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Memorials

GUEST EDITORS

Martin Kerby, Margaret Baguley, Alison Bedford & Richard Gehrmann

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If these stones could speak: War memorials and contested memory

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how war memorials engage with the contested nature of public sculpture and commemoration across historical, political, aesthetic and social contexts. It opens with an analysis of the Australian commemorative landscape and the proliferation of Great War Memorials constructed after 1918 and their 'war imagining' that positioned it as a national coming of age. The impact of foundational memorial design is explored through a number of memorials and monuments which have used traditional symbolism synonymous with the conservative ideological and aesthetic framework adopted during the inter-war years. The authors then analyse international developments over the same period, including Great War memorials in Europe, to determine the extent of their impact on Australian memorial and monument design. This analysis is juxtaposed with contemporary memorial design which gradually echoed increasing disillusionment with war and the adoption of abstract designs which moved away from a didactic presentation of information to memorials and monuments which encouraged the viewer's interpretation. The increase of anti- or counter-war memorials is then examined in the context of voices which were often excluded in mainstream historical documentation and engage with the concept of absence. The selection of memorials also provides an important contribution in relation to the ideological and aesthetic contribution of war memorials and monuments and the extent of their relevance in contemporary society.

KEYWORDS

Aesthetics, Historical Commemoration, Counter-Memorials, History, Memorials and Monuments, Memorial and Monument Design

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In an article published in the *Guardian* in 2021, Gary Younge did little to hide his disdain for the proliferation of statues of historical figures. He dismissed them as lazy, ugly and a distortion of history. Regardless of whether they celebrated saint or sinner, he believed that they should be destroyed. They are "among the most fundamentally conservative expressions of public art possible", are "erected with eternity in mind", and "mistake adulation for history, history for heritage and heritage for memory." In short, they are bad history, for they "attempt to set our understanding of what has happened in stone, beyond interpretation, investigation or critique" (Younge, 2021). Younge's 'solution' was merely a more extreme take on an issue that has been bubbling away for years but which reached a crescendo in the wake of the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in May 2020. The iconoclastic fury that this murder unleased in the United States spread beyond the issue of commemorating slave owners, Confederate heroes, and Christopher Columbus. Statues to King Leopold II in Brussels, the slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Finance Minister for Louis XIV and author of Code Noir in France, and Italian journalist and fascist propagandist Indro Montanelli in Italy, all got short shrift from protestors.

Clearly, the second half of 2021 is an opportune time to edit a special theme issue on war memorials, as the editors acknowledge. Yet as they are academics working at an Australian university, it would be difficult to conceive of a time when this would not be the case. War memorials are the most common form of public sculpture in Australia, and though they are far from being unique to this country, they have become something of an Australia icon. The proliferation of war memorials across Australia (in the early nineties, it was estimated that there was one civic memorial to every 30 soldiers killed in The Great War) is illustrative of the extent to which the national story is grounded in war. It is a connection that is officially endorsed by both major political parties and through their aegis is widely disseminated through schools and during public commemorative services.

War memorials in Australia have rarely attracted sustained opposition on anything other than aesthetic grounds. In 1966 twenty women laid flowers at the Second World War Memorial near the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne in a respectful protest at the sending of conscripts to Vietnam. So unique was this protest that Ken Inglis (1987), the most prominent historian of Australian war memorials, suggested that they might legitimately lay claim to being the pioneers of a female counter tradition. Three years later, 400 people held an anti-war protest on the parade ground in front of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra. As if to show the malleability of memory, members of the neo-Nazi organisation, the Nationalist Socialist Party of Australia (NSPA) attended and waved pro-war banners. The Anzac memorial in Sydney was likewise the site of an anti-war 'sit in' in 1970, it had 'Women march for Liberation' painted on it in 1975, was the central focus of a ban the bomb protest in 1983 and was vandalised in 2005 and 2007. Plans for a $500 million extension of the AWM attracted some passionate opposition in 2020 and 2021, interestingly emanating from both the defenders of the Anzac tradition and its critics. Nevertheless, politically motivated physical attacks on memorials are rare in Australia, though not entirely unknown. In 2017 a group helpfully identified by a local paper as religious fanatics removed the sword from the Cross of Sacrifice on the war memorial in Toowong cemetery in Brisbane in a rather quixotic attempt to 'beat swords into ploughshares.' In the same year, a war memorial in Warrandyte, Victoria was spray-painted with anarchist symbols and the words 'war is murder.' In 2020 the West Ulverstone's Tobruk Park war memorial in Tasmania was spray painted with the words 'f---whites', 'f--- White Pride' and the Anitfa symbol.

Statues and memorials are more regularly the target of random vandals, as distinct from those motivated by political or religious concerns. For example, the war memorial in Collie in Western Australia was vandalised in 2012 by four boys aged 11 – 13 years old, Ulverstone's cenotaph in Tasmania was vandalised four times in three years beginning in 2013, the war memorial in Tamworth, New South Wales was targeted twice, Adelaide's Field of Remembrance was vandalised four times in a single week in the lead up to Remembrance Day 2020 (a similar memorial in Queanbeyan, Canberra was damaged in 2019), and a statue in Moore Park in Bundaberg had its bayonet broken off in 2021. At an anecdotal level at least, a sizeable proportion

of the damage appears to be the result of drunken behaviour rather than protest. For example, one man was arrested in 2018 for removing the flowers from a wreath at a war memorial in Martin Place, Sydney and placing them in the hands of the statue. He then rather ruined the effect by placing a cigarette lighter on the statue's arm, putting a cigarette in its rifle, and pouring beer on its feet. Five young men damaged the same statue while climbing on it after a night on the town in May, 2021. Gladys Berejiklian, the New South Wales premier promised that those involved "would face the full force of the law", noting that the perpetrators "don't appreciate the sacrifices many Australians made, who lost their lives and lost their livelihoods over many, many decades for our freedoms." Accepting without question the didactic value of public sculpture, she argued that it is "incumbent on us to make sure that every single Australian citizen is aware and grateful for the sacrifices made by our ex-servicemen and women." Her police minister described them as "sick individual[s]" whose actions were both "criminal and morally bankrupt" (Wondracz, 2021). Their words were far more tempered than the Australian Defence Association who described the people who vandalised one memorial as "scum" (Butler, 2017).

Whatever the motivations, much of the damage to war memorials, which is usually superficial, is met with almost universal condemnation. In spite of the distress caused to the local communities affected, and it can be significant, it is far from being a *damnatio memoriae* (condemnation of memory). Even where attacks are political, they are generally focused on memorials or statues related to European settlement and exploration rather than wars fought on foreign soil. Though not generally considered war memorials, statues to colonial era figures are increasingly linked to the Frontier Wars that ended in the often murderous dispossession of indigenous Australians. Two statues of Captain Cook in Sydney were vandalised in separate attacks in June 2020, while one to Governor Lachlan Macquarie in Windsor's McQuade Park was spray-painted, with the word 'murderer' particularly prominent. In response, Berejiklian made the link between history and citizenship explicit:

> I wish it didn't come to this and I want to stress that it's only a very, very small percentage of the population that's engaging in this activity, the vast majority of us don't condone it, we think it's disrespectful, it's un-Australian. (Kozaki, 2020)

The reason why Berejiklian was confident that her stance was in step with the majority of the electorate is explored in Alison Bedford, Richard Gehrmann, Martin Kerby, and Margaret Baguley's article *Conflict and the Australian Commemorative Landscape*. The authors begin by establishing how central war is to Australian national identity, before exploring the role played by memorials in communicating an officially endorsed version of Australian history. The reverence for these memorials and the ideology they espouse, whether it be the Anzac mythology or colonial history, is evident in the language used to condemn the vandalism of statues and memorials. People often explicitly position it as an act of defiling and desecrating a sacred object (Atfield, 2017; Nine News, 2020), "an utterly disgraceful demonstration of contempt and disrespect for our past and current defence members and community" (Douglas, 2020) and "a personal attack on all members of the community" (Wondracz, 2021). The responses can be quite earthy, ranging from "absolutely disgraceful" (Matthews, 2021) to "bloody disgusting" (Bastow, 2021). As Taree RSL Sub-branch president Charles Fisher observed when viewing significant damage to a 'digger statue', "I'm bloody pissed off" (Douglas, 2020).

Bedford, Gehrmann, Kerby, and Baguley's exploration of the first great wave of memorial construction immediately after 1918 highlights the extent to which the Australian reaction to its first experience of a major war (the Frontier Wars notwithstanding) differed from many of its allies and enemies. Europeans saw in the Great War a "manifest disintegration of old orientations" (Gerster, 1987); indeed, the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian empires collapsed in the wake of defeat. Even the British, for whom the war represents the greatest military victory in their history (Sheffield 2002), remember the war as little more than "poets, men shot at dawn, horror, death, waste" (Todman, 2005, pp. 158-160). Nothing, it seems, can penetrate "the popular shroud of death, waste, and futility"; indeed, no generation since the 1920s has questioned this imagining of a lost generation led to its destruction by an arrogant and incompetent leadership

caste (Spiers, 2015; Hynes, 1991). This is a pervasive belief that is seemingly immune from the efforts of numerous historians with enviable professional reputations who continue to question this predominantly literary view of the war, notably Bond (2002), Ferguson (1998), Gregory (2014), Reynolds (2014), Sheffield (2002), and Terraine (1984). As Todman (2005) observes, historians have argued persuasively against almost every popular Great War cliché:

> It has been pointed out that, although the losses were devastating, their greatest impact was socially and geographically limited. The many emotions other than horror experienced by soldiers in and out of the front line, including comradeship, boredom, and even enjoyment, have been recognised. The war is not now seen as a 'fight about nothing', but as a war of ideals, a struggle between aggressive militarism and more or less liberal democracy. It has been acknowledged that British generals were often capable men facing difficult challenges and that it was under their command that the British army played a major part in the defeat of the Germans in 1918: a great forgotten victory. (Todman, 2005, p. xii)

Rejection of the conflict as futile has never found fertile ground in Australian war literature. War in the Australian imagination is not a "destroyer of civilisation" (Rhoden, 2012, p. 1). It is an "epic model of national achievement" (Gerster, 1987, p. 14) and a "constitutive dimension of our public morality" (Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 316). It has also proved to be an adaptable mythology, for gone now is its "anachronistic, patriarchal, [and] militaristic" roots (Beaumont, 2011, p. 7). The newly reconfigured Australian soldier is a "kinder, gentler figure", one that is both a national archetype and a "moral vision of humanity" (Holbrook, 2016, p. 19; Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 316). There is also a greater preparedness to reassess the Great War's impact on Australia, at least in academic circles. For in spite of the popular understanding of it as a national coming of age, its impact was in fact catastrophic (Kerby & Baguley, 2020). Pre-war Australia was "a world of glorious possibilities" marked by progressive social, industrial, and economic legislation (Hetherington, 2013, pp. xi). The exertions made in pursuit of victory and the trauma generated by four years of war, industrial unrest, the rising cost of living, sectarianism, and the continuing divisions laid bare by the conscription campaigns of 1916 and 1917, had by November 1918 left Australia a broken nation (Beaumont, 2013).

Bedford, Gehrmann, Kerby, and Baguley's article moves beyond the Great War to more modern attempts at commemoration. They acknowledge what Garton (1996, p. 45) characterises as the "artistic tyranny of the Anzac myth" before exploring recent attempts to construct a "new breed of abstract and, often, therapeutic memorial" (Stephens, 2012, p. 146). Without a shared artistic language such as the one provided by Edwardian classicism, some of these newer memorials have attracted considerable criticism on aesthetic grounds. To an audience more comfortable with heroic monuments that communicate a singular ideology, abstraction is often incomprehensible. For by being unmoored from a widely understood repertoire of symbolic forms, modern memorials can find themselves fighting a two front war waged on aesthetic as well as ideological grounds. In their article *The spectre of the thing: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial*, Kerby, Bywaters, and Baguley explore how one designer used a mix of abstraction and realism to sidestep this challenge. Though this proved relatively successful in terms of aesthetics, the ideological issues were another matter entirely. Situated in the centre of Sydney, the memorial was initially conceived in 1991 as a means of commemorating the male homosexual victims of National Socialism. This initiative was inspired by similar efforts in Europe, Israel and the United States, though in this instance the Holocaust link quickly proved a formidable barrier to fund raising. AIDS and continuing violence against gays and lesbians appeared far more pressing concerns to the Sydney community than an historical commemoration. As the early supporters of the memorial were replaced on the committee or drifted away from the project, or in a number of cases died of AIDS, the Holocaust link was increasingly subsumed into the wider story of the persecution of both gays and lesbians. These 'second generation' supporters quickly recognised that the memorial's appeal needed to be broader if it was to succeed.

The decision to position the Holocaust as emblematic of the destruction wrought by all forms of racism and intolerance challenged the traditional Australian reticence to make the imaginative leap to their own history, particularly in the matter of genocide (Moses, 2003). In reality however, by the time it was completed in 2001, it was not an issue. By then the focus of the memorial had shifted from commemoration to protest; the memorial would be a "visible and permanent reminder to the heterosexual population that we will not forget those who hide their love in China, those imprisoned in Angola or those who face vilification and loss of work in Tasmania" ('Why the triangle', n.d). Though certainly a counter memorial that challenges hegemonic constructs of history, it does this through a balancing of the abstract and the literal. The memorial is comprised of a pink triangular glass prism, a symbol once used to identify and humiliate male homosexuals, but which is now embraced as a symbol of gay pride. The experience of lesbians and the connection with the Jewish Holocaust are present in a black triangle in the form of a triangular grid of black steel columns intersecting the prism, with the two triangles appearing as a fractured Star of David. For those preferring literal representations in their memorials, overlaid on the pink triangle is an iconic image of Jews being rounded up by the Nazis.

Though the evolution in the memorial's purpose might in other circumstances have consigned it to oblivion, the ambiguity in just who it commemorates has worked in its favour. The City of Sydney Council, who by 2018 were responsible for the memorial, preferred a narrow view of its commemorative function but expanded the description of the people it included. Three decades after it was first conceived, it is officially recognised as a commemoration of the "thousands of LGBTQI people persecuted during the Nazi regime in Germany, including thousands murdered in concentration camps" (City of Sydney, 2018). The Jewish community continue to make use of it during commemorative activities on Holocaust Remembrance Day and notably during a visit for the delegates at the 25th Jewish LGBT+ World Congress in March 2019. Yet beyond that, it has struggled to find a place in the commemorative landscape.

The Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial remains outside of officially endorsed versions of Australian history, and it is more interesting both ideologically and aesthetically as a result. Traditional Australian war memorials can also be aesthetically powerful, notably Rayner Hoff's memorial arch in Adelaide, "the most sculptural, the most innovative and the most dramatic" of all the major memorials in Australia (Hedger, 1995, p. 35). His work on the Sydney Anzac Memorial, a huge art deco shrine opened in 1934, is equally impressive. One looks in vain, however, for a similar artistic sensibility in other Australian memorials built during the inter-war years, though the Melbourne *Shrine of Remembrance* can lay claim to being one of the largest structures ever built to commemorate the Great War. It is not just stone memorials through which the past is made to speak to the present and to the future. Daniel Maddock's *Triumph of the Will: A Memorial in Film* explores Leni Riefenstahl's propaganda masterpiece filmed at the 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg. Maddock, an award winning documentary maker in his own right, argues that Riefenstahl's documentary remains one of the most enduring reminders of Hitler's vision for Germany and the world. Even with the passage of over 80 years, it remains compelling viewing. Yet as Maddock argues, when viewed with the benefit of hindsight, the documentary is really about absence. For it is the millions of victims of the regime who, paradoxically, now dominate the footage. It is their absence that haunts the viewer long after the torchlight parades and the pastiche of mysticism and religion fade from memory.

For all his bombast and predictions for a thousand year Reich, Hitler was denied the final word. Germany's abject defeat and the war crimes trials ensured that judgment, however flawed, was well and truly passed. But what of memorials that celebrate victory and which have never witnessed the arrival of a conquering army? Traditional heroic memorials, like those constructed in Australia during the 1920s and 1930s, avoided this type of calamitous re-evaluation and instead "obey the logic of the last word, the logic of closure." Changing ideas and tastes can often be subsumed into existing mythology for the memorials have already stripped the "hero or event of historical complexities and condense the subject's significance to a few patriotic lessons frozen for all time" (Savage, 2009, p. 10). For in spite of the importance of the Great War in the construction and maintenance of Australian conceptions of national identity, there is not a

commensurate understanding of what it meant, and continues to mean, for other nations. Although the war made extraordinarily complex demands on the nations involved, the battlefield remains the "most poignant site of the war imaginary" (Chouliaraki, 2013); for Australians, that means Gallipoli and the battlefields of the Western Front. The war on the Eastern and Italian Fronts, in the Balkans, at sea, in Africa, and even in Palestine where the famed Australian Light Horse served, make few inroads into the popular Australian understanding of the war.

An article such as Daniele Pisani's *Politics of Relics: On the Celebration of the Fallen of the First World War during the Interwar Period in Italy* offers a welcome counter to the insularity of that understanding, one which rarely acknowledges that it was a world conflict involving 32 nations who mobilised 70 million military personnel. Though much has been made of the extent of Australian per capita casualties, the comparative figure for Italy still makes for sobering reading. Between 600 000 and 700 000 dead, a million wounded, and a country effectively bankrupted by war explains the Italian anger at what it perceived as vittoria mutilate, or mutilated victory. Given that there was little widespread support domestically for involvement, it is hardly surprising that the war revealed deep divisions in Italian society. It was a watershed in Italian history, bringing about a profound rupture, one which altered the very fabric of government:

> Between 1914 and 1918, a new political mentality came into being. This grew out of a desire for a different political model, an alternative to the liberal-democratic system, the proponents of which had been accused of mishandling the transformations which the war had brought about. What made this new mentality so particularly original was the way in which it militarized politics and demonised its adversaries. (Ventrone, 2011, p. 90)

The Socialists and Catholics felt that their opposition to the war had been vindicated by the appalling cost, while the military and the right blamed them for all that had gone wrong, and in terms of Italy's experience of war, much had indeed gone wrong (Reynolds, 2014, p. 48). As Pisani observes, the rising Fascist movement nevertheless made the appropriation of the war's legacy one of its priorities. A public memorial, as the Fascists well understood, "speaks to a deep need for attachment that can be met only in a real place, where the imagined community actually materialises and the existence of the nation is confirmed in a simple and powerful way" (Savage, 2009, p. 4). The interment of the Milite Ignoto (Unknown Soldier) in 1921, the year before the Fascists came to power, is indicative of just how profound this experience can be, particularly if it is "sanctified by sacrifice" (Tognasso, 1922, p. 43). This mirrors at least at a superficial level, events in Australia. In the post-war years, the conservatives likewise took control of the powerful Anzac legacy and subsequently established a dominance of Australian political life that continued into the 1970s (Gammage, 1990).

Unlike Australia, however, the Italians generally buried their dead in their native soil, either in smaller cemeteries or from the mid-1920s onwards, in memorials known as ossuaries. These were massive buildings located along the northeastern front comprising two elements, a lower part for the burial of the dead and an upper one acting as a monumental landmark. From the 1930s these were replaced by sacrari, a collection of burial sites situated on enormous open expanses. Pisani makes it clear that this was a highly politicised evolution in memorialisation:

> All macabre content was removed. Light was cast on everything. The focus was no longer death, but transfiguration: sacrari in fact did not have the purpose of witnessing the tragic loss of young soldiers, but of glorifying their sacrifice; therefore, they concealed the grisly mortal remains of the fallen in order to better present death-in-war as an ultimate ideal to the Fascist youth. This became even more imperative with the approach of the Second World War … [it became] necessary to prepare for the nearing day when Italian youth would have to, again, "sacrifice" itself for the Fatherland.

Not all memorials are sweeping, grand political statements that dominate city centres or rise from the mists of so many Great War battlefields. Other are smaller, semi-private, and in that sense they are often remarkably moving. In *'Splendid Patriotism and Heroic Self-Sacrifice': First World War*

memorials in Welsh metalworks, Gethin Matthews, who has written extensively about war memorials in Welsh chapels, has now turned his attention to memorials in Welsh metalworks. His research is a welcome addition to the literature on mourning and commemoration which has, at least in the academic world, generally focussed on civic memorials (Scates & Wheatley, 2014). As most of the metalworks memorials were commissioned within three years of the Armistice, there is little evidence of any attempt to create a memorial "without the value bearing abstractions, without the glory, and without the large scale grandeur". Instead, the language of 1914 still dominates - Patriotism was 'splendid'; self-sacrifice was 'heroic'; the memory of the fallen was 'glorious' (Hynes, 1991, p. 282). Forty thousand dead from a population of 2.5 million made finding meaning in the sacrifice a pressing issue, as Matthews observes:

> The men's identity as employees was highlighted in the numerous memorials which noted their position within the company. They had an identity as steelworkers or tinplaters, as well as their identities as men of their home town, and as Welshmen, Britons and sons of the Empire.

When memorials challenge orthodoxy, they become even more politically charged. Marco Dräger's *Monuments for deserters: A particularity of German memory culture* explores the rise of counter-monuments in Germany after the Second World War. Somewhat surprisingly, the few German memorials dedicated solely to the Fallen erected after 1945 were not anti-war. As Dräger observes, the iconography and military rituals of commemorative events often prevented a call for peace or a recognition of grief. By the 1980s, calls to recognise the forgotten victims of National Socialism led to the construction of 'counter monuments' which compel the viewer to reflect on issues of meaning and significance. Abstraction is better placed to challenge hegemonic views of the past than traditional forms and better able to deal with the complexity of historical events. The *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington D.C and the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews* of Europe in Berlin are two prominent examples where abstraction has been employed to good effect. As Dräger explains, designers of counter memorials "beat monuments at their own game by making use of the same medium." In contrast to traditional memorials, counter monuments resist closure and fixity, and instead embrace an ideological ambiguity. Memory production can therefore flourish in a counter-hegemonic vein while simultaneously "following the inexorable imperative: to remember" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 457).

The response to the imperative to remember facilitated by counter memorials alters the role of the viewer. They are expected to participate in the construction of memory by becoming "active producers of plural pasts and multiple memories, rather than consumers for whom a single, collective memory is fashioned 'in stone'" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 448). Memorials such as those explored by Dräger aim to implicate the viewer by transforming them into a participant, thereby effecting a change in that person (Crampton, 2001). Sci (2009) argues that a memorial's continued relevance and potential impact is therefore dependent on its ability to engage the viewer in a process that is "both cognitively stimulating and affectively touching" (p. 43). This is common to many contemporary memorials that have been informed by the success of the *Vietnam Veteran's Memorial*. They engage viewers mentally and sensually and seek to affect change by inviting them to think rather than dictating what to think: "They are polysemic, engaging visitors in critical reflection about their own values since these memorials do not offer easily consumed or understood political ideological or cultural messages" (Sci, 2009, p. 45). Mitchell (2003) posits that "resisting and/or transforming dominant forms of memory production is a little easier when the city in which these forms are located is in a state of upheaval and flux" (p. 453). This is not true of Australian cities, unlike a European capital such as Berlin which Mitchell (2003) describes as the ultimate urban palimpsest - a "city text frantically being written and rewritten" (Huyssen, 2003, p. 49). The deserter monuments explored by Dräger have themselves been rewritten. Where once they had seemed so provocative, they now engender reactions ranging from acceptance to indifference.

It is not just memorials that have altered since the 1980s, but the actual act of researching them. For as academics who commenced their university studies before the advent of online databases

can attest, memories of library research are dominated by card indexes (indeed, an entire floor of the main library at the University of Queensland was given over to card catalogues when one of the editors began his study there in 1985), physical searches for material, and spare time on-campus spent in the library reading and writing. The advent of the internet, however, has had a profound impact on libraries and librarians (Garcia & Barbour, 2018). Academic libraries now require staff to have qualifications in areas such as digital technology (Choi & Rasmussen, 2009) and to act not as information providers but rather guides or facilitators (LeMaistre et al., 2012). This evolution in the profession is evident in Baguley, Kerby and Andersen's *Counter memorials and counter monuments in Australia's commemorative landscape: a systematic review*. Baguley and Kerby (who once ran a large secondary school library) are academics at the University of Southern Queensland, while Andersen is an Open Education Content Librarian at the same institution. A systematic literature review such as the one they conducted is an important contribution to any research that will be subsequently undertaken on counter memorials. It has a clearly articulated criteria and follows a set protocol which included multiple databases and grey literature. The articulation of the protocol ensures this systematic literature review is therefore valid, reliable and repeatable (Xiao & Watson, 2019). The databases used by Baguley, Kerby and Andersen were EBSCO MegaFile Complete, JSTOR, Web of Science, Taylor and Francis, and Scopus. What is explored in the article is a clear process that can be replicated, and over time, enlarged and updated. It is a worthy final addition to this special theme issue, acknowledging as it does that history is not set in stone, any more than the memorials with which we attempt to explain it.

In 2001, two of this special theme issue editors visited the Musée Picasso in Paris with a Rhodesian born, South African friend then working as a dentist in London. He had enjoyed what he acknowledged was a very English style education in pre-independence Rhodesia before relocating to London via South Africa. He found little in Picasso's work that appealed to him and was politely dismissive of the hundreds of artworks he strolled past in an increasingly desperate search for the exit. When he found a single artwork that "looked the way it should" he gave it the ultimate accolade: "Now that is art." He had been raised in Africa during the death throes of the British Empire. He knew of the battles at Trafalgar and Waterloo, but little of historical figures from his own upbringing such as Nelson Mandela or Steve Biko. He had very set ideas about the way things should look, ones that remained steadfastly anachronistic, though he was disarmingly self-aware. What the editors and authors have attempted to achieve in this article and across the special theme issue as a whole is to engage in an exploration of what people need or expect to see in a piece of public art that might encourage them to exclaim "Now that is a war memorial."

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Conflict and the Australian commemorative landscape

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ABSTRACT

Australian war memorials have changed over time to reflect community sentiments and altered expectations for how a memorial should look and what it should commemorate. The monolith or cenotaph popular after the Great War has given way to other forms of contemporary memorialisation including civic, counter or anti-memorials or monuments. Contemporary memorials and monuments now also attempt to capture the voices of marginalised groups affected by trauma or conflict. In contrast, Great War memorials were often exclusionary, sexist and driven by a nation building agenda. Both the visibility and contestability of how a country such as Australia pursues public commemoration offers rich insights into the increasingly widespread efforts to construct an inclusive identity which moves beyond the cult of the warrior and the positioning of war as central to the life of the nation.

KEYWORDS

Australian history, Commemoration, Frontier wars, Great War, Second World War, War memorial

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Introduction

In 2008 Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton challenged Australians to imagine what a history of Australia would look like if the only evidence available were the memorials documented in the state and federal heritage databases. Given the number of memorials that now dominate the Australian landscape, there would be no shortage of 'evidence.' Yet as Basil Liddell Hart would have observed, they might be official, but they are not history. For at the heart of all officially sanctioned history is the state. It endorses a version of the nation's story that furthers its own interests and ignores or marginalises anything that challenges it:

> There would be few civil or natural disasters of any kind in such an account of the nation unless they highlighted unity in diversity and the indomitable Australian spirit. Migrant communities would be largely silent and Indigenous communities relegated to a brief mention and a footnote … most of these people would be explorers, pioneers, politicians or people with property. Overall, this would be a history of the forging of a modem nation through sacrifice and the emergence of a masculine Australian identity. (Ashton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 19)

The extent of the recent commemoration of the centenary of the Great War, characterised by one historian as a 'memory orgy' (Beaumont, 2015), serves as a potent reminder of just how pervasive the state sanctioned version of Australian history has become. The growing recognition of the silences in Australian history has done little to dispel the popular construct of it as a grand narrative framed by war and the Anzac spirit (Lake, 2010). It is tempting to see this as a quintessentially Australian phenomenon, but that would be to mistake its ubiquity for uniqueness. For from the very beginning, "the principle of nationalism was almost indissolubly linked, both in theory and practice, with the idea of war … war was the necessary dialectic in the evolution of nations … It is hard to think of any nation-state … which was not created, and had its boundaries defined, by wars, by internal violence, or by a combination of the two" (Howard, 1991, p. 39). Conflict is entrenched into "the very marrow of the national idea" (Samuels, 1998, p. 8), and though Australia has developed a unique *version* of it, the belief that nations are made in war resonates well beyond the Australian context.

Despite the centrality of war to the construct of a democratic and progressive Australia, not all wars or their participants are equal in this process, as is evident in the limited commemoration of the Frontier Wars and the female experience of conflict. The dispossession of Australia's First Nations peoples is "clearly one of the few significant wars in Australian history and arguably the single most important one. For indigenous Australia, it was their Great War" (Reynolds, 2013, p. 248). Fought between 1788 and 1928, the Frontier Wars have fallen victim to a broader process of disremembering, one characterised by William Stanner (1991[1968]) as the great Australian silence. He argued that there has been a "cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale", one that has hidden many aspects of Indigenous and non-Indigenous history, particularly those dealing with invasion and massacres (p. 120). The proof that a war was fought on the Australian frontier, however, is compelling. It ranges from material in archives in major cultural institutions in Australia and Great Britain to oral histories in Indigenous communities. They describe, often in remarkable detail, a series of "massacres that reverberate as ongoing trauma through the generations" (Daley, 2014). Particularly striking are the reports published in newspapers of the time, which:

> offer remarkably detailed concurrent and retrospective accounts of frontier violence. Such stories are so often defined by a chilling, deeply disturbing candour, so detached are the killers from the humanity of their victims. But read, as I have, enough of them … and you'll be impressed with an overwhelming sense that the orchestrated violence was very widespread, well-orchestrated and committed continent-wide from occupation until far into the 20th century. (Daley, 2014)

Conservative estimates place the death toll at 22 000, with 20 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders killed either in official or non-official actions. Appalling though these figures are, Raymond Evans and Robert Ørsted-Jensen (2014) argue that the real death toll exceeds 65 000 in Queensland alone. This figure is significant at a symbolic level, given that it exceeds the number of deaths incurred by Australia during the Great War, long celebrated as the moment of Australia's coming of age. Yet until recently, one would have searched in vain for a meaningful commemoration of this conflict in a public space. To have even acknowledged the conflict as a war would have been a challenge to both the concept of terra nullius, which legally designated Australia as unimproved land still in its natural state in 1788, and the complementary narrative of a benign and successful development of an independent nation.

Although women's wartime history has enjoyed greater public recognition than the Frontier Wars, in terms of memorials, it is still woefully underrepresented. Edith Cavell, the British nurse executed by the Germans in 1915, is an interesting anomaly. There are two memorials dedicated to her in Australia, including a portrait bust (1926) located in King's Domain in Melbourne. Although the controversy surrounding her execution influenced Australian commemorative practices, it did not lead to a wider proliferation of memorials to Australian nurses. There has, nevertheless, been some recent recognition, for example, the *Australian Servicewomen's Memorial* (1999) in Canberra and the *Ex-Servicewomen's Memorial Garden* (2010) in Melbourne. Yet the *Maryborough War Memorial* (1922) is the only local Great War Memorial that includes a figure of a Red Cross nurse. She is positioned beneath a winged victory in company with the figures of a soldier, sailor and airman. There are also a few figures of allegorical females scattered around Australia, such as the bronze figures of 'Victory', 'History', and 'Fame' in Wellington in New South Wales. Even the Queensland *Women's Memorial* (1932) by renowned sculptor Daphne Mayo did not foreground the experience of women. The memorial was an initiative of the Brisbane Women's Club and is still situated in its original spot in Brisbane's Anzac Square. Although the committee consciously chose a woman sculptor for the memorial, it was never a memorial *for* women, but rather was a memorial *by* women, one motivated by a desire to honour all Queenslanders who had given their lives during the Great War. They rejected Mayo's original design of four figures representing a serviceman, a servicewoman, an industrial worker and a woman on the home front in favour of one with a more overt military theme. The final design included all branches of the Australian Imperial Force and was checked for historical accuracy (McKay, 2014a). Mayo did, however, include her only brother (Richard Henry McArthur Mayo), who served with the Australian Mounted Division in the Middle East, and who had died in 1924 aged 32 from health complications due to his war service. He is depicted leading a procession which features a horse-drawn wagon flanked by 23 other men and one woman from all branches of the defence forces. The other figures represent the Royal Australian Navy, Field Artillery, Engineers, Signallers, Infantry, Pioneers, Machine-Gunners, Army Medical Corps, Australian Army Nursing Service, Veterinary Corps and Flying Corps. As McKay notes (2014a), the nurse is barely visible. The changes to Mayo's memorial were indicative of the limited recognition of the breadth of the female experience of war, which included volunteer patriotic work, anti-war activism, and as Mayo tried to acknowledge, the important work of maintaining the homefront (Beaumont, 2000). Even the memorials that do acknowledge the experience of women are far too conservative both in ideology and form to pose any type of challenge to hegemonic narratives. What they do communicate is the reverential nature of Australian war memorials, for though they regularly foreground a "nation-building, exclusionary, sexist and militaristic" agenda (Strakosch, 2010, p. 270), they remain potent symbols of an imagining of war as a central element of the nation's story.

