Morel, returns to his village only to find his wife in a new marriage and his business in new hands. The German soldier, Weber, also returns home to find his mother destitute and his best friend crippled and excluded from the company of the more fortunate war veterans. The return of the dead proves to be a burden upon the living but it is also more than that. It discloses how personal and communal memory can trap the living in realms of sorrow (Weber's mother) or realms of anger (Girgengrath). Personal memory can also be deliberate unforgetting (Morel's wife and the German war veterans). Although Chlumberg does not put local memorials on the stage, his depiction of the workings of public memory is definitely an important precursor to the portrayal of the local community in Edgar Reitz's film *Heimat: Eine deutsche Chronick/ Heimat: A German Chronicle*, released in 1984, which shows the dedication of a local war memorial in the fictional village of Schabbach. The ceremony is short and the memorial is ignored by the villagers until the Nazis come and stage their political venues at the site. The reason why the former soldier Paul Simon leaves his home is because it is a space of absent memory. In Philippe Claudel's novel *Les âmes grises*/*By a Slow River*, the inhabitants of a small French village participate in the unveiling of a war memorial on 11 November, 1920 after which they go a reception: "The dead were forgotten over sparkling wine and pâté on toast. The living parted am hour later, ready to reenact year after year this sham of heavy hearts and resemblance" (2007: 154-155).

Cinema in the inter-war period was less inclined to take up the subject matter of commemoration or perform the commemorative function. The war films that are now considered classics of the period are adaptations of novels representing the disillusionment trend or they are based on original screenplays with the overt aim to warn against war. Exceptions include *Stoßtrupp 1917* (dir. Ludwig Schmid-Wildy and Hans Zöberlein, 1934) and *Standschütze Bruggler* (dir. Werner Klinger, 1936) which are film tributes to the soldier. An exceptional undertaking took place in American cinema. The movie *The Lost Battalion* was directed by Burton L. King and released in

July 1919. The history of the battalion which was stuck behind enemy lines for days in the Argonnne Forest in October 1918 is acted out by the veterans of those events. Actors were only employed for the soldiers who had been killed. The movie is preceded by the following introduction:

> For the first time in the history of the world you are to look upon a motion picture re-enacted by those who live again the historic events for which a grateful nation commended them. […] From Major General Alexander, Colonel Whittlesey and Major McMurtry to the last private all appear before you without compensation. We honorably proclaim our motives … may we prove worthy. The characters are played by themselves when possible. Other names are used when it might give pain. And some must be played by others for they sleep in France forever. ("The Lost Battalion of WWI")

The Lost Battalion is a reenactment of actual events, it is a combat movie but, first and foremost, it is a tribute to Colonel Whittlesey and the soldiers of his battalion who managed to hold their position despite being surrounded, which enabled an Allied breakthrough. The colonel rejected a German offer of surrender. After the war he was awarded the Medal of Honour. There has been a contemporary remake under the same title, directed by Russell Mulcahy, released 2001, with Rick Schroder in the leading role of Charles Whittlesey.

International cinema has also paid tribute to Edith Cavell. She was matron in a hospital Brussels during the Great War. She helped British, French and Belgian soldiers escape from the German-occupied territory. Arrested by the Germans, she was tried, found guilty and executed. Her death made her a martyr for the Allied cause. Her body was exhumed and returned to Britain in 1919; and her burial was an elaborate national ceremony. Several memorials were erected in her tribute and hospitals and schools were named after her (Quinlan, 2005: 76-77). She also captured the attention of American, British and Belgian filmmakers: *The Martyrdom of Nurse Cavell* (dir. Jack Gavin, 1916), *Nurse Cavell* (dir. W.J.Linden, 1916), *The Woman the Germans Shot* (dir. John G. Adolfi, 1918), *Dawn* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1928), and *Nurse Edith Cavell* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1939). These are all typical examples of tributes to an extraordinary historical figure. One should add, however, that the process of monumentalization of an individual has its pitfalls, the most notable being the neglect of other instances of extraordinary war service. Though there is no doubt that Edith Cavell deserves remembrance, it is also the case that her prominent position in public memory has been determined predominantly by the manner of her death.

Battlefield pilgrimages and war memorials appeared frequently across genres in-between the wars or, alternatively, there were novels, films and

plays that took upon themselves the function of the memorial or monument. The subsequent chapters will be devoted to post-1945 texts and films which follow up on this tendency to embrace commemoration as subject matter and/or to act as a form of commemoration. The chapters are arranged chronologically to show how the meaning of the war memorial has evolved across time. James Lansdale Hodson's *Return to the Wood* and John Harris's *Covenant with Death*, published in 1955 and 1961 respectively, are exemplary of the process of monumentalization of the past. The narrators in these novels are war veterans and therefore the subject of memory is at the heart of each text. Sebastian Faulks's *Birdsong* and Pat Barker's *Another World*, published more than three decades later, are characterized by a more analytical approach to the commemoration of the Great War, and both authors situate the war memorial in an overtly contemporary post-memory reality. Each chapter begins with a war memorial analyzed from the perspective of the inflexibility of form and the malleability of meaning. The war memorials are set forth as central to my discussion of the novels because the reactions, thoughts and emotions of the fictional protagonists at the sites of these memorials encapsulate the meaning of the Great War that is created through the entire narrative. The second chapter takes an exception to the overall structural format the book. Here the Shot at Dawn Memorial is analyzed with reference to novels, plays and film that preceded its construction, and they are discussed in the context of the heated debate about the place of soldiers executed during the Great War in national memory.

The war memorial is the primary point of convergence but each novel constructs its credo in its own distinctive way and the different narrative formulas for writing about the Great War must necessarily be taken into account. *Covenant with Death* combines the battlefield tour and combat narrative modes. The protagonist's battlefield pilgrimage provides, however, mostly the temporal frame for a story that concentrates on the training and war service of the soldiers of the Sheffield City Pals Battalion. The analysis of the novel will trace the means by which John Harris manages to create a successful text-as-tribute, resurrecting the ideals of honour, glory, and sacrifice and endowing these ideals with an imperial significance. In *Return to the Wood* it is the battlefield pilgrimage that is the focus of the protagonist's story, superior in significance to the recollections of combat. My analysis will revolve round the ways James Lansdale Hodson constructs the fictional equivalents of personal and collective memory the purpose of which is a textual apotheosis of the ethos of duty embracing two world wars. The interpretation of novels, drama, and film which foreground the figure of the deserter will prove how the different standpoints on the subject of military executions comprise, in fact, a similar refutation of cowardice as an actual problem of the British army in the Great War. *Birdsong* possesses