A review of the Australian war memorials from the first great wave of construction after 1918 until the present day offers an insight into commemorative practices and how they reflect, or fail to reflect, an evolving understanding of the national story. Australian war memorials have, however, rarely played a meaningful role in re-evaluating the nation's history. Even Australian counter memorials and monuments, which draw much of their inspiration from Europe, are not as radical in form or ideology as international examples (Strakosch, 2014). The shadow cast by the century long memorialisation of the Great War problematises any departure from traditional

ideas governing what is worthy of commemoration, and what form that commemoration should take. Marginalised groups therefore often find themselves in the invidious position of seeking admission to a well-established and ultimately conservative mythology rather than mounting a sustained challenge to it.

Commemorating the Great War

If one took Ashton and Hamilton's challenge to heart and looked to formulate a history of Australia using official memorials, it would be difficult to make the case that a war has ever been fought on Australian soil. Invasion was a phantom threat in the nineteenth century and then subsequently a more realistic one for some months in 1942. Apart from those commemorating the air raids on Australia's north in 1942 and 1943, particularly on Darwin, Australian war memorials and monuments are almost never in situ; they commemorate events and mourn deaths that occurred 'somewhere over there.' Yet that does not equate to there being a shortage of war memorials, indeed, far from it. No country embraced memorials to the Great War with greater zeal than Australia; in the early 1990s, it was estimated that with over 2000 civic memorials, the nation had built, often at great cost, one commemorative structure for every 30 soldiers killed (Hedger, 1995). This drive to memorialise the conflict and the men who fought it began as soon as battle was joined. Individual casualties were commemorated on church memorial plaques or stained glass windows in an expensive but telling reminder to a local community of the loss of one of its members. As the war progressed, individual memorials were soon overshadowed by community or collective memorials that reflected the extent of the losses, which in time would reach 60 000 dead and 150 000 wounded. The commemorative drive was exacerbated both by the distance from the major battlefields and the decision not to repatriate the dead of the British Empire. The term cenotaph became so emotionally charged that whatever the form of a memorial, it was really, "first and last, an empty tomb" (Inglis & Brazier, 2008, p. 248). As Bruce Scates (2016) observes, the "haunting absence of a body to mourn" ensured that a "host of civic monuments [would] inscribe the Australian landscape with a community's enduring sense of loss." The individual was still represented in a community memorial, usually by the inclusion of a name on a collective plaque, but the eventual construction of a town, city or state memorial ensured that they became the focus of collective and communal commemoration. During the inter-war years war memorials were established as the most accessible and the most evocative public sculpture in a country that had not yet engaged in wholesale memorialisation. Conservatives quickly took ownership of this process, although it now enjoys significant bipartisan support. There are voices raised in opposition, particularly in academic circles, as is evident in the controversy over the proposed half billion dollar extension to the Australian War Memorial and the new museum at Villers-Bretonneux, which in Scates' (2019) view "clung to the old lies: that war is a measure of the greatness of a nation, that the slaughter of 1914-18 was something other than a sordid waste" (p. 207). Beyond that, however, it still enjoys widespread allegiance.

The type of monuments generally favoured by communities in the years after 1918 ranged from arches to columns, pillars, urns, crosses, obelisks, and statues, with some communities choosing clockless towers or cenotaphs modelled on the one designed for Whitehall by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1920 (Kerby, et al., 2019). The most common Australian Great War memorial outside the capital cities is the obelisk. The figure of an Australian soldier reversing and resting on arms (leaning on a rifle held upside down) is the second. This stance has been a mark of respect or mourning for centuries, reputedly originating with the ancient Greeks. Despite being outnumbered by the obelisk, the soldier figure remains the most recognised, although there is a surprising degree of variation in design (McIvor & McIvor, 1994). In keeping with the newly articulated ethos of an apparently democratic and egalitarian Australia, memorials do not distinguish between rich and poor and often omit the ranks of those who served, thereby creating a sense of unity of sacrifice far removed from perceptions of a class-ridden Britain. Such collective commemoration often reflected the imagery and the imagined identity of a newly emerging Australian national community, one that was reverential in focus rather than utilitarian. While

utilitarian memorials such as soldiers' halls and community halls were also constructed, they did not impinge on the public consciousness to the same extent as memorials, and due to the destructive nature of urban renewal have had less lasting impact on the Australian urban landscape.

War cemeteries, war memorials, and the commemorative activities associated with them, helped create a "church for the nation" (Mosse, 1990, p. 94). Sculptors and designers drew primarily on familiar symbols worthy of this 'civic religion.' There was no place for modernism in war memorial design; instead Edwardian classicism was deemed more appropriate to communicating the innate nobility of the Australian soldier. On Gallipoli and in the Middle East, the Australian soldier had fought close to the cradles of these ancient civilisations, and they would now provide a rich storehouse of symbols with which to commemorate him:

> Death was shown through urns and broken columns; mourning through wreaths; remembrance through eternal light and torches; sacrifice through crosses; victory through the laurel, triumphal arches and Winged Victories; mankind through globes; honour through columns; fortitude through lions; regeneration through water and obelisks; and national birth through rising suns. (Hedger, 1995, p. 27)

Across Britain and the Empire these symbols brought together "all that seemed best and most noble in the artistic life of the civilisation they had fought to preserve" (Borg, 1991, p. xii). At the heart of Australian commemorative practices, which sought to reconcile "triumphalism and sacrificialism within narratives of Australian heroism and achievement" (Crotty & Melrose, 2007, p. 681), there was a "cult of the fallen" which "honoured the 'glorious dead'" (Larsson, 2009, p. 79). Their sacrifice had done more than preserve the nation. They had given birth to it.

Honouring 60 000 war dead inevitably required a public veneration that moved beyond the local level. Each state capital and the federal capital of Canberra responded to this imperative, though only two of the seven memorials were completed by 1930. This was far too late to offer therapeutic comfort, but that was, as Inglis and Brazier (2008) observes, never their primary purpose. Instead, they served as "public declarations, acts of formal homage, involving everywhere the governments and parliaments which had collaborated to make soldiers of their citizens" (pp. 266-267). Though the artwork produced for the Official War Art Scheme has been derided by at least one critic as "mediocre", and some of the sculptures chosen by smaller, cash strapped communities are far from being art works in their own right, the same cannot be said of the major state memorials. Their ideology might not have entirely withstood the test of time, but as architectural achievements they are still quite magnificent. Raynor Hoff's work on the National War Memorial in Adelaide is particularly impressive, featuring flattened stylised reliefs of the Angel of Death on the front and the Angel of Resurrection on the obverse. The Angel of Death is immune to the presence of a bronze figure group comprised of a woman, a scholar and a farmer "who pay homage to the dead and who plead with the Angel from their subservient roles. The disregard of the angel heightens the impact and makes the work a symbol of despair" (Hedger, 1995, p. 33). The Angel of Resurrection, who bears a dead soldier away to eternal rest and glory while preparing to crown him with a victory laurel, shifts the viewer from despair to hope. Other states were no less ambitious; for example, Sydney's *Anzac Memorial* (1934) is an imposing Art Deco Shrine, Melbourne's *Shrine of Remembrance* (1934) is one of the largest structures ever built to commemorate the Great War, and Brisbane's *Shrine of Remembrance* (1930) with the eternal flame burning at its heart, is one of the country's most beautiful classical Doric structures (Hedger, 1995). Other impressive works abound: two figurative bronzes, *Wipers* (the soldier's pronunciation of Ypres) (1937) and *The Driver* (1937) in front of the Victorian State Library, *Winged Victory* (1919) in Marrickville, NSW, and *Man with the Donkey* (1935), a statue of John Kirkpatrick Simpson, outside Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance are just four of many.

Educational institutions such as schools also constructed memorials that reflected the needs of their community. The foundation stone of the Brisbane Grammar School War Memorial Library

was laid by the Governor of Queensland Sir Matthew Nathan on Anzac Day 1923. While built as a functioning library, this ornate and disproportionately high octagonal building constructed in the Gothic revival style with its stained-glass windows and Latin inscriptions looks far more like a chapel than a library. Schools, communities, and workplaces across the country likewise commissioned their own memorial to the Fallen. Such widespread grief needed an equally widespread commemoration.

Post-1945 war memorials

Some of the war memorials constructed after the Second World War respond to shifting tastes, but the "artistic tyranny of the Anzac myth" (Garton, 1996, p. 45) remains a powerful force in memorial design. Nevertheless, it was a different world in 1945 than it had been in 1918. Monumentality was out of fashion, and as a result, war memorials for the Second World War generated far less energy, imagination and money (Inglis & Brazier, 2008). Ninety per cent of respondents in a survey conducted in 1943 preferred utilitarian memorials. In 1945, 58 percent opted for additions to the monuments already in existence, and just one year after the end of the war, 20 percent of respondents voted against memorials of any kind. The strength of their opposition was evident in the fact that this was not one of the survey options. Even the Returned Services League, a powerful conservative force at the time, were not welcoming of more statues or monuments (Inglis & Brazier, 2008). Rather than building additional obelisk, cenotaph or soldier memorials, the addition of extra names to an established memorial plinth was seen as a more pragmatic response. Communities habituated to their extant war memorial could see the logic in utilising these spaces for continued commemorations of the absent dead without further elaborate memorials, cluttering the contemplative locations of memorials such as parks.

The creation of a practical memorial was another solution and one that aligned with changing public perceptions of war memorials. After 1945 practical memorials and monuments including the naming of roads such as Remembrance Driveway between Sydney and Canberra, civic halls such as the one in Dubbo in New South Wales, libraries such as the one in Harvey, West Australia, and other community resources such as the St John's Memorial Organ in New Town, Tasmania became more popular. The post war population boom also led to the proliferation of swimming pools as memorials, such as the *Coral Sea Memorial Swimming Pool* and the heritage listed *Tobruk Memorial Baths* constructed in the north Queensland city of Townsville. The central Queensland city of Rockhampton constructed two distinct war memorial pools, one dedicated to the local infantry unit, the 42nd Battalion and the *Second World War Memorial Aquatic Centre*, originally built in 1960. Despite being redeveloped in 2014 as a modern style aquatic centre, the complex kept the original name (McKay, 2014b). Not all communities were as determined to retain their wartime heritage as Rockhampton. The *Blacktown War Memorial Swimming Pool* was constructed in western Sydney in 1961 but by the time it was redeveloped it served a different community to the one which had commissioned it decades earlier. The revitalised complex was, amidst some minor controversy, renamed the *Blacktown Aquatic Centre*. Collective national identities had evolved, as had collective Australian perceptions of war. As Inglis (2016) foresaw, it is inevitable that they will continue to evolve.

Unsurprisingly, Canberra, the nation's capital, is a key site of public commemoration. In his survey of the planning of public memorials in Washington DC, Ottawa and Canberra, Quentin Stevens (2015) observes that in each capital "military themes predominate, while many other worthy subjects go un-commemorated" (p. 56). He further notes that these commemorative landscapes "continuously and incrementally develop through decisions negotiated among various political parties, local and national government agencies, civic interest groups, experts in history and design, and mourners, and in evolving historical contexts of struggle between an overarching sense of nationhood and the fates and interests of specific social groups" (pp. 30-40). Perhaps the greatest contributor to the memorialisation process is the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra. Opened in 1941, to many it remains as its founder Charles Bean conceived of the Anzac

story as a whole, "a monument to great hearted men, and for their nation – a possession forever." To others, it perpetuates a cult of the warrior (Lake, et al., 2010), one that prevents an appreciation of the achievements of pre-war Australia (Kerby & Baguley, 2020). No museum or memorial in the country so completely embraces its role as a cathedral of the modern age (Prodger, 2016), or encourages an experience of transcendence and an engagement with the sacred so unapologetically. The positioning of the Anzac mythology as a form of displaced Christianity is particularly overt in the AWM's Hall of Memories, set above the Pool of Reflection and at the heart of the complex. The Stained Glass Windows, which look as though they once resided in a medieval cathedral, celebrate qualities such as Chivalry, Patriotism and Mateship, "quintessential qualities displayed by Australians in war" (AWM, 2019a). The wall mosaics, which commemorate the Second World War are reminiscent of classical Greek sculptures and Byzantine mosaics. The Byzantine dome, 24 metres above the floor, draws the visitor's eyes upward to a range of religious, spiritual and Australian symbols, each of which "evokes the renewal of life's forces and celebrates the immortality of those who believed in freedom and ultimately died to defend it" (AWM, 2019b). The tomb of the Unknown Soldier lies in the centre of the Hall, as it has done since 1993. At the head of the tomb is inscribed "Known unto God" and at the foot, "He is all of them and he is one of us."

It is not just inside the AWM that the Anzac story is presented to the Australian public. In 1965 the Menzies government planned for the placement of ten memorials along Anzac Parade in front of the AWM. It was to be the Australian equivalent of the 'sacred way' that had joined Athens to Eleusis, which was flanked by sculptures that commemorated heroes, gods, and civic events, and the Mall in Washington D.C. (Inglis & Brazier, 2008). The order they were built was haphazard, at least in a historical sense: the *Desert Mounted Corps Memorial* (1968), *The Royal Australian Air Force Memorial* (1973, an early journey into abstraction), *The Rats of Tobruk Memorial* (1983), more conventional memorials including the *Royal Australian Navy Memorial* (1986) and the *Australian Army Memorial* (1989), the *Kemal Atatürk Memorial* and the *Atatürk Memorial Garden* (1985) (the only memorial to an enemy commander on Anzac Parade), the *Australian Hellenic Memorial* (1988), the *Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial* (1992), the *Australian Service Nurses National Memorial* (1999), the *Korean War Memorial* (2000), the *Australian-New Zealand Memorial* (2001), the *Boer War Memorial* (2017), and the *Australian Peacekeeping Memorial* (2017). There are some interesting aesthetic choices, such as the *Australian-New Zealand Memorial*, while others respond to a modern agenda, such as the *Atatürk Memorial Garden* and the *Australian Hellenic Memorial*. Some attempt to highlight aspects of Australia's military history that have been ignored or marginalised, such as the memorials to nurses and peacekeepers, yet there is little that even the most ardent admirer of the state sanctioned view of Australian military history would find troubling.

Taken as a whole, the war memorials in Canberra and elsewhere are often artistically interesting and are at times capable of generating genuine reflection. They are, however, just as regularly sanitised, comforting, and uncontroversial, for example, the visually arresting but undeniably anachronistic *Australian National Boer War Memorial* in Canberra. Some have attempted to appropriate the language of the Anzac mythology as a means of inducting the disparate elements of modern Australia into one of the dominant narratives such as the proposed but now cancelled statue to Brisbane's *Mud Army* who helped clean the city after the 2011 floods. Others have sought an uneasy accommodation between a style reminiscent of Great War memorials and abstraction (*The Korean War Memorial*, Canberra), or have used the Great War iconography augmented, but never challenged by, the symbols of a marginalised group (*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial*, 2013, Adelaide). Some use well known symbols not usually seen in Australian memorials and mount a muted challenge to hegemonic narratives, but in reality seek admission to them on the part of a marginalised group (*Yininmadyemi Thou didst let fall*, 2015, Sydney).

The Australian commemorative landscape has nevertheless undergone some alteration in recent years. The 'heroic memorial' has been increasingly replaced, or at least influenced by a

"new breed of abstract and, often, 'therapeutic' memorial" (Stephens, 2012, p. 146), such as *Reconciliation Place* (2002) in Canberra. Some memorial designers have completely bypassed Great War iconography and drawn inspiration from ancient standing stones or monoliths and classical stelae to communicate a conservative narrative for a new class of war hero (*Australian Peacekeeping Memorial,* Canberra), or to commemorate service in an unpopular cause (*The Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial*), which is an interesting example of the shift in memorial design:

> The memorial provides a contemplative space that is active in storytelling. The stelae forming the perimeter of the space incline inwards producing a feeling of unease amplified by the suspended stone halo overhead. The words and images add to this apprehension but are instructive in the trauma of those who fought in the war. It is dedicated to "all those that suffered and died." This pensive and anxious memorial is approached from Anzac Parade by a wide ramp that punches through the gap in the stelae. Through its design the memorial manages to convey something of the story of the war and its distressing effects and differs dramatically from traditional memorials that require a different reading steeped in the traditions of classical symbolism (Stephens, 2012, p. 149).

Though 17 000 Australians served in the Korean War, 60 000 in Vietnam, and 26 000 in the Middle East since 2001, for all the political controversies and the undoubted sacrifice of the service personnel, they were not national commitments anywhere near the scope of the Great War or the Second World War. As a result, there are now far fewer Australians who have had a direct experience of war than there were, for example, in the 1920s. As a result, memorials need to tell a different story, one that is symbolically authentic (Stephens, 2012). However, the question of what is authentic is inevitably a contested one. *The Korean War Memorial* (2010) in Sydney was designed by Jane Cavanough and Pod Landscape Architecture. Some observers, though certainly not all of them, saw it as a "welcome departure" from the "heroic monumentality of traditional Australian war memorials" (Ward, 2010, p. 56). This was not a universal view, which is hardly surprising given the plethora of traditional war memorials which have inculcated entrenched views about what is an appropriate aesthetic and what is not. For as Stephens (2012) observes, war memorials "represent a significant emotional and physical investment for any community and their 'becoming' is often fraught with complication and (sometimes) conflict" (p. 141). Anne Ferguson discovered how fraught this could be when designing the *Australian Servicewomen's Memorial* in Canberra. Her flat, abstract design faced considerable public opposition, proof perhaps of Sebastian Smee's (2000) claim that "publicly commissioned sculptures – especially memorials – almost inevitably disappoint people, if only because there are so many stakeholders with different (often unformed) ideas about what they want that the end result never quite matches their expectations" (p. 371). To understand the difficulties that Ferguson encountered requires an acknowledgement that there are "tensions between traditional memorial design and the current transition in Australian towards memorials that are more overtly abstract and interactive" (Stephens, 2012 p. 142).

Some memorials seek to link more cosmopolitan memories and local issues, for example the use of the pink triangle in *Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial* (2001). Others that deal with traumatic memories acknowledge the role of contemplation, sometimes with distinct spaces set aside for reflection (*Australian Service Nurses National Memorial*, Canberra); others have foregrounded it even further (*Port Arthur Memorial Garden* (2000), Tasmania; *Reconciliation Place* (2002), Canberra and a range of other memorials to the Stolen Generations, Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children forcibly removed from their families by Federal and State government agencies and church missions. Despite the challenges inherent in public commemoration, there is a growing preparedness to acknowledge that there are marginalised voices whose experiences have been excluded from official commemoration. One of the most effective is the *Aboriginal Memorial* at the National Gallery of Australia, completed in 1988 for the bi-centenary. It is an installation of 200 hollow log coffins from Central Arnhem Land, one for each year of European occupation. The logs are, like cenotaphs, empty tombs which commemorate

people who died defending their land; though in this case they fought against rather than for white Australia. In contrast, *Reconciliation Place* in Canberra is far less evocative:

> It uses highly abstract counter-monumental forms in an attempt to embrace and integrate indigenous perspectives into the national narrative. It asserts an honest confrontation with history and an attempt to establish a new, more inclusive and "reconciled" understanding of political identity. But many indigenous Australians have received this effort with great skepticism. Rather than seeing it as a genuine form of conversation, they feel further marginalized by the monument's abstract, sanitized way of representing their long and arduous historical struggle for justice and equality (Strakosch, 2010).

In her discussion on symbolic reparations, Alison Atkinson-Phillips (2020) argues that memorials such as this one can be an act of acknowledgement on behalf of perpetrators of physical or symbolic violence. Ashton and Hamilton (2008) characterise them as an act of "retrospective commemoration: the effort of state authorities at all levels to express a more inclusive narrative of the nation as a result of, among other things, multicultural policies by retrospectively commemorating a wider number of communities and people" (p. 4). Nevertheless, after almost twenty years it steadfastly reflects rather than challenges the "pre-existing understandings of viewers. As a result, it largely fails to challenge the authority of the surrounding traditional memorials, and the story of the victims remains untold and unreflected" (Strakosch, 2010).

The AWM sought a compromise solution to the challenge of retrospective commemoration. The sustained refusal to include displays related to the Frontier Wars did not extend to the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and servicewomen in all conflicts in which Australia's military has been involved. *For Our Country* (2019) is situated in the grounds of the AWM and features a pavilion set behind a ceremonial fire pit. Behind this is a wall of two-way mirrored glass that reflects the viewer and the memorial. Perhaps channelling Maya Lin, the designer of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington, the artist Daniel Boyd explained that he was motivated by a desire to "understand the multiplicity of perspectives, or narratives, of how different people relate to country. It's a space where hopefully people can come to contemplate and reflect on the sacrifices people have made" (Hardy, 2019).

By virtue of their sheer number and the pervasiveness of the ideology they communicate, Australian war memorials have continued to influence all attempts at commemoration, even those with pretensions to being counter-monuments. Where traditional memorials glorify an event or a person or affirm an ideology, a counter monument generally recognises the less celebratory events in a nation's history and acknowledges the suffering of victims, whether it be of war or persecution (Stevens, et al., 2018). The question of how best to do this remains contentious, for we live in an age "which has not merely abandoned a great many historic symbols, but has likewise made an effort to deflate the symbol itself by denying the values which it represents" (Mumford, 1949, p. 179). Sert, Leger and Giedion (1958) went so far as to argue that memorials might only be possible in periods of history during which there exists a unifying consciousness and culture. Nevertheless, any attempt to write the obituary for memorials is at best premature:

> The more fragmented and heterogeneous societies become, it seems, the stronger their need to unify wholly disparate experiences and memories with the common meaning seemingly created in common spaces. But rather than presuming that a common set of ideals underpins its form, the contemporary monument attempts to assign a singular architectonic form to unify disparate and competing memories. In the absence of shared beliefs or common interests, memorial-art in public spaces ask an otherwise fragmented populace to frame diverse pasts and experiences in common spaces (Young, 2016, p. 329).

Young (2016) sees this as representing a shift away from any notion of a national "collective memory" to what he characterises as a nation's "collected memory." Through the sharing of "common spaces in which we collect our disparate and competing memories, we find common

(perhaps even a national) understanding of widely disparate experiences and our very reasons for recalling them" (p. 329). Nevertheless, any commemoration of the past is controversial, for memorial "dynamics are fuelled by competing memory paradigms, different and sometimes mutually exclusive groups of victims, shifting present day stakes, and divergent representations of the future" (Silberman & Vatan, 2013, p. 2). Australian culture may not be as resistant to this as it once was, for it is now "saturated with traumatic memories and understandings of victimhood that incite profound sympathy and give voice to those who have suffered." Australians increasingly view history "as a wound or scar that leaves a trace on a nation's soul" (Twomey, 2015, para. 17).

Recognising that history is a contested construct, some memorial designers have sought to offer an 'updated' narrative that maintains a reverence for past heroes while acknowledging a multiplicity of views (for example, the proposed $3 million memorial to Captain Cook at Botany Bay touted as a semi-aquatic memorial precinct). Alterations to the Explorers' Monument in Fremantle pursue the same course through a different, but perhaps more effective approach. Unveiled in 1913 it commemorates three "intrepid Pioneers" killed in 1864 "by treacherous natives" and the subsequent punitive expedition that ended in the massacre of 20 Aborigines. In 1994, during the United Nations Year of Indigenous Peoples, a counter-memorial in the form of a plaque was set in its base which outlined "the history of provocation that led to the explorers' deaths." This is an example of dialogical memorialisation, when a memorial is "intentionally juxtaposed to another, pre-existing monument located nearby and … critically questions the values the pre-existing monument expresses. A dialogic coupling dramatises new meanings beyond those conveyed by each of the works considered individually" (Stevens, et al., 2018, p. 729). As Scates (2017) observes, this approach reminds us that history is seen, not a final statement, "but a contingent and contested narrative." In this instance, the plaque acknowledges the right of Indigenous people to defend their land from invasion, a view given added bite by the addition of the words "Lest we Forget." Such a recognition that First Settlement might just as easily be characterised as an invasion strikes at the core of Australia's self-image:

> Unlike heroic struggles, military triumphs, and revolutionary victories – privileged hallmarks of national celebrations and grandiose commemorations – traumatic or infamous pasts do not lend themselves to smooth or self-aggrandizing narratives. Nations are reluctant to exhume a past that is perceived as divisive and detrimental to their official self-image or national mythology (Silberman & Vatan, 2013, p. 2).

Conclusion

Australian war memorials have changed over time to reflect community sentiments and altered expectations for how a memorial should look and what it should commemorate. The monolith or cenotaph popular after the Great War has given way to other forms of contemporary memorialisation including counter memorials or monuments. Contemporary memorials and monuments now also attempt to capture the voices of marginalised groups affected by trauma or conflict. In contrast, Great War memorials were often exclusionary, sexist and driven by a nation building agenda. Both the visibility and contestability of how a country such as Australia pursues public commemoration offers rich insights into national efforts to construct an inclusive identity which moves beyond the cult of the warrior and the positioning of war as central to the life of the nation. Ultimately what we can take away from this survey of the Australian memorial and monument landscape is an understanding that our national narrative is constantly under construction, and each generation will 'renovate' the narrative to reflect contemporary values and beliefs. Despite an ornate gothic revival library building and a state-of-the-art swimming pool, the attraction of the Brisbane Grammar School war memorial for teenage male students is probably the German field artillery gun captured by a former student and presented to the school in 1924. This is a physical structure that has a design and form embodying much of what it is intended to memorialise and has remained a favoured lunch site for generations of students. This suggests

that although formal memorials and utilitarian structures can have their place, memorials become what future generations make of them.

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The spectre of the thing: The construction of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust memorial[1]

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ABSTRACT

The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial is situated on the western side of Green Park in Darlinghurst, in Sydney, Australia. Darlinghurst is considered the heart of Sydney's gay and lesbian population, having been the site of demonstrations, public meetings, Gay Fair Days, and the starting point for the AIDS Memorial Candlelight Rally. It is also very close to both the Sydney Jewish Museum and the Jewish War Memorial. The planning and construction of the Memorial between 1991 and 2001 was a process framed by two competing imperatives. Balancing the commemoration of a subset of victims of the Holocaust with a positioning of the event as a universal symbol of the continuing persecution of gays and lesbians was a challenge that came to define the ten year struggle to have the memorial built.

KEYWORDS

Aesthetics, Gay and Lesbian activism, Holocaust memorials, Monuments, Queer memorialisation.

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Introduction

The planning and construction of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial between 1991 and 2001 was a process framed by two competing imperatives - balancing the commemoration of a subset of victims of the Holocaust simultaneously with a positioning of the event as a universal symbol of the continuing persecution of gays and lesbians. This was a challenge that came to define the ten year struggle to have the memorial built. The Holocaust does not resonate as deeply in Australia as it does in Europe, the United States, and the Middle East. Within eighteen months of the formation of a memorial committee, many of the memorial's supporters came to see the Holocaust connection as a barrier to the mobilising of popular support. . The issue of relevance was further exacerbated by the AIDS crisis (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV), which was first reported in 1981, reached its peak during 1995, and though still an issue, is now in decline. Approximately 32 million people have died from AIDS-related illnesses globally (Becerra, 2021). In the opinion of many in the gay and lesbian community, it was a holocaust much more relevant to their lived experience than an historical event distant in both time and place.

Domestic context

At the time the memorial was first mooted in the early 1990s, gay activism in Australia was undergoing a transformation. As Willett (2000) observes, during the 1970s and 1980s there was a fairly orthodox understanding of gay and lesbian activism, one dominated by committees and organisations supporting positive developments and confronting the negative or inadequate. The memorial committee falls easily enough into this category. Yet by the 1980s gay and lesbian politics had become less about protest and more about celebration, a development particularly evident in the growing popularity of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Where there was activism, it focussed on the AIDS crisis, which involved the care and support of those afflicted, mourning the loss of community members, and acknowledging the impact of the disease on the community (Willett, 2000). This focus on the AIDS crisis was not surprising, for at its peak in the early 1990s, AIDS was killing 1000 Australians each year; in New South Wales alone deaths had already reached 3000 (Health Outcomes International & The National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, 2007).

The desire to claim a space in the commemorative landscape for gays and lesbians reflected a "queer turn toward memory", one that challenged the "forgetting and erasure" that historically underpinned the marginalisation of the gay and lesbian communities (Dunn, 2011). As Wotherspoon (1991) observed in the year the memorial committee was formed, gays and lesbians in Australia belonged to a community with a history. At its very first meeting, the memorial committee argued that in spite of persecution and marginalisation, gays and lesbians are "part of the rest of the world [and do not] live in isolation." Central to this acknowledgement was a desire for external recognition, though it was on this occasion couched in almost apologetic terms: it would be a "positive move for Governing bodies to acknowledge our existence and a little about our global history" ('Gay Holocaust Monument Association,' 1991). Given that by the early 1990s the AIDs pandemic was regularly being discussed using the Holocaust as a reference point, the decision to link it to a commemoration of the wider persecution of gays and lesbians was not entirely without local resonance. A public memorial to some aspect of the gay and lesbian experience was probably inevitable, but in time the Holocaust connection became a distraction to those tasked with fund raising.

The new mood of celebration that permeated gay and lesbian politics and the activist focus on the AIDS crisis shifted attention to elements of the gay and lesbian experience that reflected local concerns. In France, Alain Emmanuel Dreuilhe had already positioned AIDS as a turning point in gay history, an assessment that relied on the "cultural memory of the Holocaust to help shape the relationship between disaster, community formation, and political legitimacy" (Caron, 2010, p.

156). Awareness of the Holocaust in Australia was, from the 1970s onwards, driven primarily by survivors. In 1933 the Jewish population of Australia was 26 472; by 2000 it was 100 000, with 35 000 to 40 000 arriving between 1933 and 1963, fleeing either Hitler or having survived the Holocaust themselves. Indeed, it is entirely possible that post-war Melbourne had the highest percentage of Holocaust survivors of any Jewish Diaspora community in the world (Rubinstein, 1991). The efforts of these survivors culminated in the establishment of Holocaust museums in Melbourne (1984), Perth (1990), and Sydney (1992), though the leaders of the Jewish community played, at best, a marginal role in these initiatives (Berman, 2001). This drive for Holocaust commemoration will eventually see Holocaust memorials and museums established in each capital city concurrent with the controversial $500 million expansion of the Australian War Memorial, concern over what some saw as the paucity of funding allotted to the National Archives, and the ongoing debate about the Frontier Wars and the traditional narrative of European settlement as a benign and civilising process. In August 2020 the state government of Western Australia allocated $6 million dollars to help fund the construction of a new Jewish Community Centre in Yokine, a suburb of Perth, which would include a Holocaust education centre. In late September 2020 the Morrison government announced funding of $3.5 million to support the establishment of a Holocaust Museum and Education Centre in Brisbane, Queensland. In October 2020 the then Minister for Education Dan Tehan (2020, para. 3) announced that $2.5 million of government funding would be likewise directed to the establishment of the Adelaide Holocaust Museum and Steiner Education Centre in Adelaide, South Australia. In January 2021 Alan Tudge, the Minister for Education and Youth, and Andrew Barr, the Australian Capital Territory Chief Minister added $750 000 to the growing total to assist in establishing the Canberra Holocaust Museum and Education Centre in the nation's capital. In March 2021 the federal government committed $2 million dollars towards the establishment of a Holocaust education centre in Hobart, Tasmania, in a move that angered some Aboriginal activists, who argue that "history much closer to home was being ignored" (Cooper, 2021, para. 3).

Jewish immigrants and the gay and lesbian community would not have instinctively seen each other as fellow survivors of genocide National Socialism, or persecution more generally, with a shared commemorative imperative. Some of the memorial's supporters engaged with this reality by characterising it as a product of the AIDS crisis rather than as a competing initiative with a singular focus on Nazi persecution. Indeed, two of the memorial's early advocates, Mannie De Saxe, who worked with the Community Support Network, a counselling group aligned with the AIDS Council of New South Wales, and Kitty Fischer who worked with the Ankali Project, which provided training to volunteers providing emotional and social support to socially isolated people living with HIV, were on the frontlines in the struggle against the virus. Yet in an Australian context, where the cultural memory of the Holocaust does not resonate as deeply as elsewhere, linking the two events obscured rather than illuminated the broader ideological considerations that increasingly animated the memorial's supporters. As the early supporters of the memorial were replaced on the committee or drifted away from the project, the Holocaust link was increasingly subsumed into the wider story of the persecution of gays and lesbians. These 'second generation' supporters saw an explicit link with the Holocaust as a barrier to "convey[ing] the universality of the vision of our project in the public arena" (The Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Project Newsletter, 24 November 1992).

International context

In spite of the apparent disconnect between the name Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial and the broader ideological concerns of its supporters, the committee's approach was consistent with international trends in Holocaust commemoration. From the 1980s onwards, there had been a growing international drive to commemorate the 100 000 gays and lesbians arrested by the Nazis (50 000 of whom were jailed for their 'crime', and though most served their sentence in regular prisons, between 5 000 and 15 000 were sent to concentration camps, where approximately sixty percent died). Beginning at the site of the concentration camp at Mauthausen

in 1984, memorials soon followed at Dachau, Neuengamme, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, and Risiera San Sabba. Cities around the world also followed suit, among them Amsterdam, Berlin, Bologna, Den Haag, Frankfurt am Main, Cologne, Anchorage, San Francisco, Rome, Palm Springs, Trieste, Laxton, Nottinghamshire, Vienna, Natzweiler-Struthof, Bas-Rhin, Barcelona, Tel Aviv, Manitoba and Ottawa. Sydney is the only one of these cities with a Holocaust memorial dedicated to persecuted gays and lesbians located outside Europe, North America, and Israel.

The relativising of the Holocaust in order to make links with contemporary persecution was also in step with the evolution in the understanding of it as a "cosmopolitan memory" (Levy & Sznaider, 2002), a "traumatic event for all of humankind" (Alexander, 2002, p. 6), and the "archetypal sacred-evil of our time" (Moses, 2003, p. 6). Most Holocaust museums and memorials adopt this approach and are driven either by nationalistic or humanistic imperatives. The former makes a connection between the Holocaust and the broader history of the nation in which it is located. The moral, political and social implications thereby become a vehicle to explore contemporary political issues. The latter approach, which informs the Sydney memorial, considers "the universal humanistic lessons of the Holocaust" as an element in the "fight against prejudice, discrimination and racism" (Berman, 2006, pp. 34-35). The Jewish experience has thereby been gradually de-historicised and in the process the Holocaust has become emblematic of the destruction wrought by all forms of racism and intolerance (Alba, 2007). A case in point is the inscription at the Sydney memorial, which does not mention the Holocaust, instead casting its net very widely in terms of who is commemorated:

> Remember you who have suffered or died at the hands of others, Women who have loved women; Men who have loved men; And all of those who have refused the roles others have expected us to play. Nothing shall purge your deaths from our memories.

This approach, however, is relatively new to Australian audiences, who have traditionally been reticent to make the imaginative leap between the Holocaust and their own history, particularly the treatment of Indigenous Australians (Moses, 2003). Such an acknowledgement would position white Australia as both perpetrator and resistor of genocidal acts. This preference for historical specificity in matters to do with the Holocaust is at odds with other developments, for Australian culture is now "saturated with traumatic memories and understandings of victimhood that incite profound sympathy and give voice to those who have suffered." As Twomey (2015, para. 17) contends Australians increasingly view history "as a wound or scar that leaves a trace on a nation's soul."

In some contexts, the globalisation of Holocaust memory has proved problematic. Some conservatives in America have criticised the linking of the Holocaust to the persecution of gays and lesbians as a victimist discourse which seeks only to garner sympathy as a precursor to laying claim to broader political and social recognition (Stein, 1998). Just recently, attempts to analogize the situation in June 2019 on the United States border with Mexico to concentration camps in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s drew the ire of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Museum made it clear that it "unequivocally rejects efforts to create analogies between the Holocaust and other events, whether historical or contemporary" (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2019). Edna Friedberg (2018, para. 9), a historian in the Museum's William Levine Family Institute for Holocaust Education argues that "when we reduce it to a flattened morality tale, we forfeit the chance to learn from its horrific specificity." Nevertheless, to date there have been few issues of this nature with the Sydney memorial. Indeed, the Sydney Jewish Museum actively includes the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial in commemorative events. In April 2018 a Yom HaShoah commemoration (Holocaust Remembrance Day) was conducted by two rabbis at the memorial in collaboration with the Pride History Group. The ceremony the following year continued the emphasis on globalising the lessons of the Holocaust, for though the organisers sought to commemorate the gay and lesbian victims of Nazi persecution, "above all, we remember the millions of LGBTIQ who in the years since the Nazi regime crumbled were still forced to hide their sexual identity for fear of persecution that did not end in 1945"

(Sydney Jewish Museum, 2019). Justice Marcus Enfield spoke at the dedication of the memorial and referenced "blinkered views from certain sectors of the community" who believed that this "detract[ed] from the recognition of the persecution of [the Jews] (*Australian Jewish News*, 9 March 2001, n.p).

What little disquiet there was in 2001 tended to be very measured. Professor Colin Tatz, the director of the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies argued that "Homosexuals certainly were not the target of annihilation in the manner that Jews were ... People have to be careful of jumping on the coat-tails of one group's suffering and appropriating it for their own" (*Australian Jewish News*, 9 March 2001, n.p). Professor Konrad Kwiet of Sydney University and former chief historian of the Australian war crimes commission and resident historian at the Sydney Jewish Museum, supported a memorial to persecuted homosexuals. He warned, however, against drawing too strong a parallel between the Holocaust, which he argues specifically refers to the attempted extermination of the Jewish people, and the persecution of gays and lesbians (*Australian Jewish News*, 9 March 2001). In contrast to these controversies, the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies Holocaust Remembrance Committee acting chairperson Val Stern saw no threat in the Sydney memorial's relativising of the Holocaust. Instead, she "applauded any move which increases the awareness of the horrors of persecution, prejudice and intolerance" (*Australian Jewish News*, 6 September, 1991, p. 9). Mannie De Saxe, a member of the original group which conceived the memorial in 1991, recalls that there was some opposition from the Jewish community to a link being made between the persecution of gays and lesbians and the Holocaust, particularly given its proximity to the Jewish Museum (personal interview). Both he and Kitty Fischer, another founding member and an Auschwitz survivor whose life was saved by a gay inmate, were Jewish, so in his view there was "a very strong connection; it wasn't just out of the blue." So muted was the concern that Luci Ellis, one of the committee's early presidents, does not recall any community concerns about the Holocaust connection (personal interview).

The memorial's story

As James Young (1993b) contends, memorials tend to remember all history except their own, and the Sydney memorial is no exception. The memorial was first mooted by Holocaust survivor Dr Kitty Fischer, who in 1949 migrated to Australia and after a wide and varied career both here and overseas, settled in Sydney in 1984. She believed that she owed her life to a homosexual inmate at Auschwitz who befriended her when she was incarcerated in late 1944. During the 1980s, Fischer, by then living in Sydney, did volunteer work providing support for people who were HIV positive. Given her personal experience of the concentration camps, the relevance of the Holocaust to the gay and lesbian community probably appeared self-evident. When the *Sydney Star Observer* reported the formation of the Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Committee in May 1991, the appropriateness of the link was not an issue. Andrew Clark, the group's spokesmen, had no qualms about making the imaginative leap between it and the persecution of gays and lesbians in contemporary Australia:

> The blood of the martyrs in the Holocaust is no different to the blood being shed now through homophobia. The language used by the Nazis when they were kicking someone to death is the same used by gay bashers today (*Sydney Star Observer*, 17 May 1991).

Clark's language choices were not mere hyperbole. In June 2018 the New South Wales police reviewed 88 deaths between 1976 and 2000 and found that possibly 27 of them were gay hate crimes. The violence reached a "bloody crescendo" in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the AIDS crisis worsened, with upward of 20 assaults each day, most going unreported or un-investigated, which some believed was the direct result of an "unsympathetic" police and judiciary (Duffin, 2018).

Ten people, Fischer among them, attended a Special General Meeting at the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby premises in Sydney on 28 July 1991. The group committed to doing "all things necessary to construct and maintain a monument" (The Gay & Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Project, 1991). Until the association could be incorporated, which is a formal legal structure adopted by a large range of not-for-profit organisations in Australia, it continued to operate as a collective. Aside from Fischer, the group was at this point entirely male, which perhaps goes some way to explaining the initial and short lived commitment to commemorating only the homosexual males persecuted or murdered during the Holocaust. Nevertheless, the group unanimously adopted a statement of aims that was, by contrast, very broad. The memorial would commemorate all victims of "lesbian and gay oppression around the world through the ages." The three examples explicitly identified were the "nazi holocaust", "the soviet gulags AND [the] ongoing bashings and murders in Australia and throughout the world" (capitalisation in the original) (The Gay & Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Project, 1991). It was hoped that the memorial would encourage community formation, for the Australian gay and lesbian communities were, it was believed, "searching for [their] identity, with and post AIDS, and to do this, we need to search for our identities internationally." Drawing inspiration from the *Homomonument* in Amsterdam which was dedicated in September 1987, an early contributor suggested to the committee that the memorial take the form of a pink granite triangle set into the pavement. In spite of the breadth of the vision statement, the initial discussion was at this stage far narrower, both in terms of the memorial's design, and the people it commemorated than it eventually became. In gold lettering etched into the marble was to be an explicit identification of it as a Gay Holocaust Monument commemorating only the male victims of fascism ('Gay Holocaust Monument Association', Letter, 1991).

The question of which community the committee was serving is an interesting one. In reality, much of the focus was inward looking, for the memorial was positioned as a site of resistance and protest rather than commemoration. In one promotional pamphlet, (circa. 1990s), the memorial was characterised as a reminder to "lesbians and gays in Sydney not to become complacent – that no matter how open and accepted we feel at the moment, there is always the chance that tomorrow, full scale persecution could start again." The conflation of historical and contemporary persecution in the same publication, which ranged from Nazi Germany to Russia and the Soviet Union, Colombia, Iran, Peru, Cuba, Angola, Tasmania, and the "victims of bashings and murders occurring in Sydney and elsewhere to the present day" served only to reinforce this message. Where an engagement with the wider community was discussed, the content and tone displayed an assertiveness that was at least in part born of anger and frustration. The memorial would be a "visible and permanent reminder to the heterosexual population that we will not forget those who hide their love in China, those imprisoned in Angola or those who face vilification and loss of work in Tasmania" ('Why the triangle', n.d.).

The initial choice of site was Taylor Square, but when confronted by a wait time for approval of anywhere between five and ten years, the committee opted instead for the newly named Stonewall Gardens (itself a name redolent with meaning) in Green Park, Darlinghurst. It was an appropriate choice given that Darlinghurst is considered the heart of Sydney's gay and lesbian population, having been the site of demonstrations, public meetings, Gay Fair Days, and the starting point for the AIDS Memorial Candlelight Rally. It is also very close to both the Sydney Jewish Museum and the Jewish War Memorial. It also suited the South Sydney Council, who wished to redevelop the park, as well they might. As the committee itself acknowledged, the area was "run down, dark at night, and is frequented by the homeless, sex industry workers and IV drug users [and] was one of the most dangerous streets at night for bashings in Sydney." Perhaps unnecessarily, they added that "people avoid Green Park" (The Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Project, 1991a, p. 8). It was hoped that the Park would also be the site of an AIDS memorial, but that was subsequently established five and a half kilometres away in Sydney Park and dedicated on 27 May 2001, three months after the Holocaust memorial.

Funding was immediately an issue, however, and though the Australia Council provided grant monies in 1991 and 1992, by 1998 only $25 000 had been raised, well short of the $40 000

required (although various figures were quoted across the life of the project, some as high as $68 000). The Community Cultural Development Unit of the Australia Council provided $15 000 to fund an arts position for Andrew Clark. The Artists and Designers Participation in Environmental Design programme of the Community, Environment, Art and Design Committee of the Australia Council provided a further $5500 to finance the bulk of the design work once a winning design had been chosen. Nevertheless, that left the committee to raise the greater portion of the required funds. They proved dedicated and innovative fund raisers, though at times they must have despaired at ever reaching the required amount. They engaged in a wide variety of activities - social events at the Exchange Hotel in Oxford Street, Sight Nightclub, Club 77 on William Street East Sydney, and at Kinselas in Taylor Square, a costume party, monthly dinners, information forums and presentations, chocolate drives, a stall at the Mardi Gras Fair Day, and selling t-shirts and posters.

A design competition with a prize of $2000 was announced in the second half of 1991, although it was eventually replaced by a shortlist of four who were paid to develop their original ideas from which a final design was selected. One of the central requirements was that any design needed to use the pink triangle as either the basis for the whole design or as a motif used as part of the whole. The winning design by Russell Rodrigo was unveiled at the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby Offices on 14 September, 1992. At the dedication ceremony in 1992, which also saw the dedication of Stonewall Gardens, the programme positioned the design as a commemoration of "all lesbians and gays who have at any time in history been persecuted or murdered because of their sexuality." It was hoped that the memorial would serve as both a reminder of "past injustices, and as an inspiration to us all to fight for that justice which is still to be gained" (Stonewall, 1992). Although the use of the pink triangle was a non-negotiable for the committee, past injustices were an increasingly secondary issue for those pursuing a more contemporary agenda.

At the 1992 Annual General Meeting the decision was taken to change the group's name from the Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Project to the Gay and Lesbian Memorial Project. As Luci Ellis, the then Association President, observed, "the intent of the memorial was never to be only about the Holocaust, but [instead] to specifically reference the Holocaust." On practical grounds, even as a reference point, the Holocaust link was seen as problematic. Ellis recalls:

> It was the early nineties, and the AIDS crisis was in full swing. Nobody in Sydney wanted to donate money to something that wasn't AIDS related, particularly if they thought it was about something that had happened decades earlier in Europe (personal interview).

Nevertheless, the change proved controversial. Mannie De Saxe who by then had been voted off the committee, was opposed to any effort to shift the Holocaust to the periphery of the memorial's narrative. Almost thirty years later he remains adamant that it was a "very bad idea" (personal interview). Others saw a darker force at work and suggested that it was driven by an anti-Semitic agenda. In reality, however members of the new committee believed, probably correctly, that the Holocaust connection did not resonate sufficiently in the local context to generate the level of financial support that was required. Ellis, who championed the initiative, recalls that a gay Jewish man attended the meeting with the intention of nominating for the committee and opposing the change. When he heard the arguments he was swayed sufficiently to support it and subsequently became an effective fundraiser.

The success in obtaining a site and a design for the memorial was, however, a false dawn. The initial drive to build a memorial began to dissipate in the face of legal difficulties and the continuing issue of funding. In 1996, three years after the intended completion date, the *Sydney Star Observer* announced that the memorial project had been axed. There was some disquiet about the fate of the funds already raised. De Saxe wrote a letter to the editor of the *Sydney Star Observer* in 1996 and again in February 1998 requesting that donations be returned. Two months later, the same paper reported that the project had been revived with Robert Marsden acting as the newly reconstituted group's solicitor. Marsden indicated that the funds now totalled $25 000 and that

efforts would be made to raise the final $10 000. With further funding from the South Sydney City Council and after almost a decade of struggle, the memorial was dedicated on 27 February 2001 in the presence of Cr. John Fowler, Mayor of South Sydney, Ms Luci Ellis, President of the Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Project, Mr John Marsden, Chairperson of the Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Project Incorporated, The Hon Justice Marcus Einfeld, and Ms Lou-Anne Lind, President of the Sydney Pride Centre. In the midst of the success, the committee was emboldened enough to confront the issue of relevance. They showed no small amount of dexterity in arguing that the distance of the memorial from the camps and the sites of Nazi occupation and atrocities was a strength rather than a weakness, one that would permit both mourning and celebration:

> The proximity to the Jewish museum and the textual and pictorial imagery used will ensure this space never loses it reverential and memorial quality. The location near Oxford Street will assist in a reading of this memorial allowing for events of joyful celebration to be staged here without fearing the sacredness will be destroyed. Indeed, it is anticipated this multiple layering will increase its importance ('The Gay and Lesbian Memorial', Dedication and Presentation Ceremony Programme, 2001).

In spite of the long delays that included Andrew Clark quitting the project in 1992, and the subsequent threat of a legal squabble over the group's finances when the initiative looked ready to be cancelled in 1996, the committee members consistently harboured quite lofty ambitions. The tone had been set very early when one of their first promotional pamphlets noted that though there were a few similar monuments in Europe, "ours will be the envy of Gay and Lesbian communities around the world" ('Gay Holocaust Monument Association', 1991). The long struggle to marshal a broad supporter base and to raise the necessary funding never saw a softening of this rhetoric. At the dedication ceremony in 2001, the committee, no doubt relieved to have finally completed the memorial, channelled some of this early confidence when they celebrated the memorial's "iconic status as a symbol of the community" and its potential to be "the most utilised memorial of its kind" ('The Gay and Lesbian Memorial', Dedication and Presentation Ceremony Programme, 2001).

Ethics and aesthetics

When he was first approached to design what became the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C, James Ingo Freed was less than enthusiastic. Believing instinctively that the architecture would need to generate an emotional rather than an intellectual response, he was doubtful whether it was even possible to address the aesthetic issues inherent in any engagement with an "unimaginable, unspeakable, and un-representable horror" (Young, 1993a, p. 16). As Freed conceded, "looking over your shoulder, you were always aware of the spectre of this thing, those millions of bodies" (Freed, 1993, p. 89). In effect, Freed would need to engineer a monument that would evoke a nightmare (Argiris, et al., 1992, p. 48). As Bewes (1997) observes, Auschwitz is an affront to human rationality (p. 145). Any attempt to depict it must find a way to do so and "not … insult the millions of real dead" (Lyotard, 1989, p. 364). Rodrigo's design does not insult the dead, but nor does it offer a visceral engagement with the Holocaust as an incomprehensible evil. Instead, its central message is hope, a design decision symptomatic of a determination by all involved to unmoor the memorial from its historical roots.

At a surface level, the Holocaust is certainly referenced in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial. The memorial is a pink triangular glass prism, symbolic of the ones worn in concentration camps to identify and humiliate male homosexuals, but which is now considered a "symbol of gay pride" (Pamphlet announcing the formation of the committee, 1991). The black triangle, the symbol used to identify lesbians, is present in the form of a triangular grid of black steel columns intersecting the prism. The two triangles appear as a fractured Star of David, thereby linking the more specific experience of gays and lesbians with the Jewish tragedy. The black columns are sentinels which are intended to symbolise individual resilience and strength.

During the day the memorial reflects its surroundings, which in the eyes of some of its supporters, ensures that "the past and the present become one." At night, the Holocaust image on the face of the memorial "glows softly, a symbol of hope and the life within and beyond" (The Gay & Lesbian Memorial, Dedication and Presentation Programme, 2001).

Given the visual appeal of the memorial, there is not only a disconnect between its name and its ideology, but also between its ideology and its aesthetics. This is not something unique to Rodrigo's design, for as Marcuse (1978) observes, "art cannot represent suffering without subjecting it to aesthetic form and thereby … to enjoyment" (p. 55). Fine and popular art often make a moral compromise with pleasure (Duncum, 2008), a reality that the Sydney Pride Centre embraced, for in their view, there needed to be room for both grief and celebration:

> Standing there, we understand that this is the place to leave our tears … [and there] are the times of our choosing, times when our celebration is given added power by our proximity to this icon of our identity (Lesbian & Gay Solidarity Melbourne, 2016).

This approach is also evident in other explorations of the Holocaust which have celebrated the survivors, rescuers, and liberators in order to construct narratives that are, to a point, factually accurate but are nevertheless optimistic and uplifting (Kansteiner, 2012). Hayden White (2012) identified the same issue, noting that many historians saw the flood of memoirs, autobiographies, novels, plays, movies, poems and documentaries as threatening to "aestheticize, fictionalise, kitschify, relativise, and otherwise mythify what was an undeniable fact (or congeries of facts)" (p. 191). As the families that picnic near the memorial would probably attest, it has aestheticised, and indeed naturalised the history it seeks to commemorate.

Though not played out on such a large physical scale, the design and construction of the Sydney *Gay and Lesbian Holocaust M*emorial also confronts the tension between aesthetic imperatives and the ethical considerations inherent in the memorialisation of an event that many consider beyond comprehension. From the earliest attempt to memorialise the Holocaust in 1943 at the Majdanek (or Lublin) Concentration Camp to the most recent efforts, three characteristics have emerged as typical of the genre: they are addressed to transnational audiences, they communicate multiple meanings; and they use a new repertoire of symbols, forms, and materials to explore those meanings. Having dispensed with the use of stelae, towers, and realistic statuary by the 1960s, Holocaust memorials no longer resembled traditional war memorials. Instead, they adopt larger, more expansive, abstract, avant-garde forms (Marcuse, 1978). The Sydney memorial is more conservative in its symbolism, perhaps reflecting the fact that the project was already well underway before the design competition, the predominance of activists rather than visual artists, and the strict parameters in terms of imagery, size and placement outlined in the design brief.

Though in step with some of the approaches to commemorating the Holocaust in evidence internationally, the memorial does not embrace abstraction with any degree of confidence. Rodrigo opted for a very different approach than Peter Eisenman, the designer of the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* in Berlin, which is comprised of 2711 concrete stelae arranged across a five acre space. Like Rodrigo, Eisenman is an architect. Both created memorials to the Holocaust that demand a subjective engagement; indeed Rodrigo argues that a minimalist approach allows the memorial participant to become part of an embodied experience of memory, mediated by architectural form and space. They are thereby transformed from a spectator into performer (Rodrigo, 2009). Eisenman pursued a deconstructivist approach, one informed by the paradoxical view that the rupture of the Holocaust had made such an architectural representation impossible (Rosenfeld, 2016). This reflects his intellectual debt to philosophers such as Theodor W. Adorno, who argued that poets or artists engaging with the Holocaust will always fall short in their efforts to impose meaning "on the otherwise meaningless, of form on the formless, or of familiarity on the radically unprecedented" (Trezise, 2001, p. 43). Eisenman argued that his memorial "symbolises silence and emptiness. It does not say … what it is and what it means." It was intended to be a place devoid of meaning and information, one that would "speak without speaking"

(Rosenfeld, 2016, p. 290). In contrast, Rodrigo saw in the abstraction of minimalism proof that "some form of figuration is required in order for an empathic link to be evoked in the memorial participant, for projection and identification to take place." Effective memorial design, in Rodrigo's view, requires a balance between "abstraction and figuration, between ambiguity and specificity" (Rodrigo, 2009, p. 11).

In spite of the memorial's failure to find an enduring place in the commemorative landscape or to act as a significant site of remembrance or resistance for the gay and lesbian communities, the place of the Holocaust in the memorial's ideology still lingers. Nevertheless, when Rodrigo came to submit his PhD to the University of Sydney in 2009, he referred to the memorial as the 'Gay & Lesbian Memorial', choosing to dispense with the narrower and more explicit link to the Holocaust. By then he was characterising the purpose of the memorial as more than just the "tens of thousands who were tortured and murdered during the Nazi Holocaust and the untold number who perished in other incidents of persecution throughout history, but also victims of ongoing assaults and murders in Australia and elsewhere." He also saw a clear didactic purpose in that he wanted it not only to be a focus for the gay and lesbian community, but also "an educational device to help overcome prejudice, fear and discrimination" (Rodrigo, 2009, p. 193). In 2001, he came close to apologising for the Holocaust link, acknowledging that the manner in which the memorial was promoted may have seen "erroneous references made." He went as far as to accept that "it's possibly valid that there's no equivalence between the two [persecutions] (*Australian Jewish News*, 9 March 2001, n.p).

In contrast to Rodrigo's approach, the City of Sydney Council, who by 2018 were responsible for the memorial (the South Sydney Council was merged with the Sydney City Council in 2004), retained the narrower view of its purpose, though they expanded the description of the people it included. Three decades after it was first mooted the memorial is now seen, at least officially, as a means to commemorate the "thousands of LGBTQI people persecuted during the Nazi regime in Germany, including thousands murdered in concentration camps" (City of Sydney, 2018) Interestingly, where once there were concerns that the Jewish community of Sydney might oppose a memorial, they continue to make use of it during commemorative activities on Holocaust Remembrance Day and a visit for the delegates at the 25th Jewish LGBT+ World Congress in March 2019. The gay and lesbian communities, which naturally cut across all racial, ethnic, religious, and class boundaries are perhaps not as drawn to a monument with such a clear aesthetic and ideological link to an event that has played little or no part in their own identity formation.

Conclusion

The memorial's physical distance from in situ or primary sites and the declining resonance of the Holocaust in the Australian context are just two issues that have contributed to its marginalisation. As Ellis observes, the next generation of supporters has not come through to champion it and the early supporters have moved away or died (personal interview). The memorial might yet successfully evolve, as other memorials have before it, and become a site of gay and lesbian resistance. At this point, though, it does not resonate sufficiently as a commemorative structure or as a counter monument that challenges traditional power structures. As the influential scholar Pierre Nora (1996) argues, memory is "vulnerable", "fragile", and "subject to the dialectic of remembrance and forgetting" (pp. 1-3). It remains to be seen whether in the long term the memorial can effectively challenge the erosion of memory.

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Endnotes

[1] There is an issue here of nomenclature. Across the literature this term, as well as gay, lesbian, homosexual, LGBTQI+, and queer, are used, sometimes interchangeably. The authors have maintained the terminology used by the various researchers, while using 'gay and lesbian' in the context of the memorial for consistency. They acknowledge, however, that this term does not fully reflect the diversity of the people commemorated by the memorial.

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Triumph of the Will: A memorial in film

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ABSTRACT

Despite Hitler's efforts to transform Berlin into Germania, the capital of the new world he envisioned and which he believed would bear comparison with Ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Rome, there is little in the way of monumental architecture to bear witness to that ambition. Though there is only limited public evidence of Hitler's architectural hubris present either in stone or steel, the same cannot be said of film. Leni Riefenstahl's masterpiece *Triumph of the Will* (1935) (German: Triumph des Willens) is the most famous propaganda film of all time and a staple of university film schools and secondary schools across the world. At the time of its creation, celluloid motion picture film was a relatively new technology and the documentary format a nascent art form. Nevertheless, it was lauded almost immediately as a visually stunning imagining of the new regime and its leader. Though the film maker was subsequently reviled for her Nazi associations, as an art work her film has retained an almost miasmic aura that justifies continued re-assessment of its standing as a monument to the Nazi regime and the horrors perpetrated in its name.

KEYWORDS

Authenticity, Documentary film, German history, Realism, Leni Riefenstahl, Nazi Germany, Propaganda.

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Introduction

Albert Speer, Hitler's architect and later Minister of Armaments and War Production, saw in the preparations for the now notorious Nuremberg rallies a hint of what lay in store for Nazi Germany. When he was driven past the site, the Nuremberg street-cart depot had only just been demolished to make way for redevelopment. Already, however, the iron re-enforcements protruding from the concrete were starting to rust. Speer later claimed to have had a premonition that for all its hubris, National Socialism and the monumental buildings designed to celebrate it would also be subject to the degradation of time. Sadly, he drew architectural rather than political inspiration. From this insight he championed an approach to architecture that he characterised as 'the theory of Ruin Value' (German: Ruinenwerttheorie). Speer (1971) argued that by using "special materials and by applying certain principles of statics" it was possible "to build structures which even in a state of decay after hundreds or thousands of years would more or less resemble Roman models" (p. 97). This was consistent with Hitler's understanding of the role of architecture in promoting a national consciousness:

> Hitler liked to say that the purpose of his building was to transmit his time and its spirit to posterity. Ultimately, all that remained to remind men of the great epochs of history was their monumental architecture, he remarked. What then remained of the emperors of the Roman Empire? What would still give evidence of them today, if not their buildings … Our buildings must also speak to the conscience of future generations of Germans. (Speer, 1971, pp. 96-97)

The now crumbling remains of the Nuremberg complex still transmit Hitler's time and spirit but not in the manner he intended. Instead, the ruins are "tangible proof" of a "poisoned heritage" and a "collective place of memory for the Germans as a nation" (Manka, 2008, p. 115). It is not the only structure in Germany that engages with this heritage, with numerous counter memorials and monuments being constructed from the 1980s onwards, with Berlin's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* (2005) being the most aesthetically remarkable example. At least one critic dismissed it as being little more than "a symbol of a symbol" (Brody, 2012, para. 10), while the former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder saw its use of abstraction as a barrier to understanding. He noted that despite the horrors that it commemorates, it is a "memorial which one enjoys visiting" (Mueller, 2010). Robert Musil went even further when he argued that there is "nothing in the world as invisible as a monument" (Almeida, 2014, p. 28). The tendency of traditional memorials to "seal memory off from awareness" (Trainin, 1944, in Silberman & Vatan, 2013, p. 4) has seen the designers of counter monuments such as the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* privileging "voids, absence, invisibility, or vanishing monuments as a way to suggest loss, challenge the monumental taste of authoritarian regimes and keep the work of memory alive" (Silberman & Vatan, 2013, p. 4).

Yet in the case of the Nuremberg rallies, its monument still exists in its original form, exactly as it was conceived by the Nazis. This article will explore the documentary film *Triumph of the Will* (1935) (German: Triumph des Willens) and position it in both conception and execution as a deliberate attempt by its director, Leni Riefenstahl and her patron Adolf Hitler, to create a monument to Nazi Germany using a new medium accessible to millions. Unlike other monuments of the period, the film has not subsequently been destroyed by foreign occupation or rendered irrelevant by the passage of time. It remains the most famous propaganda film of all time and a staple of university film schools and secondary schools across the world. On its release, it was lauded almost immediately as a visually stunning imagining of the new regime and its leader. Though the film maker was subsequently reviled as a Nazi, as an art work the film has retained an almost miasmic aura that justifies continued re-assessment as a monument to the regime and the horrors perpetrated in its name.

Leni Riefenstahl – Hitler's filmmaker

Born in Berlin in 1904, Leni Riefenstahl's childhood love of the arts ran counter to her father's hopes for a more dignified career. Nevertheless, she dreamt of becoming a famous dancer, and in fact achieved moderate success by performing in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland. A series of injuries and an operation on her knee saw her focus shift from the stage to film. During her recovery she began performing in films, beginning with her first role as a dancer in the 1925 film *Ways to Strength and Beauty* (Kaufmann & Prager, 1925) (German: Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit). Riefenstahl went on to act in nine films, six of them directed by Arnold Fanck, owing much of her initial success to the German film genre of Mountain Films (German: Bergfilme). These films, much like the American Westerns, pitted man or woman against nature. In Riefenstahl's case, she was usually cast as a young, athletic heroine, trapped in the frozen reaches of the Alps. The genre appealed to German audiences for its nationalistic sentiments and romantic idealisation of the solitary hero, ideas that Riefenstahl would later employ for Hitler (Bach, 2008). Though they probably appeared apolitical to audiences at the time, Susan Sontag (1975) dismissed the films directed by Fanck and starring Riefenstahl as "pop-Wagnerian vehicles", further noting that the film theorist Siegfried Kracauer considered them an "anthology of proto-Nazi sentiments" (para. 5).

Filmmaking during the 1920s was ripe for technological innovation. The first complete sound films were not seen by cinema audiences until 1928, and then only in the United States. The first all-talking German language films were not produced until 1930. This was a period marked by advances in film technology and filmmaking practice, and like many other performers of the time, Riefenstahl was nervous about her future. She pursued some voice training but her Berlin accent and her pitch "irritated many of the movie going public, who felt these qualities didn't belong to the world of Mountain Film or to the image of the mythical female that audiences had assigned to the young actress" (Trimborn & McCown, 2008, p. 33). Riefenstahl still possessed an appetite for professional success however, and continued her career in film, but as a director. Her first feature film *The Blue Light* (1932) (German: Das Blaue Licht) saw her immersed in the same new technology which had ended her aspiration for acting success only the previous year. *The Blue Light* was one of Germany's early sound films and one of the first to be filmed entirely on location as opposed to a studio, which was a much more difficult undertaking. It is a fictional story loosely based on a Brothers Grimm fairy tale of the same name published in 1810. Despite meticulous planning, Riefenstahl was unable to attract financing so self-funded the project and starred as its female lead. The film divided critics in Germany, even though Hitler reportedly adored it, calling it "the finest thing I have ever seen on film" (Knopp, 2003, p. 112). It was critically acclaimed internationally with several American publications, including the *New York Times*, remarking on its pictorial beauty and remarkable camerawork (Bach, 2008).

In the same year *The Blue Light* was released, Riefenstahl attended a Nazi Party rally "on the spur of the moment" (Riefenstahl, 1995, p. 101). Her claim to being apolitical, "that no one would ever believe", would come to define her long post-war life (Kennicott, 2005, para. 3). Riefenstahl's recall of the event is interesting: "I had an almost apocalyptic vision that I was never able to forget. It seemed as if the Earth's surface were spreading out in front of me, like a hemisphere that suddenly splits apart in the middle, spewing out an enormous jet of water, so powerful that it touched the sky and shook the earth" (Brockmann, 2010, p. 153). She wrote to Hitler who responded almost immediately and the two met for the first time in May 1932 in a private audience. Until that point, Riefenstahl had never made a documentary film. She had, in fact, only directed one feature film. Francine Prose (2018) suggests that despite Riefenstahl's claims of the profound effect of Hitler's speeches, she was driven by "neither fascist ideology nor German nationalism, but an almost demonic personal and professional ambition" (p. 40). The German documentary film, *Hitler's Frauen* (2001), suggests a more symbiotic relationship between the pair, noting that after Hitler became Chancellor "Leni sought proximity to Hitler and he to her. It was the beginning of a fateful friendship" (Brauburger et al., 2001). Riefenstahl's background to this point marks her as a creative talent, but she was far from being a natural choice as the Third

Reich's premier documentary film maker. It was her experience on stage and in film presenting fictional narratives, her eye for innovation, and her connection with Hitler that would see her become one of the most notorious filmmakers in history.

Nuremburg and the Rallies

The city of Nuremberg in the German state of Bavaria has become synonymous with the 1935 laws that institutionalised Nazi racial theories. The Nuremberg Laws were a defining moment in history, one memorably characterised by Richard Heideman (2017) as "the embodiment of state-sponsored, sanctioned and enforced hate" (p. 5). The religious discrimination, economic boycotts, and persecution of Jews that it enshrined in law were a significant step in a process that culminated in the Holocaust. The fact that thirteen war crimes trials were held in the city between 1945 and 1949 only adds to the perception, flawed though it is, that the Holocaust both began and ended in the city. As if these historical bookends were not enough to see the city forever identified with National Socialism, in 1927 and 1929 and then annually from 1933 through to 1938, it was also the site of the Reich Party Conventions (German: Reichsparteitag). To the world at large, though, they are demonised as the Nuremberg Rallies.

The crumbling physical remains of the site where the rallies were held are now part of a broader ethical and aesthetic discussion of how to best commemorate trauma and genocide. This is particularly relevant when considering *Triumph of the Will* (1935), for contemporary artists often stress the "collective dimension of memory making [which] invade[s] public and everyday spaces, hand over authorship, involve the audience, and turn viewers into committed participants" (Silberman & Vatan, 2013, p. 5). Though the discussion and planning of what to do with the grounds is a complex process, the remains of the Zeppelinfeld (Nazi party rally grounds) are far less problematic than a documentary film which is easily accessible online to an audience exponentially larger than might ever visit the physical location. In 2019 Nuremberg's governing body decided not to rebuild or restore the grounds, but instead conserve them "in part because they did not want to erase this difficult chapter of the city's history, and in part, because they did not want to be forced to close off large portions of the site" (Katz, 2019, para. 8). The very passivity of the term 'conserve' is an attempt to avoid the issues inherent in the more active process of restoration. Julia Lehner, Nuremberg's chief culture official, is cognisant of the danger of the site becoming a rallying point for extremists. She is adamant that returning the grounds to their pre-war state is not a consideration:

> We won't rebuild, we won't restore, but we will conserve … We want people to be able to move around freely on the site. It is an important witness to an era - it allows us to see how dictatorial regimes stage-manage themselves. That has educational value today. (Katz, 2019, para. 10)

Though it is the best remembered documentary film to emerge from the Nuremberg rallies, *Triumph of the Will* (1935) was not the first; it was preceded by three others. The first, *A Symphony of the Will to Fight* (Lippert, 1927) (German: Eine Symphonie des Kampfwillens), a twenty-minute silent film, was shot during the Nazi Party's third annual congress, ominously titled the Day of Awakening. It was filmed shortly after the establishment of the Nazi Party film office but in ambition and quality was far removed from later efforts. Riefenstahl's first attempt was the hour long *The Victory of Faith* (1933) (German: Der Sieg des Glaubens) which though possessing considerable artistic merit, was ordered destroyed by Hitler. This was due to his image being captured alongside Ernst Röhm, the leader of the Nazi paramilitary wing the Storm Detachment (German: Sturmabteilung), or SA, whose murder he had ordered during the Night of the Long Knives on June 30, 1934. In addition, both Hitler and Riefenstahl looked far too mortal for political and cinematic comfort (Saunders, 2016, p. 29). However, a copy did survive, turning up in East Germany in the 1980s. When viewed side by side it is clear that *Triumph of the Will* follows a similar structure to its predecessor. The camera angles and editing that made Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* a ground-breaking film are already demonstrated in *The Victory*

of Faith. Riefenstahl (quoted in Saunders, 2016) later dismissed her first effort as "some exposed film stock." The response at the time was far more complimentary; it was "warmly greeted by the party and many commentators, who waxed enthusiastic about the access to the experience of the Nuremberg rally and to Hitler himself." The implication that the film allowed the viewer to see more than any individual spectator, Hitler included, was particularly appealing to the Nazis "because the Nuremberg rallies constituted for them the apex of the party's self-understanding and self-representation" (Brockmann, 2010, p. 155). This sense of access to the truth of the event struck at the core of Fascism's aestheticisation of politics:

> Fascism attempts to organize the newly proletarianized masses without affecting the property structure which the masses strive to eliminate. Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves. The masses have a right to change property relations; Fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property. The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life … Mankind, which in Homer's time was a spectacle for the Olympian gods, has become one for itself. (Benjamin, 1969, [1935], p. 19)

The viewers, "soaring with Riefenstahl's camera" enjoyed the illusion that they possessed an "almost superhuman gaze" (Schulte_Sasse, 1996, p. 293; Brockmann, 2010, p. 155) and were able to view themselves. Despite her attempts to belittle the film, which must be considered in the light of her post-war attempts to rehabilitate her image, the film does exhibit key elements of her aesthetic, but it was not this early effort that led *The Economist* to anoint Riefenstahl "the greatest female filmmaker of the 20th century" ("Hand-held history," 2003, para. 1).

Cinema Verité

Many decades after making the film, Riefenstahl claimed that *Triumph of the Will* was cinema verité (French: literally 'truth cinema', though it was not a term used at the time) and denied any political intentions or propagandist influence. However, it is clear the three-day congress and the film were planned simultaneously (Hoberman, 2016). Indeed, the film was more important to the Nazi party than the congress itself and certainly more significant historically. Hitler and his minister for propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, saw in Riefenstahl the opportunity to create an operatic image of an omnipotent Germany imbued with an order and beauty that matched their own vision (MoMA, 2021). Riefenstahl was given unprecedented facilities and generous state funding to realise her vision: at least one-hundred and seventy people were directly involved in the filming including eighteen film cinematographers and sixteen assistants with thirty cameras, sixteen newsreel camera operators, four sound trucks and twenty-two chauffeur-driven cars. She was able to work with the Nazi party to choreograph the congress so that the event was optimised for her cameras before any other consideration (Sennett, 2014). She was even allowed to construct elaborate bridges, towers, and tracks for her cameras in order to achieve the best angles and the smoothest and most intricate movements available at the time (MoMA, 2021). In total, she shot sixty-one hours of film, which was cut down to just under two hours during five months of intensive editing (Sennett, 2014). The film won the Gold Medal at the Venice Film Festival in 1935 and the Grand Prix at the Paris Film Festival two years later. These awards from the European artistic community were something Riefenstahl would later cite as evidence that her film was art and not propaganda (Sennett, 2014).

Despite Riefenstahl's claims of truthfulness, "the film achieved a radical transformation of reality during which an historical event was transformed into a film set and presented as an "authentic documentary" (Sontag, 1975, para. 14). Indeed, when discussing *The Victory of Faith* in 1933, she made it clear that it was "artistic structuring", not newsreel reportage that shaped her vision: "My job in Nuremberg was to collect, from the huge number of powerful occurrences, the best possible filmic effects: to choose from the masses in the audience, the marching SA, and from the course of the imposing events the ones appropriate for the camera" ("Imposante

Wochenschauberichte", 1933, in Brockmann, 2010, p. 156). Riefenstahl called this the 'experience of Nuremberg', as the opening scenes of *Triumph of the Will* attest. In its opening moments, Hitler descends from the clouds in an aircraft like a god from Greek mythology:

> Hitler's plane casts a shadow over the medieval city indicating that Germany has now been released from the torment of the post-Versailles years. Hitler's plane literally as well as metaphorically carries the Nazi message that Germany is "awakening" to carry out its historic mission. The symbolism could hardly be more explicit. Hitler descends from the skies like a god attending a festival in his honour. (Sennett, 2014, p. 51)

At first, the viewer does not see Hitler, for the camera is positioned in such a way that they see through Hitler's eyes and witness "the sheer subjugation of will as untold thousands relinquish minds and individuality to a single, mesmerizing fanatic" (Salkeld, 1996, p. 140). Riefenstahl eschews the explicit imagery employed in many documentary films and newsreels of the time. Instead, she conflates the images of the eagle, the swastika and finally the Fuhrer to communicate a single, unified emblematic statement of the new Germany. Hitler then greets his near hysterical followers as he rides past them, high in an open-top car, waving and giving the Nazi salute. Thematically there are clear links with her films in which the mountain is simultaneously represented as "both supremely beautiful and dangerous, that majestic force which invites the ultimate affirmation of and escape from the self—into the brotherhood of courage and into death" (Sontag, 1975, para. 6). For much of the film, Hitler is presented as just such a majestic force; depicted in isolation with his stature enhanced through low-angle shots (Figure 1). In contrast, his followers are filmed from above, emphasising their smallness. He is juxtaposed with the symmetry of a unified military (Figure 2); he walks through them as if he has "parted them with the magical presence of his body and his will" (Brockmann, 2010, p. 159).

Figure 1. This screen-grab from Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) shows Adolf Hitler portrayed as a towering, God-like figure through Riefenstahl's very low-angle composition.

Figure 2. This screen-grab from Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) shows Adolf Hitler alongside Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, and Viktor Lutz, the new head of the SA. They walk past a uniform body of over 108, 000 faceless troops.

Figure 3. This behind-the-scenes photograph of Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) shows camera-crews and large lighting fixtures built into the structural design of the rally grounds and buildings by architect Albert Speer at the 1934 Nuremberg Nazi Party Congress (*Nuremberg Rally*, 1934).

This cinematographic language was enabled through the efforts of Albert Speer, who designed spaces for Riefenstahl's cameras (Figure 3) so she could achieve her dramatic low-angle shots, overhead angles and strategic dolly shots (Hoberman, 2016). She regularly made use of symmetry, scale, low-angles, suspense and mystery to aggrandize her subjects (Cousins, 2011, p. 154). Nothing, it would seem, was left to chance, for the rally itself was staged for the film first and the theatre of the event second. Indeed, when footage of some of the party's leaders at the speaker's rostrum was spoiled, the shots were then refilmed weeks later. Rosenberg, Hess, and Frank re-pledged their fealty to the Führer, without Hitler and without an audience, on a studio-set built by Speer to match the rally grounds. Speer's collaboration with Riefenstahl reached its apogee in the Cathedral of Light (Figure 4). Speer placed one-hundred and fifty-two anti-aircraft searchlights at intervals of twelve metres, aimed skyward to create a series of vertical bars surrounding the crowd. Although the lights were originally planned as a temporary solution to the incomplete rally grounds, they continued to be used at subsequent Nazi party rallies. The searchlights were borrowed from the Luftwaffe and represented most of Germany's strategic reserve. Hermann Göring, the Luftwaffe commander, opposed their use but Hitler overruled him suggesting that their inclusion in the film was a valuable piece of disinformation. Hitler purportedly said to Göring "if we use them in such large numbers for a thing like this, other countries will think we're swimming in searchlights" (Speer, 1970). Though Speer had been earmarked to rebuild Berlin as the capital of a world empire, it would be the ephemeral cathedral of light which is widely considered to be among his most important works; certainly, it is the most enduring.

Figure 4. The Cathedral of Light designed by architect Albert Speer and captured in dramatic fashion by Leni Riefenstahl as shown in this screen grab from *Triumph of the Will* (1935).

The Cathedral of Light shows Hitler and, by extension, Riefenstahl's ambitions for the film; a piece of powerful propaganda aimed not at the German nation itself but at the outside world. It is high-budget cinema, a monument in film, masquerading as a documentary newsreel. The exactitude presented in the film was achieved through rehearsals, expert editing and post-production sound dubbing (mixing sound from one location with vision from another). These were all techniques Riefenstahl perfected during her time as an actress and director of mountain films. Indeed, Riefenstahl went on to refine her filmmaking and explore these themes further, and with astounding results in *Olympia* (1938) which documented the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The

same techniques and themes are evident in her photographic books such as *The Last of the Nuba* (Riefenstahl, 1976), where she focuses her lens on the celebration of the athletic human body much as she did for *Olympia* (1938).

For all Riefenstahl's talent *Triumph of the Will* (1935) is hardly subtle. Scene after scene hammers home her central themes through shots of rallies, speeches by Hitler and other key Nazi Party leaders, masses of workers and soldiers standing to attention or marching past Hitler, and crowds of adoring Germans, all of them staged for the camera. Riefenstahl made crowds appear bigger, spaces seem vaster and more complex, and time itself feel alternately elongated or compressed. Extreme low-angle shots (where the camera is set low on the ground looking up) of Hitler delivering his histrionic speeches position him as master of a world of impeccably ordered subjects (MoMA, 2021). The geometrical shapes of the marching Nazis, their flags, their Swastikas, their iconography, show the nation as a single unit, with one agreed purpose: the rebuilding of Germany as a great power (Sennett, 2014). Political considerations aside, the genius of Riefenstahl is her combination of narrative, documentary, and expressionist techniques in this film. It is likely Riefenstahl understood, epistemologically, that cinematic reality is in fact a construction designed by the director (Williams, 2011). Her understanding of the contested format of documentary film and the nature of the tension between fiction and 'truth' is at odds with her claim to being apolitical. Renov (1993) characterises this dilemma as a question: "is the referent a piece of the world, drawn from the domain of lived experience, or, instead, do the people and objects placed before the camera yield to the demands of creative vision" (p. 2). As is implied in this observation, what constitutes the control of those in front of the camera by the filmmakers? It is a straightforward task to prove Riefenstahl's control of the objects and subjects within her frames but what documentary filmmaker can claim not to have 'controlled' those elements in front of their lens so as to better articulate the story they want to portray? Riefenstahl's aim was not to state the objective facts of the rally. Hitler's Germany was operatic. Riefenstahl used dramatic techniques to capture that opera.

The concern about the blurred distinction between narrative-cinema and documentary was not one shared by early documentary makers. Riefenstahl's approach was the norm rather than the exception in the period during which she worked for the Nazis. Indeed, *Triumph of the Will* was made less than thirty years after the earliest example of narrative filmmaking (Beattie & Maddock, 2016), and only twenty years after the earliest example of montage editing as theorised by Lev Kuleshov (juxtaposing shots occurring at different times in reality but making them appear as if they are happening at either the same time or shortly following one another) (Cook, 2016). Nevertheless, the filmic, or photographic representation is itself not the real object and is therefore an interpretation of the reality. The framework of ethical principles for documentary filmmaking created by the Center for Media and Social Impact at the American University highlights how differently documentary film is viewed in a modern context. The documentary maker, in their view, should create work that is a reflection of what they understand to be true and real, but which would withstand critical scrutiny if they told their viewers where and how they got their images (Aufderheide et al., 2009). Such a requirement demands that the documentary maker and the viewer should agree that the same thing occurred in spite of the fact that the former was present at the real event and the latter only experiences a mediated version of it. How far the documentary maker is prepared to go in this mediation is a complex issue. Jill Godmilow (1999) an American documentary filmmaker, takes one extreme, suggesting that eschewing emotive filmmaking for a strategy of "under-representation and Brechtian reconstruction" leads to a raw truth, "cold facts and hard reality." In contrast, Werner Herzog (2021) suggested the 'fly-on-the-wall' approach should be discarded in favour of shaping the "ecstatic truth to tell a beautiful and brilliant story." Riefenstahl's own claim of cinema verité (a fly-on-the-wall style of 'capturing' an event rather than orchestrating it) should nevertheless be treated with caution, if not outright contempt. In an interview she gave to Cahiers du Cinéma in September 1965 she denied that any of her work was propaganda. "Not a single scene is staged ... everything is genuine and there is no tendentious commentary for the simple reason that there is

no commentary at all. It is history - pure history" (Riefenstahl quoted in Sontag, 1975, para. 16). This claim does not survive even the most rudimentary scrutiny.

Conclusion: Riefenstahl's legacy

Though the Thousand Year Reich lasted only twelve years, Riefenstahl's film which sought to monumentalise it, has retained its reputation as a landmark moment in cinematic history. Thirty years after Germany's defeat, Susan Sontag (1975) opined that the film would eventually supersede the event and the reality which occurred on the day, thereby becoming history in itself. The renowned film critic Roger Ebert (2008) considered its reputation separately from its quality when he noted that "it is not a great movie, but it is great in the reputation it has and the shadow it casts" (para. 2). It is regularly referenced in modern cinema, including such noteworthy productions as *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope* (Lucas, 1977), *The Lion King* (Allers & Minkoff, 1994), *Gladiator* (Scott, 2000), *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (Jackson, 2002), and *TRON: Legacy* (Kosinski, 2010). It is regularly shown in museums such as New York's Museum of Modern Art where it was first shown in 1941 after being re-cut by Edward Kerns (Hoberman, 2016). The famous surrealist filmmaker Luis Buñuel liked MoMA's version so much he claimed to have re-edited it himself suggesting he made a new film which was far better than Riefenstahl's original (Hoberman, 2016). Despite YouTube removing all versions of *Triumph of the Will* from its site in 2016 after reviewing its standards around hate speech citing it under the prohibition of "videos that promote or glorify Nazi ideology, which is inherently discriminatory" (Kohn, 2019, para. 2), it can still be found there today. Apart from the many video essays exploring elements of *Triumph of the Will* on YouTube (alongside a variety of versions), the film is also readily accessible on sites like the Internet Archive (archive.org) and easily purchased in 'Special Edition' from Amazon, remastered in high-definition for Blu-ray.

Historian Nicholas Reeves (2004) suggests the Nazi Party's legacy is also the film's legacy, observing that "many of the most enduring images of the [Nazi] regime and its leader derive from Riefenstahl's film" (p. 107). Portions of the film are shown and re-shown in part in numerous television documentaries about World War Two, Nazi Germany, and Hitler himself. Riefenstahl's film, even if only in part, is still regularly viewed today more than eighty-six years after its creation. Far more than the rally grounds in Nuremburg, this film has achieved an immortality denied the Nazi regime, and even of Riefenstahl herself. She produced little work of note other than during the six-year period beginning with her first film *The Blue Light* in 1932 and ending with her last film *Olympia* in 1938. Nevertheless, the critic John Simon called her "one of the supreme artists of the cinema" (1993) while *Triumph of the Will* was included in Anthology Film Archives' canon of essential cinema (Hoberman, 2016).

Triumph of the Will remains one of the most famous propaganda works in history and one of the most pervasive and long-lasting monuments to Nazi Germany and its victims. Statues and monuments to discredited ideologies and defeated regimes are often destroyed by liberators. In many ways the opposite is true of *Triumph of the Will*, which has now proliferated online and is used widely in schools, universities and museums as an educational resource. As Roland Barthes (1981) observed, there is "that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead" (p. 92). The same is perhaps even truer of the documentary, but in the case of Riefenstahl's opus, the dead are present but invisible, for it is the millions of victims of National Socialism that now dominate any viewing. As Linda Deutschmann notes, *Triumph of the Will* is:

> unlikely to stimulate political fascism among intelligent modern viewers, if only because the falseness of its prophecy is so well known. The viewer contrasts the powerful, joyous images of the Party with the indelible images of concentration camps and war. It stands as a warning against letting aesthetically pleasing propaganda numb the rational mind. (Deutschmann, 1991, p. 11)

Nevertheless, the film both glorified Nazi pageantry and deified Hitler in a manner that at the time was both innovative and visually eloquent. It earnt Riefenstahl a place in film history. It also made her a post-war pariah (Falcon, 2003). Post-war assessments of *Triumph of the Will* and of Riefenstahl's legal and ethical culpability acknowledge that the film is one of the most effective and enduring ideological statements of the entire Nazi era. The thunderous cries of "Ein Volk! Ein Reich! Ein Führer!" (trans. One People! One Empire! One Leader!) have their monument in film and have not been lost to history (Hoberman, 2016, para. 6). As Brockmann (2010) observes, *Triumph of the Will* is still disturbing "not because it is fictional but because, it is, for the most part, real" (p. 165).

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Politics of relics: On the celebration of the fallen of the First World War during the interwar period in Italy

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the way in which the fallen of the First World War were commemorated in Italy between 1918 and 1940. At the end of the war, numerous spontaneous local monuments were constructed. At the same time, the many small war cemeteries established near the former battlefield areas began to be perceived as a problem. Shortly before the Second World War, in order to bury all the exhumed bodies, the Fascist Regime constructed huge war memorials (ossari and sacrari). However, this was also a means of taking advantage of the fallen for ideological and political purposes. This paper focuses on the connection between the sacralisation of the battlefields by way of raising ossari and sacrari, on the one hand, and the spread of 'fragments' of these battlefields all around the country, on the other. The latter phenomenon has not yet attracted significant interest from researchers. Boulders from the battlefields began to appear in the middle of village, town, and city squares across the country. They were considered 'sacred' since they were where hundreds of thousands of soldiers had fallen, ensuring Italy's victory. As the boulders themselves were imbued with the fallen's sacred blood, they were not carved but rather displayed within the monuments in their 'natural' shape. They were not intended to represent anything or communicate a specific message regarding war and death; they simply had to present themselves. The stone of which they were made was their main feature: just like relics, they emanated a sacred aura. Through their physical dissemination, the whole national territory could therefore be sacralised. To take their cue from this rebirth of relics were the ossari and sacrari of the late Fascist Regime, which used them as a propaganda weapon.

KEYWORDS

Commemoration, Fascists, First World War, Italian history, War memorials

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> Among the boulders of the Karst and the Snežnik, here rises a cippus of the new border in the reclaimed Venezia-Giulia; a mix of sand from the Pivka, gravel from the Isonzo, cementum from Salona, water from the Timavo; bound together with iron taken from the wire fences of the Krn Mountains.
>
> *Epigraph in the Monumental Cemetery of the Colle Sant'Elia*

Introduction

Italy emerged from the First World War as one of the victorious powers, although it was a victory bought at an exorbitant cost. Its war dead numbered between 600 000 and 700 000, with almost a million more wounded or maimed. The financial and social costs were equally shocking, with the country effectively bankrupted by war debt, food shortages, and poor harvests. In the post-war period, the burial and commemoration of the fallen was not only a matter of public order but also a burning political issue. It was the Fascist Regime (1922-1943) that claimed possession of this military legacy. Therefore, to speak about the monuments to the fallen and war memorials in Italy between the two wars inevitably means speaking about politics. But as Italian politics never came closer to being a laic religion than during the Fascist period, the cult of the fallen and its architectural expression assumed a sacred dimension. Nevertheless, there has been only limited research into this feature of Fascist commemorative architecture. This article will investigate the Regime's approach to commemoration, and how certain monuments and memorials can be characterised as 'relics.'

Towards a Laic religion

The Italian politician Massimo D'Azeglio is often erroneously credited with having said that "Having built Italy, we must now build the Italians." The Unification of Italy, which was proclaimed in 1861, required the unifying of territories that had been separate and often hostile for centuries. In addition, it also became necessary to perform a complex work of 'moral regeneration' now that Italy had been 'liberated' from foreign occupation, one characterised as a moral 'resurrection' or 'Risorgimento' (literally New Rising). Following the example of the United States and of revolutionary France, it was a matter of articulating a new civil religion, with its own myths and rituals, upon which a Nation State could be established (Tobia, 1990; Gentile, 1993; Perkins, 1997; Levis Sullam, 2004; Banti & Ginsborg, 2007).

Starting from the mid-nineteenth century, Italian politics was marked by the attempt of laic institutions to not only emancipate themselves from century-old ties to the Catholic religion but also to propose themselves as the latter's replacement in its privileged position in society. Before his death, Giuseppe Mazzini openly expressed his opposition to having his body embalmed, preserved, and turned into an object of worship by his 'disciples', though this subsequently occurred (Luzzatto, 2011). In contrast, other heroes of the Risorgimento like Giuseppe Garibaldi consciously used their popularity to elevate their image to one endowed with thaumaturgic powers (Mengozzi, 2008). Fascism, which was greatly interested in elaborating a form of mysticism aimed at obtaining an unconditional adherence to the new totalitarian State (Gentile, 1993), challenged the ideals of the Risorgimento. Between Unification and the outbreak of the Second World War, Italian society was therefore dominated by a religiosity that was no longer the prerogative of the Church, but widespread nonetheless.

Perhaps even more than most of the other belligerent countries – where the processes of national integration were more advanced – the First World War was a watershed moment in the nation's history. In recent decades it has increasingly been characterised as an authentic anthropological transformation (Gibelli, 1991). Abstract concepts like 'sacrifice' or 'death for the Fatherland,' which were already ideals fostered by the Risorgimento, became concrete realities both for the millions of soldiers and for their families. Death left a mark on both the survivors and their loved ones. The consequences of this transformation would become evident, as this article

will explain, from the moment that Fascism – with its veneration of heroic death – proved itself capable of channeling the trauma of the conflict and the forces it subsequently unleashed toward its own ends (Pisani, 2011; Pisani, 2017).

Monuments to the Fallen and war memorials: The altars of a cult

At the end of the First World War, successive Italian governments interred the remaining unburied soldiers or transferred their bodies from small makeshift cemeteries along the battlefront to larger and more accessible ones. Meanwhile, thousands of monuments were constructed on the initiative of local authorities so that the various communities could commemorate the memory of their own fallen soldiers. Countless small Italian parishes, neighbourhoods, and villages saw monumental sculptures with a plaque bearing the names of the fallen soldiers rise in their main square in the years immediately after the war. Each Italian community paid homage to their dead in a manner that implied a kind of tacit exchange: the fallen had given their lives for the prosperity of the living, and now the latter reciprocated by honouring the memory of their benefactors.

Figure 1. Monument to the Fallen, Rovaré, ca. 1925
Photo © Teresa Cos

In the absence of dedicated official state policies, the legacy of the war and its fallen remained a contentious issue. The rising Fascist movement had already identified the appropriation of it as one of its main objectives. The phrase which Benito Mussolini is incorrectly credited with using when he introduced himself to the King of Italy, upon taking power on 30 October 1922, nevertheless highlights just how determined this appropriation would be: "Your Majesty, I bring you the Italy of Vittorio Veneto." This was a reference to the 1918 battle which marked the end of the war on the Italian Front, the location of which was renamed 'Vittorio' for King Vittorio Emanuele II.

Figure 2. Monument to the Fallen, Spresiano, ca. 1925
Photo © Teresa Cos

Figure 3. The sentence "Maestà, vi porto l'Italia di Vittorio Veneto" (*Your Majesty, I bring you the Italy of Vittorio Veneto*) in a room of the Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista (*Exhibition of Fascist Revolution*)
Rome, 1932 (from the 1933 exhibit catalog)

Precisely one year earlier, the democratically elected government had attempted to stem the rise of Fascism by relegating it to a subsidiary role in a nationwide ritual of mourning and commemoration. Following the example of France and England, in 1921 it was decided to inter the Milite Ignoto (Unknown Soldier). A special commission was sent to the battlefields to exhume the bodies of eleven unidentified victims. These bodies were already perceived as holy, as evidenced by the reaction of women in the small town of Gallio who "presented themselves to the president of the commission, pleading that no one had the right to remove those relics from those sites, sanctified by sacrifice" (Tognasso, 1922, p. 43). Each of the bodies was then transported to Aquileia. Here, a solemn ceremony took place, during which the mother of a fallen soldier chose one of the eleven bodies to be sent to Rome. A convoy then left from Aquileia and travelled slowly to the capital, stopping en route at various stations among uninterrupted walls of people. Just like a relic in its reliquary, the coffin was clearly visible within its special wagon, designed by the architect Guido Cirilli. With a ritual conducted in the capital in absolute silence, the Milite Ignoto was finally buried on 4 November in the Vittoriano, henceforth known as 'Altare della Patria' (Altar of the Fatherland). At the exact same moment, countless smaller similar rituals took place in front of monuments to the fallen all over Italy (Labita, 1990; Pozzi, 1998). At the heart of the celebrations in the city of Milan, through which the convoy did not pass, was an enormous boulder from Mount Grappa (Pisani, 2014). The altar of the Crypt of the Milite Ignoto in Rome – inaugurated in the 1930s in the Vittoriano – was also made from stone of the Grappa, with walls made from stone of the Karst (Leone, 1988).

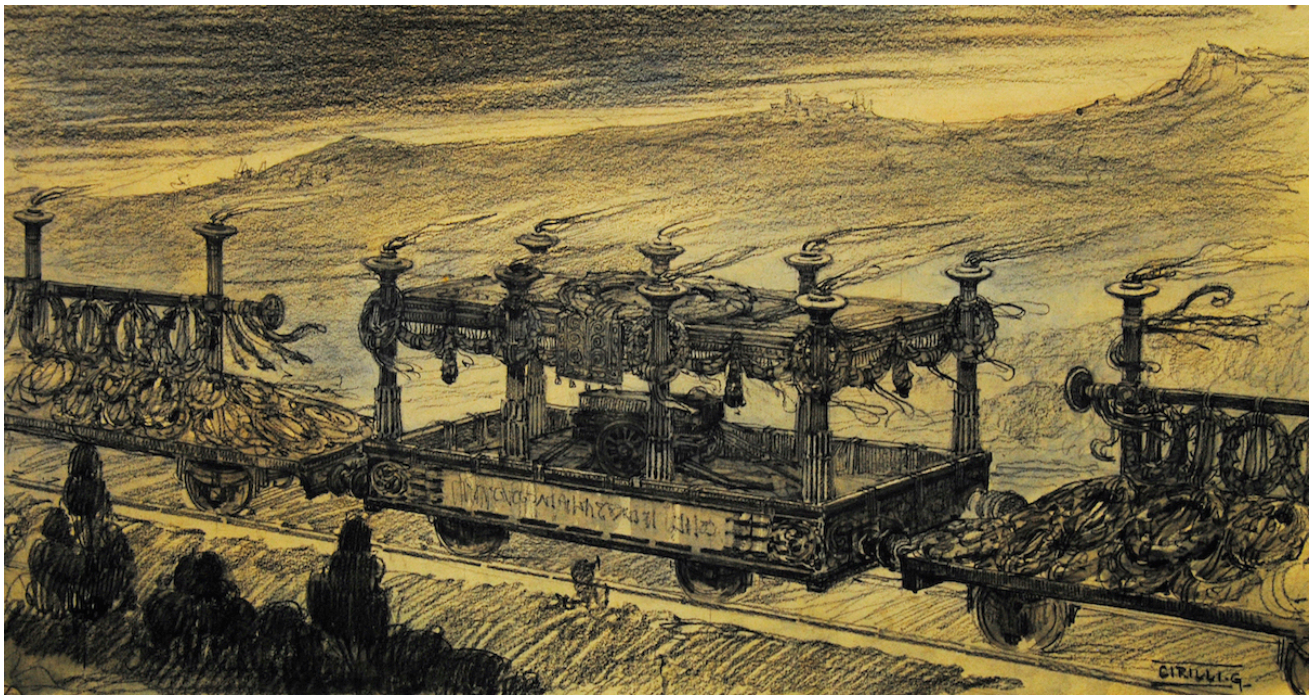

Figure 4. Guido Cirilli, Reliquary-Wagon of the Milite Ignoto, 1921
(Archivio Storico dell'Accademia di Belle Arti, Venezia)

Although it was an undeniable success, the celebration of the Milite Ignoto merely delayed the rise of Benito Mussolini. The fascists still managed, nevertheless, to exert only a partial control over the monuments to the fallen. They dismantled some of the more openly pacifist examples mourning the dead but not celebrating the Fatherland (Isola, 1990), 'corrected' other ones, and intervened through local authorities in determining the outcome of design competitions or in demanding modifications to winning projects.

By the mid-1920s, the sense of urgency to pay tribute to the fallen began to fade. By then, most of the fallen had been commemorated. During the same period, Italy began replacing smaller war

cemeteries with war memorials known as 'ossari' (ossuaries), like that of the Pasubio (1920-1926). These were massive buildings located along the northeastern front, where the war had taken place, largely made up of two elements: a lower part for the burial of the dead and an upper one acting as a monumental landmark. This was not, however, an original solution, as it had already been used during the Risorgimento. More importantly, it was unsatisfactory; it answered the need to bury the fallen, but it did not fully exploit their sacred – and political – potential.

After Mussolini and the fascists took control in 1922, the new regime searched for a signature way to celebrate the fallen, one that was unified and consistent with its objectives (Tobia, 2002a; Giuffrè, Mangone, Pace, Selvafolta, 2007; Janz, Klinkhammer, 2008; Spiazzi, Rigoni, Pregnolato, 2008; Pisani, 2011; Pisani, 2017). The answer to the problem emerged only in the 1930s with the construction of war memorials known as 'sacrari.' Their function was the same as the ossari but the transition from the use of one term to the next – 'ossario' derives from 'ossa' (bones), whereas 'sacrario' derives from 'sacro' (sacred) – highlights a significant change in focus. The mournful dimension was no longer predominant. The dark spaces of the ossari (often underground hypogea), in which the remains of the soldiers were laid to rest, began to disappear and all direct reference to death and grief disappeared along with it. It is at this point that sacrari took their place. These were no longer actual buildings with an interior and an exterior, but rather – starting from the Sacrario del Monte Grappa (1932-1935) – a collection of burial sites of the fallen set upon enormous open expanses (Pisani, 2011; Pisani, 2014; Pisani, 2017).

Figure 5. Ferruccio Chemello, Ossario del Pasubio, Monte Pasubio, 1920-1926
Photo © Teresa Cos

If sacrari – and in particular that of Redipuglia (1935-1938), the largest one – are to be understood as the definitive example of the Regime's approach to the issue of the fallen (but also to that of the First World War and of the theme of war in general), it is because their peculiar features not only expressed but actually *embodied* Fascist ideology. What they achieved was the transfiguration of all the individual lives that had been lost during the war into a unitary construct that completely removed any vestige of individuality. They were now perfectly aligned and, not by chance, an article published at the time spoke of Redipuglia as formed by and constructed with "serried ranks of invincible heroes" (Anon., 1938, p. 401). All macabre content was removed. Light was cast on everything. The focus was no longer death, but transfiguration. Sacrari in fact did not

seek to act as witnesses to the tragic loss of young soldiers but as a means of glorifying their sacrifice. They concealed the mortal remains of the fallen in order to better present death-in-war as an ultimate ideal to the Fascist youth (Amadori, 1940). This became even more imperative with the approach of the Second World War as it became necessary to prepare Italian youth to again sacrifice themselves for the Fatherland.

Figure 6. Giovanni Greppi and Giannino Castiglioni, Sacrario del Grappa, Monte Grappa, 1932-1935
Photo © Teresa Cosa

Sacred area

Almost all the ossari and sacrari were built along the old war front between Italy and Austria-Hungary. The burial sites remained adjacent to the original site where soldiers had fought and died, even after their conversion from temporary to definitive. Both during the war and following it, a specific part of the national territory was thus immersed in a massive propaganda effort. Despite it being a peripheral area from a geographic point of view, it became a central one ideologically. Throughout Italy, countless streets and squares were named after significant battle sites, especially victorious ones, like Ortigara, Sabotino, Mount Grappa, Vittorio Veneto, and the Piave River; the latter, which was almost unknown before the war, was even celebrated in the most famous patriotic song of the time: *La leggenda del Piave* (Minniti, 2000).
The war had placed the mountains and rivers of North-East Italy at the center of the national collective imagination, and the nationalist rhetoric would then continue to fuel the mythical essence attributed to them. Over the years, some monuments were therefore built and dedicated not only to the fallen but also to the actual places of victory. However, it was ossari and sacrari, above all, which gave a definitive look to the sites considered significant for the present and future grandeur of the country. And when they did rise near the old battlefields for the obvious sake of convenience, they certainly contributed to monumentalising them and perpetuating their memory. In this sense, they were required to act as 'sentinelle della memoria' (sentinels of memory), physically marking the sites where many had fought and died to ensure victory.

To this day, these places still are a sort of symbolic barrier: a "sacred area" established with the double purpose of inspiring pride in compatriots and fear in foreigners (Tobia, 2002b, pp. 7-21). In many publications of the time, there is the recurring image of the fallen in the act of "watching over the sacred borders" (Cobòl, 1922, pp. 39-40), often threatening and ready to take up arms again: "Our dead will all be lined up in battle, vigilant custodians of our sacred borders" (Baistrocchi, 1931, vol. IV, pp. 5096-5097). Therefore, if ossari and sacrari "are located along the battlefronts where the fight was harshest and the sacrifice bloodiest," it is because "their sacred Remains, vigilant and safe at Italy's borders" could find a home "in the same sites where our brave soldiers fought and fell, under the same ground that witnessed their heroic deeds and was soaked in their blood" (Michelesi, 1939, p. 1436). It was a "santa terra" (sacred ground), observed General Ugo Cei, "sown with dead soldiers for the fruitful sprouting of Victory" (cited in Malone, 2017).

Both for their location and for the dead they contain, ossari and sacrari are a sort of central station emitting a strong and dense sacred presence. The arrows indicating the sites of the main battlefields create a vectorial network that expands as far as the eye can see over the entire territory. This network was then layered with a second one, less intense but more widespread throughout the country. And it is here, at this point of our discourse, that the relics of the Great War come into play.

Figure 7. Guido Cirilli, Monument to the Piave River, San Donà, 1934
Archivio Storico dell'Accademia di Belle Arti, Venezia

Figure 8. Arrow indicating the site of the battlefield from the Ossario del Pasubio
Photo © Teresa Cos

Figure 9. Arrow indicating the site of a battlefield from the Sacrario del Grappa
Photo © Teresa Cos

A new chapter in the history of pilgrimages, reliquaries, and relics

After the so-called "Fiume Endeavour" – during which the city (today's Rijeka, Croatia), claimed by Italy but not assigned to it by the peace treatises, was seized by force of arms (Ledeen, 1975; De Felice, 1978, pp. 3-140) – Gabriele D'Annunzio, the leader of the operation and one of the key figures in European culture of the time (Mosse, 1980, pp. 87-103), retired into a sort of voluntary exile near Lake Garda. Here he bought a villa – promptly renamed 'Vittoriale' – that he would continue to develop and transform until the time of his death (1922-1938), as if it were a sort of autobiography designed to build an image to be handed down to posterity (Terraroli, 2001).
D'Annunzio had been a war hero, and the gardens of the villa recall many of his exploits: for example, the helmet of an infantryman and howitzer shells, the hull of the Italian cruiser *Puglia* and the *MAS 96* torpedo armed vessel in which he had engaged in a famous raid, or the *Ansaldo SVA* aircraft in which he had undertaken a propaganda flight over Vienna.

Figure 10. Gabriele D'Annunzio and Giancarlo Maroni, Giardino delle Reliquie (*Garden of Relics*) at the Vittoriano, Gardone Riviera, 1926 from *L'Illustrazione Italiana* LIII, 26, 1926

A particular detail I would like to draw attention to is found in one of the Vittoriale's more intimate gardens: here, under the leaves of a great purple-leaf beech tree, there used to be a red rose bush with its falling petals seemingly dyeing the ground the colour of blood. This is also where a few misshapen boulders from the major battlefields were placed. Under a pseudonym, D'Annunzio spoke of this himself: "In the garden, under the purple beech tree, between the boulder from Mount Sabotin and the one from Mount Grappa, between the Lion of Šibenik and the Austrian machine-gun from Asiago, there is a bit of lawn, almost a strip of prairie […]. Among these memorial stones, among these boulders that have descended from the mountains of War, there is a narrow open space" (Cocles, 1935, p. 338). In an effort to emphasise its character, D'Annunzio called this spot the 'Giardino delle Reliquie' (Garden of Relics); and it was by this name that it became known to his contemporaries (Viator, 1926; Vergani, 1927). Yet many of the monuments to the fallen that were erected in city and town squares in those years were actually made of the stones and boulders from the same battlefields, often preserved in their 'natural' state. And, in some circumstances, we also find something else, as is the case of the war memorial inaugurated in 1933 in the small mountain village of Sant'Eulalia, on the slopes of Mount Grappa.

Figure 11. Monument to the Fallen, Pedescala, ca. 1925
Photo © Teresa Cos

It is an unpretentious memorial. It includes the figure of an infantryman, a flagpole, the list of local fallen soldiers, some Fascist emblems, and, most notably, an irregularly shaped boulder. Both for its size and its placement within the composition, the boulder is the dominant element. Even the soldier seems to step aside to leave it the place of honour. Moreover, this great stone mass was transported down to the valley with great difficulty by the inhabitants of the village themselves (Mondini, 2006). They evidently believed that the best way to commemorate their dead was to give the pre-eminent spot to a boulder retrieved from the battlefield.

In the case of the monument to the fallen of Sant'Eulalia, the center of the composition is occupied by a shapeless block of stone that instead of *representing* war and victory, *embodies* them: it is a fragment of that blood-drenched stone that was considered more sacred than anything else and, as such, it occupies the central position in this monument (Pisani, 2011; Pisani, 2014).

The monument of Sant'Eulalia and the Giardino delle Reliquie of the Vittoriale are only two examples among the many possible, of a particular type of memorial. Although there is no definitive census or inventory of the monuments including boulders from the 'sacred' mountains, or drawing inspiration from the place of origin of the stones that constitute them – like the Crypt of the Milite Ignoto mentioned above, or the monument to the fallen of the city of Como by Giuseppe Terragni, upon the entrance of which lies the inscription "WITH THE STONES FROM THE KARST THE CITY CELEBRATES THE GLORY OF ITS SONS" – it is clear, however, that they are numerous. Some have officially been listed and recorded (Ferlenga, 2014; Pisani, 2014), while many others still wait to be. However, beyond their mere number, their importance lies in how they allow us direct access to an important, yet still quite hidden aspect of Italy's commemoration of its fallen.

Figure 12. Monument to the Fallen, Sant'Eulalia, 1933
Photo © Teresa Cos

In his important study on the cult of saints, Peter Brown noted how – differently from both pagan and Jewish sensibilities – early Christianity began to perform its ceremonies in places where saints were actually buried. The tomb of a single individual thus became the focal point of forms of worship that extended to the entire community. Another unique feature of Christianity was the use, when necessary, of practices such as exhumation, transfer, and dismemberment of the bones of the dead. It is in this way that a "grid of shrines" began to mark the Christian Mediterranean and the Middle East (Brown, 1981, p. 11). One of the main practices of the new religion also emerged from this development: pilgrimages not only to the tomb of the saint, but to locations connected with them, even if only for the presence of objects they had touched (Brown, 1981, p. 88). It was not only the faithful that flocked toward relics, but it was also the relics themselves that began to spread across the territory and make their way toward the faithful. The advancement of Christianity thus became increasingly more widespread and far-reaching (Brown, 1981, p. 120).

The analogies with what happened at the end of the First World War are compelling on three points. The first may seem obvious: the conflation of places of martyrdom with places of worship. The second point is the development in both cases of a few great *sancta sanctorum* and the dispersion of their sacredness; the construction of ossari and sacrari on the one side, and the phenomenon we are examining here on the other. In order to better understand the reason for the sacredness that came to permeate the historical battlefields, it may be useful to recall a literary *topos* that recurred at the time. In a poem written during the war, D'Annunzio (1915) referred to a fallen soldier in these terms: "And the pool of blood that ran, warm, from your ribs was guzzled by the hard rock. O mountain of thirst, rock of drought, how much you drank! O Karst of insatiable mouths ..." (p. 3). The memoir of a soldier, Giuseppe Reina, was entitled *Noi che tingemmo il Carso di sanguigno* (We who dyed the Karst blood-red). These two are only a couple of the countless examples available. In short, the earth and the stones of the battlefields were largely considered to be so permeated with the blood of the fallen soldiers that they were themselves considered

sacred: "sacred for the blood that has drenched it, and for the remains that it still holds" (Cobòl, 1922, p. 32).

This was not only a convenient metaphor. When the war ended, a dilemma arose. Loyalty to the memory of the conflict led to a desire to maintain the battlefields untouched; it was believed that, somehow, nothing but the remaining battered natural landscape could best bear witness to what had taken place. Nevertheless, life had to go on. In order to honor the memory of the war without hindering the natural progress of life, on 29 October 1922 the Italian government designated some monumental areas to be preserved as natural parks. However, this type of provision could not be extended to the entire war front, especially considering that nature itself, in the years to come, would inevitably attenuate or erase the traces of the war. It was therefore necessary to accept that, gradually, many traces would largely disappear from the area. But this loss had to be compensated by actions in the opposite direction. For instance, with the development of ossari and sacrari marking the territory for future memory with presences able to act – even if only thanks to the tens of thousands of fallen soldiers buried in each of them – as enourmous sources emitting sacral waves (Pisani, 2012).

Not by chance, the locations of ossari and sacrari were chosen to facilitate pilgrimages toward these temples of a new form of worship, which also initiated a new form of tourism. The most important national publishing house in the tourism sector, Touring Club Italiano, after having organised a series of visits to "sacred areas" immediately after the war, began publishing a series of guides entitled *Sui campi di battaglia* (On the battlefields) in the late 1920s (Pivato, 2006, pp. 103-112). These guides offered both a detailed itinerary of the 'sacred locations' for the pilgrim, and practical information for the tourist. Even the government itself favored visits to ossari and sacrari, providing discounts and exemptions for relatives of fallen, mutilated, and invalid soldiers.

From representation to presentation

Built near the battlefields, ossari and sacrari benefitted directly from the fact that they were made from the same stones that had been soaked in the blood of the soldiers who had died for the Fatherland. If the Ossario del Pasubio or the Sacrario del Monte Grappa were made of stone from Mount Pasubio and Mount Grappa respectively, it was not only due to the advantageous logistics of having the raw material available on site. It was also a programmatic choice; the fallen and the blood-drenched stones would, together, eternalise the victory and those who had sacrificed their lives for it.

If ossari and sacrari represent the equivalent – in the commemoration of fallen soldiers – of what the sancta sanctorum had represented for early Christianity, the pieces, shreds, and fragments of stone they were made of became the vehicles for the dissemination on a national scale of the sacredness that was stored and treasured in the mountains of the Pasubio, Grappa, and Redipuglia; that is, in those battlefields that were transformed into war memorials. In Milan, as we have seen, the focus of the celebrations held on 4 November 1921 was focused on an enormous boulder from Mount Grappa.

Both for the coincidence of places of martyrdom and places of worship, and for the coexistence of grand *sancta sanctorum* and widespread diffusion of sacred remains, the commemoration of the fallen soldiers of the First World War in Italy between the two World Wars presents precise analogies with the spread of Christianity in the early centuries of the modern era with its relics and martyrs. A third analogy should be added to these first two: just as the celebration of the Milite Ignoto revolved around a body – recovered, ideally recomposed, transferred, and buried in the nation's capital, in one of the most visible spots of the city – so did the celebratory nature of a monument like that of Sant'Eulalia revolve around a boulder. In both cases, the dead on the warfront were considered so sacred that *nothing could represent them*. But what is a relic, if not "what presents the sacred without mediation" (Leone, 2014, p. S53).

Figure 13. Giovanni Greppi and Giannino Castiglioni, Sacrario di Redipuglia, Fogliano Redipuglia, 1935-1938
Photo © Teresa Cos

The more the Fascist Regime tried to transform politics into a cult, the more any form of mediation tended to disappear. What followed was a transition from representation to pure and simple *presentation*. A boulder like the one at the center of the monument of Sant'Eulalia constitutes, in some ways, the purest expression of the *presentation without mediation* that is a distinctive feature of relics. In a sacrario like that of Redipuglia, every form of representation – in terms of iconographic tradition – was also expelled in favour of a pure physical display of materials. However, something had changed; what started as the result of popular devotion in Sant'Eulalia became the fruit of a deliberate political strategy in the late war memorials of the Fascist Regime (Fiore, 2003; Pisani, 2014).

Conclusion

In reference to the commemoration of millions of fallen soldiers of the First World War, historical studies speak of the "lacerating discrepancy between the accelerated [...] experience of death and the growing difficulty in establishing, fixing its memory" (Koselleck, 2003, p. 11). This discrepancy undoubtedly played a role in the departure from the traditional formal support of figurative arts – which were now considered ineffective – in the late Fascist war memorials. But, as we have seen, it was a more complex process than this might suggest. A sacrario like that of Redipuglia was the most radical outcome of a search for the most effective way to celebrate the war dead; a search that began in Italy during the Risorgimento – among the efforts to develop a "laic religion" for the new nation – which was later transformed, during the Fascist era, into one of the main propaganda vehicles to help prepare the Italian people for a new war. In the ossari, like that of Pasubio, the contribution of painting and sculpture to the elaboration of the visual message was still important; in Redipuglia – the ultimate incarnation of Fascist ideals in the field of the commemoration of the fallen of the First World War – both painting and sculpture were banned. The message, in its entirety, was conveyed by an enormous open-air space: a great mass of one hundred thousand

burial sites that was sacred both because it held the fallen soldiers' graves and because it was made of the same stone that had been figuratively drenched in their blood.

The choice of no longer representing a message but of simply presenting it was a seemingly innocent way of letting facts speak for themselves. In reality, cleansed from iconographies that had become useless or had been deemed inappropriate, the communication came to develop an extraordinary level of intensity. Any refined allusion or articulated narration disappeared. What remained was an object, an *almost* mute object that only spoke with its physical presence, thus directly conveying what it embodied. It did not allude to the mountains of the Grappa or the Karst, it *was* those mountains. Left without the intermediation of a rational message to be decoded, the viewer was alone in front of an object that belonged to a sacred sphere and that, with its own presence, seemed to attest to an indisputable truth. A heroic and, at the same time, a softened vision of the fallen and of the war – one that was the fruit of a deliberate political strategy – was presented as "natural" (Barthes, 1957, pp. 201-204) as the only possible way of seeing things.

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Daniele Pisani is a historian of architecture. He graduated and got his PhD at Università Iuav, Venice, and is Associate Professor at the Dipartimento di Architettura e Studi Urbani (DASTU) of the Politecnico di Milano. Among his publications are: *L'architettura è un gesto. Ludwig Wittgenstein architetto* (Macerata); *Paulo Mendes da Rocha. Complete Works* (Milano, Barcelona and New York); *Uma genealogia da imaginação de Paulo Mendes da Rocha. Lições de Veneza* (Porto); *O Trianon do MAM ao MASP. Arquitetura e política em São Paulo (1946-1968)* (São Paulo); *A cidade é uma casa. A casa é uma cidade. Vilanova Artigas na história de um topos* (São Paulo). He has already published many papers on the same issue addressed in the present text. Among these is the article "*From Italian Monuments to the Fallen of World War I to Fascist War Memorials,"* published in the 2017 *War Graves* issue of the *RIHA Journal*.

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'Splendid patriotism and heroic self-sacrifice': First World War memorials in Welsh metalworks

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ABSTRACT

Much of the academic attention on issues of Great War mourning and commemoration has focussed on the civic memorials, particularly given that they are designed to be public, visible reminders of the local community's contribution to the war effort. The focus of this article is on a different subset of memorials, in that they refer specifically to workers from particular companies who served in the war. As such they were not always public memorials, being located in many cases within the works and thus only on display to fellow workers. Yet neither were they entirely 'private' memorials, such as the ones established in so many family homes to those they had lost. This article considers twenty five metalworks memorials in the south Wales counties of Monmouthshire, Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire. Taken as a whole, these memorials convey a number of messages about south Wales society in the immediate aftermath of the war. In most examples these were commissioned within three years of the Armistice, and the terms they deploy show that the 'language of 1914' was still in vogue. Patriotism was 'splendid'; self-sacrifice was 'heroic'; the memory of the fallen was 'glorious.' Death was preferable to dishonour. In naming these men, the metalworks companies claimed them as their own and by extension laid claim to a share of the glory. The men's identity as employees was highlighted in the numerous memorials which noted their position within the company. They had an identity as steelworkers or tinplaters, as well as their identities as men of their hometown, and as Welshmen, Britons and sons of the Empire.

KEYWORDS

Commemoration, First World War, Mourning, Wales, War memorials.

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Introduction

In response to the widespread desire across all the belligerent nations to commemorate loved ones who had served in the Great War, an enormous number and variety of memorials were established by official bodies and community organisations. For as Jay Winter (1995) observed, this was evidence of "the powerful, perhaps essential, tendency of ordinary people, of many faiths and of none, to face together the emptiness, the nothingness of loss in war" (p. 224). In the United Kingdom, the response ranged from large-scale memorials, such as the Cenotaph situated at the heart of power in London and which commemorated almost a million men from the British Empire, through thousands of civic memorials to the fallen from particular counties, towns and villages, down to simple plaques focussing on the hyper-local contribution which noted the loss of one or two men (Moriarty, 1997).

Much of the academic attention on issues of mourning and commemoration has focussed on the civic memorials, which were designed to be public, visible reminders of the local community's contribution to the war effort (Scates & Wheatley, 2014). The focus of this article is on a different subset of memorials, in that they refer specifically to workers from particular Welsh companies who served in the war. As such they were not always public memorials, being located in many cases within the works and thus only on display to fellow workers. Yet neither were they entirely 'private' memorials, such as the ones established in so many family homes to those they had lost (Winter, 1995, p. 81). They are similar to other 'unofficial' memorials that I have studied, which were set up by specific communities to commemorate their own, such as those in schools, chapels and clubs. It is my contention that these memorials are often more interesting and revealing than the 'official' civic memorials. Although civic memorials do display a range of inscriptions and designs, their commissioning was in most instances the result of committee meetings and subject to oversight and discussion in the local newspapers (Gaffney, 1998). Guidelines were established which set the boundaries for what was expected of a civic memorial, which resulted in a degree of uniformity.

In contrast, 'unofficial' memorials were most often commissioned more quickly than the civic memorials and as such often give a deeper insight into the feelings of the local community in the immediate aftermath of the war. This article considers twenty five metalworks memorials in the south Wales counties of Monmouthshire, Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire. Of these companies, fourteen produced iron or steel, and nine produced tinplate (including one which produced both). There are two distinct clusters of memorials, one in south east Wales which is dominated by iron- and steelworks, and another cluster in West Glamorgan and the Llanelli area, where there are a variety of memorials with tinplate being more prevalent.[1] The amount of information on these memorials varies greatly. Six are 'Rolls of Honour', naming all those who served in uniform; eighteen name those who died, and one gives no names. Several of the memorials give further details of the units with which the men served and/or the department they worked for within the company. They display a wide variety of designs and imagery, but even though the form of wording may differ, they explicitly convey the message that the men fought and died in a just and noble cause. The glory of their service and 'sacrifice' thereby reflects back upon the company that sponsored the memorials.

The memorials

One important factor to consider with these 'unofficial' memorials is the question of preservation. In contrast to civic memorials, which are generally awarded a high degree of protection, those established by other organisations are vulnerable to changing times and circumstances. Several hundred chapels in Wales have been demolished or repurposed over the past half century, and the number of First World War memorials that have been lost as a result runs into the hundreds. Many of the schools of 1914 have been re-developed or re-located, and there is no certainty that their old memorials were transferred over to their new buildings. In 1914 there were over 400

coal mines operating in south Wales, but the last deep mine closed in 2008. It is likely that most of these collieries had their own memorials to workmates who died in the war, but only around ten have survived.

Another industry that has faced a difficult time in Wales in the century-plus since the First World War is metal production. Wales has a long history of making iron, steel, copper and other metals, going back to the early modern period. In the eighteenth century major ironworks were established in the 'heads of the valleys' area in upland Monmouthshire and Glamorgan, while the Swansea locality developed an expertise in copper-smelting during the nineteenth century that ensured the area was globally important (Evans & Miskell, 2020). The growth of tinplate in Swansea and Llanelli was vigorous in the late nineteenth century and other non-ferrous metal industries were also established in the Swansea valley. By 1914 this meant that there was a network of metal industries operating around south Wales, drawn by the abundance of coal for fuel, the decent transportation links, and the tradition of metal-making which meant a ready supply of skilled and semi-skilled workers.

One constant throughout the war was the support of the leading politicians and opinion-formers of Wales for the British war effort, notwithstanding the resilience of the minority viewpoint against militarism (Powel, 2017). This support was particularly marked amongst the capitalists who owned and ran the metalworks. The newspapers of south Wales in the early months of the war contain many articles highlighting how local employers were 'doing their bit' for the recruitment effort, with the managers of metalworks being particularly prominent. One such case in the early weeks of the war concerned the Neath Steel Sheet and Galvanizing Works. The *South Wales Daily News* of 31 August 1914 has a photograph showing 40 new recruits with the manager, Edward Gibbins located in the middle. The caption declared this to be "An example to the rest of Wales." The text declares that his "personal efforts in recruiting have met with this splendid response from his own employees." Further details from the *Herald of Wales* show that the forty men volunteered *en bloc* on 29 August, with a local silver band playing 'Rule Britannia' accompanying them as they marched to the Drill Hall.

The employers' support of the war extended to financial commitments. In the Swansea Valley in mid-August 1914 it was noted that both the Mond Nickelworks in Clydach and the Gilbertson Tinplate and Steelworks of Pontardawe had guaranteed that the jobs of any men who volunteered would be kept open for them, and that their wives and families would receive financial assistance from the companies. Frank Gilbertson, manager of the Pontardawe works, wrote a public letter, published in a local newspaper (*Llais Llafur*, 5 September), strongly urging the younger men in his employment "to make up their minds at once to join the army, and so serve their country in the only way open to them." It is clear that these exhortations had some effect, as on 24 September the *Cambria Daily Leader* named 197 men from the Mond works who had volunteered, and 45 from Gilbertson's.

The managing director of the nickelworks was Alfred Mond, the Liberal MP for Swansea. He became exceptionally prominent in encouraging recruitment from the Swansea area in general and from his company in particular, no doubt driven in part by his German ancestry having made him the target for sniping by his political opponents. After guaranteeing £5000 of the £10000 cost of recruiting a Swansea Battalion for the Welsh Regiment, at one "splendid" recruiting meeting he urged potential volunteers "not to delay, but to join with the hosts of the Empire's sons in the greatest war the world had ever known, to liberate the world from the greatest tyranny it had ever known" (*Cambria Daily Leader*, 2 November 1914). Alfred Mond's vocal support of the British war effort did him no harm, as his company profited handsomely from the war (nickel is an essential component in the armour plating required by battleships) and he was appointed First Commissioner of Works in 1916. By the end of the war, 450 of his Clydach employees had joined the Armed Forces and 33 had died. Their service and sacrifice is commemorated by a magnificent bronze monument which is inside the Mond recreation hall. At the top there is a bas relief of a soldier and a sailor, kneeling either side of a shield emblazoned with the words 'Our Glorious

Dead.' The men's names are listed along with their rank and regiment (in two cases, their ships); by far the largest contingent (14 men) served with the Welsh Regiment.

Both the *Cambria Daily Leader* and the other Swansea newspaper, the *South Wales Daily Post*, frequently published lists of volunteers by workplace in the early months of the war. With a marked lack of subtlety, it was emphasised that those companies who had a large detachment on the 'Roll of Honour' were worthy of praise, and those companies not represented were failing to "do their bit" (Matthews, 2017, pp. 686–7). A special souvenir issue was published by the *Cambria Daily Leader* on 23 October 1914 with four pages of names of volunteers, listed by workplace. This publication deploys what I call 'the language of 1914': terms such as 'honour' and 'duty' had a concrete meaning in the contemporary discourse, which was well understood by the readership (Matthews, 2016; 2017). The pages' masthead exemplifies these ideals. Here one can see Britannia, guarded by a lion, perusing a Roll of Honour, flanked on either side by a sailor and a soldier, with the words 'Patience', 'Endurance', and 'Valour' underneath.

The only Swansea company to beat the Mond's tally of volunteers in the list of 23 October was the Mannesmann Tubeworks, with 210 names (out of a workforce of 1600 men). As the casualty reports began to trickle in, soon to become a flood, the notices about men who had been killed or wounded often included information which rooted them in their local communities: what chapel or church they attended, what sporting club they were involved with, and where they had been employed prior to the war. Over a dozen reports in the *Cambria Daily Leader* of servicemen killed in action state that the deceased was a Mannesmann employee. By the war's end, 58 of the company's employees had been killed. The company erected a memorial tablet to their memory, naming them underneath the words 'TO THE GLORIOUS MEMORY / OF THE MANNESMANN MEN / WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR.' The Mannesmann memorial is one of four of the twenty five memorials considered in this article which has definitely not survived.[2] The only record I have of this memorial is a cutting from the *South Wales Daily Post*, probably from 1922 or 1923, which shows the names engraved on a tablet, presumably of brass or a similar material. This does raise the question which cannot be answered with any certainty: how many other memorials were created but have since disappeared? No memorial is known to exist from the Neath Steel Sheet and Galvanizing Works but a newspaper report from December 1919 states that a tablet to the memory of the nineteen men from the works who were killed in action was shortly to be unveiled. Given the manager's commitment to supporting the war effort in 1914, it is no surprise to find him presenting the relatives of the fallen, and the 165 employees who served and returned, with gold medallions (*Cambria Daily Leader*, 8 December 1919).

Similarly, there are newspaper reports from a number of other metalworks where no memorial has survived which *did* make efforts to enumerate and commemorate those who served in the war. To give two examples from Swansea, the major Cwmfelin tin-plate works boasted in June 1919 that thousands of their workmen had served in the war, noting that 57 military decorations were won and "no less than 220 of them paid the supreme sacrifice." Baldwin's steel and tinplate company also kept records of how many of their workmen served, noting at the reunion dinner for returned servicemen in December 1919 that 232 workers had joined up from their Landore works, while 800 attended a reunion of demobbed men and munitioneers in May 1920. However, no memorials have survived from either of these works, which are long gone from the Swansea landscape.

The number of names on these memorials varies greatly. The Roll of Honour from the Morlais Tinplate works, Llangennech, commemorates one soldier who died and names another 38 who served. At the other end of the scale, the memorial at the Orb Steelworks, Newport (also known as Lysaght's) commemorates 121 dead servicemen. The mean number of employees named on the six Rolls of Honour is 120; the mean number of fallen on the twenty four which give names is 30.5. The Orb Works memorial highlights a point seen in many of these memorials – how the men were explicitly remembered by their role in the workplace. This memorial divides the men up not by military rank but by department: thus, there are 65 names of those who worked in the Mills; 15 from 'Sheetweighing'; 7 from 'Bar Bank'; 6 each from 'Close Annealing' and 'Cold Rolling'; 4

'Brass Shop'; 3 'Staff'; and 15 down as 'Miscellaneous' (Westlake, 2001, 135-7). At the bottom, the tablet declares 'Erected by their proud and grateful employers.'

This division by department can also be seen in the memorial on the list which names the greatest number of men, that of the Gilbertson Company of Pontardawe, which lists all those who served – 321, of whom 34 died. The Roll shows that 73 joined from the Steel Works Department, 99 from Sheet Mills & Galvanizing, 68 from Tinplate and so on. This was designed by the *Western Mail*, a newspaper which produced many such war memorials for schools, chapels and workplaces. Although this version is less ornate than many of their other designs, it is beautifully crafted in black and red ink, with gold highlights.

Three metalworks Rolls of Honour which are more colourful and intricate in their design were established by companies in Briton Ferry (Skidmore, 2018). The Albion Steelworks memorial lists 74 who served by their department, including two who died; for the Briton Ferry Steelworks there are 92 names of whom six died; the Villiers Tinplate Company names 104 employees, of whom eleven died. All of these memorials list the departments in which the men worked and the unit which they joined. The two regiments which attracted by far the most recruits were the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the Welsh Regiment: the sole workman who joined the Royal Irish Regiment had an Irish surname (Flynn). All three memorials, created by J. S. Beynon, a printer from Llanelli, have at the top the title 'Roll of Honour', flanked by the Union flag and the Royal Navy's White Ensign.

Figure 1. Orb Steelworks memorial, Newport
Photograph by Gethin Matthews

Figure 2. Villiers Tinplate Company Memorial, Briton Ferry
Photograph courtesy of John Skidmore

Some details of the Briton Ferry Steelworks memorial are interesting – perhaps the most unexpected entry under 'Department' is that of A. S. Webb, who is listed as the company's 'Cricket Pro'. This document is the most colourful of the three and taking centre-stage at the top of the Roll is a striking image of the Steelworks at dusk. This echoes the imagery of a large number of Welsh chapel Rolls of Honour which have an image of the chapel in a prominent position (Matthews, 2018, p. 498). This acts to root the list of names with the physical centre-point of the community which is commemorating them: it also reflects some of the glory back upon the institution. The fact that these three memorials have a similar style, even though their designs differ, suggests that there was a level of inter-dependence in their commissioning and execution. It is possible that

once it was known that one local works was creating, or had unveiled, a memorial to their employees who had served, other works in the town felt the need to have a memorial to *their* workers who had been in uniform. A similar pattern can be seen in those places in Wales that had a plurality of chapels, where one can often see a succession of unveiling of memorials, indicating that each place wanted to be seen (at least) to be as loyal as its neighbours/rivals (Matthews, 2018, pp. 498–500).

With commemorations on paper such as these, the question of preservation is even more pressing than with physical memorials. There were a large number of tinplate works in the Swansea-Llanelli area, which each employed perhaps several hundred men, but which have left no physical traces as their locations have been redeveloped. Only a few of these have left memorials which have survived. Two tinplate memorials from Llanelli, from the Old Castle works and the Morlais works, are under the care of Carmarthenshire Museum. One cannot say how many have been lost. The Imperial War Museum's database of war memorials gives some details of the 'Roll of Honour' established by the Morfa Tinplate works in Llanelli, listing the 89 names, of whom twelve died, but as the memorial is noted as 'lost', one cannot say any more.

The Roll of Honour from the Morlais works is, like those from Briton Ferry, a colourful and elaborate affair. This gives the details of which unit the 39 men served in and notes their rank, which reveals some interesting patterns. Nineteen served in the Army (of whom nine were in Welsh regiments), one served in the RAF and nineteen in the Royal Navy, which is substantially more than one would expect. Of these nineteen sailors, seventeen served as stokers: this extraordinarily high proportion suggests that the men's experience of working in the tinplate made them choose (or get directed to) the hard labour of feeding the ships' boilers.

More information about the Old Castle works' involvement in supporting the war effort and commemorating the involvement of their workmen can be found in the local newspapers. When Sidney Williams, one of the first employees to die as a result of the war, was buried locally, a report states that were several floral tributes from the departments of the company. The company's support for those who had served and distinguished themselves continued beyond the end of the war. Reginald Davies became the fifth employee to be awarded the Military Medal; in May 1919 he was rewarded with a cheque for £20, with the managing director stating that he "had brought honour not only upon himself but also upon the works and all connected with it" (*Llanelly Star*, 3 May 1919). The company commissioned a brass memorial to the 31 employees who had died. It was put on public display in a local shop in August 1919 prior to its official unveiling on 1 November. On this solemn occasion the managing director declared that the men "had given their all in their fight for liberty, and it is our sacred duty to see to it that their sacrifices should not be in vain." Around 240 men who had returned from the Armed Forces were then presented with silver cigarette cases, while relatives of the deceased received a large framed photograph of the company's memorial (*Llanelly Star*, 22 November 1919).

Other workplaces across south Wales presented similar mementoes to their workers who had served. Those from the Cwmfelin Steel & Tinplate Works received a colourful rectangular card. The image was of an over-sized Britannia, flanked by the Union flag and the Red Dragon, with a soldier and sailor shaking hands under her watchful gaze. The employees of the Hafod Isha Nickel-Cobalt works who had been in uniform received a pendant in 9 carat gold, 22.5mm across, in the form of a Maltese Cross within a circular surround. The name of the recipient was engraved on one side, and on the other, 'Served in the Great War' on the surround, with 'Hafod Isha Works' on the cross. The Hafod Isha works, situated not far from Swansea's main railway station, erected a stone memorial to those employees who died in the war prominent on the outside of one of the company's buildings. This names eleven who died and, interestingly, declares that it was instigated by the men's 'fellow employees' rather than by the company itself. One can find a list of 64 company employees who had volunteered in the first eleven weeks of the war in the *Cambria Daily Leader* of 23 October 1914; seven of these died and are commemorated on the memorial.

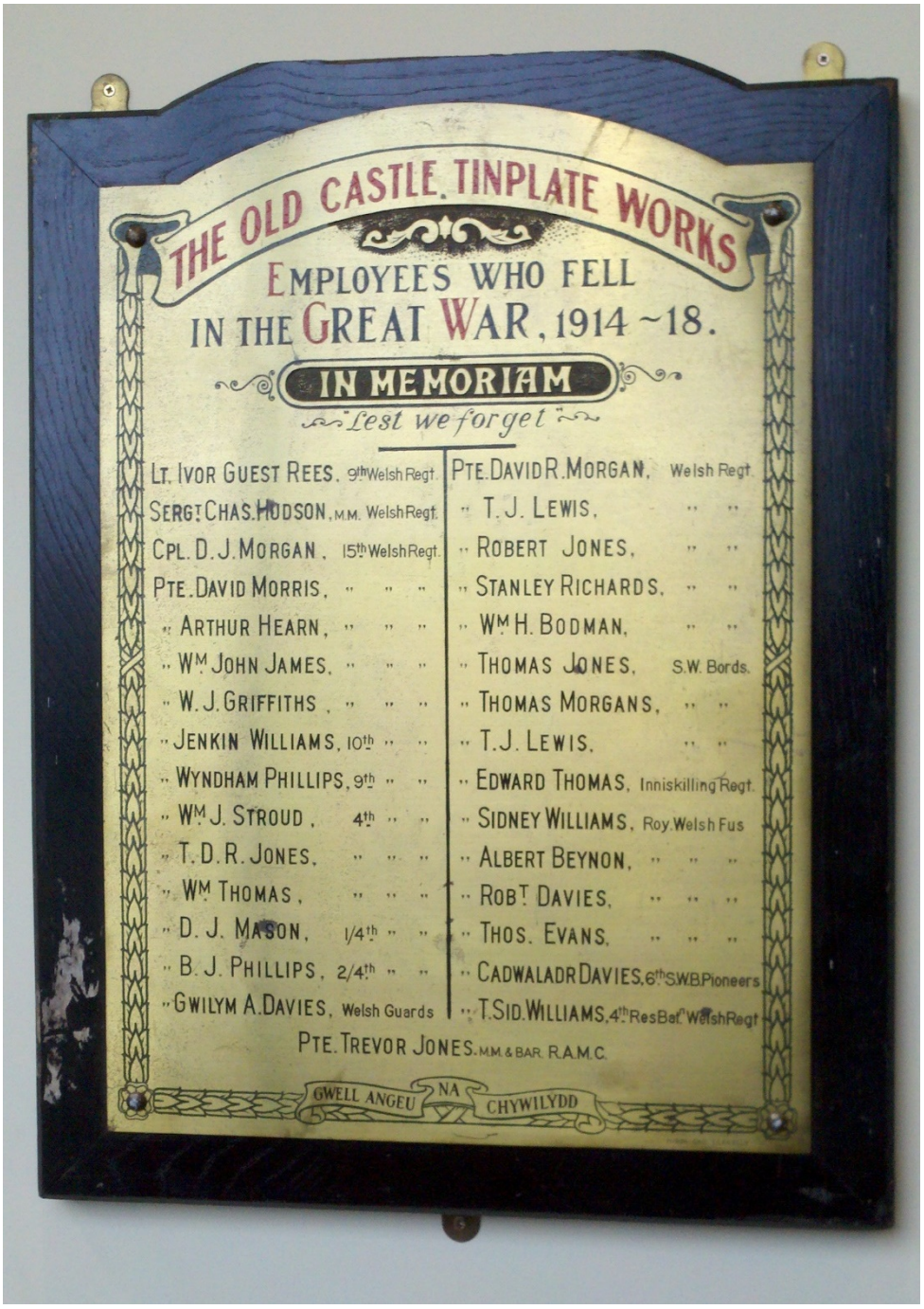

Figure 3. Old Castle Tinplate Works memorial
Photograph by Gethin Matthews

A stone memorial was also created to commemorate the fallen from the Melyn Cryddan tinplate works, near Neath. This names 23 men and is inscribed 'TO / THE GLORY OF GOD / AND IN MEMORY OF / THE MEN FROM THIS WORKS / WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR.' It was unveiled on 10 April 1920 by the works' managing director, after which a reception was held where the returned soldiers and sailors were given "an official welcome-home." Each serviceman and the relatives of the deceased received a gold medal and seventeen of the relatives received oil paintings of "the dead patriots" (*Western Mail*, 12 April 1920). This is one of only two instances where the memorial explicitly mentions God. Even though the unveiling ceremonies could have a

religious dimension – in this case, an Anglican clergyman and a Nonconformist minister took part in the dedication of the Melyn Cryddan tablet – on the whole most of these metalworks memorials do not have explicitly religious inscriptions. Nor is it common to see explicit Christian imagery (in contrast to a large number of civic memorials). The other instance which has the wording 'to the Glory of God' is the only one of the memorials considered here in the form of a Cross. This was created by the Mansel Tinplate works, near Port Talbot, to commemorate 29 men, and was unveiled by the Assistant Bishop of Llandaff in October 1920 (*Western Mail*, 18 October 1920). Nearby a month later the memorial for the Port Talbot Steel Company was unveiled, again with some pomp and ceremony. The works band headed a procession from the railway station to the hospital, where the memorial was handed over in front of a crowd of several hundred people and dedicated by the local vicar. The 39 steelworkers were commemorated with both a functional memorial, of electrical equipment for the hospital worth £1300, and a brass tablet with their names (*Western Mail*, 22 November 1920). There is a classical feel to this tablet, which has Doric columns either side of the names, and above, the Latin inscription 'Pro Patria Mori.'

The latest newspaper account of an unveiling ceremony that has so far come to light is that of the Upper Forest and Worcester Tinplate works, in Morriston. This was unveiled on 7 November 1925, to the accompaniment of the works' male voice choir singing the 'Dead March' by Handel (a staple of the unveiling ceremonies in Welsh chapels and churches) and the hymn Aberystwyth. As well as an address by the managing director, who actually unveiled the memorial, four Nonconformist ministers gave short speeches and the local vicar gave the Benediction. To round off the proceedings, 'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau' (the Welsh National Anthem) and 'God save the King' were sung (*Western Mail*, 9 November 1925). This works memorial has been preserved, decades after the tinplate works itself has disappeared, perhaps as it is so imposing, being almost two metres tall in black granite with the 54 names of the fallen embossed upon it in brass. Of these men, 21 can be found commemorated on the extant memorials of local chapels. Of all the memorials considered in this article, this is one of just two to have anything in the Welsh language upon it. Both this and the Old Castle Tinplate memorial display the motto of the Welsh Regiment, 'Gwell Angau na Chywilydd', which translates as 'Better Death than Dishonour.' In these memorials, as with other First World War memorials in Wales, when Welsh symbols or the Welsh language were included, it was as a proud proclamation of the Welsh contribution to the war, not as a challenge to Wales' position within the British state (Gaffney, 1998, p.173).

Moving the focus towards the memorials in south east Wales, of the ten memorials on the list in this area, one company, the conglomerate Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds (GKN) has six entries from their iron- and steel-works.[3] These all have a similar style, listing the fallen alphabetically by surname and initial, with the text 'IN EVER GRATEFUL RECOGNITION/OF THE SPLENDID PATRIOTISM/AND HEROIC SELF SACRIFICE OF/THE EMPLOYEES OF / GUEST, KEEN AND NETTLEFOLDS, Ltd. / [Name of works] / [Names] / WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES/FOR THEIR KING AND COUNTRY/IN THE GREAT WAR, 1914 – 1918.' No information has come to light as to when these memorials were unveiled, however, we can say that another branch of the GKN corporation organised an event in May 1919 to honour the employees of the Cwmbran Coke Ovens who had served in the war. The 41 men who had served and returned were presented with inscribed silver watches to mark their contribution, and relatives of the eleven who had been killed in action also received these gifts.

The sole extant tinplate memorial in south-east Wales is the memorial of the Abercarn Tinplaters' Memorial Institute, which has been preserved in a surgery built on the site of the Institute building. Twenty six men who worked at the town's Thomas Richard & Company works are named. The text closely echoes the words on the 'next of kin memorial scroll' that was sent to the relatives of those who had died in the war (Westlake, 2001, pp.10–11).

The sole example of a memorial which commemorates both colliers and steelworkers was commissioned by the Crawshay Brothers Company to their employees at the 'Mountain Levels and Steelworks.' 'Mountain Levels' refers to three small coal-mines run by the company; their steelworks had closed in 1910 but re-opened for a short time in the latter stages of the war to

make iron for the war effort and employed no more than 300 men. There are thirteen names on the memorial, but one cannot say how many were miners and how many were steelworkers. The wording is identical to that on the GKN memorials. It is now preserved at the museum at Cyfarthfa Castle, which used to be the home of the Crawshay family.

The memorial at the Ebbw Vale steelworks was unveiled on Armistice Day 1921. A bronze panel with a white marble surround bore the words 'IN EVERLASTING MEMORY / OF ALL / OUR EMPLOYEES / WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR / 1914 – 1918'; this was mounted on a slab of green marble. In contrast to the other memorials considered here, this did not name the fallen. Perhaps that is explained by their number; at the unveiling it was stated that of the 8 000 employees who served, almost a thousand "had paid the extreme penalty of their patriotism with their lives" (*Merthyr Express*, 19 November 1921). This memorial has not survived, apparently being broken in an unsuccessful attempt to move it when the steelworks closed. This exemplifies the vulnerability of even the most lavish memorials when the businesses that commissioned them close down. It is clear that the survival rate of metalworks memorials is healthier than those of some other workplace memorials (cf. the example of Welsh coal mines) perhaps because so many are solid, but it is entirely possible that a number of smaller memorials, or those commissioned on paper, have been lost.

Conclusion

Taken as a whole, these memorials convey a number of messages about south Wales society in the immediate aftermath of the war. In most examples these were commissioned within three years of the Armistice, and the terms they deploy show that the 'language of 1914' was still in vogue. Patriotism was 'splendid'; self-sacrifice was 'heroic'; the memory of the fallen was 'glorious'. Death was preferable to dishonour. In naming these men, the metalworks claimed them as their own, and thus they also laid claim to a share of the glory. The men's identity as employees was highlighted in the numerous memorials which noted their position within the company. They had an identity as steelworkers or tinplaters, as well as their identities as men of their home town, and as Welshmen, Britons and sons of the Empire. Clearly, these memorials declare that the men served and died *for* something. The commissioning company (for the most part in 1919–21) could hope that this would indeed be the war to end all wars, and that peace would prove permanent. These memorials too were meant to stand the test of time: all First World War memorials were "built to endure" (Scates & Wheatley 2014, p. 554). 'Their name liveth for evermore' was inscribed upon the (now destroyed) memorial at the Ebbw Vale Steelworks. However, just as the hopes of a lasting peace would prove transient, the declarations of these memorials that the memory of the metalworkers who served would be 'glorious' and 'everlasting' would fail to stand the test of time.

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About the Author

Gethin Matthews is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, Heritage and Classics at Swansea University, where he has been since 2011. His doctorate examined the involvement of the Welsh in the Gold Rush to British Columbia in the 1860s, examining issues of identity on the edge of Empire. For several years he has been involved in projects researching the impact of the First World War upon Welsh society and culture, including a 2018 book, *Having a Go at the Kaiser*, which provides an in-depth study of the effect of the war upon a Swansea family. He has been active in trying to raise awareness of the vulnerability, and value, of 'unofficial' war memorials.

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http://war-memorials.swan.ac.uk/

Endnotes

1 For a link to the map, and a list giving details of the twenty five memorials, see https://war-memorials.swan.ac.uk/?p=683

2 The other three, considered later in this article, are those from the Neath Sheet Steel and Galvanizing Company, the Morfa Tinplate Works and the Ebbw Vale Steelworks. Although they were extant relatively recently, there is reason to fear that the memorials of Hafod Isha and GKN Coverack Road are vulnerable.

3 I also have information on four other workplace memorials created by the company in Wales: three from coal-mines and one from a wharf. See Westlake, 2001, pp.75–6.

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Monuments for deserters: A particularity of German memory culture

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the changing face of deserters in Germany and the gradual entry of monuments dedicated to them into German memorial culture. The multiple changes in the perception of the Wehrmacht (united armed forces of Nazi Germany from 1935-1945) deserters during the last 70 years from cowards and traitors to (anti-)heroes to victims is the result of generational shifts and changed political contexts. Deserters from the Wehrmacht were a taboo subject for a long time. Over the course of the past thirty years, their story has been reappraised. It now has a visual presence in the form of counter monuments which challenge notions of traditional heroic military virtues and the place of resistance in modern political German culture. Counter-monuments, which had their origins in Germany in the 1980s, were always intended to be provocative, for they sought to disrupt a discourse that had become anachronistic, even unbearable in the eyes of many. Whether they will continue to have a presence, whether further deserter monuments will be built, or whether a future retrospective evaluation will show these monuments to have been an ephemeral and singular phenomenon, is still uncertain.

KEYWORDS

Counter memorials, Deserter memorials, Deserters, Germany, Memory culture, Nazi Germany, War, Wehrmacht

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German war memorials before 1945

War memorials, or Kriegerdenkmäler (literally 'warrior monuments' in German) have existed in Germany since 1813. Previously, they were reserved for rulers and generals, yet the transition from mercenaries to a militia-based 'people's army' saw the simple soldier elevated to the point that he was now considered worthy of memorialisation. The characteristics of the war memorial, that is, the heroic transfiguration of war and death and the representation of the soldier's death as a necessary sacrifice for the fatherland, became the norm from the middle of the nineteenth century until well after the end of the Second World War. In the few cases where new war monuments were created for the fallen of the Second World War, figurative representations were not used; instead there was a preference for abstract architectural solutions which often employed Christian symbolism such as a cross, a pietà, a palm branch or a quote from the Bible. These monuments omitted any reference to the cause of the war and refrained from engaging with issues of fault or sorrow. Given the millions of victims of National Socialism, it was difficult to characterise the soldiers in the heroic terms used in traditional monuments. This did not equate to a criticism of war or the sacrifice of the individual soldiers, let alone position the monuments as anti-war. This was especially true where there were additions to already existing structures. Furthermore, the iconography and military rituals of commemorative events were often at odds with a call for peace or a foregrounding of individual grief. The formal language of war monuments remained essentially unchanged.

The emergence of counter-memorials

Noting a preference for abstraction, a lack of a clear message, and an abandonment of positive meaning-making in favour of reflection, art historians began to speak of 'monument fatigue' as early as the 1960s. By the 1970s, they proclaimed the 'end of the monument', yet within a few short years there was a veritable monument boom. National Socialism and the complicity of the German people in its crimes were increasingly subject to interrogation through an alteration in commemorative practices. In addition to the large state sponsored memorials, there was agitation at a local and national level for the construction of counter-monuments for the 'forgotten victims' of National Socialism like homosexuals, Sinti and Roma, or people who suffered from forced sterilisation. In many cases, and in the face of considerable resistance, these monuments were slowly integrated into German memory culture. This was almost inevitably going to attract a considerable divergence of views, for anyone who "installs a monument privileges a certain view of the past and furthers, in some measure, his or her prerogative of interpretation regarding the past, present and future" (Hardtwig, 2011, p. 25). Instead of ascribing a clear meaning to death and suffering, this new type of monument encouraged the viewer to reflect and to interrogate rather than just passively receive a state sanctioned interpretation of the past. This alteration in approach, which reached its apogee in Berlin's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, reflected the widespread belief that traditional approaches to commemoration were ill-suited to ambiguity and competing narratives, hence the preference for abstraction (Endlich, 2003).

These counter-monuments began to emerge in Germany in the 1980s in response to concerns over what events and people connected to the Second World War were worthy of memorialisation, and indeed what was the most appropriate artistic form for this commemoration. The monuments were intended to be provocative, for they sought to disrupt a discourse that had "become anachronistic, even unbearable in the eyes of some members of society, and – now disarmed – integrating it into the present" (Hausmann, 1997, p. 96). As a rule, they were, and are, created not synchronically but diachronically with more traditional monuments because attitudes, values, conceptions of history and interpretations of the past change over time. Tomberger (2007) recognised the didactic value of this fluidity, for monuments are "both interpretations of the history that is being remembered and statements about how it relates to the present and which consequences, which lessons or resolutions for the future are derived from it" (p. 27). A monument and the ideology it espouses must therefore first age and obsolesce before it requires

a counter-monument. The supporters of counter-monuments are not iconoclasts, for they remain convinced of the fundamental effectiveness of monuments. They are, after all, a prerequisite for the articulation of contrary interpretive schemes and new creations of meaning. Though it is simplistic, there is considerable value in seeing their acceptance as beating monuments at their own game.

The political significance of counter-monuments as they emerged in the 1980s was grounded in their capacity to show that alongside the dominant understanding of history, other currents existed. In doing so, their supporters took advantage of the fact that the limits on what could be uttered publicly had shifted, as had the aesthetic language deemed appropriate to challenge traditional monumental practices. This involved a rejection of the formal language, meaning-making and appeal of traditional monuments, as well as a renunciation of their uniform, clear and unambiguous message. Instead, the preference was for a recognition of grief and suffering, one that encouraged reflection and critical engagement. This brought new life to the medium, reviving and rehabilitating it just as it appeared ready to slip into irrelevance. The early examples were constructed on a small, local scale before emerging on the national stage in the 1990s and 2000s (Tomberger, 2007). Notable examples include the rededicated Neue Wache (lit. New Guard) building (1993) and Peter Eisenman's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* (2005), both in Berlin. While there is now a preponderance of counter-monuments in Germany due to the particularities of German history, this type of monument is not an exclusively German phenomenon. Similar monuments are also found in Austria, France, Australia, the UK and the US (Wijsenbeek, 2010). They are a phenomenon that is linked not so much to a place but to a time in the postmodern Western world, where affirmative historical meaning-making has given way to a critical construction of meaning.

Deserter memorials

The "stone provocation" of a traditional heroic war memorial in Germany is now regularly confronted by a counter-monument, usually a deserter monument that acknowledges a dialogical engagement. It invites the observer to reflect on and compare the two interpretations of history presented. This "didactic constellation" generates insight rather than nostalgia. The counter-monument wants to make visible an interpretation that its counterpart withholds, and ideally it serves as a catalyst for a shift in the public awareness of history and in the collective memory by offering an alternative and critical view of the past by disrupting and "correcting" the mono-perspectival proposition of its counterpart (Wijsenbeek, 2010, pp. 258-259). Deserter monuments constitute a "particular variety of war memorial" (Müller, 2007, p. 267), though at first they attracted only limited academic attention (Welch, 2012; Dräger, 2014, Dräger, 2017a; Dräger, 2017b; Dräger, 2017b). Indeed, until the late 1970s, desertion from the Wehrmacht (united armed forces of Nazi Germany from 1935-1945) remained a taboo subject in the Federal Republic of Germany (Dräger, 2014). After first emerging during the 1980s at the peak of the German peace movement, there are now approximately fifty deserter monuments across the country. Their proliferation is an indicator of the waning importance of everything military in German society and a seismic shift in public opinion. The major turning point was what became known as the Filbinger affair in 1978. The minister-president of Baden-Württemberg, Hans Filbinger (1913–2007, reg. 1966–1978), served as a naval judge during the Second World War during which time he had been involved in the passing of a number of death sentences. It was not his initial denials, however, that attracted the most criticism. Rather it was his inability more than three decades later to express a word of regret to the relatives of those he had prosecuted. The public was outraged over Filbinger's obstinacy much more than over his collaboration in passing death sentences. Though Filbinger was far from being a Nazi, this was a major early step in removing whatever remained of the Wehrmacht legal system's credibility.

The influence of the peace movement of the 1980s played a pivotal role in moving public opinion in favour of Wehrmacht deserters. As a reaction to the NATO double-track decision in

1979 which offered the Warsaw Pact a mutual limitation of medium-range ballistic missiles and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, an eclectic group of anti-militarists made up of reservists who refused to do military service, groups associated with the German peace association Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft – Verband der Kriegsdienstverweigerer (DFG-VK) and green/alternative initiatives, rejected outright any anachronistic notions of soldiers dying heroically in the anticipated nuclear war. They discovered a rich source of inspiration in the example set by Second World War deserters. They demanded monuments for them to act as counterpoints to the traditional war monuments, a move that constituted a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the soldierly principle of command and obedience and the tradition of 'honouring heroes.' Beyond the abstract notions of soldierly virtue, this drive to recognise deserters was also at odds with the perceived national interests of the Federal Republic of Germany, hence the vehemence of some of the opposition. As desertion began to be celebrated as a moral choice rather than a criminal act, the war generation was confronted with questions about their own behaviour, their own responsibility, and indeed their own direct and indirect complicity in Nazi crimes.

In numerous cities there was agitation for the construction of monuments. This in turn positioned conscientious objection and desertion as more worthy of validation than the principle – obsolete, in their view – of command and obedience. Desertion could thereby be construed as an act of 'self-defence', an emancipated act against external military constraints. The supporters of the monuments hoped that this process of reflection and re-evaluation would lead to a more critical evaluation of state goals and state sanctioned violence. Although there was little chance of consensus, the push for deserter monuments did spur some academic interest. Early examples include Norbert Haase's *Deutsche Deserteure* (German Deserters) as well as Manfred Messerschmidt and Fritz Wüllner's publication *Die Wehrmachtjustiz im Dienste des Nationalsozialismus. Zerstörung einer Legende* (The Military Justice System in the Service of National Socialism. Destruction of a Legend) (Haase, 1987; Messerschmidt & Wüllner, 1987). Nevertheless, the drive to build deserter monuments hindered efforts to understand that desertion could have any number of motivations driving it. This lack of nuance found its best expression in the widespread use of a quote from Andersch's *Kirschen der Freiheit* (1952): 'Mein ganz kleiner privater 20. Juli [1944, MD] fand bereits am 6. Juni statt. (*The Cherries of Freedom*: 'My own very small 20th of July had already taken place on the 6th of June' [1944, MD].) The response to Andersch's book was until then marked either by indifference or criticism. It has now experienced a revival, proof in print that desertion was a form of resistance. Elements of his account, namely isolation of the individual, rejection of military or militant violence, and the individual's freedom of choice, lent themselves to appropriation by the peace movement decades after it was first published:

> Here young pacifists and members of today's peace movement recognized motives to which they had an affinity. And they found the outline of a provocative, politically-emotionally charismatic antitype who had both elements: the radical rejection of a criminal regime of the past and at the same time a rejection of the machinery of war and defence of today. What becomes linked in the orientation toward this antitype are historical sensitization and the sense of an existential threat in the present. (Kammler, 1990, p. 158)

The drive to understand what motivated deserters became more objective as time went on. Eventually the focus shifted to the historical phenomenon of desertion (Dräger 2017b), a development that allowed for more nuance in popular conceptions of Wehrmacht deserters. In light of the studies conducted since the 1990s, the assumption that deserters were pacifists and/or resistance fighters has been the subject of significant re-evaluation. Indeed, only 20 to 25 percent of desertions were motivated by political or religious reasons (Dräger, 2017b). Any unease about the more 'private' motives for desertion has either faded or been integrated into the new narrative by virtue of two insights: one, that under the National Socialist regime, 'private' decisions were always highly political – in the eyes of the Nazi system of criminal prosecution in any case; and two, that deserters were – regardless of their subjective motives – in an objective

sense removing themselves from a criminal war of aggression and extermination. Indeed, historical studies on the Nazi military justice system have ascribed to it a "terrorist character" when it came to the persecution of deserters, characterising it as a "typical act of National Socialist violence" (Paul, 2003, p. 173). This allowed for a balancing of views that found room for deserters as both an historical phenomenon and as individuals with unique motivations.

A side effect of this shift in public perception was that for the first time surviving deserters spoke up, be it as contemporary witnesses engaging in interviews or in the form of autobiographies. The addition of their perspectives served to add a further layer of nuance. Having finally gained a voice, in 1990 they founded the Federal Association of the Victims of the National Socialist Military Judiciary (Bundesvereinigung Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz e. V.), which subsequently played a central role in their political rehabilitation. Their primary aim was to gain recognition of their experience rather than to obtain financial compensation for historical injustices or the prosecution of the few surviving Wehrmacht judges who sentenced them. Nearing the end of their lives, they wanted to see their dignity and reputation restored. Ludwig Baumann, the chairman of the Federal Association of the Victims of the National Socialist Military Judiciary, put it this way:

> We were called 'traitors' and 'cowards' […], we were financially discriminated, convicted, socially excluded and had to experience, how in Germany and Austria the legend of a so-called 'clean' Wehrmacht was disseminated until everybody thought it was true. […] But the struggle of the Wehrmacht deserters for late recognition can be regarded as a parable of so-called civil society to change for the better. (Baumann, 2007, pp. 10-11)

This process was in part a generational conflict, as the-younger activists of the peace movement, with their own role models, moral concepts and ideas of how to preserve peace, confronted the ideas of the War/ Hitler Youth-generation. They no longer believed that peace could be guaranteed through military service, as the monuments to past wars proclaimed. Toward the end of the 1980s, the many local discussions shifted or rather were actively spread to the federal level. Unlike the West German student movement's protests in 1968, this generational conflict was not only about how to deal reasonably with the past, but how to commemorate that past in light of the present political situation and hopes for the future.

The commemoration and rehabilitation of Wehrmacht deserters in the 1990s

The end of the Cold War and German re-unification shifted discussions to the Federal level, paving the way for a complete political and legal rehabilitation. In 1991, the Federal Social Court (Bundessozialgericht) permitted damages to be paid to the widow of an executed deserter for the first time. The ruling explicitly noted that an individual's motives for deserting must not be a factor in assessing the case under compensation law. Instead, the legal prosecution by the Wehrmacht military courts, instrumentalised by the Nazis, gave to deserters the status of a victim which in turn justified appropriate compensation. This ruling transformed the image of the deserter yet again. Deserters were now seen neither as cowards or traitors, nor were they positioned as resistance fighters and heroes. Like millions of other people, they were victims of Nazi persecution. In 1995, the German Federal Supreme Court of Justice (Bundesgerichtshof) likewise distanced itself from Nazi military justice and suggested a reversal of rulings against deserters. In 1997, the German Lower House of Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag) formulated a resolution that in 1998 was passed into law which allowed for the rehabilitation of deserters predicated on the examination of each individual case. Two amendments to this act in 2002 and 2009 abolished the practice of examining individual cases and the outcome was a blanket rehabilitation of deserters.

Commemoration returns to the local level

When the legal rehabilitation of deserters was concluded, the subject returned to the local level. This was evident in the continued construction of monuments and the travelling exhibition entitled *Was damals Recht war… – Soldaten und Zivilisten vor Gerichten der Wehrmacht* (What was deemed fully legal at the time... – Soldiers and civilians tried before the courts of the military) (Baumann, & Koch, 2008). The exhibition opened in 2007 and has since visited more than 50 cities. It further disseminated the legal rejection of the Wehrmacht judiciary and its decisions. There are now more than 50 monuments, plaques, commemorative stones, names of streets and town squares, Stolpersteine (lit. stumbling blocks) or information boards at cemeteries that mark deserters' graves. The existence of these types of monuments and their continued construction is an indicator of a social change that would have appeared unthinkable in 1945. In the 1980s, these counter monuments were controversial, but their provocations generated parliamentary debate and a political, legal, and popular debate about memory practices and the nation's understanding of its own history. The fact that construction continues is indicative of the extent to which the experience of deserters is now anchored in commemorative culture. In contrast to the controversies of the 1980s, the construction of monuments is no longer initiated by groups of individuals who seek popular support and the advocacy of political parties. The political parties themselves are now beginning to take the initiative. Members of the extra-parliamentary groups active in the 1980s have moved through the political system and are now in positions of influence and power. The increased political and societal acceptance of deserters and deserter monuments ensures that initiatives are less controversial than they were even twenty-five years ago.

Conclusion: Deserters and their place in the German collective memory

Although it has been 20 years since the legal judgement against deserters was set aside, this process of reconciliation and understanding is still incomplete. It has not been embraced by all sections of society, and if one compares the approximately 50 deserter monuments to the tens of thousands of traditional war monuments, it becomes clear that while the counter monuments have challenged the status quo, they have not established for themselves a pre-eminent place in commemorative practices. This is somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, with the exception of some stray voices, the monuments meet with broad social acceptance. The fierce debates of the past have abated and deserter monuments are no longer provocative. Their potential for triggering a broad social debate has, however, also subsided, although this is partly the result of a lack of information and indifference. On the other hand, the monuments erected so far, like any other monument, suffer from a lack of attention, despite their gradual entry in memory culture. They are 'invisible' according to the characterisation of the famous Austrian author Robert Musil (1978) and the public response to them is minimal. They merely play a "sun and holiday role", with at best a sporadic or dutiful renewing of its validity and memory; they do not hold a living "everyday role" (pp. 506-509). The lively debates that were part of a practice of communicative memory leading up to their construction have been buried in the process of their cultural framing. Indeed, the topic of deserters now struggles to move beyond specialised academic circles. To ensure that not only a small, educated élite engages in discussions, further educational efforts are required in order to emphasise the potential this type of counter monument has in generating societal debate (Dräger, 2017b).

The impact of the deserter monuments is still open to debate. They remain dependent on the historical context and social frame of reference. Every period decides anew whether or not particular historical matters are worthy of being remembered and whether the related monuments will remain in the active cultural memory or will become a passive memory. Apart from this basic historical contingence of perspective, evaluations of, and the socio-cultural discourse about, the term 'treason' is of course also subject to ideological and historical-political instrumentalisation. In light of current armed conflicts and future military challenges, there is considerable value in reinvigorating the debate that saw their initial acceptance and transfer it to other contexts. They were characterised in the 1980s as a means of coping with the past as much as with the present and the future. Today as well, they can act as provocateurs, thereby ensuring

that their historical re-collective function is not limited to the German context. There is, however, some reappraisal occurring in pop culture and memory culture at the level of public history. The latest example of this is the film *Im Labyrinth des Schweigens* (lit. In the Labyrinth of Silence, Germany 2014), whose English title, *Labyrinth of Lies,* is equally apt. The most spectacular and impressive example of the transient nature of the social frame of reference is the posthumous publication of Siegfried Lenz's (1926–2014) novel *Der Überläufer* (The Defector), which was to have been published in 1952, but was withheld as it did not conform to the political climate of the time. The response of present-day literary critics, who fully embrace the work, has helped bring it significant public attention, thereby renewing, as it were, the subject of desertion and public discourse about it.

The debate in Germany also had consequences internationally. It triggered similar debates in other countries and sparked comparable initiatives. In June 2001 a monument at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire, UK, was erected to commemorate 306 soldiers from Great Britain and the Commonwealth who were executed during the First World War for desertion and cowardice. In Austria since the turn of the millennium, the rehabilitation of deserters from the Second World War and the associated issue of monuments for deserters has attracted debate. In 2005 and 2009 respectively, two laws were passed: the Recognition Act (Anerkennungsgesetz) and the Reversal- and Rehabilitation Act (Aufhebungs- und Rehabilitationsgesetz). In October 2012, the decision was made to install a deserter monument on the Ballhausplatz in Vienna, which was inaugurated in the autumn of 2014. There is still the question of whether the German, British and Austrian debates will lead to similar discussions in other countries. This would seem possible, for example in the US, where the treatment of deserters and 'draft dodgers' from the Vietnam War remain problematic; in the states of the former Yugoslavia, whose deserters have also contributed to the change of opinion in Germany and in Europe at large; in Syria, and in the Ukraine. If deserter monuments have so far been considered something specifically German, if not thought of as a special case in history or even as a *Sonderweg* (a theory in German historiography that posits that Germany's course from aristocracy to democracy was a unique phenomenon), they do offer ample material for discussion at an international level.

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About the Author

Marco Dräger studied history and Latin at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen and received his doctorate with a study about the changing face of Wehrmacht deserters in Germany and their gradual entry into Germany's memory culture in the form of monuments. Currently he works as a teacher in Lower-Saxony and also is a teaching officer at the universities of Hanover, Lüneburg and Göttingen. His foci of research are history didactics and culture of memory.

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Counter memorials and counter monuments in Australia's commemorative landscape: A systematic literature review

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ABSTRACT

Over the course of the last four decades there has been a growing interest in the development and impact of counter memorials and counter monuments. While counter memorial and monument practices have been explored in Europe and the United States, relatively little research has been conducted in the Australian context. This systematic literature review examines the current state of scholarship by exploring what form counter monuments and memorials have taken and what events they have focussed on. A total of 134 studies met the selection criteria and were included in the final review. The major factors identified that have impacted on the development of the counter memorial and monument genre in Australia are international and domestic influences, historical, political and social-cultural events in Australia, the socio-political agenda of various individuals or organisations, and the aesthetics of the counter memorials and monuments themselves. The review found that Australia has a diverse and active counter memorial and monument genre, with commemorative practices honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women, victims of human made and natural disasters, the experiences of asylum seekers, and the histories and experiences of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities.

KEYWORDS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, Aesthetics, Anti-monuments, Anti-memorials, Commemorative practices, Counter-memorials, Counter monuments, Human and natural disasters, Frontier Wars, Queer memorialisation, Women's history

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Introduction

Memorials and monuments influence how people remember the past by recording and narrating history in selective ways, often hiding as much as they reveal (Alderman & Dwyer, 2009). Consequently, commemorative practices and the social process of remembering are simultaneously accompanied by a process of forgetting, one achieved through the exclusion of other historical narratives. As memorials and monuments often reflect the values of the dominant social class, they tend to exclude, marginalise or contort the histories and narratives of minority groups. However, there is increasing evidence of marginalised groups responding to this silence by building counter memorials and monuments that challenge the dominant historical narratives that frequently exclude them.

The Australian commemorative landscape is dominated by two kinds of memorials and monuments. The first kind consists of war memorials, mostly honouring those who served and recognising those who were killed during the First and Second World Wars and in various post-war conflicts such as Korea and Vietnam (Oliver & Summers, 2014). Inglis (1998), Scates (2006; 2009), and Ziino (2007) are among a growing number of researchers who explore Australian war memorials and monuments, a genre dominated by the nation's obsession with the First World War. The landing on Gallipoli by Australian troops in 1915 became in the words of the Australian historian Manning Clark, 'Australia's day of glory', one commemorated annually on Anzac Day (25 April). The national mythology that enshrouds this commemoration continues to exert an extraordinary emotional power (Kerby & Baguley, 2020), one which foregrounds the role of Australian military engagements and the Anzac spirit in shaping the nation (Lake, 2010). Australia's traditional memorials and monuments are almost universally reverential, but they are increasingly subject to interrogation for what some see as their "nation-building, exclusionary, sexist and militaristic" agenda (Strakosch, 2010, p. 270).

This reverence, which has installed the Anzac myth as the nation's civic religion, does not extend to all who participated in or were affected by conflict. For example, the Indigenous and female experience of war have long been marginalised. The failure to acknowledge the Australian Frontier Wars as a conflict in their own right is part of a broader process famously characterised as the 'great Australian silence' (Stanner, 1991 [1968]). Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have participated in all of Australia's major overseas conflicts, including the Boer War, First World War, Second World War, Malayan Emergency, Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War, and peacekeeping missions around the globe, there is a "cult of disremembering" which has reduced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to little more than a "melancholy footnote" in Australia's history (Stanner, 1991 [1968], p. 120). This process has all but erased the "invasion, massacres, ethnic cleansing and resistance" that characterised their treatment for much of the period after 1788 (Stanner 1991 [1968], p. 120). Given the "relentless militarisation of Australian history" (Lake & Reynolds, 2010, p. 138) and the central role played in this process by the Australian War Memorial (AWM), the Frontier Wars might in other circumstances have been incorporated into a broader, national mythology. Instead, the AWM steadfastly refuses to include them in its displays. As one of the nation's most important cultural institutions, this exclusion is no ordinary sleight (Kerby, Bywaters, & Baguley, 2019). Alan Stephens (2014, para. 1) argues convincingly that this is "historically dishonest" and an "impediment to reconciliation." While the women's experience of war has not been neglected to quite the same extent (see Shute, 1975; Gowland, 1980; Damousi, 1991) there is a pressing need to adopt a broadened approach that recognises experiences ranging from nursing, to volunteer patriotic work, and anti-war activism (Beaumont, 2000).

The second kind of memorial or monument that is a regular feature of the Australian landscape are those commemorating European colonisation. Inglis (1998) identified thousands of memorials to colonisation, with 5000 in the state of New South Wales alone. A consistent rhetoric accompanies these memorials, one which foregrounds the 'pioneer,' as an archetype that conveys a narrative of "development, productivity and initiative" (Graves & Rechniewski, 2017). The role

of violence in enforcing Aboriginal dispossession is almost never evoked in these monuments, and it is instead implied that the right to the land has been earned through the pioneering spirit of white settlers (Graves & Rechniewski, 2017). A more disturbing category of assimilationist monument are those dedicated to Aboriginal people as "the last of their tribe" (Besley, 2005). These types of memorials and monuments misrepresent the passing of Aboriginal culture and its ostensibly non-violent assimilation into mainstream Australian society (Besley, 2005). Two prominent examples are the memorials to the Aboriginal women Kal-Ma-Kuta at Wingi near Bribie Island and Truganini at Bruny Island in Tasmania (Besley, 2005). This approach contributes to the creation of a national story that marginalises events in Australian colonial and post-colonial history that challenge the celebration of European settlement and the democratic nation that emerged after Federation in 1901.

Counter memorials and counter monuments

Commemorative forms have undergone a radical transformation over the course of the last four decades. This is a response to international trends that first emerged in West Germany in the 1980s and a growing preparedness on the part of Australians to recognise historical trauma. In contrast to traditional memorials and monuments that glorify an event, a person or affirm an ideology, this new style of commemorative practice recognises the less celebratory events in a nation's history (Stevens, et al., 2018). The term counter memorial (or counter monument) was coined by James Young, who used it to explore Holocaust memorials constructed by nations to honour the victims of their own crimes (DeTurk, 2017). Young analysed several German examples that embodied counter monumentality. Two in particular became famous for representing this new type of monument: Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz's *Monument Against Fascism, War and Violence – for Peace and Human Rights,* unveiled in Hamburg in 1986 and Horst Hoheisel's Aschrott-Brunnen Monument, more commonly referred to as the *Aschrott Fountain* built in Kassel in 1989. *The Monument against Fascism, War and Violence – for Peace and Human Rights* encouraged more than just a philosophical engagement. It provided viewers with a metal pencil and a panel with the following text:

> We invite the citizens of Hamburg, and visitors to the town, to add their names here to ours. In doing so we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. As more and more names cover this 12 metre-high lead column, it will gradually be lowered into the ground. One day it will have disappeared completely and the site of the Hamburg monument against fascism will be empty. In the long run, it is only we ourselves who can stand up against injustice. (Young, 1992, p. 274)

The *Aschrott-Brunnen Monument* drew its inspiration directly from the fountain gifted by the Jewish businessman Sigmund Aschrott that was built in front of the City Hall in the German town of Kassel. The Nazi's tore down the Aschrott-Brunnen Fountain in April of 1939 leaving only the sandstone base. The local artist Horst Hoheisel wished to recreate the old fountain, "but in a way that suggested loss, emptiness and the painful history that had been blurred and forgotten by the town" (Johnson, 2013, para. 3). He therefore recreated the original fountain as a hollow concrete shell which was then buried upside down in the exact location of the original. The hollow inverted version of the fountain was covered by glass and a grate that "traced the outline of its bottom, so that people could walk across it and look into its emptiness" (Johnson, 2013, para. 2). The viewer was also able to hear water falling to the bottom of the fountain which was now 12 metres underground. Hoheisel described his approach to the memorial:

> The only way I know to make this loss visible is through a perceptibly empty space, representing the space once occupied. Instead of continuously searching for yet another explanation or interpretation of that which has been lost, I prefer facing the loss as a vanished form. A reflective listening into the void, into the negative of an irretrievable form, where the memory of that which has been lost resounds, is preferable to a mere numb endurance of the facts. (Johnson, 2013. para. 4)

The prominence and unconventionality of both monuments acted as catalysts for the development of numerous counter memorials and monuments in Europe, including *The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* (2005), *The Nameless Library* (also known as the *Judenplatz*

Holocaust Memorial) (2000) and the *Stolpersteine* project (1992). Though they commemorated more than just the Holocaust, Young (1993) was quite clear about their purpose:

> [They] aim not to console but to provoke, not to remain fixed but to change, not to be everlasting but to disappear, not to be ignored by passers-by but to demand interaction, not to remain pristine but to invite their own violation and not to accept graciously the burden of memory but to drop it at the public's feet. (p. 30)

Although counter memorials and counter monuments are most often associated with Germany, Young's description of the genre is consistent with numerous memorials and monuments erected across the world. Prominent examples in the United States include Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans' Memorial* (1982) in Washington DC and the 9/11 Memorial in New York City, *Reflecting Absence* (2011). These developments made their way to Australia, where they contributed to a "shift away from normative memorial treatment to engage with the strengthening multicultural aspects of Australia" (Ware, 2004, p. 122). This was often in the form of additions or alterations made to existing memorials, an approach particularly evident during the 1980s and 1990s when they were used as a means of reinterpreting Aboriginal history and foregrounding forgotten voices (Batten & Batten, 2008). Nevertheless, Australia's counter memorialisation practices have attracted considerably less interest from researchers than those in Europe and the United States. However, there are exceptions, as is evident in the work of Strakosch (2010), Ware (2004), and Bulbeck (1988). One of the most notable efforts to address this alteration in Australian commemorative practices was a survey conducted between 2004 and 2008, which culminated in the publication of *Places of the Heart: Memorials in Australia* (Ashton, Hamilton & Searby, 2004). The authors moved beyond the fixation with traditional war memorials to explore alternative memorials in Australia including those to disasters, AIDs and roadside deaths. This review will extend on this work and the research undertaken by Strakosch (2010) and Ware (2004) by providing a systematic review of the literature pertaining to counter memorials and counter monuments in the Australian commemorative landscape.

Method

An electronic search was conducted through the following databases: EBSCO MegaFile Complete, JSTOR, Web of Science, Taylor and Francis, and Scopus. Using relevant, controlled vocabulary at initial screening, the following key terms were used in Boolean topic searches: "Counter memorial" OR "Counter monument" AND "Australia" OR "anti-memorial." Other synonyms and related search phrases were also trialed, including "Counter memory" OR "deathscapes" OR "War memorials" OR "Gardens of Remembrance." Publications such as book reviews were excluded, as well as those in languages other than English. However, additional sources were identified through other means, including searching the same key terms in Google Scholar and checking the reference lists of articles for additional sources missed in the initial search. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRIMSA) diagram (Figure 1) was used to track the process of identifying and selecting relevant papers to address the research question: What form have counter memorials and monuments taken and what is their particular focus?

Using the key search terms listed, 545 sources were found in the various databases, plus an additional 193 identified through other sources. After the removal of 224 duplicates, 513 records were screened. Many of the sources initially screened focused on counter memorials and counter monuments in the context of literature or film. These records were excluded, leaving 355 sources to be fully assessed for inclusion in the study. Following the review of the title and abstract, this process was repeated for the full-text review of the records. Sources that focused on traditional, American confederate, or colonial monuments and memorials were excluded (n=39), as well as any sources that did not sufficiently focus on the counter memorial or counter monument genre in Australia or international factors that did not influence Australia's commemorative practices (n=90). This left 134 sources for inclusion within the review. The data extracted from these sources included names and types of memorial or monument; country and significance of its location; influences and perceptions of the creator; and historical,

aesthetic, rhetorical, political and social-cultural themes and dimensions relating to the monument or memorial. The data extraction form is located in Appendix A.

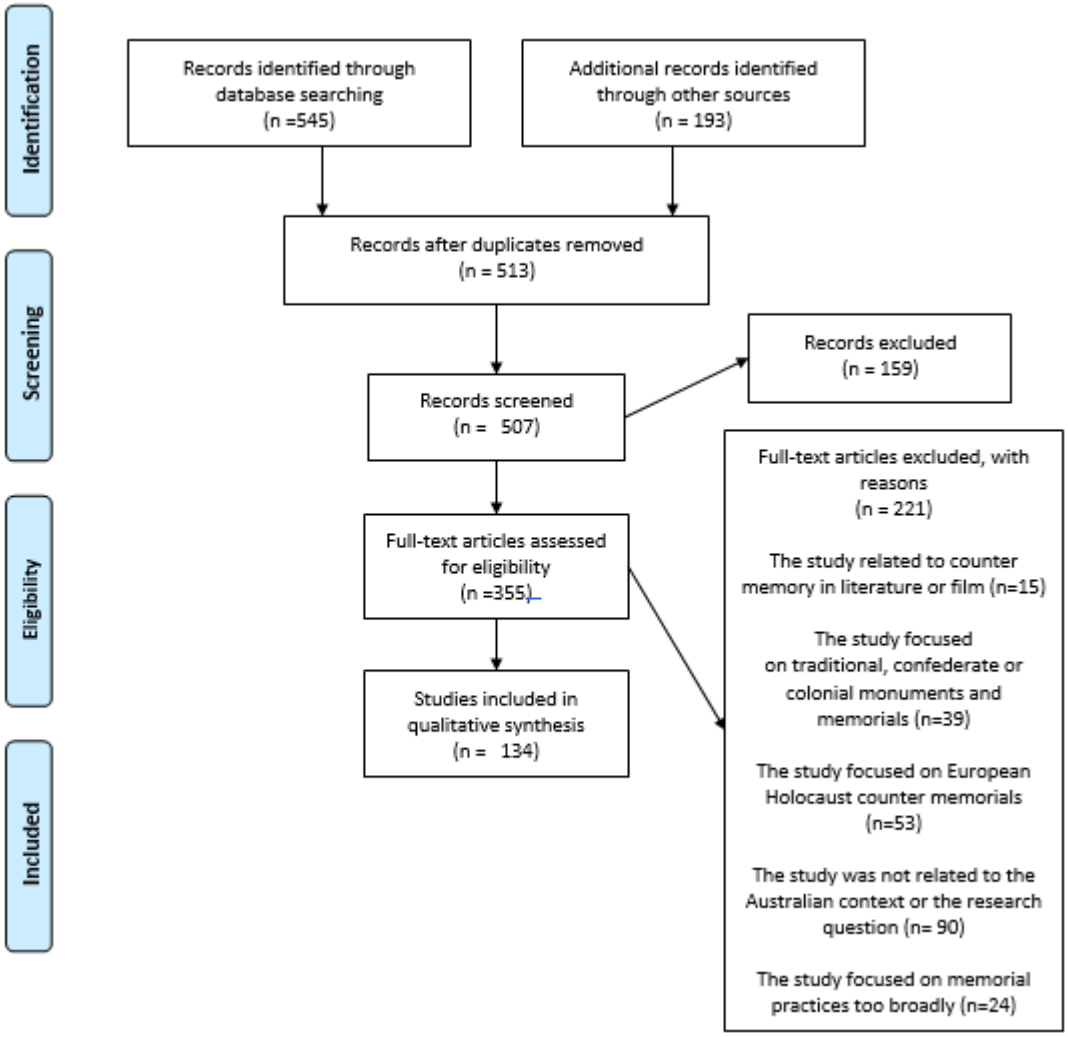

Figure 1: The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRIMSA) diagram on counter memorials and counter monuments in Australia

Results and discussion

All selected studies were classified in different historical themes such as the Holocaust, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, queer memorialisation, peacekeeping initiatives, women's history and perspectives, refugee experiences, and terrorism. Figure 2 presents the studies based on the historical or cultural theme of the counter memorial or counter monument.

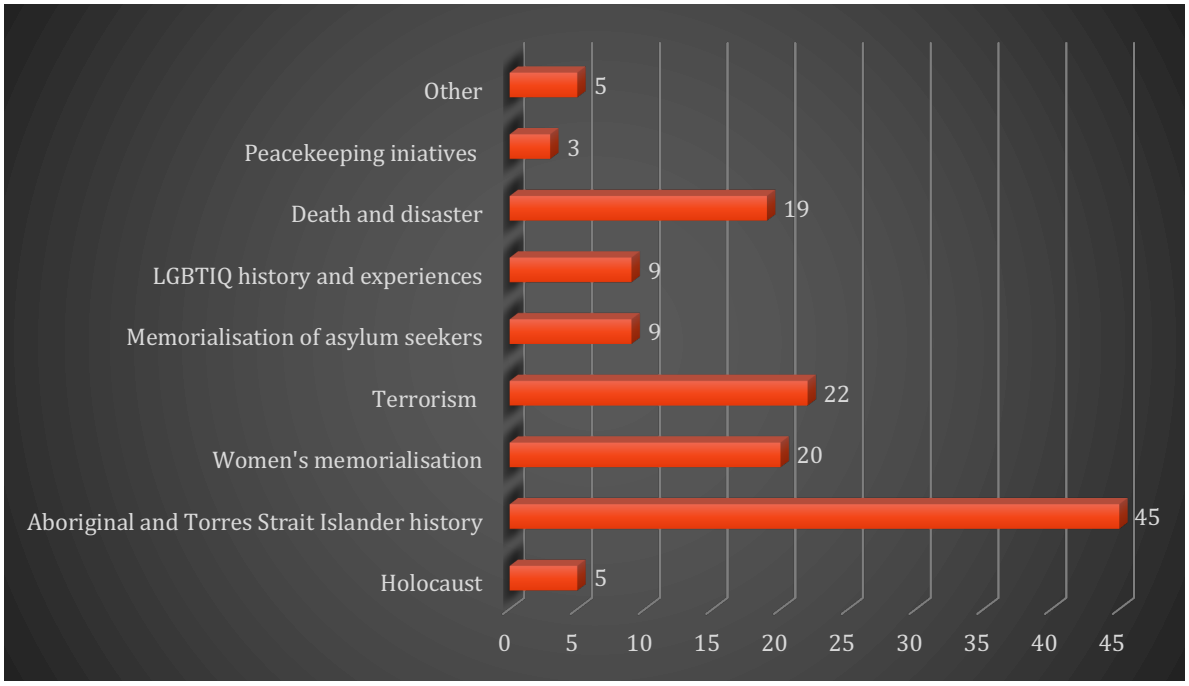

Figure 2: Classification of counter monument and counter memorial by historical themes

1. The Holocaust

As counter memorials and counter monuments emerged in post-war West Germany, Holocaust memorialisation was a regular feature in the literature and was cited as a primary influence for the development of similar memorials and monuments in other countries. Australian examples are no exception, for they regularly employ representational strategies drawn from Europe, such as being interactive instead of merely pedagogical and their use of an "abstract aesthetic language of absence" (Strakosch, 2014, p. 137). However, as further noted by Strakosch (2014), they are rarely as radical either in form or discourse as their European counterparts. Five studies focused on Holocaust memorials in Australia (Alba, 2007; Alba, 2016; Cooke, 2018; Levi, 2007; Witcomb, 2013). Two studies focused on the Sydney Jewish Museum (Alba 2007; Alba 2016). Alba (2007) explored the Sydney Jewish Museum's *Sanctum of Remembrance* (1992) and analysed the relationship between Holocaust memorials, the Jewish commemorative tradition, and the sacralisation of Holocaust memory in the Australian context. Art was also a medium used to capture Holocaust memory in Australia. Cooke (2018) examined the 1961 Warsaw Ghetto exhibition in Melbourne and Witcomb (2013) explored art in the Jewish Holocaust Museum in Melbourne.

2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and perspectives

Forty-five studies were identified that focused on counter memorialisation practices related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history. The three main sub-categories were memorials and monuments that acknowledged the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples during war time and/or the Frontier Wars (n=22); memorials dedicated to the Stolen Generations (n=12); and traditional memorials and monuments that have been altered to include Aboriginal perspectives and narratives (n=15) (Figure 3).

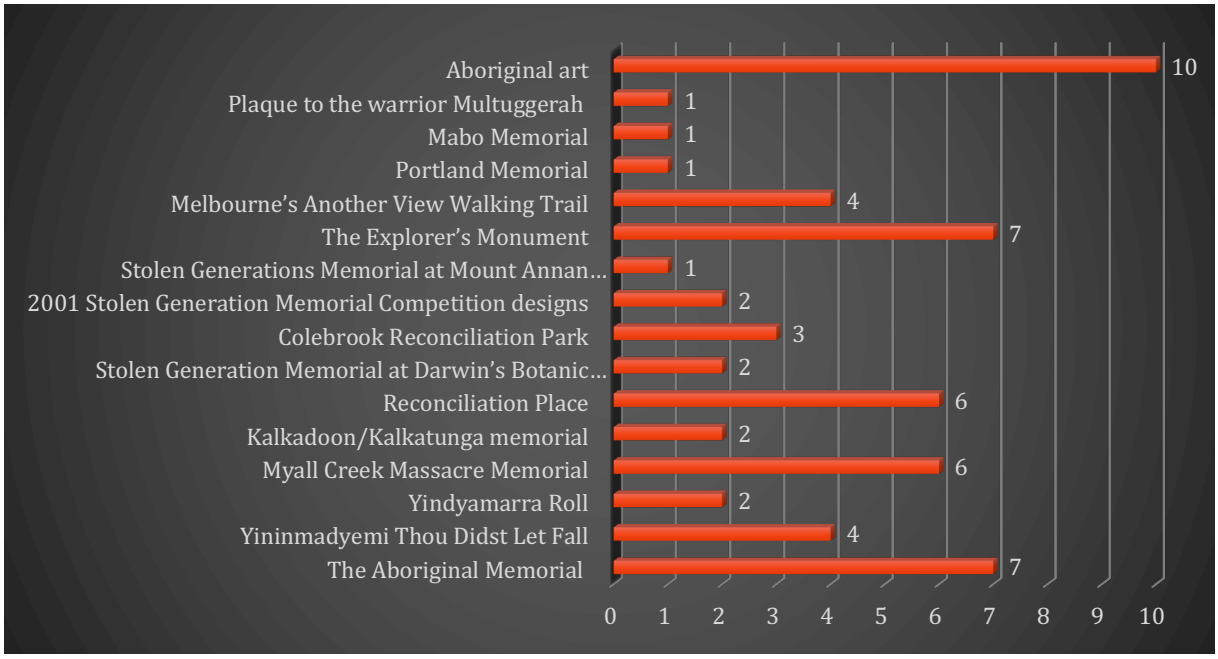

Figure 3: Counter memorials and monuments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and perspectives

2.1 Countering the Great Australian Silence

Twenty-four studies directly challenge the 'great Australian silence' by acknowledging the Frontier Wars and the contribution of Aboriginal people to Australia's wars (Table 1). Seven studies focused on the *Aboriginal memorial* by Aboriginal artist Djon Mundine (De Lorenzo & Chow, 2011; Desmond, 1996; Jenkins, 2003; Lendon, 2016; Mundine, 1999; Mundine, 2015; Smith, 2001); four focused on the memorial *Yininmadyemi Thou didst let fall* by Aboriginal artist Tony Albert (Kerby at al. 2019; Oakley, 2015; Riseman, 2017; Syron, 2015); two studies mentioned the *Yindyamarra Roll* by Wiradjuri artist Amala Groom (Barritt-Eyles, 2019; Graves & Rechniewski, 2017); and ten studies focused on other memorials to the massacres of Aboriginal peoples (Barritt-Eyles, 2019; Batten & Batten, 2008; Besley, 2005; De Lorenzo & Chow, 2011; Frew & White, 2015; Graves & Rechniewski, 2017; Harris, 2010; Read, 2008; Schlunke, 2016).

The literature consistently identified the fundamental role played by landscape and natural materials in memorialising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture (Batten & Batten, 2008; Besley, 2005; De Lorenzo & Chow, 2011; Jenkins 2003; Mundine, 1999). De Lorenzo and Chow (2011) found that sacredness was embodied in the natural components of *the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial.* Mundine (1999) states that his *Aboriginal Memorial* is like a forest and that "each log is ceremonially a bone coffin … and the forest is like a large cemetery" (p. 49). Jenkins (2003) also explored the meaning of the hollow logs and the role of nature, arguing that the *Aboriginal Memorial* offers a snapshot of Arnhem Land that possesses "numerous associations, readings and layers of meaning that are constantly changing" (p. 246). In contrast, some counter memorials and monuments draw their inspiration from Australia's traditional war memorials. According to Jenkins (2003), the Aboriginal Memorial is linked to Australia's Unknown Soldier, and the hollow logs it is comprised of serve the same function as a cenotaph, which literally means 'an empty tomb.' *Yininmadyemi thou didst let fall* adopts a more literal approach by using oversized bullets as a universal signifier of conflict (Kerby et al. 2019, p. 561). *Yindyamarra Roll's* symbolic correlation to the Honour Roll in Returned Services League clubs across Australia challenges the lack of recognition of Indigenous Australians who fought in foreign wars and resisted colonial invasion (Graves & Rechniewski, 2017). Additionally, commemoration of the massacres of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through public art is now quite extensive and has attracted a commensurate level of academic interest (Barritt-Eyles, 2019;

Batten 2004; Batten & Batten 2008; Caso, 2020; De Lorenzo & Chow 2011; Lowish, 2018; McLean, 2016; Mendelssohn, 2018; Read, 2008; Schlunke 2006).

Title of work	Number of papers	Citations
The Aboriginal Memorial	7	De Lorenzo & Chow, 2011; Desmond, 1996; Jenkins, 2003; Lendon, 2016; Mundine, 1999; Mundine, 2015; Smith, 2001.
Yininmadyemi - Thou didst let fall	4	Kerby et al. 2019; Oakley, 2015; Riseman, 2017; Syron, 2015.
Yindyamarra Roll	2	Barritt-Eyles, 2019; Graves & Rechniewski 2017.
Myall Creek Massacre Memorial	6	Batten & Batten, 2008; De Lorenzo & Chow, 2011; Frew & White, 2015; Graves & Rechniewski 2017; Read, 2008; Schlunke, 2016.
Kalkadoon/Kalkatunga memorial	2	Besley, 2005; Read, 2008.
Pinjarra memorial	2	Graves & Rechniewski 2017; Harris, 2010.
Aboriginal art	10	Barritt-Eyles, 2019; Batten 2004; Batten & Batten 2008; Caso, 2020; De Lorenzo and Chow 2011; Lowish, 2018; McLean, 2016; Mendelssohn, 2018; Read 2008; Schlunke 2006.

Table 1: Counter memorials and counter monuments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history

Researchers identified several influential individuals and associations that have contributed to the development of counter memorials and counter monuments that recognise the contribution of Aboriginal servicemen and acknowledge the Frontier Wars. Two studies referenced historian John Pilger and Governor General Sir William Dean as catalysts for the development of the *Aboriginal Memorial* through their call for national recognition of the 'black wars' (Jenkins, 2003; Riseman, 2017). Historian Ken Inglis was also identified as someone who called on the AWM to incorporate the Frontier Wars into their displays (Jenkins 2003; Riseman, 2017). Other factors that informed the historical development of the counter memorials and monuments to Australia's First Nations people includes the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans and Services Associations (ATSIVSA) and the Reconciliation Service who campaigned for memorials to Indigenous service (Riseman, 2017). More recently, the issue of memorialising the Frontier Wars has been driven by Aboriginal activists who have organised a 'shadow march' after the Anzac Day march in Canberra to mark those who died in the Frontier Wars (Graves & Rechniewski, 2017). Similarities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counter memorials to Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans' Memorial* (Clark, 2008) were also identified. Lin designed the *Vietnam Veterans' Memorial* as a black scar in the landscape to express the scarred psyche, thereby depicting loss rather than heroism (Clark, 2008). Counter memorials to Aboriginal history are similar in that they disrupt the romanticisation of the Anzac legend and encourage the public to engage with contested history and challenge, rather than endorse pre-existing beliefs.

2.2 Memorialising the Stolen Generations

Twelve studies focused on counter-monuments to the Stolen Generations – the children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who were forcibly removed from their families as a result of the Australian Government's policy of assimilation which began in the first half of the

20th century and continued until the 1960s (Table 2) (Ashton, 2009; Ashton & Hamilton, 2008; Atkinson-Phillips, 2018; Atkinson-Phillips, 2020; Batten and Batten, 2008; Besley, 2005; Read, 2008; Strakosch, 2009; Strakosch, 2010; Strakosch, 2014; Ware, 1999; Ware, 2004). The literature found that counter memorials and counter monuments to the Stolen Generations are heavily influenced by conceptions of transitional justice and human rights (Atkinson-Phillips, 2020). State-led inquiries into human rights violations, formal apologies, and the creation of memorials to acts of injustice against Indigenous peoples were in evidence internationally and ultimately also emerged in Australia (Atkinson-Phillips, 2020). Atkinson-Phillips (2020) also argued that half of all Australian memorials created between 1985 and 2015 were directly related to a national inquiry or Royal Commission. The National Inquiry into the Removal of Aboriginal Children from their Families, led by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) (1997) and the subsequent *Bringing Them Home Report* (1997) informed the development of counter memorials and counter monuments relating to the Stolen Generations. These factors, along with Prime Minister John Howard's refusal in 1998 to apologise for the actions of past governments, which a decade later was delivered by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd during the 'Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples' speech (2008), opened a space for "public mourning of the lost culture, language and childhood experience of the Stolen Generations" (Atkinson-Phillips, 2020, p. 4).

Title of work	Number of papers	Citations
Reconciliation Place	6	Batten & Batten, 2008; Besley 2005; Read, 2008; Strakosch, 2009;Strakosch,2010; Strakosch, 2014.
Stolen Generation Memorial at Darwin's Botanic Garden	2	Ashton, 2009; Ashton & Hamilton, 2008.
Colebrook Reconciliation Park	3	Atkinson-Philips,2018; Atkinson-Phillips, 2020; Read 2008.
2001 Stolen Generation Memorial Competition designs	2	Ware, 1999; Ware, 2004.
Stolen Generations Memorial at Mount Annan Botanical Garden	1	Batten & Batten, 2008.

Table 2: Counter memorials to the Stolen Generations

Many of the studies relating to the memorialisation of the Stolen Generations focussed on grief, healing and the role of nature in healing trauma. In Aboriginal culture there is no arbitrary separation between nature and culture (NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, 2006). Natural forms such as gardens and parks, or used materials such as wood, water and rocks have therefore emerged as key elements of Aboriginal memorials, particularly in the case of those commemorating the Stolen Generations. There were five studies of memorials that utilised a natural landscape setting to commemorate the Stolen Generations (Ashton, 2008; Atkinson-Phillips, 2018; Atkinson-Phillips, 2020; Batten & Batten, 2008). These include the Stolen Generation memorials at Mount Annan Botanical Garden, Darwin's Botanic Gardens, and Colebrook Reconciliation Park in South Australia. The literature noted that memorials with a natural setting appeared to lead to experiences of healing and reflection, particularly for Aboriginal people (Batten & Batten, 2008). Visitor reviews of the memorial at Mount Annan Botanical Garden characterised it "as a journey of healing and reflection as they walk through the forest," a "peaceful meeting place with water," and one that allowed at least some of the visitors to reconnect with Country (Batten & Batten, 2008, p. 97). In the case of the Colebrook Reconciliation Park, Silvio Apponyi and Shereen Rankine's *Fountain of Tears* uses water to acknowledge the pain, trauma, and sorrow of those affected by the removal of children (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018).

2.3 Altering colonial memorials and monuments

Fifteen studies focused on 'twinned' memorials and monuments, also known as 'tack-ons,' whereby alternative views are offered through additions or alterations (Ware, 2004). Table 3 lists memorials that have undergone some type of modification or which inspired the design of a dialogic memorial, a type of counter monument that counters an existing monument and the values it espouses (Quentin et al., 2018).

Title of work	Number of papers	Citations
Reconciliation Place	6	Batten & Batten, 2008; Besley 2005; Read, 2008; Strakosch, 2009; Strakosch, 2010; Strakosch, 2014.
The Explorer's Monument	7	Batten & Batten, 2008; Besley, 2005; Graves & Rechniewski, 2017; Harris, 2010; Mills &Collins, 2017; Read, 2008; Scates, 2017.
Melbourne's Another View Walking Trail	4	Fiannuala 2016; Morris, 2001; Ware, 1999; Ware, 2004.
La Grange Massacre of the Karaadjarie people	2	Graves & Rechniewski, 2017; Read, 2008.
Portland Memorial	1	Bulbeck, 1991.
Mabo Memorial	1	Sullivan and Sullivan, 2020.
Plaque to the warrior Multuggerah in Duggan Park, Toowoomba	1	Graves & Rechniewski, 2017.

Table 3: Twinned and dialogic counter memorials

Tack-ons are often responses to monuments that are considered offensive, and like twinned monuments they incorporate a variety of perspectives to facilitate a re-interpretation of a country's past. Studies found that removing racist monuments or altering them with tack-ons has gained considerable publicity, not all of it positive, as a result of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement (2013-) in the United States (Mills & Collins, 2017; Scates, 2017; Slessor & Boisvert, 2020). Bulbeck (1988) states that twinned memorials "provide a second disjunctural reading for the spectator which the monument does not resolve" and are "one of the most powerful forms of rewriting memorial history" (p. 10). In contrast, Ware (2004) argues that tack-ons are 'band-aids,' merely existing in relation to a historical 'wrong.'

Similarly, another type of memorial that has attracted some interest from researchers is the dialogic memorial or monument. For example, *Reconciliation Place* (n=6) includes an explicit representation of the Stolen Generations that challenges a 'silence' in a nearby monument (Batten & Batten, 2008; Besley, 2005; Read, 2008; Strakosch, 2009; Strakosch, 2010; Strakosch, 2014). The *Mabo Memorial* in Townsville is even less subtle, as it is in the form of a canon aimed at the controversial colonial statue of Robert Towns across Ross Creek. According to Sullivan and Sullivan (2020), these memorials and monuments are in dialogue with each other, "acknowledging mutual and antagonistic pasts in the present" (p. 179). This is in contrast to older, more traditional statues which do not recognise alternate viewpoints and instead offer a single vision that is grounded in a narrow conception of citizenship and national identity.

3. Women

Twenty studies focused on memorials and monuments that capture the contributions and experiences of women (Abousnnouga & Machin, 2011; Ashton & Hamilton, 2008; Bailey & Woytiuk, n.d; Besley, 2016; Bold et al., 2002; Bulbeck, 1992; Burk, 2006; Ching, 2019; Gardiner, 2019; Kelsey, 2018; Lattouf, 2016; Mackie, 2016; Marschall, 2010; Mikyoung, 2014; Orozco, 2019;

Pickles, 2004; Randle, 2018; Reed & Brown, 2012; Yoon, 2017; Yoon & Alderman, 2019). Two main categorisations within these counter commemorative practices were identified in the literature: memorials and monuments that acknowledged the service of women (n=8), or which are dedicated to women who have lost their lives to violence or have survived sexual abuse (n=12) (Figure 4).

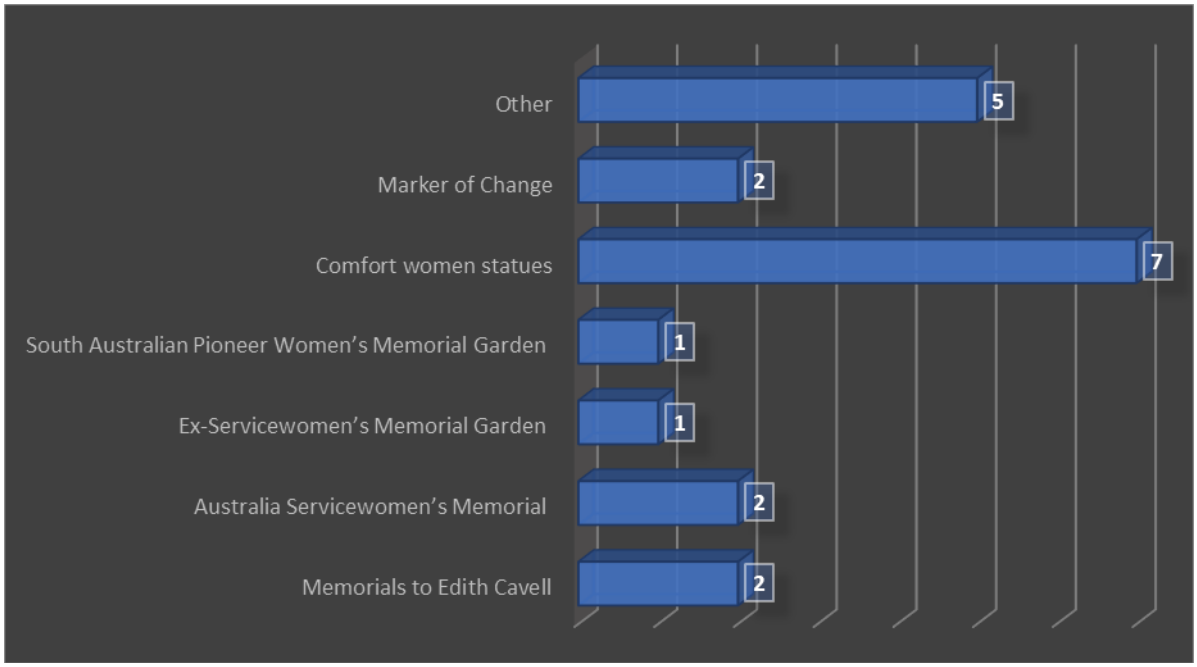

Figure 4: Counter memorials to the experiences and services of women

3.1 Women

While males are often installed as heroic figures in Australia's public memory; in contrast, women are more likely to be presented as allegorical or mythological figures (Abousnnouga & Machin, 2011; Bulbeck, 1992; Mackie, 2016). Furthermore, Inglis (1998) notes that war memorials and monuments to women, even nurses, are rare in Australia. Eight studies explore counter memorials that commemorate the contributions and services of women (Abousnnouga & Machin, 2011; Besley, 2016; Bulbeck, 1992; Gardiner, 2019; Mackie, 2016; Marschall, 2010; Pickles, 2004; Reed & Brown, 2012). Two studies found that memorials to British nurse Edith Cavell who saved the lives of allied and enemy soldiers and was executed by the Germans in 1915 contributed to the public recognition of women in service, with hundreds of memorials and monuments dedicated to her around the world (Bulbeck, 1992; Pickles, 2004). Although Cavell never set foot in Australia, she left a legacy of honouring women in war which exerted a considerable influence on Australia's commemorative practices to servicewomen (Bulbeck, 1992; Pickles, 2004). Three studies focused on memorials that paid tribute to the thousands of women who served Australia in wars and peacekeeping endeavours (Mackie 2016; Marschall, 2010; Reed & Brown, 2012). Two papers focused on the *Australian Servicewomen's Memorial* in Canberra (Mackie 2016; Marschall, 2010), and one study focused on the *Ex-Servicewomen's Memorial Garden* in Melbourne (Reed & Brown 2012). Reed and Brown (2012) identified in the Ex-Servicewomen's Memorial Garden a number of symbols drawn from nature. For example, South African jacarandas represent the Boer War, which is the first war in which Australian women served (Reed & Brown, 2012). One study focused on the *South Australian Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden* (Gardiner, 2019). The memorial affirmed white settler women's right to be recognised in public memory, reflecting contemporary feminist discourse around gender, citizenship, and traditional gender roles (Gardiner, 2019). Garden historian Katie Holmes noted the significance of gardens to women in colonial Australia in forging a sense of settled place and identity in a 'new land' (Gardiner, 2019). This is evident in

the *South Australian Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden* which utilises flowers to symbolise feminine virtues (Gardiner, 2019). The earth and natural elements are a common theme of counter memorial design to servicewomen and pioneer women. The use of earth as an intrinsic element is seen in many memorials designed by and dedicated to women including: the *Australian Services Nurses Memorial, Australian Servicewomen's Memorial, The Korean War Memorial, The Ex-Servicewomen's Memorial Garden and Cairn,* and *The South Australian Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden*. According to Hess (1983), there is a "female sensibility" in memorials linked with the earth in contrast to "phallic memorials that rise upwards" (p. 123).

The contribution of Aboriginal women as domestic workers was also depicted through an art museum project called *Many Threads* (Besley, 2016). *Many Threads* was created by Cherbourg women who incorporated their experience of service and trauma on tea towels. According to Besley (2016), *Many Threads* is a form of counter memory with narratives that bring hidden and silenced pasts into the public domain.

3.2 Memorialising violence against women

Parks have emerged as a common site to memorialise women who have died at the hands of men (Bold et al., 2002; Burk, 2006), which again is in step with international developments. For example, Burk (2006) studied three monuments: *Marker of Change* (1997), *CRAB Park Boulder* (1997), and *Standing with Courage, Strength and Pride* (1997) in Canada, which memorialised women who died by, or have experienced violence from men. Bailey and Woytiuk (n.d) studied Marker of Change, which commemorates the murder of fourteen female engineering students at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique by a gunman. Marker of Change is a collection of benches marched with oval depressions, where water naturally collects (Bailey & Woytiuk, n.d). These pools symbolise tears. The inscription dedicates the monument to "all women who have been murdered by men" (Bailey & Woytiuk, n.d). Another study focused on – a tribute to Marianna Goulden who was murdered by her male partner in 1992 (Bold et al., 2002).

In Australia, this development has been recently evidenced in the renaming of a section of Camp Hill Park in Brisbane, *Hannah's Place,* in memory of Hannah Clarke and her three children who were burnt alive by her husband and their father (Stone, 2020). However, there is a gap in the commemorative landscape, with no memorial or monument existing in Australia that specifically addresses violence against women perpetrated by men. There was a temporary floral memorial to Eurydice Dixon an Australian comedian and actress, in Princes Place, Melbourne. After performing a comedy gig she was raped and murdered whilst walking back home in 2018. The floral tributes were mulched and spread across the three victims of crime memorial sites in Melbourne, with calls for a permanent memorial to be erected (Ansell & Prytz, 2018). There was also an unofficial tribute plaque to Jill Meagher who suffered a similar fate while walking home from a pub in Brunswick, Melbourne. A memorial stone and floral tributes were placed near the shallow grave where her body was found. The plaque was later removed by the Melton City Council "in a compromise with locals, and was done with the permission of the Meagher family" (Duffy, 2012). Yet as Ashton (2009) observes, there is a general absence of memorials to women who are raped and murdered at the hands of men in Australia, despite campaigns from the victims' families and the rate of domestic violence in Australia. However, one Australian study did find a memorial to victims of child abuse and rape in Tasmania (Ashton & Hamilton, 2008). This memorial is comprised of hundreds of white crosses lining a flowerbed. Each day organisers add three crosses to represent the estimated number of children that are abused every day in Tasmania (Ashton & Hamilton, 2008). Similarly, *the Memorial to Forgotten Australians and Wards of the State* (2010) in Adelaide which includes huge meta flowers intended to be gazanias, honours children who have suffered abuse in institutional and out-of-home care (Atkinson-Phillips, 2020).

4. Spontaneous memorials

Spontaneous memorials mark the deaths of people who do not fit into the categories of those we expect to die (Ware, 2004). The term spontaneous memorial was coined by Jack Santino to describe murder sites in Northern Ireland that had become shrines (Doss, 2018). The definition has expanded to include those who die engaging in routine activities in which there is a reasonable expectation of safety, such as driving a car to work (Ware, 2004). In addition, they can memorialise forgotten, marginalised or 'regular' members of society. The literature found that the development of spontaneous memorials is informed by several historical and cultural factors, including:

- Existential, spiritual and phenomenological ideas that link to the sense and meaning of a fatal place (Clark & Franzmann 2006, Grider 2006; Maddrell & Sideaway, 2010; Petersson, 2009).
- The impact of political, religious, cultural and social structures (Maddrell & Sideaway, 2010).
- How the practice of placing material things associated with the deceased by the site generates the presence of the deceased, and gives the place meaning (Petersson 2004, Petersson, 2009).
- How spontaneous memorials are distinct from traditional commemorative practices by offering a way for people to mark their own history, challenge society or unite in grief and anger (Doss, 2008).

Memorials that commemorate tragedy, death and disaster include ones to victims of drug overdose (n=3), roadside memorials (n=9), victims of terrorism (n=22), victims of suicide (n=1), victims of natural disasters (n=6), and memorials that commemorate the experiences of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTIQ+) communities (n=9), particularly in reference to the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic. Figure 5 identifies the subjects of commemoration in this field:

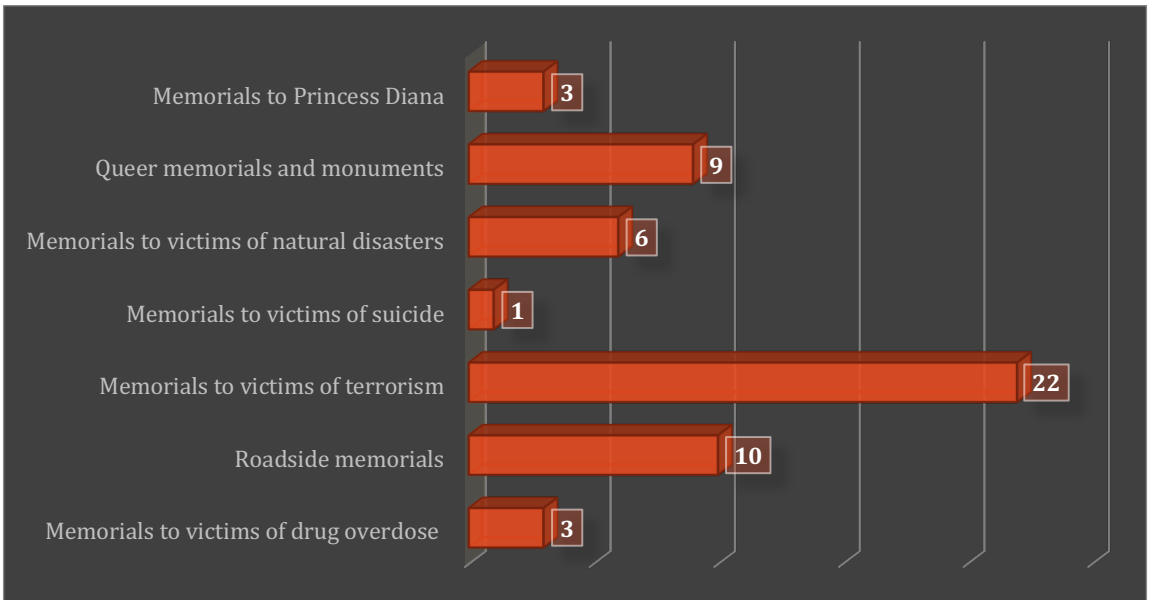

Figure 5: Counter memorials to death and disaster

4.1 Roadside memorials

The international array of temporary and spontaneous memorials created after the death of Princess Diana on August 31, 1997 is one of the most prominent examples of a spontaneous memorial (Ashton & Hamilton, 2008; Doss, 2008; Sully, 2010). Ashton and Hamilton (2008) note that the public outpouring of grief over Princess Diana's death was articulated in Australia through the construction of formal, unofficial, and temporary memorials. Although she remains one of the most famous road fatalities in history, Gibson (2011) notes that roadside memorials have a global cross-cultural history dating back centuries. Ten studies have explored roadside memorials in Australia, excluding that of Princess Diana's (Ashton & Hamilton, 2008; Baptist-Wilson, 2013; Clark, 2008; Doss, 2008; Gibson, 2011; Hartig & Dunn, 1999; Maddrell & Sideaway 2010; Smith, 1999; Ware, 2004; Welsh, 2017). After examining over 400 roadside memorials in Australia and New Zealand between 1989 and 2004, Clark (2008) argued that they challenge narratives of modernity and human frailty. Hartig and Dunn (1998) explored roadside memorials in Newcastle that focused on the roadside deaths of young people, particularly young men. They argue that roadside memorials should be viewed as symbols of societal flaws and a "testament to dominant and problematic strains of masculinity," which glorify hyper-masculinity rather than condemn unsafe road practices. Other studies include the *Road as Shrine Memorial* in Victoria which uses sections of road and landscape to memorialise highway fatalities and provide space for personal commemorations (Ware, 2004). The literature also includes other assessments of roadside memorials. Gibson (2011) argues that roadside memorials function as a catalyst in revealing the ever-present spectre of death and the fragility of human life. Baptist-Wilson (2013) acknowledged that landscape architecture is an important medium for the interpretation and expression of contemporary tragic events such as roadside deaths.

4.2 Counter memorials to honour victims of terrorism

Terrorism is a common theme in the global counter memorial genre with twenty-two national and international studies found in the review (Ashton & Hamilton, 2008; Allen and Brown, 2016; DeTurk, 2017; Evans, 2019; Frew, 2012; Frew & White, 2015; Hannum & Rhodes, 2018; Heath-Kelly, 2018; Jinks, 2014; Lewis et al., 2013; Micieli-Voutsinas, 2014; Monument Australia, n.d.a; Monument Australia, n.d; Moshenska, 2010; Sci, 2009; Silveira, 2019; Sodaro, 2017; The Guardian, 2017; Welsh, 2016; Widrich, 2019; Young, 2016; Zuber, 2006). Figure 6 highlights the historical events memorialised:

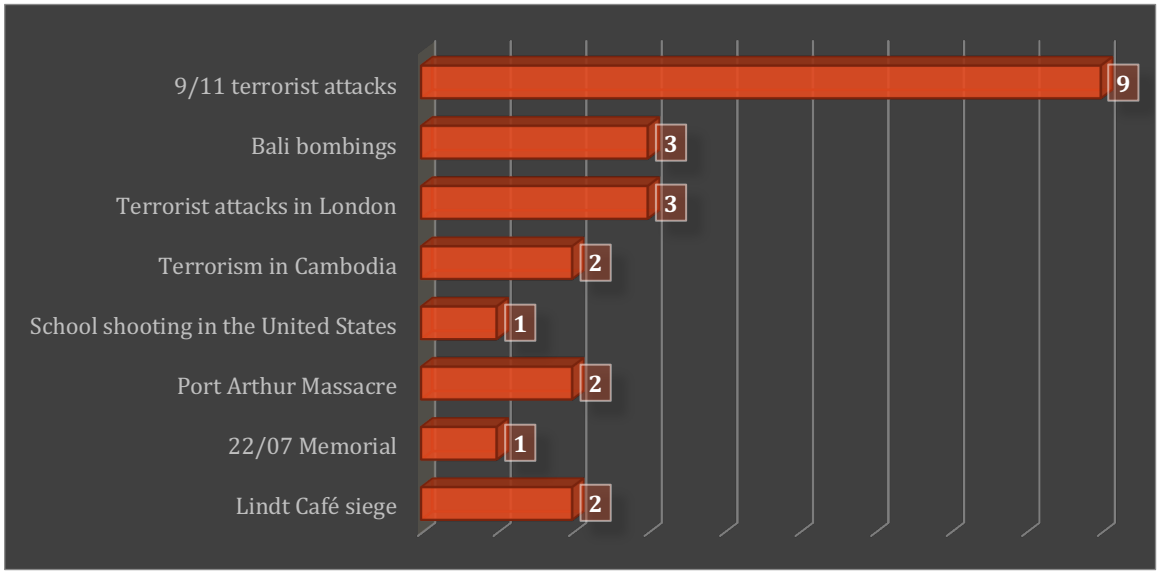

Figure 6: Terrorist attacks that influenced the development of counter memorials to victims of terrorism

Counter memorials to victims of 9/11 dominate the literature on a global scale. However, Australia's commemorative practices to terrorism were primarily influenced by three events: the Port Arthur Massacre (1996), the Bali bombings (2002), and the Lindt Café siege (2014). The website Monument Australia (n.d.) regards the Bali bombings as Australia's version of September 11, a perception that influenced the development of a *Bali Bombing Memorial* (2003) at the Gold Coast and the establishment of a water fountain in Carlton, Victoria (Ashton & Hamilton, 2008). Heath-Kelly (2018) acknowledges that in commemorations of human lives lost to terrorism, European and American memorials increasingly appeal to the aesthetics of 'nature' to symbolise societal regrowth. This is also evident in Australian memorials to victims of the Port Arthur Massacre and the Lindt Café siege. Frew (2012) and Frew and White (2015) studied *the Memorial Garden at Port Arthur historic site* (2000), which incorporates the remains of the cafe where victims were killed, a reflective pool, crosses engraved with the victims' names, and a plaque describing what happened on the day. The Lindt Café siege resulted in one of Australia's largest spontaneous memorials in Sydney's Martin Place which was transformed by more than 100 000 bunches of flowers (Monument Australia, n.d; Welsh, 2016). This spontaneous memorial of public grief inspired the development of a permanent Lindt Café siege memorial, titled *Reflection* (2017), which consists of 210 hand-crafted flowers embedded in the ground and covered by glass (Monument Australia, n.d). According to the New South Wales government, the "sea of flowers in the heart of the city signifies the heart of the community united in the face of tragedy" (Monument Australia, n.d), indicating that even a counter memorial can be enlisted in the cause of national unity.

4.3 Queer memorials and monuments

Although still relatively rare, queer memorials are a growing subset of counter memorials (Ashton, 2009; Orangias et al., 2018). Orangias et al. (2018) identified 46 queer memorials around the world which they define as sites that honour "gender and sexual minorities" and "represent communities that have often been excised in dominant public narratives" (p. 705). The stigma surrounding the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic (1981-) was one of the major factors that influenced the development of counter memorials and monuments to the LGBTIQ+ community in Australia. There are several memorials to AIDS in Australia, notably the *Fairfield Aids Memorial Garden* (1988) in Melbourne, the Memorial garden at Newcastle's John Hunter Hospital (1994), and the AIDS Memorial Bell in Sydney (2003). Interestingly, one of the most prominent counter memorials to AIDS is the *AIDS Memorial Quilt*– a series of cloth panels stitched together, each produced in memory of a person who has died from AIDS (McKinnon et al., 2016; Power, 2011). The first Australian *AIDS Memorial Quilt* was launched in Sydney on World AIDS Day in 1988. It was inspired and influenced by the original AIDS Quilt (1985) in America, and qualifies for consideration as a counter memorial by virtue of the fact that it challenges the public imagery and stigma associate with HIV and AIDS (Power, 2011). Other international studies relating to queer counter memorials focus on memorialising victims of homophobic violence (Boylan, 2013) and remembering the persecution of homosexuals by the Nazis (1933-1945) (City of Sydney, n.d; Dunn, 2019; Lehrman, 2003). *The Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial* in Sydney (City of Sydney, n.d) is Australia's contribution to this development. The aim of queer counter memorials is to provide visibility, reduce stigma, educate the public about homophobic abuse and the attempted extermination of gender and sexual minorities, and to stimulate public debate about gender and sexual minority rights (Orangias et al., 2018).

4.4 Other counter memorials and counter monuments to death and disaster

Three studies focused on *the Anti-Memorial to Heroin Overdose Victims,* which was a public installation that sought to humanise the 331 overdose deaths in Melbourne in 2000 (Malins, 2016; Ware, 2004; Ware, 2008). This spontaneous counter memorial challenged the stereotype of the 'junkie' and encouraged viewers to adopt a more benevolent attitude by utilising a personalised

and humane memorial design (Ware, 2008). Harm Reduction Victoria's *Overdose Memorial Day installation* (2016) is another recent counter-memorial that uses public art such as graffiti to memorialise the names of victims to drug overdose in Melbourne's alleyways. (Malins, 2016). *The White Wreath Memorial* at the State Library of Victoria in 2001 was another spontaneous memorial that deployed traditional and counter memorial strategies to remember victims of suicide and make the public more aware of the prominence of suicidality (Ware, 2008).

Three studies focused on memorials to natural disasters in Australia and New Zealand (Atkinson-Phillips, 2020; Joyce, 2018; Logan, 2015). Logan (2015) explored the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfire disaster through the burnt remnants of the former Cockatoo Kindergarten in the Ash Wednesday Memorial (1983). Smith (2016) discussed *the Black Saturday Memorial Tree* (2013/2014), a memorial of community hope, to the victims of the 2009 Black Saturday fires. Atkinson-Phillips (2020) notes that disaster memorials in Australia are often created to remember the experience of living through a disaster rather than focusing on loss of life. This is evident in the *ACT Bushfire Memorial* (2003), which is comprised of bricks on which survivors inscribed messages of loss which referenced their homes and their memories, rather than people (Atkinson-Philips, 2020). Counter memorials to natural disasters were also found in New Zealand, with a particular focus on the earthquakes in Christchurch. Joyce (2018) studied the *Stadium Broadcast* (staged in 2014), a radio memorial of archival recordings that hosts the memories of local people. According to Joyce (2018), the *Stadium Broadcast* reflects on the spatiality of radio sounds, post-disaster transitionality and the impermanence of place due to natural disasters. In disaster memorials, the relationship between humans and nature was another theme that emerged from the literature, specifically that of the Anthropocene, which highlights the fact that humans live "within a meteorological theatre that impacts and is impacted by their presence" (Widrich, 2019). As the Anthropocene refers to geological time, it is intrinsically linked to memory (Massolde Rebetz, 2019), and has resulted in a more sober view of memorials as geographical and ideological landscapes, with a focus on processes, rather than events (Widrich, 2019). Stanley (2019) explored this notion through an analysis of human relationships with the environment at the Kyneton Botanic Gardens (est. 1858) in regional Victoria.

The commemoration of famine and poverty also emerged as a theme from the literature (Atkinson-Phillips, 2020; McGowan, 2014). The Irish famine was another disaster memorialised in both Australia, New York, and Canada (Atkinson-Phillips, 2020; McGowan, 2014). Australia erected a *Memorial to the Great Irish Famine* (1845-1852) (1999), whereas New York developed *the Irish Hunger Memorial* (2002), which makes an historical connection with the ongoing issue of food poverty across the world (Atkinson-Phillips, 2020).

The memorialisation of animals is a less common theme in the literature (Eason, 2019). Eason (2019) explored online deathscapes for people who memorialise their pets and maintain a companion animal presence through virtual commemoration. The changing face of the expression of grief, using online platforms such as Facebook, blogs, discussion boards, Twitter and YouTube was discussed by Gibson (2013). She posits that both roadside memorial sites and Internet memorial sites "mimic graveyard or cemetery memorials . . . [and] virtual memorials may . . . become the chosen or dominant spaces for memorialisation, replacing real world geographical spaces and places." Gibson (2013) argues that online sites keep the memory of a deceased person or animal alive.

5. Other counter memorials and monuments

The review also found counter memorials and counter monuments erected to commemorate the experiences and deaths of asylum seekers (n=9), the Korean War (n=2), and peacekeeping operations (n=3).

5.1 Counter memorials to asylum seekers

Six studies explored memorials that commemorated the sinking of SIEV X, a fishing boat that sank in international waters, killing 353 asylum seekers (Andrews, 2008; Cole, 2017; Gibbings, 2010; Horsti & Neumann, 2019; Tello, 2016; Ware, 2008). The acronym SIEV stands for Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel and is used by the surveillance authority for any boat that has entered Australian waters without prior authorisation. Five studies focused on the Canberra *SIEV X Memorial* (2006) – an installation of 353 wooden poles, painted by community groups and school children (Andrews, 2008; Cole, 2017; Gibbings, 2010; Horsti & Neumann, 2019; Ware, 2008). Cole (2017) found that 20% of poles were decorated with Australiana images, including native animals, fauna, flora, tourist landmarks, Australian symbols and Indigenous artwork. A further 12% depicted landscapes of the Australian bush. Cole (2017) argues that the use of Australiana imagery reflected a desire on the part of the public to symbolise the inclusion of asylum seekers in their local areas. One study focused on three memorials to the sinking: the *SIEV X Memorial in Melbourne* (2002), a temporary light projection that "literally and figuratively illuminated the deaths that occurred as a result of the SIEV-X sinking"; the *Christmas Island SIEV X Memorial* (2001); and *the Janga/SIEV 221 Memorials* (2004) (Cole, 2017, p. 106). Horsti and Neumann (2019) note that a bench exists in Hobart to commemorate the SIEVX disaster, and that there are public memorials in each of Australia's six state capitals that acknowledge the experience of child migrants (Atkinson-Phillips, 2020). Baldassar (2006, p. 49) acknowledges that monuments have the power to turn migrants into citizens and uses *the Italian Pioneer Monument* (2008) in Perth as an example of a "de-ethicised homage to the Australian pioneer myth."

Each of the SIEVX memorials have political and moral connotations, further exacerbated by the events of 9/11, the context of the war on terror, and Australia's border security policies. This raised questions about who is human and who is grievable (Andrews, 2008). Cole (2017) argues that these memorials were developed to create cultural memory and to challenge a government rhetoric that sought to dehumanise, make invisible and suppress not only public memory of asylum seekers but also the public debate on how they should be treated. This was also evident in Dierk Schmidt's twenty-one part history painting called *SIEVX on a case of intensified refugee politics* (Tello, 2016). Schmidt's artwork identifies the forces that might have prohibited the remembrance of SIEV X, including portraits of Australian figures involved in asylum seeker discourse, such as Prime Minister John Howard, and Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock (Tello, 2016). This again reflected international trends. Beyond Australia, the literature also identified similarly contested memorials in the United States and Europe (Auschter, 2014; Widrich, 2019). Auchter (2013) explores the memorialisation of undocumented immigrants at the US-Mexico border, which has been controversial due to their legal status and the counter-memorialisation discourses that have arisen.

5.2 War and peacekeeping initiatives

Although war memorials dominate Australia's memorial practices, some wars are marginalised within Australia's commemorative landscape. This includes the Korean War (n=2), the Pacific War (n=1) and Australia's peacekeeping initiatives (n=3). The experiences of Australian prisoners of the Japanese in Thailand and Singapore were explored through the *Museum of Difficult Memories* (2009) (Pieris, 2013). The *Museum of Difficult Memories* asks people to address "important ethical issues in relation to Australia's shared history with Asia; its obdurate Eurocentrism and evasion of regional influences, its divisive rhetorical constructions of nationalism and deep-rooted anxieties based on residual prejudices" (Pieris, 2013, p. 116). Histories of conflict in Asia, particularly the Korean War (or the 'forgotten war') and the politically divisive Vietnam War, challenged the Eurocentric focus of many memorials, though they remain overshadowed by the World Wars and the Anzac legend (Pieris, 2013; Ward & Sharp, 2010). Two studies focused on the *Korean War Memorial,* designed by Jane Cavanaugh (Crawford, 1996; Ward & Sharp, 2010), which has a garden feel to it and one that represents a "welcome departure from the heroic

monumentality of traditional Australian war memorials" (Ward & Sharp, 2010, p. 58). This also serves to balance the tragedy of war with hope, much like the Taoist concepts of Yin and Yang which inspired it.

Two studies explored the *Shrine of Remembrance* (1941) at the AWM which is buried below ground, invoking the trenches of the First World War and resisting monumentality (Pieris, 2013; Ware, 2005). According to Pieris (2013, p. 112) the design suggests that the "weight of war, memory, and loss does not sit easily on the Australian psyche" which is in contrast to the traditional glorification and romanisation of Australian war memorials and monuments. Three studies focused on counter memorials to peacekeeping initiatives in Australian and internationally (Gough, 2002; Kerby et al., 2019; Ware, 2009), which focused on the *Australian Peacekeeping Memorial* (2017) in Canberra.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review identifies a small but growing body of work dealing with Australia's counter commemorative practices and the influences exerted by international, domestic, historical, cultural and aesthetic forces. The results show that Australia's counter memorial practices were initially influenced by the works of Holocaust counter memorials and the aesthetics of Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans' Memorial.* However, Australia's counter memorials differ from those in Europe and the United States through their deeper connection with, and representation of, nature. This was particularly evident in many counter memorials and monuments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Australian women, asylum seekers, and victims of terrorism, death and disaster. Future research could focus on the relationship between nature and Australia's counter commemorative practices, as well as exploring the Australian public's interpretation and understanding of counter memorials and counter monuments.

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Appendix 1

Data Extraction Form

Identification Information

Full reference:
Summary of article:

Overview of memorials/monuments in source

Type of memorials/monuments discussed in source:
Name of memorials/monuments discussed in source:
Countries of memorials/monuments discussed in source:
Historical events, themes background associate with memorial/monument:

Analysis of memorials/monuments in source

Materials used and location:
Aesthetics and artistic interpretation:
Notes on the artist or designer and their thoughts:
Public reaction to the memorial/monument:
Extract and other notes: