

**Visual and Written Discourses of  
British Commemorative War Monuments**

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## Abstract

This thesis analyses commemorative war monuments using a social semiotic approach to understand how they communicate as three-dimensional objects, considering their design alongside contextual information. Taking a social semiotic approach to the study of commemorative war monuments, it responds to calls by historians for innovative ways to study war commemoration by providing an approach that offers both specific analysis of the objects and attends to matters of design. This thesis also provides a contribution to the work in Critical Discourse Analysis on discourses of war through its analysis of the way that certain dominant discourses of war are realised, maintained and legitimised; not just through political speeches and news texts, but visually and materially through these objects that appear in cities, towns and villages across Britain. Following in the relatively recent tradition of multimodal analysis, the thesis draws on the ideas of Kress & van Leeuwen, adapting and extending their theories to the analysis of typical examples of post-First World War British commemorative war monuments.

The analysis reveals that sign makers rejected modern forms, relying on classical styles of representation to realise meanings which serve to recontextualize the brutality of war. These monuments contain powerful discourses of denial that work to promote the sacrifice of life by creating a strong, ethnically homogenous and consentient *national group* that acts

uniformly to carry out the will of the nation-state. The theoretical framework has enabled identification of the semiotic materials and modes that carry these consistent, persistent banal messages of nationalism within commemorative war discourses which serve to shut down the possibility of having wider conversations about the negative nature of war and its effects on a nation's soldiers and on its civilians.

**Key words:** War; Commemoration; Monuments; Social Semiotics; Multimodality; CDA; Nationalism.

**DECLARATION 1:**

Over the course of this research aspects of the findings have been co-published with my supervisor, Dr. David Machin. These publications are listed below:

Abousnnouga, G. and Machin, D. 2008, 'The Visual Institutionalization of Discourses in War Monuments', In, Mayr, A. *Language and Power*, London, Continuum, Ch.6:115-137

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**DECLARATION 2:**

This work has not been submitted in substance for any other degree or award at this or any other university or place of learning, nor is being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The visual representation of war is a crucial component of war commemoration, but if we were asked to paint a picture that represented war; how it took place, its participants and its consequences, what elements and features would we include? Devastated cities, lost homes, hunger, disease, dead bodies, blood and dismembered body-parts? In fact, we regularly come across visual representations of war on public display in British villages, towns and cities. Annual commemoration rituals and ceremonies centre on these representations in the form of commemorative war monuments built predominantly during the post First World War years, but which have continued to be used as sites of remembrance for subsequent wars as new names of 'the fallen' are added to the growing list.

Yet, these monuments feature none of the components, participants and processes that constitute actual elements of war. Instead, we find a range of what can appear, on closer examination, as bizarre elements that I show in this thesis serve to recontextualize war through a range of symbols, forms and materials that relate to: religion; mysticism; references to ancient civilisations; classical characters and narratives and other quite specific, yet non-war related, ideas and attitudes. Take the monument that was erected to commemorate the Royal Signals Corps at the National Memorial Arboretum in

Staffordshire<sup>1</sup> as an example. What ideas, attitudes and values of war does this monument communicate, and whose interests can this recontextualization serve?

Questions such as these, as to *how* social practices such as war are recontextualized have lain at the heart of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Practitioners of CDA, for example Wodak and van Leeuwen (1999), have focussed on the ways in which language and grammar is used to recontextualize practices by substituting elements from the actual practice with others, by deleting and by additions; a process which reshapes representations to serve the interests of a particular group. Norman Fairclough (2003) has pointed to the importance of paying particular attention to the abstraction of actual participants, processes and relations in texts in order to gain clues as to the nature of the ideological interests they serve. He recommends we look carefully at what kinds of identities, processes and settings are foregrounded, backgrounded, or silenced completely. Drawing on the same perspective, other authors (Hodge and Kress 1989, van Leeuwen

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<sup>1</sup> The commemorative war monument to the Royal Signals Corps at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, England.

2005) have pointed to the important role played by visual communication in this process of recontextualization. In both linguistic and visual terms these authors point to the importance of analysing the details of the communicative choices made in order to uncover the broader ideas or discourses that are present.

Following in the tradition of which these authors are a part, seeking to draw out the less than obvious discourses and ideologies buried within texts and other modes of representation, this thesis focuses on the commemorative war monuments that stand in public spaces in almost every British village, town and city. Most of these monuments were erected in a nation-wide project during the post-war years of the 1920's to commemorate the First World War, whilst others have been added over the last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Typical examples of these monuments are carefully examined, and, just as critical discourse analysts sought to draw out the less than obvious discourses and ideologies buried in texts through systematic analysis of linguistic and grammatical choices and social semioticians have shown how the same kind of analytical work can be carried out on other communicative modes, this work shows that these three-dimensional designs can be analysed in terms of individual communicative choices.

This thesis seeks to uncover the ways in which war and sacrifice is recontextualized into this form of war commemoration, with the aim not only to identify and analyse individual semiotic choices, but also to place these into the processes that create the monuments and to consider what interests they serve. It considers research done on monuments across a range of disciplines, from historical analysis and cultural studies, and shows how this social semiotic inspired methodology, one that emphasises the systematic analysis of communicative choices, considers the underlying communicative options from which these draw and connecting these processes to processes of production and power relations, can provide one useful and valuable addition which addresses some of the weaknesses identified by a number of scholars in the field.

War unleashes the most devastating consequences imaginable on both military participants and civilians, yet it has proved to be a constant feature of human society. The increasing impact of war on humanity is described by prominent researcher on the sociology of global politics, war and genocide Martin Shaw, who maps out the politically motivated conflicts of the twentieth century in his examination of the meaning and causes of mass killing in the modern world. Shaw (2003) asserts that the difference between twentieth century wars and earlier wars is that genocide is a product of modern wars due to technological advances that have made mass killing possible; something

that would have been impossible to achieve in the earlier hand-to-hand combat battles.

However, as demonstrated in the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq during the first decade of this century, advances in military technology have not eliminated the need for the foot soldier. According to Posen (1993) the vast increase in deaths due to military technological advances creates a need for more soldiers to volunteer themselves to commit to ever demanding warfare. He also asserts that commitment to military participation is achieved by the promotion of nationalism via literacy and ideology and is delivered to citizens through schools, entertainments and media, as well as within military establishments.

Placing the responsibility for recurring wars with established nation-states, Shaw (2003) asserts that whether in peace time or in war time modern societies are permanently set up in preparation for war, arguing that even the creation of social welfare expenditure was largely motivated by the need to care for the fighting force. For Shaw, with the modern era has come degeneracy in war, and he argues 'legitimate war' has become harder to define. Shaw makes the point that war and genocide whilst not exclusively carried out by established states, are predominantly forms of violence that are organised by nation-states: 'States are the practitioners of slaughter *par*

*excellence.*' (Shaw, 2003:58). He reiterates by asserting that state power is constituted and maintained through violence, new states only reaching recognition once they have exercised their power. According to Shaw, militarism in modern Western societies has taken on new forms; the fascination of high-tech modern warfare weaponry being the subject of many films and games in the consumer culture. Shaw speculates on the future of war concluding that as long as state and state-like organisations are considered to be legitimate, 'legitimate war' will be an ever-present option as a resolution of conflict. Posen's and Shaw's arguments about the enduring presence of war as a social practice and the resultant increased requirement for military recruitment fulfilled by the promotion of nationalist ideology lead us to the assumption that war discourses play an important, if not major, role in society.

When a democratic nation is engaged in war its political leaders, the elected elites in society, need to gain the support of the majority of its citizens if they are to achieve any degree of internal unity. Convincing members of society that war is necessary is a complex task that involves creative and sustained forms of persuasion. The language of persuasion is a topic that has been taken up by analysts working within a CDA framework, a tradition on which this thesis draws, with the aim of showing how the ideologies of the powerful are more subtly disseminated, legitimised and maintained in societies. Academic studies taking a critical discourse analytic approach to the

examination of war-related discourses within the discipline of language study have predominantly studied the language content of elites' speeches and media reports.

Such studies reveal that similarities in linguistic strategies utilised by elites within their war-related discourses serve to obfuscate both the nature of war and the reasons for a nation's participation in war. Johnson's (2002) study of war-related discourse showed how American President George W. Bush and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair justified a military response to the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York in 2001 (9/11) by systematically creating binary oppositions, as in 'good' and 'evil'. Johnson's analysis revealed how 'the good' way of life practised in the nation of America is juxtaposed with 'the evil' of the terrorists who wish to destroy the freedom it provides, arguing that justification for military intervention rested upon the image of a good 'us' and an evil 'other'.

The theme of the 'evil other' also appears in a study by Graham et al. (2004) who show similarities in speeches given by key western political leaders in speeches spanning around a thousand years: 1095 (Pope Urban II), 1588 (Queen Elizabeth I), 1938 (Adolf Hitler) and 2001 (George W. Bush). They point out that the war discourses of each leader draw on common sources in an attempt to legitimate their battle cries: superiority due to religious beliefs

and the support from their God, monarchy, the defence of the Nation-State and the creation of the evil 'other'.

Similarly, Lazar and Lazar (2004) show how binary opposition strategies are used in the speeches of the presidents of the post-Cold War period. They show how the 'enemy' is created by consistent 'Othering' of those who the U.S. seeks to dominate arguing that the U.S. is portrayed as having a higher moral code than the others who are criminalized and vilified through what Lazar and Lazar term as '(E)vilification' (2004:236). 'Orientalization' of 'the enemy' based on the theory of Orientalism, put forward by Edward Said (1978), forms a large part of their analysis that reveals how supposed characteristics of 'the enemy' follow a well-established practice of stereotyping people of the Eastern hemisphere. These themes are also identified in their 2007 study which analysed Bush's war discourse to further uncover extensive use of Orientalization of 'the enemy' through its justification of military action. Their analysis revealed that notions of Western superiority are reinforced through claims that the war action taken is defensive and serves as a route to peace.

van Dijk, a critical discourse analyst taking a cognitive approach to linguistic analysis, has focused on the manipulative aspect of the United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair's speech to Parliament in which he

defended his government's decision to invade Iraq in 2003. van Dijk (2006) argues that in order to convince his immediate audience (Members of the British Parliament) Blair draws on ideological polarization strategies including: nationalism; moral superiority; emphasis of his power; discrediting opponents and emotionalising the argument concluding that by the use of these, amongst other, strategies Tony Blair manipulates the MPs into accepting the legitimacy of the invasion. The impact these discourses have on people's thinking about war and their nation's participation in war become amplified when they are brought to the macro level by the media.

War-related discourses of elites that become blended into macro-level discourses have been studied by Hodges (2007) whose work focuses on the transfer of discourse from the micro level to the macro level. Hodges' analysis of an interview by a CNBC reporter Gloria Borger with the then United States Vice-President Dick Cheney shows how the argument for the 2003 invasion of Iraq is delivered via the linking of Iraq's then leader, Saddam Hussein, with the terrorist organisation al Qaeda that claimed responsibility for the September 2001 attacks on the Twin Towers in New York. Hodges notes that the Bush/Cheney linking of Iraq with al Qaeda was accepted as 'the truth' by the U.S. public, despite the findings of the official 9/11 Commission that concluded they could find no link between Iraq and al Qaeda. However, Iraq and al Qaeda became part of the macro discourses of the War on Terror. Hodges points to

the 'inseparable trio' of: truth, knowledge and power, calling for further work on the role of the media in taking discourse from the micro to the macro level, to give a better understanding of the interplay between them.

As well as studies that focus solely on the language content of war-related discourse, examinations of the visual content of war-related discourse also reveal persuasive devices that work towards a particular construct of war-related events; three such examples are briefly outlined here: Chouliaraki (2005), Machin (2007) and Konstantidiniou (2008). Chouliaraki's (2005) semiotic based, multimodal study of BBC World's coverage of the bombardment of Baghdad shows how apparent objectivity in war reporting is an illusion. Chouliaraki argues that the pictures that accompanied the reports showed fire-power and destruction only of non-human targets, exploding buildings, allow for a view of war as a material process void of any human suffering. What she describes as a '...spectacle of rare audio-visual power and intensity.' (2005:148) not only compels the audience to become voyeurs of violence, it also allows them to view violence without having to confront the consequences of the bombing:

By cancelling the presence of the persecutor and the sufferer, the footage presents the bombardment of Baghdad, not a scene of suffering, but a site of intense military action without agency.

(2005:153)

Chouliaraki's work reveals how violence and consequential suffering can be 'aestheticised' to remove both the horror and responsibility for these acts and helps to show how by eliminating agency, the authors of the text avoid opposing or criticising the perpetrators of the bombardment of Baghdad. Moreover, the text does not encourage the viewer to question or criticise the act of war; resulting in, at least momentary, hegemonic control over the viewer.

Concentrating on the visual aspect of war discourse, Machin's (2007a) discussion of photographs of the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003 reveals differences in comparison with images of earlier wars; specifically the American invasion and occupation of Vietnam and the First Gulf War. Machin argues that, predominantly, these images construct a story of peacekeeping rather than invasion, killing and brutality. Turning to the images of torture of Iraqi civilians by British and American soldiers, Machin argues that these images are presented as isolated events in contrast with the 'real' identity of

the allied soldiers. So, Machin argues, whilst the images seemingly reveal undesirable practices, they actually conceal the brutality of war.

Whilst Chouliariki's study shows us that sometimes we can watch war without having to consider its victims and Machin's study reveals the way in which visual war discourses serve to repackage the brutal social practice of war into a caring practice in the form of peacekeeping, Konstantinidou's (2008) study shows us that it is possible to feel good when viewing even the most shocking pictures of the suffering of victims.

Following Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) social semiotic framework, Konstantinidou's (2008) analysis concentrates on the visual construction of human suffering in a selection of the Greek newspaper *Eleftherotypia*'s reports on the Second Iraq War. It focuses on a series of three photographs depicting a child victim of the invasion of Iraq in 2003: Ali Abbas. Ali was twelve years old when his home in Baghdad was bombed. A total of fifteen members of his family were killed, including his parents, and Ali was horrifically wounded; losing both arms and suffering extensive burns. In terms of wider media coverage of the invasion, Konstantinidou reiterates a familiar point that by identifying Iraqis who fought against the occupation as 'insurgent' or 'rebel fighters', rather than the legal government or military force of an invaded country, the majority of Western war discourses support a hegemonic

occidental position, employing Orientalism as described by Edward Said (2003, 1978).

However, in the context of this Greek tabloid, Konstantinidou outlines the entwining of an 'imagined' community of Eleftherotypia readers in an anti-war position (94% of the Greek public were opposed to the invasion according to one headline). Konstantinidou argues that this 'imagined' common stance is achieved partly by the publication of a series of three pictures of Ali Abbas that ultimately serve to allow the Greek press to become part of a Western liberal, humanitarian world-view portrayed in mainstream media; a view that enables a neutralisation of guilt.

The small sample of academic work outlined in this introduction points to key themes characteristic of a large body of work that highlights the tendency of war-related discourse to become shaped by the ideological stance of elites who participate in its distribution. As the sample has shown, authors within the discipline of CDA-based Language study concentrating on war discourse have tended to have tended to focus on political speeches or media reports and whilst there has been considerable work on the way that discourses are realised through language and an emerging literature on visual communication, writers like Machin and van Leeuwen (2005) have argued that much less attention has been given to entertainments media, such as

computer games and toys. The area of war commemoration has also been neglected in CDA, specifically commemoration in the form of war monuments. I argue that these monuments that have been commissioned to stand in public spaces as a memorial to the soldiers who lost their lives during the nation's wars are a key communicative tool that has been used to realise certain discourses of war. Moreover, they are one further area where discourses of war are disseminated in society and offer one very useful site for understanding the processes of the legitimization of war. War commemoration is a topic that has been examined by historians and those working within the field of cultural studies. This thesis seeks to address this gap in knowledge within the discipline of language study by adapting and applying a social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analytic approach to British commemorative war monuments.

The commemoration of past wars has been an area of increasing public interest since the First World War. These days a profitable war-related tourist industry exists worldwide; thousands of people flock to memorials, war museums and battle sites to view places, objects and artefacts that facilitated or commemorate death in war. The tourism of the sites of previous wars has 'commodified' war death; it is exploited by politicians, business people and educationalists (Lennon and Foley, 2000). Although Lloyd (1998) argues that pilgrimages to war memorials and war cemeteries were ways in which

individuals could construct the memory of war and offers this argument as evidence that war memory is not simply a tool of manipulation employed by elites.

Commemorative war monuments are the physical points of collective remembrance and stand in our public spaces as a permanent reminder of war; they are found in the centres of almost every British village, town and city. Yet, these structures are more than convenient public gathering sites; they are symbols that carry meaning about reasons for war and the nature of the role of the individual's participation in the nation's wars.

Following the CDA tradition of drawing out the concealed discourses in written texts, this thesis draws out the war discourses buried within the monuments' material semiotic resources and written inscriptions, describing and analysis the communicative resources used in the monument construction in order to reveal the discourses buried within them. The thesis seeks to develop a social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analytic approach that is apt for the analysis of three-dimensional realisations of discourse taking both the visual and verbal components of the commemorative war monuments into consideration.

Chapter two examines previous approaches to the study of commemoration and war memorials carried out by prominent authors within the disciplines of history (for example: Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983, Anderson 1983, Danzer 1987, Ashplant, Dawson and Roper 2000, 2004, and Wingate 2005) and cultural studies (for example: Griswold 1986, Haines 1986, Carlson & Hocking 1988, Blair, Jeppeson & Pucci 1991, Abramson 1996, Blair 1994, Biesecker 2002); exploring the theoretical positions that have been applied to the analyses of commemorative war monuments and discussing the findings, advantages and limitations of the approaches used. The chapter goes on to explore work that concentrates on commemorative war monuments as a tool of the nation-state. These authors focus on the meanings commemorative war monuments may create for subsequent generations about war and sacrifice of life for the nation-state (Hobsbawm 1983, Connerton 1989, Reynolds 1996, Raivo 1998, Rowlands 2001, Calder 2004, Rausch 2007, Niven 2008).

Chapter three explains the data collection method and sets out the aims of the thesis, describing and defending the rationale for the selection of the theoretical approach taken to the analysis of the data in this research. According to Kress, social semiotics and multimodality combined provide an encompassing theory of representation and communication (Kress, 2010:105), this chapter explains how the theoretical framework of Kress and van Leeuwen's (1990, 1996, 2001, 2006) social semiotic theory, refined by van

Leeuwen (2005) and Kress (2010) has been utilised and adapted to the multimodal analysis of the material semiotic resources of the three-dimensional data under analysis in this research. The commemorative war monuments also include a written component, in the form of inscriptions; that I argue can be analysed more aptly by the inclusion of a linguistic-focused, rather than visual-focused, critical discourse analytical approach. The chapter goes on to explain how the written component of the commemorative war monument data has been analysed utilising Fairclough's (2003) critical discourse adaptation of Pragmatic theory's analytical term 'Presupposition': 'Assumptions'.

In chapter four the analysis of commemorative war monuments begins by providing contextual socio-historical, socio-political information that surrounded the period following the First World War, discussing arguments (Rudy 1918, Arnot 1967, McKibbin 1974, Hobsbawm 1990, Laybourn 1997,) that describe the political mood of the politicians, trades unions and soldiers at the time. The chapter goes on to discuss previous studies of British First World War commemorative monuments by historians (Borg 1991, Gregory 1994, Moriarty 1995 & 1997, Gaffney 1998, King 1998, Winter 1998, Boorman 2005, Quinlan 2005) that utilise historical information in an effort to explain the meanings of commemorative war monuments.

In chapter five, examples of the commemorative war monuments are analysed using the social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis as set out in chapter three. To facilitate its reading, the discussion is interspersed with photographs of the examples, rather than being stored in the appendices at the end of the thesis. The chapter is divided into five sections: firstly, in order to foreground the theoretical tool kit, the data analysis is initially presented a format that follows the order of the theoretical tools outlined in chapter three. The second section, an analysis of the representation of women, is presented around the central themes that are found within the monuments. The subsequent two sections discuss anti-war commemoration and, the future of war commemoration. Finally, this chapter ends with a discussion of the monuments' written components: the inscriptions, using an aspect of Fairclough's (2003) CDA-based adaptation of the Pragmatics-based notion of 'Presuppositions': 'Assumptions'. Throughout the entire analysis the discussion refers to theoretical positions on nationhood (Gellner 1983 & 2006, Posen 1993, van Evera 1994, Billig 1995, Smith 2001, Penrose 2002, Anderson 2006) in order to more deeply contextualise the commemorative war monuments and consider the wider implications of the semiotic choices made by the sign makers who created them.

Chapter six draws conclusions from the findings and considers the value of social semiotic multimodal CDA in the study of commemorative war

monuments. In this chapter I discuss how the theoretical approach has enabled me to reveal the processes by which the monuments create discourses that realise a variety of meanings, including: restricted notions of male and female participation in warfare and subtle traces of nationalist ideological expression. The chapter ends with a discussion of the value of analysing commemorative war monuments using the theoretical approach adopted in this study, a reflection on the limitations of this thesis, further questions that arise from this study and the possibilities of future research of war commemoration taking a multi-disciplined approach.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter discusses the academic literature across a number of fields that addresses war commemoration; presenting and assessing the literature in two stages. Firstly, it explores the arguments and work of authors (Ashplant, Dawson and Roper 2000 & 2004, Danzer 1987) who have been critical of the literature on war commemoration, calling for an alternative approach to the topic. Leading on from these observations the chapter reviews a wider body of work on the topic, not considered by these authors, where I also identify some of the strengths and weaknesses, placing my own research into this context; explaining why the social semiotic approach I take here is highly useful and relevant. Secondly, the chapter explores the work of authors (Hobsbawm 1983, Reynolds 1996, Raivo 1998, Rowlands 2001, Rausch 2007 and Niven 2008) who approached the subject by examining the ideological relevance of sacrifice, nationalism and military participation. This work is relevant because it places war commemoration into a broader contextual framework that provides useful theoretical hooks on which to hang the findings at the analysis stage.

### ***Approaches to the analysis of war commemoration***

The way society commemorates war has been traditionally investigated by historians (for example: Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983, Anderson 1983, Danzer 1987, Thomson 1994, Winter & Sivan 1999, Calder 2004, and Quinlan 2005) and cultural studies analysts (for example: Griswold 1986, Haines 1986, Carlson & Hocking 1988, Blair, Jeppeson & Pucci 1991, Blair 1994, Blair & Copeland 1994, Abramson 1996, Blair & Michel 2000); each tackling the topic from their own theoretical perspectives and traditions. However, concerns have been expressed by some authors that the topic has not been sufficiently, or appropriately dealt with; particularly: Danzer (1987) calling for further work on the topic, Ashplant, Dawson and Roper (2000, 2004) arguing that commemoration has been approached from distinct, fixed ideological and theoretical positions and Niven (2008) calling for commemoration to be approached 'bilaterally'. This discussion takes in a broader range of work on commemoration, examining work by historians and authors within the discipline of cultural studies, drawing out their main concerns, assessing how their approaches differ and how effective they are in explaining the role of war commemoration in society and the meanings hidden within commemorative war monuments.

A key discussion on war commemoration is provided by Ashplant, Dawson and Roper (2000, 2004) who set out to summarise and critique much of the previous work done on war commemoration by historians, and who propose their own model of analysis. They divide previous work on the approaches to the subject of commemoration into three broad categories. The first of these is what they call the 'top-down' approach, citing the work of Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983) and Anderson (1983) as an example of this approach. According to Ashplant et al. (2000, 2004) it is an approach that takes the perspective of commemoration as an exercise in power, involving the social institutions and elites using a ritualised form that allows them to promote their own particular memories of war.

Their second category is the body of literature that focuses on the memories and expressions of commemoration by individuals; the 'social-agency' approach, which puts less emphasis on the role of the state. This work concentrates on accounts of experiences as expressed by 'ordinary people', (citing as an example: Winter 1998 and Winter and Sivan 1999). Ashplant et al. describe the intentions of the authors of this body of work as examining remembrance from the perspective of individuals and social groups, viewing commemoration as a personal act of speaking out, rather than an elitist, or an official top-down, form of commemoration.

For Ashplant et al. both kinds of analysis are weak; the former being unable to explain how official commemoration and memory achieves its subjective hold, the latter has not analysed the articulation of meanings within the process of production or how viewers interpret their significance and identify with the forms of commemoration. They further criticise Hobsbawm & Ranger's (1983) work for underestimating the psychic processes that national identification entails, whilst Winter is criticised for subjective views of commemoration; in effect taking '...the history out of commemoration' (Ashplant et al., 2004:11).

The third approach they identify takes a view from 'below'; meaning the individual's, rather than the establishment's perspective, this involves a 'popular memory approach' that explores personal bereavement and trauma, they cite as a prominent example the work of Thomson (1994). Ashplant et al. assert that this approach expands the conception of the politics of memory; demonstrating how strands of memory come together. Although it is difficult to see how this approach fully addresses the criticisms they make of the first two categories, especially those relating to the subjectivity of the 'social-agency' approach, Ashplant et al. assert that by their widening of perspective to take into consideration both state-centred and personal memory, this work addresses the 'fundamental problems' with the state-centred and social-agency approaches (Ashplant et al., 2004:14).

Whilst acknowledging that all three approaches have contributed significantly to developing our understanding of the politics of commemoration, they say that new theoretical frameworks for making sense of war memory and commemoration should be sensitive to the dynamics of change that are operating what they term as ‘transnationally’, *and the ways in which these impact within national contexts*. To this end, they offer their own model for the analysis of war commemoration, a model that not only has the nation-state as central to the politics of war commemoration, but also considers literary or artistic productions that may draw together shared or common memories into a wider narrative within civil society.

They also advocate looking at the ‘transitional space’ between formal organizations of civil society and informal networks of family and kin; the ‘fictive kinships’ referred to by Winter (1998) i.e. groups of survivors, small-scale agents who form ‘families of remembrance’ and the private memories that often act against official attempts to suppress popular memory. They refer to this structure as a complex interrelationship between different agencies emphasising that war-related ‘cultural templates’, commemorative monuments, are personalised by their viewers and lead them to an interpretation of subsequent wars that they may or may not support. They also propose that the commemoration of previous wars can be ‘reworked’ to

provide a hegemonic framing of selected memory that will consequently shape their narrative on current and future wars (Ashplant et al., 2004).

Despite their observations on the necessity of a robust theoretical framework, I argue that their methodological approach does not form a systematic model for the analysis of commemorative war monuments to the extent that the model that a social semiotic based analytical model would achieve. Of significance to this thesis of Ashplant et al.'s observations on the study of war commemoration is their insistence on the necessity of an approach that considers the subject of war commemoration from the perspective of all participants; a multiple approach.

However, a variety of approaches can be found in some of the prominent work on American commemorative monuments, much of which was not discussed by Ashplant et al. Some of this work focuses on state-centred readings, others on the ways in which viewers engage with the monuments by their use of the physical space, the landscape, around the monuments. Although this thesis investigates meanings in British examples, looking at this work will expand awareness of the variety of approaches taken and help to assess their potential in drawing out meanings found within commemorative war monuments.

Wingate's discussion of the monuments commemorating the American First World War dead soldiers and sailors, 'the Doughboy'<sup>2</sup> statues, tackles the topic from a 'top-down' perspective as her discussion centres on what Wingate sees as the nationalistic motivations behind the consensus to create images of the war dead; images that ultimately served to connote loyalty to the nation and mythologized constructions of American masculinity.

Her arguments are reflected in the work of British historians that discusses the presence of 'radicalism', in the form of communist leanings, by many groups that threatened the established powers in Britain during and after the First World War (see, for example: Arnot 1967, Hobsbawm 1983 & Jenkins 2002)<sup>3</sup>. In her work, Wingate refers to a fear of communist influence on The United States of America and comments on the power of the war memorials to combat any 'left-leaning' political persuasions by offering images that would encourage patriotism and, consequently, commitment to a capitalist dominant ideology. Wingate comments that sculptor after sculptor designed and produced a soldier-statue that fulfilled ideological aims of nationalism by connoting patriotism and idealistic masculinity (Wingate 2005).

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<sup>2</sup> Wingate notes that the origin of the name 'doughboy' is disputed and recommends Keene, J., 2001, *Doughboys, the Great War and the Remaking of America*, Baltimore, John Hopkins Univ. Press, for a summary of the various theories.

<sup>3</sup> This literature will be discussed in further detail later in the thesis

According to Wingate, two of the most notable sculptors able to achieve these aims were John Paulding (1853-1935) and Ernest Moore Viquesney (1876-1946). Whilst commenting on the similarities in the designs their work that produced representations of soldiers in battle, Wingate describes how the work of Viquesney was considered to be a 'perfect' representation of the American soldier by The American Legion in their weekly magazine and local newspapers.<sup>4</sup> They used the sculptures to promote the dominant ideological stance in direct reply to war protests by a radical labour union.<sup>5</sup> Wingate further illustrates how the use of the image of the charging Doughboy was frequently used in the wider culture, such as: advertisements for cigarettes, articles on sport and song sheets to connote the health and virility of the American male and, by association, the health of the American nation.

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<sup>4</sup> Wingate names *The American Legion Weekly* and *The Chambersburg* who, amongst others, sold related promotional materials to raise money for the purchase of further reproductions of the sculpture.

<sup>5</sup> The Industrial Workers of the World (The IWW) demonstrated against the war on grounds of economic exploitation. They were associated with Bolshevism and disloyalty by 'vigilance and patriotic' groups (Wingate, 2005:30)

Although Wingate does not place her work within a social semiotic, multimodal or CDA framework, in Wingate's work we can trace faint echoes of these approaches to the analysis of commemorative war monuments. Wingate's approach places the monuments firmly within their wider socio-political context, she urges that the representations of the fighting soldier must be considered in the context of the widespread anxieties the American public was voicing over the health and well-being of the returning soldiers. Wingate also comments on some intrinsic features of the designs, noting that later in the 1920s and into the 1930s Doughboy statues featured soldiers in various poses of grief, such as bowed heads over graves; seen by Wingate as romanticising the soldier. Linking the Doughboy statues and the various uses of the image to the American nationalist cause, it is clear that the outline of events that she provides shows clearly how the military, artists and the media come to the aid of the nation in America at that time.

However, although the wider historical, socio-political context is addressed in Wingate's work and although in her discussion she does refer to some intrinsic features of the memorials themselves, the work does not go on to present us with as systematic analysis of the communicative potential of *all* intrinsic features *combined* with an examination of the wider socio-political context surrounding their commissioning.

A variety of approaches taken towards the analysis of commemorative monuments can also be found in the work of a number of authors who have discussed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (the VVM), erected in Washington, D.C. USA, some of whom have centred their attention on the monument's intrinsic features, others on viewers' behaviour towards the monument.

### ***Readings of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial***

A useful view of approaches taken towards the analysis of commemorative war monuments can be seen in the work of authors who have discussed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM), erected in Washington, D.C. USA, some of whom have centred their attention on the memorial's intrinsic features, others on viewers' behaviour towards the monument. In a radical departure from traditional representations, the VVM, designed by Maya Lin, features more abstract elements not previously seen in commemorative war monuments. This design has attracted some analysis of its intrinsic features, the way viewers behave towards the monument and the nature of the space surrounding the monument. It is useful at this point to view the range of approaches and conclusions offered by the analysts of the VVM.

Danzer (1987) says that monuments in public places have an important function for the individual and their identity: they tell us who we are and how we should behave. He claims that in representing an event from the past, they guide contemporary viewers and lead the way for future generations. Danzer proposes a systematic approach to the analysis of monuments; an analyst should examine key elements of any memorial under investigation, these being: its history; design; materials; site; inscription (or lack of); connections to other people, places and times and their subsequent life (for example, a change in use). In Danzer's work we find not only a defence of the analysis of memorials as a valid academic enquiry, but also a proposal of a systematic approach to their analysis.

Danzer goes on to apply his approach to a discussion of the Washington Monument (Washington, USA) and a brief reference to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the same site. Although much detail is given about the historical circumstances surrounding various elements of the memorials and their construction and despite calling for analysis of a number of 'key elements', such as design, Danzer's approach does not offer a reading of the monuments that precisely identifies the semiotic resources used to communicate any one particular message, or possibly multiple messages, to their viewers. Danzer makes a claim about the VVM monument's possible effect on its viewers in stating that when leaving the VVM, visitors can see the Washington

Monument that ‘...rises directly in front, a symbol of hope’ (Danzer 1987:14), yet, precisely **how** this monument gives people hope is not clear as the theoretical approach Danzer applies does not provide a systematic framework for the analysis of the elements that make up the monument. After reading Danzer’s discussion of the Washington Memorial, we understand much more about how the monument came about and what led to the decisions reached on each aspect of its construction. However, our understanding of **how** these memorials construct meanings for their contemporary visitors is not further advanced.

The VVM is a black V-shaped wall upon which are panels inscribed with the names of the American war dead, these names are set out in a representation of a time line in chronological list format. The panels also carry two inscriptions specifying the purpose of the memorial; one after the date of the first American death, the other after the date of the last.<sup>6</sup> When analysing

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<sup>6</sup> Inscription 1: “IN HONOR OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES WHO SERVED IN THE VIETNAM WAR, THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES AND OF THOSE WHO REMAIN MISSING IN ACTION ARE INSCRIBED IN THE ORDER THEY WERE TAKEN FROM US”

Inscription 2: “OUR NATION HONORS THE COURAGE, SACRIFICE AND DEVOTION TO DUTY AND COUNTRY OF ITS VIETNAM VETERANS. THIS MEMORIAL WAS BUILT WITH PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. NOVEMBER 11, 1982 (Griswold, 1986:708)

the memorial authors make reference to two starting points: the claim by Lin that her design has no intended meaning, and that at the instigation of the design competition the commissioners of the monument requested a design that was both therapeutic and conciliatory (Griswold 1986, Haines 1986, Carlson & Hocking 1988, Blair, Jeppeson & Pucci, 1991, Abramson 1996, Blair 1994). Both the claims by the artist and the requirements of the commissioning body act as a focal point for the discussions and analyses, albeit with a slightly different focus in each analysis.

Abramson (1996) seeks to explain the design choices made for the VVM in terms of the requirements of the design committee. In his discussion of the commissioning of this monument and two other designs by Lin: one commemorating female presence at Yale University and the other commemorating the American Civil Rights Movement, Abramson (1996) points out that the design was guided by the requirements set out in the competition that was held to select the successful designer. Lin responded to directions given by the fund and architectural adviser stipulating that a list of names of the dead fighters (around 58,000), should be included and the tone should be 'harmonious', "conciliatory" and "contemplative and reflective' (Abramson, 1996:685). The commissioning body also took the surrounding landscape into consideration when specifying the shape of the memorial; an emphasis on horizontal rather than vertical elements and it was to be set in a large garden

area. It is argued then that these guidelines resulted in Lin's winning design, although Griswold (1986) points out that the winning design was not at first widely appreciated or admired due to its distinct departure from traditional forms of commemorative war sculpture. However, Abramson (1986) claims that the design was not as radical departure from tradition as people think<sup>7</sup>, arguing that in basing the VVM on chronological time lines when listing the names of the dead, Lin brings personal memory and political memory together '...in the name of social reconciliation and historical continuity.' (1996:708).

As a result of criticisms of the original design, the memorial does not stand alone as intended; after much debate a 'compromise' was agreed upon by allowing a second and third memorial to be erected near May Lin's memorial. This second memorial sees a return to commemoration by representing human figures; three male soldiers: one black two white, dressed in combat gear appear to be coming out of a wooded area, gazing toward the

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<sup>7</sup> Griswold's notes summarise a 'rancorous and heated debate' between supporters and opponents that led to the additional monument (1986:718). Whilst Blair et al. refer to a delegation of 27 Republican Congressmen who regard the design as making '...a political statement of shame and dishonor' (Blair et al. 1991:275)

names of the dead on Lin's memorial, there is also an addition of a flagpole, with an inscription.<sup>8</sup>

Griswold's comments, as evident in the following selected quotations, seem to suggest that he bases his analysis on a particular ideological stance, rather than offering an argument based on a systematic analysis of the monument itself. In his notes, he comments that the addition of the flagpole and statue enables a more palpable and traditional representation of '...the heroism of the veterans and the nobility of their cause' (Griswold 1986:718). Throughout his discussion of The VVM, its physical location in relation to other famous landmarks and memorials, the reactions of its visitors and the dedication ceremony, Griswold (1986) emphasises the meanings of the memorial as therapeutic, encouraging the viewer to question the purpose and consequences of war for the individual but also encouraging, in his view, a reaction that espouses a positive sort of patriotism; one that is in itself therapeutic. He asserts:

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<sup>8</sup> "THIS FLAG REPRESENTS THE SERVICE RENDERED TO OUR COUNTRY BY THE VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR. THE FLAG AFFIRMS THE PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM FOR WHICH THEY FOUGHT AND THEIR PRIDE IN HAVING SERVED UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES" (Griswold, 1986:710).

The VVM embodies ability of Americans to confront the sorrow of so many lost lives in a war of ambiguous virtue without succumbing to the false muses of intoxicating propaganda and nihilism.

(Griswold 1986:713)

Yet, revealing a seemingly contradictory position, Griswold goes on to describe how the design of the monument, set into the soil and reading as a chapter in a book, leads the viewer to think of the war in terms of the preserving of the American nation:

...it admonishes us to write the next chapter thoughtfully and with reflection on the country's values, symbols of which are pointed to by the Memorial itself.

(Griswold 1986:708)

Efforts to resist a reading of the monument that celebrates the Vietnam War in any way can also be seen in the work of Carlson and Hocking (1988). In their discussion of their analysis of the significance of the messages left by visitors to The VVM, they comment that The VVM is not a memorial to the war, but to the individuals who took part and died fighting in it. They view the

original design, Lin's VVM, as the focal point of commemoration, describing the memorial as '...deceptively simple' (1988:205). They offer no other analysis of the actual monument, instead choosing to concentrate on the reactions and messages left by its visitors. They conclude that the meaning of the VVM is only realised by its visitors and that the visitors define its meaning by their reactions to the sacrifices made by the people who are named.

Some authors opt for reading the original monument as a separate entity from the additions of the figurative work and the flagpole, such as Griswold who views Lin's monument as a separate entity from Harts' statue. However, Blair et al. (1991, 1994) argue for a collective reading, moreover, one that 'deauthorizes the authors' (1991:273). They assert that the addition of Hart's monument and the flag alter any readings the original design would have offered if it had been placed alone. With its multiple authors and Post-Modern, rather than Modernist, categorisation they argue that the monument site '...tells multiple stories' (Blair et al. 1991:279), asking questions (as Griswold also argues), yet offering contradictory interpretations. They assert:

The Memorial stands as a commemoration of veterans of the war, and as a monument to political struggle.

(Blair et al. 1991:281)

For Haines it is the ambiguity of the design that makes The VVM ‘...vulnerable to political manipulation’ (Haines 1986:17). However, he does not base his comments on an analysis of the monument itself; instead Haines’ work focuses on the actions of the visiting veterans, noting that some veterans are so deeply traumatised by war that they commit suicide at the memorial site. Haines describes how many others go there to ‘speak’ to their dead friends after locating their names on the wall, whilst others leave their messages at the wall in written form. In this short paper Haines discusses the attempts of political elites to utilise The VVM for their own ideological aims and links The VVM to power. His reading stands apart from the other readings discussed here in that he makes the crucial claim that the VVM, rather than being a monument that resists a particular reading has the potential to become an argument in favour of future wars and future sacrifices on behalf of the nation. This view of the commemorative war monument’s potential for future legitimisation of warfare is not the position taken by Blair et al. (1991, 1994).

Blair, Jeppeson & Pucci (1991) consider the memorial within the context of post-modernist thinking, asserting that the monument can be categorised as falling into a post-modernist, rather than modernist, category due to its departure from generic norms of commemorative monuments and its non-functional element. They argue that the fact that for many Americans the war on Vietnam was ‘unpopular’, even ‘immoral’ (1991:276) meant that there was no

consensus for the 'valorization' of the war dead. It is this lack of public support, or consensus, for the war, Blair et al. claim, that 'allowed' the memorial to take a multiple stance. Blair et al. (1991) comment further that in the light of the differing opinions on the war there could be no typical response in its commemoration; it required one that would '...honor the veterans...' without '...valorization of the war dead', something apart from awarding political merit to the war itself (Blair et al. 1991:366). In their analysis, they consider the elements of the whole monument collectively; the flag, statues and original wall are all discussed. They focus on their possible individual meanings and their meanings when considered in relation to each other, adding that the addition of the flag and the statue intensifies the political character of the original design; commenting that they '..."question" one another's legitimacy indefinitely.' (1991:367).

Post-Modernism and its relationship to architecture, the field within which monuments can be placed, is discussed by Jencks (1987, cited by Blair et al. 1994) who claims architecture is a verb, Blair et al. assert that this is demonstrated by the rhetoric of the VVM that: '...acknowledges Vietnam veterans both as a group and as individuals', '...allows for legitimate commemoration...', '...invites active engagement by the visitor', '...invites doubt and critical differentiation of the issues', and that it invites its visitors to '...weigh the cause against the cost', (Blair et al. 1994:278).

Clearly, Blair et al. are emphasising their pluralistic reading of the monument. And although they stress its resistance to a singular reading, they reject the idea that it is an apolitical piece of work as claimed by the designer Maya Lin; concluding that the monument makes a political statement by virtue of its departure from the norms of commemorative memorials. This departure, they comment, allows the monument to tell ‘...multiple stories’ (1994:369), and in doing so realises a conflict in opinions on the war, resisting one single account.

Focusing on the surrounding landscape, Hagopian (2001) considers how the viewing public are encouraged to view, and by suggestion 'read', the VVM partly as a result of the placement of the footpaths leading to and around the monument. The discussion describes how viewers have diverted from the designated paths, creating new, unintended, routes through the memorial space that allow for closer interaction with the monument. Further into the discussion, Hagopian discusses other Vietnam commemorative war monuments occasionally commenting on their intrinsic features, such as the implications of the use of maps. Although his conclusion seems to echo Asplant et al.'s (2004) calls for an analytical approach that encompasses wider contextual factors, as with the studies discussed so far, I would argue that Hagopian's analysis lacks a comprehensive, systematic analytical model that uncovers the full meaning potential of the monuments.

Ashplant et al. (2004) comment that when analysing commemorative war monuments, the site taken as a whole reflects *political conflicts* regarding how the war is viewed. This position suggests that one memorial communicates, or has the potential at least, to communicate multiple messages; a view that we can contrast with the work of Biesecker (2002) who turns this perspective on its head by looking at a variety of commemoration 'texts' relating to the Second World War: two memorials, a book and a film, concluding that they all give a similar message.

Biesecker's discussion of these four texts shows how through the commemoration of war, particularly the Second World War, each text in its own way constructs the ideal relationship between citizen and state. Biesecker argues that this is achieved partly via a pedagogic stance, by the retelling of wars and what part citizens played in them and by reinforcing a particularly positive national identity. Biesecker points out that each text teaches their viewers how to be 'good Americans' and remind them what 'the American way' is. Again, Biesecker's work does not offer a systematic analysis of memorials; however, it does succeed in showing how cultural works of war commemoration can be employed in different ways to give one overriding message.

So far, we have seen that the study of commemorative war monuments has been approached in a variety of ways, all of which give us an insight into the potential of monuments to 'speak' to their viewers. Historians such as Danzer (1987) and Ashplant et al. (2000, 2004) call for alternative approaches to the study of commemoration; Ashplant et al. stipulating that any analysis should take into consideration the part played in commemoration by the nation-state (2004). Others already take the role of elites into consideration in their analysis (Griswold 1986, Haines 1986, Biesecker 2002, Wingate 2005) whilst others tend to focus more on personal, or participant/viewer contributions to meaning and effects on interpretations of war commemorative art (Carlson and Hocking 1988, Winter 1998, Winter and Siven 1999, Blair et al. 1991 & 1994, Abramson 1996, Hagopian 2001).

### ***Limitations of the approaches discussed so far***

Approaches to the analysis of the material content of the VVM memorial vary widely. Some take the whole site into consideration, including not only the additions of the flagpole and the statues, but also the other major landmarks in the immediate area. Others only consider Lin's work, paying no attention to the additional memorials, not its physical setting and context. Whilst some do discuss symbolism found in the intrinsic features of the monument itself and

their possible meanings, they do not take each physical element of the memorial and the surrounding space into account in a systematic way and then consider their meaning potential realised as a combined channel of messages. They also largely, apart from Wingate (2005) and Haines' (1986:17) brief comment in his conclusion, quoted earlier in this discussion, do not fully explore the part played by the nation-state as urged by Ashplant et al., neither do they fully address the relation of the monuments to power in the form of nationalism. Although we get a sense of the potential of this line of enquiry in Biesecker's (2002) study, overall I argue that the work does not constitute a systematic analysis of commemorative war monuments. The position I take here is that by applying social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis to the commemorative war monuments the analyst is compelled to explore all aspects of their existence to extract a sense of their meaning, as Kress (2010) puts it:

In a social-semiotic account of meaning, individuals, with their social histories, socially shaped, located in social environments, using socially made, culturally available resources, are agentic and generative in sign-*making* and communication.

(2010:54)

What this essentially tells us about an approach to the study of war memorials is that we have to search beyond 'the text', or the actual monument

in this case, to social practice in order to account for how these monuments are *made*; not in the banal, practical sense, but how they came to be born out of particular societal structures and practices. In simpler terms, this approach compels me as an analyst to consider the monuments from both their *contextual* aspect and their *physical* properties. Furthermore, in taking this approach I aim to provide a fuller understanding of the meanings carried by the monuments than previously uncovered by other approaches.

Much closer to the analytical model I propose in my study is Kruk's (2008, 2010) analysis of the history of public monumental art in the Soviet Block that looks at the ideological, political and financial constraints faced by sculptors working under the control of communist Soviet Union. Kruk (2008) considers the effects of pre and post-Stalin Soviet ideological positions on public art, showing how they moved from communicating socialist ideology to expressions of 'subjective psychology'. Again, whilst Kruk considers the use and origins of iconographic representations, he does this by giving much background detail of external social and political transformations.

Kruk (2010) looks into the mechanisms of funding for artists and he considers how artists supported the dominant discourse of power in their quest for financial support of their art. However, Kruk's work, whilst informative and based within the broad area of semiotic analysis, gives no formula for a

systematic semiotic analysis of the semiotic resources utilised in the monuments and their socio-political context combined. Kruk's enquiry into the social practice of art funding within Soviet culture equates with my historical enquiry into both the commissioning practice that precedes an unveiling of a monument and the wider political context of the key ideological issues and concerns of the ruling elites at the time of their commissioning.

In order to fully explore the meaning potential of the semiotic resources used in the commemorative war monuments I will be extending and adapting existing social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analytic approaches to three-dimensional objects; an issue I will discuss further in the following chapter that explains the theoretical approach I have applied to the data. For the remainder of this chapter, I would like to focus on authors who examine what they consider to be the wider socio-political context of war commemoration and present their key conclusions.

### ***Commemorative war monuments within the national context***

Raivo (1998) argues:

...nationalism – the ideology of belonging to the nation – is an essential part of war remembrance. Commemorative landscapes can be seen as part of the imagined geography of the nation and of its narrative.

(Raivo 1998:13)

This view concurs partly with that of Niven (2008) who in a discussion of First World War commemorative monuments warns against reading them as politically neutral and an exercise in expression of individual grief. In his comments Niven acknowledges the significance of the First World War memorials as instigating a new style of commemoration: of mourning the dead, in contrast to earlier memorials that celebrated the triumph of generals in their quest to expand empires. Nevertheless, he says the abiding memories of the First World War are the trench warfare and the struggle between *nations*. Niven calls for a bilateral approach to the study of war memorials: synchronic and diachronic; an approach that recognises the fact that perceptions of memorials change with time and one that also brings into the analysis contextual information from their past.

We get echoes of these concerns in the work of Connerton (1989) who, in his discussion of the way that societies remember, makes the point that each group learns its history and identity from the experiences of previous

generations. It follows that if we are to understand the nature of the war memorial, we need to first look at the how the act of sacrifice has been historically practised and remembered by societies. Connerton emphasizes the importance of practising a particular ritual or pattern of behaviour to the maintenance of collective memory by asserting that what he refers to as 'social habit memory' is:

'...an essential ingredient in the successful and convincing performance of codes and rules.'

(1989:36)

***The tradition of commemoration and the function of commemorative war monuments: for spirit and nation***

The ritual of the commemoration of war dead is an example of one of these social habitual memories. Indeed, studies in anthropology and archaeology tell us that wars and battles have been followed by a desire to socially commemorate the events for many centuries. Archaeological evidence from fifth century Greece demonstrates social commemoration of the soldier as hero (Low, 2003). The overriding message in the inscriptions being that the men had died for the cause of civic identity; what Low describes as an early

example of the nation-state concept. However, this practice was not unique to Athens, Low emphasises that oligarchic Thespians simultaneously practised similar rituals. She makes an important comment on their function, noting that the late fifth century Thespian war monuments signify more than a synchronic marker of respect for the dead, but that they also acted as:

‘...symbols and sites with which the local community might actively engage over a more extended period.’

(Low, 2003:107).

So, through habitual ritual, generation after generation has learned that the sacrifice of life for a collective cause will be commemorated. Rowlands (2001) gives a summary of thoughts (citing the work of Durkheim 1976, Bloch 1995 and Maus 2006) on the function of the ancient practice of the sacrificing humans and animals for spiritual reasons, or for a God; a practice that he says has been viewed largely as an act that enables a cleansing of society resulting in a relief of sin. Placing the sacrifice of life in war as part of this ancient tradition, Rowlands (2001) sees the modern-day sacrifice for the nation in contrast to these older forms of sacrifice for God. He asserts that the nation itself has now become the focus of popular devotion, arguing that war is the vehicle that enables an individual to sacrifice their life for it. Sacrifice for the nation, he argues, has replaced the ancient practice of sacrifice for the spiritual

cleansing that was widely practised in pre-modern times. Rowlands goes on to ask why war memorials are the objectification of sacrifice and why they have become such an essential feature of modernity and continue to be part of a global response to twentieth century events.

Hobsbawm (1983) addresses this question in his discussion of the invention of traditions, arguing that the rituals surrounding commemoration are carefully crafted to promote national identity. However, Rowlands, concerned with exploring all functions of the war memorial, concludes by stating that commemorative war monuments should satisfy three functions for the living: the first being an acknowledgement of the importance of the sacrificial act in the remembering of the loss incurred by individuals, communities and nations. Then, the monument should demonstrate acceptance that although violence has taken place a benefit has replaced the sacrifice; therefore, he argues, the monument should become the object of devotion and passion because it represents this perceived benefit. He goes on to describe commemorative war monuments as giving a 'relief from trauma':

The relief from trauma lies in the detail. Recognising the nature of sacrifice as an act of surrendering the self is in this sense part of a wider understanding of what constitutes

humanity, which is the ideal object of devotion imaged in the war memorial.

(Rowlands, in Forty and Kuchler, 2001:144)

Finally, he argues that a commemorative war monument should be a deification of the dead that is embodied in the idea of the collective; moving the living to recognise the debt they owe to the dead and express a willingness to reciprocate. This view concurs with Reynolds (1996) who claims that monuments are:

‘...embodiments and symbols of our traditions and values.’

(Reynolds, 1996:59)

It is interesting to consider these views on the function of a commemorative war monument; they suggest that their success depends on not only the acceptance of death for the nation, but also its ability to motivate the viewer to make the same sacrifice should it become necessary in the future. Noticeably, comments also take as *a given* that there is such a thing as a *collective* set of values, which are inherited along with one’s national identity. Rowlands’ and Reynolds’ discussion don’t go as far as to question the validity of the concept of the nation as a homogenous group and the validity of the concept of sacrifice of the individual for the nation-state, instead, their

work focuses on the significance of the monument as the physical manifestation of the human desire to commemorate and celebrate the sacrifice of life. Rowlands' point about the replacement of the ancient practice of sacrifice for God, or spirituality with sacrifice for nation is a good point from which to begin a deeper examination of the history of the modern commemorative war monument in order to learn how the concept of the nation-state and the acknowledgement of individual sacrifice for its goals became part of modern war commemoration.

Rausch (2007) also takes the nation-state factor as a central function of commemorative war monuments, arguing that the commissioning of late nineteenth century, war monuments and their ceremonial unveiling and their promotion through the print medium that were:

'...part of an extremely complex didactic used to pass on a national message...'

(Rausch, 2007:75)

Rausch argues that circumstances in the different European states meant that despite an attempt to manipulate collective memory, the public's response to attempts to legitimise the nation through the construction of statues did not result in an automatic acceptance of national war myths,

although it must be said that her evidence for this claim is based on press comments, not on records of interviews with individuals from wider society. Rausch urges case studies on an individual state basis taking into account historical contextual factors that lead to ‘...different programmatic connections between war and nation’ (2007:75).

According to Rausch, in the nineteenth century not only did different states vary in their approach to war commemoration, there was a variety in the approaches each state adopted to its different wars. For example, Rausch asserts that in comparison with Prussian and French monuments the representations of British imperialism through the construction of numerous monuments in the late nineteenth century distinctly emphasised the aggressive and missionary aspects of colonial campaigns. During the latter period of the century, the emergence of monuments celebrating various successful campaigns in Africa and India gave the message that Britain depended on war and colonial expansion to enhance the power of the nation. This coincides with the physical locations of the battles Britain was fighting at the time that were now no longer within European boundaries, but further afield (Rausch, 2007).

She argues that these colonial exploits were presented to the public, through the monuments, in terms of religious ideology; a type of Christian

militarism, Rausch notes that there was little opposition to this message from liberal critics. Again, Rausch uses newspaper comment as evidence for this assertion, citing the London newspaper, *The Standard*. Rausch quotes a passage that clearly shows reactions to the nineteenth century empire-building wars and their commemoration revealed a nationalist ideology that based itself on the belief that the British race was superior to those native occupants of its territorial conquests. Writing of the unveiling of a monument to the first High Commissioner of South Africa, Sir Bartle Frere, it says:

Accustomed from youth to deal with inferior and subject races, he [i.e. Frere, H.R.] could not conceive of any tribe, or race, or people confronting British power with any chance of success. His one duty in life was to ... bring to their knees, those who did not at once recognise [England's] authority ... it was the destiny of the British Empire not to shrink but to expand.

(*The Standard*, (no date provided) quoted by Rausch, 2007:87)

To emphasise her point on the variation of representations in war commemoration, that differed depending on the particular war that was being

commemorated, Rausch quotes the Telegraph's piece on the unveiling of the statue of Major General Sir Charles Gordon who was defeated and killed by 'the enemy' in Khartoum, Sudan. Rausch notes how the newspaper presents Gordon as a 'humble and earnest Christian' (Daily Telegraph, 17<sup>th</sup> October 1888, quoted by Rausch, 2007:87), a description that perhaps seeks to excuse his defeat. I would argue that if we look at the piece carefully, we can see that it goes beyond the commemoration of Gordon; its tone clearly promotes an imperialist mentality that seeks to justify the invasion and occupation of foreign lands. Indeed, Rausch's exploration of reports of unveilings of the monuments suggests that at the end of the nineteenth century religion was a powerful and acceptable justification for war and conquest.

Rausch argues that wrapping war in this religious ideological perspective profoundly differs from the perspective taken in the commemoration of the First World War; when commemoration of war sought to legitimise the events by linking them with the cause of the nation. On this point, Rausch comments that memorialisation of this conflict publicly exposed the war myth for the first time:

This only became possible after the Great War of 1914-1918, when the disillusionment caused by the experience of mass death allowed the development of new symbolic languages

and modified through still one-dimensional versions of legitimising the nation through war across Western Europe.

(Rausch, 2007:91)

Having looked at samples of nineteenth century commemorative monuments through the press reports of their unveilings, Rausch concludes that these nineteenth century monuments to the heroes of the First World War shaped conceptions of war in general by their representations of these heroic public figures. Although Rausch's paper does not include a study of the First World War monuments, she asserts that only after the First World War, in an attempt to maintain public support for the war, do we see complex symbolism which sacralised violent death.

Hobsbawm presents a clear argument in relation to the First World War monuments in his discussion of those constructed in France to commemorate the 1914-1918 war. He refers to this period of commemorative monument building as 'statuomania', noting that in post First World War France two kinds of monuments were erected: those featuring the personification of the nation, Marianne, and images of the patriotic civilians that he describes in the following way:

Such monuments traced the grass roots of the Republic - particularly its rural strongholds - and may be regarded as the visible links between the voters and the nation.

(Hobsbawm, 1983:272)

We also see this position argued in Raivo's (1998) discussion of the general practice of war commemoration and cultural heritage, in which he maintains that sites of memory are crucial to the building of national ideology and identity. These assessments firmly place the monuments commemorating the First World War in the context of a newly emerging nationalist ideology. The monuments mark a period that moves away from the legitimization, celebration and justification of death through war for religious ideals to a period that promotes sacrifice of life for *national* ideals. National ideals are also a theme in Calder's (2004) work. In a collection of essays, Calder examines representations of war in various genres: poetry, art, films, theatre, memoirs, sculpture and commemoration. He does not claim to offer a theory on the way war is represented, saying that different methods are employed in each genre. However, he says that they all succeed in transforming 'fact' into myth by incorporating 'real' manifestation into '...pre-existent discourses and narrative structures.' (2004:X). He discusses First World War memorials in terms of their commemoration of imperialistic activity and asks an important question about the role of future war commemoration:

We may wonder how fresh imaginations born into the twenty-first century will respond to, and perhaps make use of, the values projected in the Great War memorials.

(2004:27)

Added to the comments of those by the authors reviewed so far, Calder's comments on the 'values' projected and the role commemorative war monuments will play in the twenty-first century raise some important questions about the entwined existence of nation and war. He also suggests that the role played by the nation's military in the twentieth century is very different from the imperial role it played in the First World War; citing the case of NATO intervention in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, he comments that military intervention is now viewed as one of a peacekeeper's, rather than an imperialist's role (Calder, 2004).

Calder's comments resonate in relation to wars that have taken place in this relatively young century. The first decade of the twenty-first century has seen significant military activity suggesting that whatever the reason for military intervention, future warfare and the recruitment of soldiers to carry out the business of warfare will follow in a now well-established pattern of human behaviour. What roles do the commemorative war monuments play in

warfare and what meanings of warfare do they provide for the nation's citizens? Do they commemorate or celebrate past wars, do they mourn the deaths or celebrate the sacrifice of citizens and do they play a part in the promotion of future wars?

If monuments are to play a part in the promotion of the nation, then they must, as Raivo (1998) commented, build a sense of national identity. According to Anderson, a prominent writer on the subject of nationhood, each individual carries a complex set of feelings towards their nation and these feelings are not always a matter of free will. The element of choice and the phenomenon of loyalty to the nation, loyalty to the point of self-sacrifice, are acknowledged by Anderson in his exploration of 'imagined communities' (2006). Following his portrayal of the linguistic, economic and cultural developments that lead to the formations of communities of varying and transforming types and sizes: states, nations and empires, Anderson considers in this revised edition (2006) a question that he says he overlooked in earlier editions: the question of sacrifice for the nation. He asserts that the nation is an inspirer of love, expressed in cultural products of all kinds; a love that is not evident in expressions about political entities. His analogy is that nation is similar to a family, one does not choose a family, nor even necessarily love it, but it is what he describes as '...the domain of disinterested love and solidarity.' (2006:144). His argument in making this analogy of nation and

family is that it explains the willingness of people to sacrifice their lives for the nation:

Dying for one's country, which usually one does not choose, assumes a moral grandeur which dying for the Labour Party, the American Medical Association, or perhaps even Amnesty International can not rival, for these are all bodies one can join or leave at easy will.

(Anderson, 2006:144)

### ***Summary***

The literature discussed so far serves two main purposes. Firstly, to demonstrate a shortfall that exists in approaches to the study of war commemoration. This has been achieved by reviewing the work of key authors in the field of war commemoration who have used a combination of historical contextual data and their own observation of the monuments as the methods by which they reach their conclusions and those who call for wider approaches to the subject. This thesis responds to these calls and argues that what existing approaches have in common is a misperception of language as 'transparent', in other words, when authors from non-language disciplines 'read' texts or

objects, their focus naturally falls not on the actual linguistic or visual communicative elements of the text or objects, but on the contextual or historical features and events, with discussions of the intrinsic features of the object itself being based on their general impressions of the object not on the 'language' within the communicative elements. Such an approach results in analyses that are not guided by theoretical positions that encourage the analyst to question the form and structure of the representation and to consider alternatives to the choices and selections made in the context of other forms of representation. It is this core tenet of the approach to analysis of text taken by social sciences that differentiates the analysis taken in this thesis from the approach taken by the authors reviewed in this chapter. This difference in approach to text analysis by social scientists, as opposed to historians or cultural studies analysts for example, is illustrated in a point made by Fairclough (1995) in his discussion of approaches taken by social scientists:

Social analysts not uncommonly share the misperception of language as transparent, not recognising that social analysis of discourse entails going beyond this natural attitude towards language in order to reveal the precise mechanisms and modalities of the social and ideological work of language.  
(Fairclough, 1995:208-9)

Secondly, the literature discussed here demonstrates the importance of nationalism as a contextual feature of the semiotic resource, the commemorative war monument, by presenting key findings of authors who have tackled the subject by exploring the ideological relevance of war commemoration. The literature suggests that death and sacrifice are crucial features of increasing military participation and a key feature in the nationalist message that is passed on to members of the nation-state in order to perpetuate and sustain a level of military recruitment. Commemoration of past wars is one way of disseminating this message, and the work of authors reviewed here suggests that twentieth century war memorial plays a significant role in this dissemination.

We see confirmation of the link between military participation and sacrifice for the nation in the comments of Rowlands (2001) who confirms this message in his summary of what a commemorative war monument should do for the viewer. The same position is argued by Reynolds (1996) who holds similar views on the function of war commemoration. Finally, in Rauch's (2007) work on the history of commemorative monuments there is an agreement with Rowlands (2001) on the point that *nation* replaced the role of God in war memorial monuments for the first time in the First World War. The important contrast in discourses of earlier commemorative war monuments highlighted

by Rausch is that earlier monuments managed to legitimise war on the grounds of spirituality, despite commemorating wars fought in the interests of an expanding British empire in the late nineteenth century. We see similar observations in Hobsbawm's (1983) and Raivo's (1998) discussions of memorial, nation-building and heritage in the points they make about war memorials acting as builders of ideology and national identity.

These arguments, that by the definition of Ashplant et al. (2000, 2004) take a wholly state-centred approach to the analysis of commemorative war monuments, lead me to the conclusion that commemorative war monuments can be considered as belonging to a particular semiotic practice: nationalism, by the commissioning, designing and public placing of commemorative war monuments. From a semiotic perspective I am arguing that the nation and a form of its promotion, nationalism, are significant in the role of leading to an interpretant of the semiotic object. An examination of commemorative war monuments as a semiotic resource should take into consideration the nation-state as a significant socio-political contextual feature, considering the findings within this context leads to the exploration of the extent to which the commemorative war monument can be viewed as a vehicle for nationalist expression.

I argue that the extension of existing social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analytic approaches I apply to the data in this thesis will address the gaps in the work of the authors reviewed here by offering a sound, systematic theoretical basis from which to analyse the monuments by examining three areas: historical context; socio-political context and the intrinsic physical properties of the monuments themselves. I set out the details of the methodology used in this analysis in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### ***Introduction***

This chapter sets out both the theoretical approach adopted in the analysis, and the methodological approach taken to the collection of the data studied in this research: commemorative war monuments in public space. These monuments are major sites of the dissemination of discourses of war in British society and at each stage of their commissioning process decisions were made on their realisations, including their: form; materials; size; shape; iconographic and written content, all of which combine to tell the viewer why wars were fought, their consequences and provide ideological guidance to the reader as to how they should respond to those consequences. In this chapter I explain which theoretical and methodological tools I have used to offer the possibility of a thorough description and analysis of these.

As discussed in the previous chapter, studies of war commemoration have explored the subject using a variety of theoretical approaches and, whilst these studies have generated many thought-provoking ideas on the meaning of war commemoration, I argue that there is a place for an approach that is able to provide a systematic study of the choices which were made in the design of the monuments. Each of these choices combines to communicate

meanings about war; why and how it was fought, by whom and what ideas and values we should associate with war. In this chapter I explain how the toolkit necessary for the analysis of the data is drawn from social semiotics; a tradition that is grounded in linguistics, but one that has been developed to analyse other modes of communication such as: gesture, images and music. This approach enables me to identify and document the communicative patterns found within the commemorative war monuments and reveal how those patterns can be attributed to ideologically based motivations and interests.

The discussion begins by tracing the origins of social semiotic theory providing a brief explanation of the distinction between the semiotician Peirce's and the linguist Saussure's concepts of the sign, before moving on to discuss the relationship between ideology and semiotics. The chapter continues with an illustration of the elements of social semiotics and multimodality applied to the analysis of the data in this thesis, explaining their theoretical inspirations and influences. The third section of the chapter outlines the critical discourse analytic perspective that frames this research. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of some criticisms made of the theory that question its ability to sit comfortably alongside other theoretical perspectives.

### ***Semiotics, Saussure and the sign***

The tradition and scope of semiotics extend well beyond the confines of Western academic linguistic disciplinary boundaries that largely base themselves on Saussurean linguistic theory centring on his concept of the function of the linguistic sign, tying the field of study to the human phenomenon of language (Cobley, 2001). Charles S. Peirce is considered one of the founding fathers of semiotics whose work has been widely viewed as the starting point of Western study of semiotics (Cobley and Randviir, 2009). Peirce's work focuses on communication as the generation of meaning, rather than as a process (Fiske, 1990). In contrast with Saussure's dyadic model: *signifier and signified*, Peirce's triadic model features the relation between: *sign, or 'representamen'* (see Merrell, 2001), *object and interpretant*, the essence of the model lies in the recognition of the tendency of each component to interrelate with the other and transform themselves into signs. Merrell expresses this distinction as:

More properly, a representamen, when at its best, interrelatedly and interdependently emerges with all other signs. At the same time, it interrelates and participates with something (its respective semiotic object).

(2001:34)

Semiotics differs from Saussurean linguistics in the way that the semiotic approach to language study emphasises choices made in particular contexts, focusing on 'the text'<sup>9</sup>, but it also considers the role of the 'reader' who helps to create meaning, partly by interpreting according to their own cultural experiences (Fiske, 1990). Fundamentally, the emphasis semiotics places on the role of the reader and contextual features causes it to differ with Saussure in its approach to the relations of *the sign*; taking the view that they are not arbitrary, but *motivated* relations of meaning and form (Kress 2010:54). The significance of this distinction between the two models put forward by Saussure and Peirce is central to the understanding of how Peirce's theoretical approach contributed to the social semiotic approach that I utilise in the analysis of the commemorative war monument data in this thesis.

### ***Social semiotics***

The study of the ways in which signs are deployed in social formations is identified by Cobley and Randviir (2009) by the use of two terms: 'Sociosemiotics'; stemming from a European tradition, or, 'Social Semiotics'; largely associated with an Anglo-Australian, Hallidayan perspective such as the

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<sup>9</sup> The term 'text' will be used in this chapter to refer to a semiotic resource; specifically the commemorative war monuments under analysis in the case of this thesis.

approach taken in the seminal work on visual images by Kress and van Leeuwen (1990, 1996). A definition of social/socio-semiotics that Cobley and Randviir describe as: 'among the very few explicit...' (2009:2) is that given by Gottdiener and Lagopoulos, stating that sociosemiotics is: '...materialistic analysis of ideology in everyday life' (Gottdiener and Lagopoulos, 1986:14, quoted by Cobley and Randviir, 2009:2). Cobley and Randviir do not entirely accept this distinction between traditional semiotics and socio/social semiotics; however, it does provide a succinct description of the approach from Kress and van Leeuwen (1990, 1996) that I draw upon for my analysis.

Kress and van Leeuwen's work is an extension of Kress' earlier work with Hodge. Hodge and Kress (1988) used the semiotic aspects of Halliday's (1978) work to build upon the notion of agency in the making of signs, leading them to view signs as made and motivated through the choices made by the agent (Hodge and Kress, 1988). Kress (2010) underlines the distinction of the social semiotic approach in his discussion of a further departure taken by social semiotics from earlier semiotic theories of the sign where Kress states that Peirce's tri-partite classification of sign, as *iconic*, *indexical* and *symbolic* allows for '...little bits of arbitrariness' (2010:65) that serve to undermine the power of the motivated sign. It is this concept of the process of motivated sign-making that guides me towards the selection of approaches I apply to the analysis of the commemorative war monuments, taking as the starting point

the choices made in the forms and materials of the components that go towards the making of the whole.

The work of Hodge and Kress (1988) emphasises the significance of the role of the sign maker who is motivated by both the available semiotic resources and their particular socio-cultural/political origins<sup>10</sup>. The emphasis on the process of sign-making and the agent's role raises the question of the ideological stance of the sign maker, and the reader of the text, and how the theoretical approach allows the analyst to consider the presence of ideology in a given text.

### ***Ideology***

The question of how social semiotic theory approaches the question of revealing ideological effects of a text is briefly addressed here. As well as drawing on Hallidayan theory, social semiotics draws on Marxist theory that holds the concept of ideology at its core. Ideological theories view all communication and meanings as having a socio-political dimension and their

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<sup>10</sup> I use this term in the broadest sense possible to refer to the range of characteristics that make up an individual, their background, position in society and interests at the time of sign-making.

social context crucial to their interpretation (Fiske, 1990). These cornerstones develop and inform the theorists from the school of Western Marxism (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997) that is influenced by the work of Althusser (1971) amongst others who extended Marxist theory of the 'false consciousness' of the proletariat into a theory of ideology as practice springing from within all levels of society rather than being imposed upon the proletariat in a hierarchical, top-down, process (Fiske, 1990). Specifically in relation to semiotics is Althusser's proposal that people are positioned ideologically through dominant connotative meanings which are embedded in denotation (Silverman 1983, in Chandler 2007).

Gradually, these influences also extended into linguistics in studies that adopted a more critical approach (see for example, Fowler et al. 1979) revealing ideological positions within communication. The way in which these ideas have been developed by authors working within a critical discourse analytical framework who explore the relationship between ideology, language and dominance will be discussed later in this chapter. Here, I set out the social semiotic position as addressed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2001) and Kress (2010). By focussing on the processes of sign-making, social semiotics is an analytical method that can help to define ideological stance embedded within messages; a process that leads to the identification of the ways in which these messages are used to the benefit of a particular group. Chandler (2007)

points out that signs serve ideological functions by 'defining realities' and that by deconstructing and contesting the realities of signs the analyst can show 'whose realities are privileged and whose are suppressed' (Chandler 2007:11).

A method by which meaning *potential*: encompassing both latent and possible meanings that lie within semiotic resources was proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1990, 1996, 2001), who, largely influenced by the work of the semiotician Roland Barthes and the semiotic perspective of the linguist Michael Halliday's theory, aimed to develop a descriptive framework that could be applied to the visual analysis of semiotic resources. Kress and van Leeuwen reiterate their critical stance towards the analysis of visual communication; pointing out that '...neither power nor its use has disappeared.' (2006:14). However, they make no claims regarding the 'truth' or 'untruth' of a representation, clarifying their position as:

A social semiotic theory of truth cannot claim to establish the absolute truth or untruth of representations. It can only show whether a given 'proposition' (visual, verbal or otherwise) is represented *as* true or not.

(1996:159)

Kress (2010) elaborates on their theoretical perspective on ideology in representation and communication by distinguishing between the purpose of ‘the rhetor’ and that of ‘the designer’, noting these can often be the same person. He views the rhetor’s purpose being a political one that aims to align their message with their and the audience’s political position, whereas the designer’s purpose is a semiotic activity – specifically, the shaping of the message using the available resources for the ‘...best possible alignment between the purposes of the rhetor and the semiotic resources of the audience...’ (Kress 2010:49). Kress uses the metaphor of a two-pronged fork, one prong being the semiotic prong and the other the multimodal prong, to provide a description of what a social semiotic theory of multimodality does:

As the briefest exemplification: how *signs* are made; how *meaning* is shaped; what *discourses* and what *genres* are available and how they are used; what *texts* are and how they work; how *representation* and *communication* function; that *modes* occur in *ensembles*: all these belong to the first prong, the *social semiotic*. What the potentials of each mode in these *ensembles* are, the fact that *modes*... have specific affordances and differing *semiotic* means... belongs to the second prong, the multimodal. Together, *Social Semiotics* and

*Multimodality* provides an encompassing theory of *representation and communication*.

(Kress, 2010:105)

My analysis of the commemorative war monuments utilises aspects of this framework and in the following section I describe the theoretical origins of the framework and relevance of the analytical tool kit I have selected to apply to the analysis of the commemorative war monument data.

***Specific tools that are used in the social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis of the data***

Kress and van Leeuwen's (1990, 1996, 2001, 2006) social semiotic theory, refined by van Leeuwen (2005) and Kress (2010), develops from traditional approaches to semiotics dating back to the structuralist and functionalist perspectives taken by the Prague School of the 1930s and 1940s, and the poststructuralist perspective taken by the Paris School of the 1960s and 1970s. Essentially, these two schools of thought developed the notion of applying linguistic concepts to non-linguistic modes of communication; such as visual images in painting, film and photography. Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2001, 2006) approach to semiotics extended these prior theoretical

positions on the relationship between the signifier and the signified, and their focus on structure and system, to the role of the semiotic resource in the production and interpretation of communicative artefacts and events (van Leeuwen, 2005).

However, it is important to note that semiotic resources and their uses and valuations that make up the 'semiotic landscape' are far from universal but are contextually dependent, varying in each individual environment and temporal period (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996), this point brings us to the inclusion of historical contextual information in the analysis of the data.

### ***Historical context***

To fully understand the monuments as multimodal texts it is essential that the analysis goes beyond a reading of the texts and extends to an exploration of the context of their production. The significance of contextual factors to the interpretation of texts is acknowledged within the disciplines of both multimodal social semiotic and critical discourse analysis. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) discuss the tradition of the inclusion of historical contextual information in the analysis of discourse, citing earlier work of van Dijk's analysis of racist discourse during the 1980s and Wodak et al.'s work on racist discourse

in Austria in the early 1990s. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) further demonstrate the significance of a discourse historical approach in their example of an analysis of a speech by the ex-British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, concluding that the speech relates to a number of earlier events: speeches and proclamations; laws; media reports and other actions. They conclude their discussion by pointing out:

‘The discourse history of each unit of discourse had to be uncovered. This naturally again implies interdisciplinary analysis; historians have to be included in such an undertaking.’  
(1997:277)

Kress (2010) also explains the relevance of contextual information to a social semiotic analysis of a text by listing the first question a social semiotician asks of a text is: ‘*Whose interest* and agency is at work here in the making of meaning?’ and pointing out that the third perspective that multimodal social - semiotics takes in the theorizing of the meaning of *mode* is a description of ‘...its histories of social shaping and the cultural origins/provenance of elements of that mode’, emphasising that both culture and meaning are required in a full theory of meaning (Kress, 2010:61).

When we look at the producers of the commemorative war monuments we find that they are co-produced; the end product was not solely shaped by the designer, the sculptor, but by a chain of agents. These agents were both elitist, in the sense of their powerful positions in society and ordinary individual members of society that did not occupy influential positions; each of whom had a different input into the final product.

The majority of British monuments were erected following the First World War and marked a radical change in the way Britain commemorated war through public sculpture, completely altering the semiotic landscape. The monuments occupy a unique position in British political history, so my analysis begins with a discussion of the post-WWI political climate that sparked the nation-wide programme of war commemoration by public art. It then goes on to provide contextual information on commemorative war monument design considerations, giving details of guiding trends that directed designers of the monuments.

The inclusion of this contextual information will demonstrate that the theoretical framework does not provide the analyst with a fixed, universal method of unlocking meaning that permanently resides within semiotic resources, but it recognises that *sign-making* is a process that stems from both the interests and needs of society at a given time (van Leeuwen, 2005).

Kress (2001) argued for the necessity in a new way of thinking about meaning: one that delivered the promises made by Saussure (1916 and Peirce, 1935 1958); the: '...all-embracing theory [that] would provide an account of human **semiosis** in all its manifestations' (Kress, 2001:67). Indeed, perhaps the greatest theoretical leap from those earlier schools of thought is the stance Social Semiotics takes on different semiotic modes: it does not seek to make separate descriptive or functional accounts of these, but examines how semiotic modes are brought together in the process of sign-making to create new meanings (van Leeuwen, 2005) and fundamentally sees signs as motivated, arising out of the interests of sign makes (Kress, 2010). Kress explains:

*Social semiotics and the multimodal dimension of the theory, tell us about interest and agency; about meaning(-making); about processes of sign-making in social environments; about the resources for making meaning and their respective potentials as signifiers in the making of signs-as-metaphors; about the meaning potentials of cultural/semiotic forms. The theory can describe and analyse all signs in all modes as well as their interrelation in any one text.*

(Kress, 2010:59)

### ***Panofsky: Iconography and iconology***

Kress and van Leeuwen's work utilises Panofsky's (1972) theory relating to iconography and iconology. Panofsky's discussions (1970, 1972) present the core concepts of his theory of interpretation of artistic work in the form of a table showing three levels of iconological interpretation.

At the first level, the viewer **identifies** elements in a painting by means of familiarity, being able to identify and name objects they see. The second level involves *iconography*, the **linking** of objects with themes, concepts and conventions, knowledge of literary sources and the manner in which themes or concepts were expressed by objects and events. The third level is the *iconological* level of **interpretation**, going into the domain of 'symbolical' values, it is at this level that much deeper levels of meaning are realised, for example, ideological perspectives and concepts of art history have pinpointed 'synthetic intuition' as the thread that runs through one's interpretation of meaning in the visual arts. He relates the phrase to a familiarity with the tendencies of the human mind:

It is apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion.

(Panofsky, 1972:7)

Panofsky's comments on revealing 'basic attitudes of a nation' suggest that interpretation at this level involves both personal psychology and a particular world view. Panofsky argued that the appreciation of works of art necessitated the study of historical methods, even classical languages in order to fully understand the significance of the images encountered (Panofsky, 1970). When examining the commemorative war monument data we can extend the exploration of a world view being expressed through the choices made in the representations of soldiers and civilians by looking closely at the choices made in the selection of their physical attributes and general appearance. Categorization, both biological and cultural, can work to typify racial stereotypes that create either positive or negative impressions of an ethnic group. In his discussion of iconography, van Leeuwen (2001) explains that presenting contrasts in the form of 'types' of both 'Westerners' and 'non-Western' immigrants stereotype them both. These typifying representations produce a further layer of meaning; connotation, that provides the broader concepts, ideas and values which the represented people 'stand for' (van Leeuwen, 2001). van Leeuwen draws attention to Nederveen Pieterse's (1992)

work on visual racism that revealed how a wide range of visual materials have consistently used visual stereotypes of black people to create negative connotations through the repeated use of child-like or animal-like characteristics, including exaggerated physical features such as thick lips or characters with hair styled in the same 'kinky' fashion, or objects such as fruit that have iconographical significance. van Leeuwen (2005) argues that applying this analytical approach to the analysis of both past and present works of art and media collections of data allows the analyst to identify the symbolism drawn upon to create layers of 'meanings and myths'.

The extension of Panofsky's work is important to the interpretation of the commemorative war monuments under analysis as it helps to unlock the meanings in the symbols found in the sculptures, this is not to claim that every viewer of the sculptures will have detailed knowledge of their origin, but that the theory helps to understand the techniques used by the sculpture to embed meaning within their work in ways which will be familiar to the viewer. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) also draw on and develop theories of metaphorical association to explain their ideas about how visual images can communicate ideas far beyond the confines of a given text.

***Barthes: myth, denotation and connotation***

In addition to the work of Panofsky, the social semiotic multimodal theory of Kress and van Leeuwen draws heavily on the work of the semiotician Roland Barthes; however, they explain that their approach begins with their definition of the relationship between the image and the text; a definition that departs from Barthes' (1977) theory. Barthes tied the meaning of image to text via a process of 'elaboration' or 'illustration' (1996:16), whilst Kress and van Leeuwen proposed that:

...the visual component of a text is an independently organised and structured message - connected with the verbal text, but in no way dependent on it: and similarly the other way around.

(1996:17)

Barthes theory proposed two *orders of signification* that involved a reader understanding meanings through *myths*, which Fiske defines as: 'a story by which a culture explains or understands some aspect of reality or nature.' (1990:88). Although it is important to point out here that 'myth' in the Barthesian sense does not necessarily equate to 'false', Barthes uses the word to mean a believer from the reader's perspective. However, they do serve to

disguise the historical origin of social ideas or theories, making them appear 'natural', hence unquestionably accepted by the reader (Fiske, 1990).

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) demonstrate the significance of Barthes' theory of *myth* in their discussion of an Australian school textbook depicting the colonisation of Australia by the British. However, their theory goes well beyond Barthes' concept to show that **visual structuring** works not to reproduce structures of reality, but to create motivated versions of the past:

...they *produce* images of reality which are bound up with the interests of the social institutions within which the pictures are produced, circulated and read. They are ideological. Pictorial structures are never merely formal: they have a deeply important semantic dimension.

(1996:45)

Kress and van Leeuwen also draw on Barthes' notion of *denotation and connotation*. Barthes distinguished two *orders of signification* within a text: the 'denoted' message and the 'connoted' message. The first level deals with the direct representation found in a piece of visual communication; Machin (2007b) likens this to perceiving reality, saying exactly what or who is particularly represented. At this level, the level of describing who or what we see in an

image, we may appear to be doing a mundane task that is very likely to extract little or no actual meaning from considering who or what is included in an image. However, Machin asserts that it is at this level that much of the analytical foundations are laid, he rejects the notion of a neutral choice in the composition of an image: ‘...we are always making meaning rather than just seeing.’ (2007b:24).

van Leeuwen describes connotation as a: ‘more abstract concept, or rather, mixture of concepts...’ (2005:38). It is another mechanism of semiotic invention and innovation, as is metaphor, or experiential metaphor, but whereas the experiential metaphor involves the process of understanding complex and abstract ideas through our concrete experiences, connotation occurs when a semiotic resource is imported from one domain into another (van Leeuwen 2005). According to Barthes (1973, 1977) communicating ideas, values and concepts at a deeper level is found in the ‘connoted’ message; it is at this level that we ask deeper questions of the image; not just ‘who and what’? The image leads us to ask a series of deeper questions that will involve asking about things outside of the piece of visual communication, the inclusion of a particular element may lead us to consider other experiences or knowledge from domains outside of the image and ask how these other experiences or knowledge transport into and inform the image we are viewing.

### ***Bodily poses***

Barthes (1977) further defined carriers of connotation: poses; objects; settings and photogenia (photographic techniques), discussing the effects of a subject's pose in an image and considering their role in the viewer's interpretation of the image:

Consider a press photograph of President Kennedy widely distributed at the time of the 1960 election: a half-length profile shot, eyes looking upward, hands joined together. Here it is the very pose of the subject which prepares the raising of the signifieds of connotation: youthfulness, spirituality, purity.

(Barthes, 1977:22)

This aspect of Barthes' theory is utilised in my analysis of the commemorative war monuments. Just as we read multiple channels of non-verbal or bodily communication in our everyday encounters with others (see for example Argyle, 1988) so we rely on the multiple channels of bodily communication of the image in the sculpture. Bodily pose is a major vehicle of communication, for example, we understand if someone is feeling particularly proud when they stand in slightly more erect than usual, with their heads raised slightly higher than usual and their chests puffed up slightly more than

usual; rightly, or wrongly, we will commonly interpret this pose as an indicator of pride.

Where they include human representations, the sculptors have all ranges of bodily poses from which to choose, the poses making up this range are a set of semiotic resources; each known and understood by others who share the sculptor's culture, therefore, we can safely assume that a selection of a particular pose has been made on the basis of its commonly held meanings. So, the pose is a mode of communication that goes towards the integrated whole sign: the sign being the complete commemorative war monument. In my analysis, the pose of the figures in the commemorative war monuments will be taken into consideration in an attempt to reveal possible meanings a viewer will commonly attribute to them, allowing me to infer meaning based partly on the selection of a particular pose in the design and production process of the commemorative war monument.

### ***Metaphorical association***

Kress (2010:55) explains that whilst social semiotic theory connects with the *social basis* of the theoretical position on metaphor taken by Lakoff and Johnson (1982) and Lakoff (1987), the approach Social Semiotics takes towards

metaphorical association departs from the *cognitivist* approach taken by Lakoff and Johnson. Kress and van Leeuwen expand on the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1987) by extending explanations of how metaphors constitute cultural meaning and how they are utilised in language to create meaning potential:

In our terms this means that humans have the ability to match concepts with appropriate material signifiers on the basis of their physical experiences of the relevant materials.

(Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:75)

They elucidate by pointing out that some meanings develop on the basis of flexible semiotic principles and defining key principles of experiential meaning potential. This involves identifying the suitability of a resource to the broadness of cultural value systems and the multiple qualities of materials, resulting in the potential for various analogies to be developed in semiosis. One of their specific examples being: 'soft' can be considered both bad as in soft land being bad to build on and good as in soft beds being good to sleep on, pointing out that '...experiential meaning potentials are typically multimedial, and at the basis of synaesthetic correspondences.' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:77).

So, in this way a viewer understands complex and abstract ideas through the association of the sign with their concrete experiences. An example of their adaptation of this theoretical position is their discussion of a reader's interpretation of the use of angles, height and colour in images.

### ***Angles and height***

van Leeuwen's (2005) discussion of the connotations of the phrase 'upper class' shows how, by metaphorical association, height and status are associated with each other. Transferring this concept to the printed page, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) argue the upper half of the page is reserved for the 'ideal', whereas the lower section is reserved for reality, or the 'real'. So, the aspiration image in consumer advertising, for example the beautiful skin of a model in a picture, is set on the upper section and the product itself, which gives access to 'the ideal', is set in 'the real' on the lower section of the page. In my analysis of the commemorative war monuments, I relate this aspect of the theory to the position as regards to the height of the commemorative war monuments that affects the viewing angle.

Kress and van Leeuwen also draw on Arnheim's (1974, 1982) theories on visual composition of works of formal art to develop their social semiotic theories on the information value of left/right, centre/margin composition of an image on the page. Related to this, they also show how angles can realise particular power relationships between that which is represented and the viewer. Social distance, closeness and attitude can all be suggested by the angle from which the subject in a photograph is viewed; so a low angle that forces the viewer to 'look up to' the subject puts the balance of power in favour of the subject and not the viewer, whereas an equal angle, that allows the viewer to see the subject at eye level suggests equality. They explain:

If the represented participant is seen from a low angle, then the relation between the interactive and represented participants is depicted as one in which the represented participant has power over the interactive participant.

(Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:140)

For the analysis of sculpture in the commemorative war monuments, this aspect of the theory also relates to the question of the height of the monument. As with angles in art or photography, my analysis demonstrates how looking upwards to view a sculpture that is placed on a plinth that allows it to tower high above its viewer achieves the placement of the figure into the

ideal; thus achieving the unequal power relationship between the viewer and the figure or figures represented in the sculpture.

### ***Materiality and colour***

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) point out that the semiotization of material makes it capable of acting as representation, becoming a mode. (2006:225). A sculptor of a commemorative war monument begins its production with a raw material that he or she carves or moulds into shape, having first had to make a selection from a range of materials, each with their own distinct characteristics. Included here is colour, which, according to the theory, plays a major part in the judgement of visual modality. Colour, they assert is not a sign, but a semiotic mode and as signifiers, colours enter into meaning just as other signifier material does, (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:58-9).

On a basic level colour can be a carrier of high modality if the colours in a painting or picture appear 'natural', or 'true to life', but there are further choices available and are presented on a scale of intensity. For example, Kress and van Leeuwen illustrate how soft colour and soft focus can combine to present a low modality suggesting a fantasy, or 'what could be' scenario, whereas saturated colour and sharp focus will suggest higher modality.

Together with colour saturation, colour differentiation and colour modulation are said to appear on scales from high to low that represent a corresponding scale of high to low modality (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996:165). Cultural history is a significant factor in the analysis of the meaning of colour; every culture will use and read the meaning of colour in its own way (Gage, 1999).

In relation to the commemorative war monuments, the issues of colour is slightly more complex as choices in colour are not as multiple for designers of the monuments as they are to an artist working with paints on a canvas. In the genre of sculpture the colour selection is restricted in the sense that colour is closely linked to the materials selected. For example, stone is limited to a small variety of natural colours, or bronze which, as a material comes in one colour: bronze. Of course, we could speculate about the meanings that would be created if the sculpture had chosen to use different materials that bring with them access to a wider choice of colours, such as a brightly coloured resin, with this speculation comes explanations of particular practices within a particular social group: monument sculptors. If we consider the sculptors of the commemorative war monuments to belong to a particular group in society, we have to acknowledge, according to the theory, that they have their own complex design practices (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001) that define them and the choices they make. For this data, unlike many other data types, materiality and colour combine into a single mode of communication.

### ***Further points to consider when analysing three-dimensional objects***

In three dimensional representations there are further points to note in relation to modality; choices of materials can be motivated naturalistically, to make them similar to that which they represent, or can be motivated by a desire to give more pleasure or displeasure to the viewer when naturalistic choices are replaced by unrealistic materials (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996).

The selection of materials available to the sculpture is limited due to factors that have to be taken into consideration, such as: weather resistance; vandalism and a material's suitability for sculpting. Material is nevertheless a crucial carrier of meaning and, although limited, alternative materials are available to the sculptor giving them an opportunity to make choices at each stage of the design. Clearly here the notion of the 'aptness' of the material comes into play, as Kress (2010) puts it: '*Aptness* means that the form has the requisite features to be the carrier of the meaning' (2010:55). Also, of particular relevance to the analysis of three dimensional commemorative war monuments is Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) point regarding the extended choices available to viewers of sculpture in comparison with those available to paintings or photographs.

Drawing on Arnheim's (1982) theory of the positioning of three dimensional sculptures, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) make an important observation on the relevance of context to the physical positions available to the viewer from which to view the sculpture; for example, where barriers prevent close access, or where the piece is positioned above the viewer on high pedestals or low. They point out that both impact on the social distance of the interactive relationship and the power distribution, these observations on the significance of interactive viewing are taken into consideration during the analysis of the data in this thesis.

In their discussion of how their theory translates theoretical positions on ways in which, linguistically, the metaphor is used to create meaning potential, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) note that it is important to identify the suitability of a resource to the broadness of cultural value systems and stress the need to consider the variety of ways in which any particular resource can be understood and analysed through cultural experience and experiential semiosis. In relation to the analysis of commemorative war monument data under analysis in this thesis it is important here to reiterate this highly relevant aspect of the social semiotic approach adopted. Furthermore, in their discussion of the emphasis on the relevance of culture in the 'grammar' of visual design Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) make it clear that their 'grammar' is not intended to be a universal grammar, but they acknowledge that their

analysis of signs within Western cultures, does not necessarily apply to visual communication generated by non-Western cultures, or that people from non-Western cultures read Western communication in the same way that Westerners do:

A glance at the 'stylized' arts of other cultures should teach us that the myth of transparency is indeed a myth. We may experience these arts as 'decorative', 'exotic', 'mysterious' or 'beautiful', but we cannot understand them as communication, as forms of 'writing' unless we are, or become, members of these cultures.

(Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:33-34)

This is an important point in relation to the data examined in this work; the commemorative war monuments under analysis are all of British origin, created for a British audience and placed in British public space. If their full meaning potential is to be established it is important to use a theoretical approach that acknowledges the relevance of culture and it is also important to remain mindful of cultural relevance during the analysis.

### ***Hallidayan-inspired tools***

Kress and van Leeuwen also draw heavily upon the semiotic perspective of Halliday's (1978, 1985) theory that rests on several 'fundamental assumptions' that view signs as motivated, newly made and arising out of the interests of the sign-maker (Kress, 2010:54). Halliday's notion of social/communicational functions provided Kress and van Leeuwen with the basis of their assumption that: '...each mode expresses meanings about states, relations, actions and events in the world' (Kress, 2010:104). The following section outlines the relative Hallidayan-influenced theoretical items of the tool kit that I apply to the analysis of my data.

### ***Speech acts and gaze***

Kress and van Leeuwen extend Halliday's (1985) definition of 'speech functions', or, 'speech acts', beyond the domain of language alone. They argue that these speech acts can be realised in the direction of the gaze of the figure in an image. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) assert that 'the offering of information, or goods and services' and 'the demand of information, or goods and services' are realised by the indirect and direct gaze of the figures

respectively. The direction of the gaze of the figures in the image, whether at the viewer, upwards, downwards will define the interactive relationship with the viewer, for example, direct gaze gives power to the figure to address the viewer, therefore, as with verbal interaction; a response is required. In cases where there is no eye contact with the viewer, the image is offered to the viewer as information, not for scrutiny and analysis.

In a sense we can say that the viewer is directed to think about war and the role soldier plays within war in a variety of different ways according to the type of 'interactional' exchange the gaze initiates with them. Kress and van Leeuwen assert that images have the potential to extend their semantic reach into areas occupied by language, but they also emphasise that speech acts in images do not work in exactly the same way as they do in language. van Leeuwen (2005) refers to the potential of images to be studied as multimodal communicative acts saying that the nature of 'offers' and 'demands' come through a '...combination of different visual and contextual features, just as in the case of the speech act' (2005:120). Analysing the communicative potential of an image as an interaction rather than a representation necessarily involves interpreting the pose a figure adopts. As Kress and van Leeuwen point out:

A visual 'invitation' is a 'demand' picture with a beckoning hand and a smiling expression; a visual 'summons', a

'demand' picture with a beckoning hand and an unsmiling expression; a visual 'warning', a 'demand' picture with a raised forefinger and a stern expression; and so on.

(Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006:123)

### ***Agency, action and behavioural processes***

Meaning can also be realised through the choices made regarding who is represented and what active, or passive, role they are represented taking. Halliday's (1985) definition of how action and transaction is communicated has been adopted and applied to the analysis of visual communication. 'Processes' are used as an analytical tool to determine the level of agency and power of the figures in the image. A good example of the application of this theory to visual communication can be found in Machin's (2007a) analysis of war photographs published in 2005/6 during the occupation of Iraq. Machin distinguished five significant processes that were enacted in the images he analysed:

- 1) Material process - that is carrying out a task, when the subject is shown accomplishing something that has a material result

- 2) Behavioural process - that involves acting without outcome, carrying out an action without an end or result which impacts materially on someone or something else
- 3) Mental processes - that is thinking or sensing, when the agent engages in a mental task such as 'wondering', or enacts one of the five senses such as 'seeing'
- 4) Verbal process – that is saying something, when the agent is verbalising, such as 'ordering' people to move away; the relational process – when something is being used for comparison, that is when representations show a similarity or difference between two or more people or groups
- 5) Existential process – that is simply being somewhere, the state of existence without any evidence of action, thought or outcome, such as 'being' in a particular place.

The identification of such processes is particularly relevant to the analysis of the commemorative war monument data in this thesis. Unless we live in occupied territory, what we know about war and what foreign soldiers do in occupied war zones comes predominantly from representations we are shown of soldiers and warfare in the media. Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that it is crucial that overseas military exploits have the support of the civilian population at home, and as Machin's work shows, images play an important role in encouraging support of the soldier amongst the civilian population.

According to Borg (1991) and Rausch (2007), First World War monuments divert from previous forms; whereas earlier monuments celebrated victory through the memorialising of the leaders, the First World War monuments celebrated the ordinary soldier as the hero. Applying this particular theoretical tool to the analysis of the sculptures gives us greater insight into how the image of the 'ordinary soldier' was established and what meanings the sculptures and monuments carry of war and soldiery.

***Written text: Assumptions***

There is a further dimension to consider in the analysis of the commemorative war monument: the relation between written text and image. There are two broad elements that have meaning potential here; both the physical form of the inscriptions, such as the font style, and the conceptual structures they express in written language.

In terms of their ability to create meaning through their physical characteristics, Kress and van Leeuwen view inscription as: '...a culturally and socially produced resource for meaning-making.' (1996:231). According to Kress and van Leeuwen, inscription is, in its own right, a significant producer of

meaning. Apart from the materiality of substance, which in this case comprises the material selected by the sculptor that forms the surface on which the inscription is engraved; the choices made in the material applied to the surface and the tools selected in the process of representation, the designers of the commemorative war monuments also have at their disposal other the inscriptional resources such as font-style and colour. Apart from the physical structure or form of the inscriptions, the conceptual content of the written language can also be analysed to assess their contribution to the meaning of the whole monument.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) base their analysis of the conceptual structures that written language components of a text communicate using Halliday's (1985) concept of 'relational' and 'existential' processes. Kress and van Leeuwen were influenced by Barthes (1977) who argued that the visual image is related to written text; a linguistic message is a technique which pulls together the various signifieds in an image to anchor or extend the meaning of the image. Kress and van Leeuwen argue that the visual component of a text does not depend on written text for its meaning, instead, it exists as an 'independently organized and structured message' (1996:17).

Kress (2001) explores the relationship between language and visual modes in his discussion of accounts of school science lessons. He offers a robust

argument for the need to avoid making the same mistakes made by the likes of the Paris School, who he criticises for having treated language as the 'privileged mode of communication' (2001:80). He does not argue for erasing the distinction between different modes, but urges a reassessment of their individual functionalities. Although Kress and van Leeuwen deal (1996) with the relationship between the word and the image in some detail, acknowledging the defined role that can be taken by each in a single text, I view their application of Halliday's theory as limited for the purposes of the analysis of the commemorative war monument data and argue that a blending of a CDA-based linguistic theory with social semiotic multimodal theory will allow for a greater uncovering of meaning potential from the commemorative war monument data.

### ***Critical discourse analysis***

The theoretical position I utilise in this thesis also relies on the critical discourse analytical perspective of Norman Fairclough whose approach extends critical enquiry well beyond the text into wider societal structures, practices and events. He argues that ideology is pervasive in language:

I want to argue that ideology invests language in various ways at various levels, and that we don't have to choose between different possible 'locations' of ideology, all of which seem partly justified and none of which seems entirely satisfactory. (Fairclough, 1995:71).

Described by Cobley and Randviir as a: 'sub-division' of the socio-semiotic approach (2009:5), critical discourse analysis (CDA) views discourse as: '...socially *constitutive* as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, object of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people.' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997:258). It is clear that discourse is not seen as standing apart from social practice, but is viewed as a situated use of semiotic resources. As an analytical tool *Discourse Analysis*, in Fairclough's view, is: '...analysis of how texts work within sociocultural practice.' (1995:7). Suggesting that links between discourse, ideology and power may often be opaque, Fairclough (1995) describes the principal aim of CDA as to systematically explore:

...relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are

ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

(1995:132-133)

For Fairclough then, a commitment to the identification of power and ideological struggle is a principal aim of CDA. It is on this point that he distinguishes the position taken by CDA from other perspectives such as that of Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (1980) who questioned the extent to which 'dominant ideologies', if indeed they existed, were able to force people into accepting powerless positions (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough's approach is influenced by both Gramsci's arguments that 'political society' was the domain of coercion and 'civil society' was the domain of hegemony and by the work of Michel Foucault, who used the term *orders of discourse* to describe the way that links between texts and society are mediated through institutions' particular orders of discourse. Fairclough explains that the term '*orders of discourse*' is used in a different way from that of Foucault, saying that they are viewed in CDA as: '...the social structuring of linguistic variation or difference – there are always many different possibilities in language, but choice amongst them is socially structured.' (2003:220).

Reading a text in context involves looking at its socio-cultural and intertextual features, that is in relation to other discourses produced at other times (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). Fairclough (1992) presents his model in a three-dimensional format comprising: text; discourse practice and social practice, an interpretation of discourse that, as indicated earlier, takes after Gramsci's (1971) view of hegemony. This three-dimensional model has implications on the way an analyst will treat a text. An analyst may identify several different representations within a given text that, Fairclough asserts, can be viewed as a separate discourse, in turn a discourse is capable of generating many specific representations (Fairclough, 2003:124).

Discourses are characterised and differentiated: '...not only by features of vocabulary and semantic relations, and assumptions, but also by grammatical features.' (2003:133). Within the commemorative war monument there are visual and written modes, the written being in the form of memorial inscriptions, these inscriptions are a separate discourse differentiated by their own set of assumptions that I have identified as being the most appropriate to select for analysis.

Taking Foucault's (1994) notions of the three 'axes' of: *knowledge; power* and *ethics*, Fairclough prefers the three corresponding terms: *representation* (to do with knowledge *and* control over things); *action* (to do with relations

with others *and* action on others) and *identification* (to do with relations with oneself, ethics and the moral subject), (Fairclough, 2003:28). He also introduces the term 'dialectics of discourse' to describe the relation between these three aspects of meaning, asserting that although they need to be individually distinguished, they are not totally separate stating:

In any text we are likely to find many different representations of aspects of the world, but we would not call each separate representation a separate discourse. Discourses transcend such concrete and local representations...and also because a particular discourse can, so to speak, generate many specific representations.

(2003:124)

Although the commemorative war monuments predominantly communicate through visual images, they all feature written communication through inscriptions. These inscriptions are so intrinsic to their design that as viewers we expect to find them featured as part of commemorative war monuments; their presence is unquestioned, accepted as 'common sense' (Fairclough 1995, van Dijk 1998). I use this term not with reference to their content, but to their existence. We could also describe them as forming an 'event model' to use a van Dijk (1998:83) term; in that they are seen as intrinsic

to the design of a commemorative war monument. But the first question I would ask is: why do they have to feature? Why not simply give them a title, such as those that can be found on classical sculptures, Michelangelo's 'David' for example? If the inscriptions in commemorative war monuments followed that tradition we would see titles such as 'A soldier' and nothing else. Apart from the recorded details of the names of soldiers, name of the war and sometimes the battle, there is usually a narrative giving a 'reason' for the monument's existence, such as: '*...they gave their lives for their country...*'. The inscriptions of these narratives are relatively short; usually a sentence or two in length, but we can assume that something is being said within this narrative that can not be expressed at the sentence level within a three-word title, for example.

At the surface level the inscriptions record details of a particular social event: a war and more precisely the deaths of citizens of a particular nation, Britain in the case of this data, that have taken place as a result of a particular war. A detailed examination of the linguistic components within the inscriptions that represent of war and sacrifice, the social events, would require more attention than the scope of this thesis offers. However, based on Fairclough's discussions of implicit assumptions and how they are understood through tapping into 'members' resources' (1995) and later the relationship between intertextuality and assumptions (2003), an initial exploration of their purpose

should allow me to ask firstly, whether assumptions do indeed lie within the inscriptions and, secondly, whether there are grounds to view any assumptions revealed as ideological.

War commemoration is a major social event in the shared annual activities taking place within British society, the commemorative war monument being one of the prominent permanent, or semi-permanent, public material manifestations of this event. For van Dijk, ideologies can be defined as 'shared, social beliefs of (specific) social groups' (1998:314). My interest in the ideological content of the inscriptions relates to their function as a proposed representation of the '*beliefs*' about war and sacrifice of the group of British citizens. The role of presupposition in the ideological function is noted by van Dijk in his discussion of abstraction, he points out that:

...semantics is a rich field of ideological 'work' in discourse, and virtually all meaning structures are able to 'signify' social positions, group perspective and interests in the description of events, people and actions.

(1998:207)

He describes presuppositions as '...among the staple of ideological argument' (van Dijk, 1995:273), although I would argue that he does not

provide as detailed a theoretical model for their identification and analysis as Fairclough (2003) whose model extends Pragmatic theory. Considering existing approaches in Pragmatics to be limited, Fairclough (2003) extended and adapted the existing linguistic label 'Presuppositions' and replaced it with his term: 'Assumptions'.

Fairclough defines three types of assumptions within texts without which the text fails to achieve causal effects, these are: 'Existential Assumptions', 'Propositional Assumptions' and 'Value Assumptions'. The first of these implies, without question, the existence of something, for example, the existence of a soul as a separate entity to the physical body. The second implies an outcome or consequence of an action and the third a value judgement of what is good or bad. So, for example, if a text referred to 'sinners going to hell', it encompasses not only the existential assumption that there is a place called 'hell', but also the propositional assumption that the consequence of 'sinning' is going there. Further, it includes a value judgement that behaving in certain way is bad and requires punishment.

### ***Reflections on the theoretical approach adopted in this thesis***

Here, I would like to acknowledge and address some of the criticisms made of social semiotic multimodality. The originality of this work depends on the application and blending of elements of theoretical perspectives taken by social semiotic multimodality on the one hand and on the other, elements of CDA; specifically Fairclough's extension of Pragmatic theory to visual and written modes of communication within the commemorative war monument data that is the subject of analysis in this thesis. My aim is to address the comments, outlined earlier in chapter two of this thesis, by other analysts of war commemoration (for example, Danzer 1987, Ashplant et al. 2004, Niven 2008) who call for a more systematic and context-based study of this type of data.

In applying the theoretical approaches I have outlined in this chapter I am setting out the cornerstones of the spirit of my enquiry into the commemorative war monument data, viewing the data not solely as a resource that communicates public expression of private grief, but as a resource that has the potential to communicate much wider discourses; all of which become *recontextualized* in other social practices such as the production of public art and the national expression of war commemoration. As has CDA, Social Semiotic analysis has extended its enquiry beyond the sign to focus on the

production, use and interpretation of semiotic resources in the context of specific social situations and practices (van Leeuwen, 2005) seeking to: ‘...break down the disciplinary boundaries between the study of language and the study of images...’ (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996:183). I argue in this work that for the specific data, the commemorative war monuments, a transdisciplinary approach is needed and that the combination of approaches I have selected give a wide scope for their analysis.

However, whilst I defend my choice as appropriate to identify the nature and function of any ideological positions that lie within the data, I am mindful of Fairclough's statement that an analysis of a given text will allow the analyst to 'read off' ideologies they contain (1995:71). Naturally, when putting forward any interpretations of meaning, care should be taken in how firmly an analyst makes claims as regards the validity of any particular ideological stance the analysis reveals. On the other hand, Fairclough also takes issue with positions that avoid making claims about truth and falsity saying that it is a serious ethical failure to retreat into ‘...helpless relativism’ (1995:19) when dealing with debates on certain great social and political issues. Ideologies have the ability to reproduce and exercise unequal power relations, resulting in domination and exploitation, but Fairclough and Wodak point out that although ideologies are often false or ungrounded constructions of society, they are not necessarily so (1997:275). They also assert that a crucial factor in the determination of

whether a discursive event's role is an ideological one requires more than text analysis, but a consideration of how texts are interpreted, received and what social effects they might have (1997:275).

Similarly, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996:159) point out that a social semiotic theory of truth can not make claims on the truth or untruth of representations, but can only show whether something is *represented* as true or not. I argue that each component of the theoretical framework I have outlined has a valid role to play in the analysis of the commemorative war monument data. The multidisciplinary nature of the analytical application I propose here is an attempt to identify a pattern of meanings that are formed within each aspect of the monuments, but which come together to serve a particular power relationship between the citizen, the participant viewer of the monuments, and the elite groups who were responsible for various stages of their placement in our cities, towns and villages.

I am also mindful that Multimodal Analysis is not without its critics, Copley and Randviir (2009) recently commented that: '...the touting of multimodality has not necessarily lived up to its promise.' (2009:32) suggesting that Kress' (2001) quest for the: '...all-embracing theory' (Kress, 2001:67) has not been successful. Further criticism is found in Pink's (2011) discussion of the difference in approaches practised in the disciplines: multimodality;

phenomenological anthropology and sensory ethnography in which she draws attention to Kress' (2005) comments on his distinction between writing and images. She argues that affording the visual priority in its role in communicating experience clashes with the theoretical positions in feminist art therapy which argue that images are constantly shifting and contingent. She also cites McDonagh et al. (2005) who take issue with Kress, arguing that taken by anthropologists on the five-sense model of experience: sight; sound; touch practice in visual arts and design is grounded in the 'realm of the symbolic' (2005:85, cited by Pink, 2011:267). Drawing attention to philosophical positions; taste and smell, Pink argues that multimodality is limited as it is:

...built on an understanding of culture as a set of 'readable' representations that can neatly be placed in mutually exclusive categories with their own characteristics, and that are perceived through differentiated channels of sensory information.

(Pink, 2011:268)

I would argue that Pink's comments regarding reifying the visual mode of communication over other modes both overlook Kress' (2010) position on the significance of '*transformations*' and '*transduction*', the process of moving

meaning material from one mode to another, and that Pink's comments underestimate the importance Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) afford to **context** in *sign-making* and *sign-reading*. McDonagh et al.'s comments on the importance of the symbolic aspect of art is clearly relevant, but as discussed earlier in this chapter, the role of symbolism is acknowledged and discussed in some detail by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) and van Leeuwen (2005).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the distinction between the semiotic concept of the sign and that of the Saussurean concept discussed at the beginning of this chapter forms the basis of Kress and van Leeuwen's work that essentially looks at ways in which visual material can be explained partly, but not exclusively, through the use of Halliday's semiotic categorisation of language. Their influences come from other theoretical sources, such as: Barthes; Panofsky; Arnheim; Lakoff and Johnson, whose theoretical perspectives they have adapted for inclusion in their theoretical framework. These inclusions ensure that the description of the communicative potential of a semiotic resource does not rely on grammatical labels alone.

However, criticisms of a theoretical approach are useful as they can serve to highlight the importance of tailoring a theoretical approach to the nature of the data under analysis. I argue that to be successful in gaining maximum meaning potential from the social semiotic based analytical approach I apply,

the analysis must not restrict itself to solely and rigidly applying grammatical concepts and terms that mirror linguistic grammatical labels to visual communication. For these reasons I have chosen not to approach the analysis of the data using the micro-textual approaches practised by authors taking a systemic functional grammatical approach, such as that taken in the work of O'Toole (1994), O'Halloran (1999) and Baldry (2004). I tend to agree with Machin's (2008) comments on visual literacy and the validity of an existence of a 'visual grammar'. Machin highlights the difficulties of labelling visual communication with grammatical concepts that were designed to describe verbal or written communication. Furthermore, Machin (2009) makes a significant point about the subjectivity involved in the arbitrary selection of elements from an image that we then extract meaning from, but he also points out that it is possible to select certain elements for analysis to ascertain a meaning of the whole: '...rules without claiming that they are exactly like language.' (2009:188).

I argue that the tool kit I utilise in this thesis will provide a systematic way of uncovering hidden meanings within the commemorative war monuments, I equally emphasise the importance and relevance of exploring contextual features of their production, as van Leeuwen (2005) states:

...the 'social' in 'social semiotics' ...can only come into its own when social semiotics fully engages with social theory. This kind

of interdisciplinarity is an absolutely essential feature of social semiotics.

(van Leeuwen, 2005:1)

In summary, by approaching the analysis from the social perspective and including historical and political contextual information in the analysis, I demonstrate the significance of taking a holistic view of the data: its historical context; the modes of communication that make up the whole; as well as the role of the reader of the monuments in interactive viewing. The chapter continues with a description of the practical issues surrounding the data collection.

### 3.1 Practical Issues

#### *The data and its collection*

This project does not adopt a quantitative approach to the collection or the analysis of the data. The approach to the topic is intensive, rather than extensive and holistic in nature, which in itself led to decisions that affected the practical collection of the data.

#### *Non-utilitarian commemorative war monuments*

The data only includes **non-utilitarian** examples: the 'symbolic' commemorative war monuments that were selected by war memorial committees, rather than the utilitarian commemorative buildings, such as hospitals and libraries.

#### *UKNIWM database*

Background information on UK war memorials is accessed through a database compiled by The Imperial War Museum which describes its aim as to

compile a record of all war memorials in the UK promoting their appreciation, use and preservation (UKNIWM, online reference). The UKNIWM database shows that non-utilitarian memorials fall into two categories: figurative and non-figurative, the latter being listed as: crosses; obelisks and cenotaphs. The corpus includes examples of the latter for exemplification, but the majority of the corpus is formed by the former; the figurative types. UKNIWM lists the total number of figurative memorials as 710. I initially scanned the information in the database to identify the types of figurative monuments that existed, and although no quantitative claims are made of the methodological approach taken in this thesis, it is appropriate to state that the corpus itself consists of 90 examples, see appendices, collected over a period from 2007 – 2010, evidenced by photographic images recorded on a basic digital camera (see appendix for list of monuments).

### ***Locations***

The next decision concerned logistics and was made in relation to the geographical location of the collection. As a self-funded project that for the most part had to be completed alongside full-time employment, a decision influenced by limitations on both time and geography had to be made. For this reason, there are no examples from Scotland or Northern Ireland as the

locations fell beyond my geographical limitations. However, a search through the UKNIWM data base was undertaken and the descriptive details they give indicate that the memorials in these locations are in keeping with the style found in England and Wales. Apart from these omissions, the collection net takes in a wide range of examples from small villages, towns and cities.

Allowing practical, logistical issues to guide the data collection has eliminated the possibility of a charge of bias in the selection process as it ensured a random collection. The collections were dictated by journeys that were made predominantly for other purposes, rather than special journeys to collect a particular type of commemorative war monument. However, the criterion for the data selection has not been entirely random; I have ensured that the major sites of British commemorative war monument locations are included; these being two: Hyde Park Corner in London, a well-known, long established public area that features a collection of commemorative war monuments dating from the pre First World War period to the present, and The National Memorial Arboretum, a more recent creation.

The National Memorial Arboretum is located on a 150 acre site within the National Forest in Staffordshire and is a charity linked to The Royal British Legion. They state their aims as commemorating and celebrating: lost service personnel, those who have suffered as a result of conflict, and others (UKNIWM

online reference). The criterion also included a cross check that both more recent and First World War monuments are included in the corpus and that examples of the few Second World War and Falklands War monuments that exist are included.

### ***Official records***

During the course of data collection I also collected secondary background data on the commissioning process of three commemorative war monuments:

1. Records relating to the commissioning of The Welsh National War Memorial at Cardiff held at the Glamorgan record office.
2. Records relating to the commissioning of the war memorial at Mountain Ash held at the library at Mountain Ash.
3. Records relating the commissioning and erection of the war memorial at Wootton Bassett held by the former Mayor of Wootton Bassett who was a leading figure in the Wootton Bassett war memorial committee.

This complementary data is referred to in the analysis where appropriate.

### ***Ethical considerations***

University approval of the ethical approach was gained by attending a course run by Cardiff University, as part of their Research Students' Skills Development Programme, called: 'Research Governance and Ethics' and completing the procedure for gaining approval from the university ethics committee.

The ethical considerations to make when taking photographs in the public domain involve the infringement of privacy by the capturing of images that could result in the identification of members of the public (Pink 2001); whether their own physical images; or their identification by means of their car registration details. To combat this I took the following steps: I did no clandestine or covert photography; I attempted to ensure that my camera only captured the commemorative war monuments; where it was unavoidable that a member of the public was in the shot, I endeavoured to make recognition unlikely by taking the photograph from as great a distance possible to obscure their image and inhibit their recognition. As for the subject matter of the photographs: the monuments, these are intended for the viewing public, are placed in public space and have no photographic restrictions on them.

### ***The observer's paradox***

There are no issues of the role and presence of the researcher changing the nature of the data: the 'observer's paradox' (Labov, 1972), as the data is inanimate; my presence as a researcher has no bearing on the commemorative monuments as it would on living participants providing verbal data.

In summary, the data collection methods I employ in this thesis are largely in keeping with the qualitative strategic tradition that collects data from natural settings and one that provides a glimpse of the historical aspects of the topic (Creswell, 2009). The following two chapters provide the analysis of the commemorative war monument data. The analysis begins in the following chapter with an account of the socio-historical contextual information that surrounded the vast commissioning programme of war memorials as a reaction to The First World War. It then goes on to provide details of studies of British First World War memorials by historians who interpret the memorials in the context of their history.

## **Chapter 4: Analysis**

### **4.1 Political contextual information on British First World War commemorative monuments**

#### ***The post-First World War British political climate***

An understanding of the role played by elites in the commemorative war monument process is crucial to our understanding of any ideological function the monuments may have played. With this purpose in mind, this section of the analysis examines the political climate of the First World War period to establish a picture of the ideological environment from which the commemorative war monuments emerged. It shows how the commissioning process of the First World War monuments can be understood as part of a process of the promotion of nationalism in the face of perceived political threats from the left. The chapter examines research by historians that documents details of design considerations and the roles elites and other members of the community played in their erection and unveiling.

### ***The view from parliament***

Keegan's (2001) account of the First World War provides an excellent overview of how seemingly inconsequential disputes between the major power holders in the world at the time led up to the First World War and consequently how that war led to the demise of the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman empires. The fall of the latter gave the victors, Britain and France, control over new territories in the Middle East; this factor in itself having a major influence on future wars. The replacing of the autocratic Tsarist regime in Russia with the Bolshevik government caused some concern within the British government of the time. There is ample evidence to suggest that British society was undergoing a period of adjustment; changes that revealed signs of unrest at the bottom levels of society and that those elites at the top levels were concerned about the possible threats as a consequence of the unrest. Arnot (1967) refers to the effect on British Parliamentary decisions following the Russian revolution of 1917. Strikes, mutinies and opposition to the war all increased in the year following the Bolshevik revolution.

Events in Russia were certainly in the minds of the early Labour movement in Britain and influenced their early decisions in party policy (see, for example: McKibbin 1974; Laybourn 1997). The fear of Bolshevism was also uppermost in the thinking of Winston Churchill at that time, who, according to

Jenkins (2002), was intent on: ‘...strangling near to birth the Bolshevik regime in Russia’ (Jenkins, 2002:350). Jenkins comments that despite having just come out of one war, Churchill was calling loudly for Britain to engage in another war; this time against the new Russian power holders.

### ***A trade union perspective on British military involvement***

Arnot (1967) describes the growth of trade unions in Britain during the first two decades of the twentieth century and how, following the war and the Russian revolution, they became more militant. Convinced that the combined force of allied powers were determined to intervene militarily in Russia’s revolution, the unions called for a withdrawal of British troops from the force. Speakers at the conference of the Miners’ Federation called for the withdrawal of troops and highlighted the role of the press in anti-Russian propaganda, although these excerpts are lengthy, it is worth seeing them in full at this point to appreciate the strength of feeling against further military participation by Britain:

I want to submit to the conference that if we had no capitalistic money invested in Russia we should have no troops in Russia...It is a betrayal of the lads who have been called up

to take on military service in that direction. They ought to manage their own affairs; they ought to be left alone, and it is not for us to interfere and land troops there to protect capitalist interests.

(Hebert Smith of the Yorkshire Miners' Association, quoted in Arnot, 1967:148)

This Government of ours are controlling the Press of this country, and not allowing the truth about Russia to come out; if they did, possibly there would be almost, if not quite, a revolution against the treatment that has been meted out to the men who have been fighting for liberty, and for justice, and democracy. I think it is one of the greatest scandals, and one of the greatest reflections upon what we sometimes call this free British country of ours, that our troops should be sent there in order to prevent these men and these women, who like ourselves, are endeavouring to work out their own social salvation.

(James Winstone, vice-president of the South Wales Miners' Federation, quoted in Arnot, 1967:148)

We can see from these comments that trade union officials saw parity in the social circumstances experienced by British soldiers, the general public and Russian citizens. Arnot's work reinforces this perception; he describes how during this period a revolutionary spirit was spreading throughout Britain; he quotes Lloyd George from a confidential memorandum who said that the whole of Europe was:

...filled with the spirit of revolution....there is a deep sense not only of discontent, but of anger and revolt, amongst the workmen against the war conditions. The whole existing order in its political, social and economic aspects is questioned by the masses of the population from one end of Europe to the other.

(Lloyd George, quoted in Arnot, 1967:150)

According to Arnot, this spirit of revolution existed in the British army at the time, and the mutinies of January, and the demonstration by police and prison officers in Hyde Park in June 1919 can be attributed to this revolutionary spirit. This picture of a popular revolutionary spirit is also borne out by Hobsbawm (1990) who writes that the state and ruling classes were already competing with 'rivals' for the loyalty of the British working class, or what Hobsbawm regrettably refers to as 'the lower orders' (1990:83), pertinently

noting that prior to the First World War recruitment could not be taken for granted:

The political attitudes of citizens, and particularly workers, were matters of vital interest, given the rise of labour and socialist movements.

(Hobsbawm, 1992:83)

### ***Returning soldiers: elites' and soldiers' perspectives***

Once the war was underway the establishment also seemed to be concerned about the attitude of returning soldiers. Rudy, a social and political commentator of the time describes in an essay he wrote in 1918 how he is often asked his opinion by 'officers' and 'ministers of the Church' what 'Tommy' may be thinking after his war experiences. Writing whilst the war was drawing to a close, Rudy (1918), spoke of the contrast of the real soldiers on the front and the idealised representations of them at home, he comments on:

'...the almost necessary glorification of ...men and methods out in France or wherever we are at close grips with the enemy'

(Rudy, 1918:545)

The idealised versions of soldiery propagated at home never matched the bleak reality of the soldiers' lives on the front. Rudy's article warns of the 'dangers' that may face the 'homeland' (Britain) and 'its empire' when the soldiers returned from the war. When they return Rudy fears the soldiers will:

'...either go to the extremist camp or he will help form some powerful organisation of his own'

(Rudy, 1918:551)

He talks of the enormous profits being made by businessmen who are involved in the manufacturing of goods for the war whilst living in the safety and comfort of home. The tone of his article is one of fear and demonstrates that the return of disillusioned, dissatisfied men who have now become aware of their unequal status in society through the war process was a genuine threat to the nation.

In a stark example of the social distance between members of differing economic classes, he adopts a condescending tone when speaking of the

soldiers who he regarded as being: ‘...prone to mental phlegm’ (Rudy 1918:546). The soldiers are, he observes, generally ignorant and largely illiterate. He urges for an education of the masses to avert any danger, but the education of the masses was not without benefits for the nation, he argues:

...the State owes it to its citizens that they should be acquainted with their rights, duties and the true significance of Throne, Country and Empire.

(Rudy, 1918:550)

Without elaborating on circumstances surrounding the events, he refers to the:

...social grievances which almost culminated in 1914 in a war of classes in the United Kingdom, the citizen-soldier has added the many wrongs, or supposed wrongs, of the past four years.

(Rudy, 1918:546)

Alerting the reader to the fact that the Church no longer has power over the soldiers, he notes their lack of spiritual interest, describing them as:

‘...essentially materialistic, highly superstitious and possessing virtues which are ethic rather than religious.’

(Rudy, 1918:551).

Above all, he mourns the loss of faith ‘Tommy’ has in political parties and institutions, national or: ‘...imperial...which stand, or ought to stand, above party strife’, (Rudy, 1918:546). Rudy then gives an example of a symptom of this loss of faith: ‘...his present attitude towards the national anthem’ (Rudy, 1918:546). Rudy’s comments whilst not supported by a great amount of detail are evidence that by 1918 soldiers were displaying their resentment of nationhood and that powerful groups had noted this resentment and feared its consequences.

The contextual information provided by the literature reviewed so far paints an uneasy picture; there were obvious tensions at government level regarding the perceived threat of the emerging of Communist ideology. Signs of the level of the perceived threat can also be seen in Churchill's willingness to engage in further military activity against the new Russian power holders. The trade unions, claiming to speak for the British workers, saw a parallel with their domestic low social status and that of the Russian worker and firmly rejected notions of further British military activity. On the domestic level the perceived threat also came from within the lower ranks of the military, those who made

up the mass of the British army, 'the ordinary' British citizen who was now waking up to the appalling conditions their poverty at home created for them and their families.

These are the socio-political factors that are significant to the conception and production of the nation-wide First World War memorial project and that the concerns we have seen expressed propelled their erection in British villages, towns and cities. It may be that *nationalism*, communicated by the wide scale commissioning of commemorative war monuments became the mechanism by which the elites attempted to reconcile with the average citizen. The following section discusses the commissioning processes that preceded the erection of a commemorative war monument in British villages, towns and cities and explores the design considerations that formed a part of the commissioning process of the national memorial: The Cenotaph, and British commemorative war monuments in general, particularly looking at the choices made by the designers in their representation of soldiers. It begins with the spontaneous war 'shrines' that sprung up on streets throughout Britain during the First World War.

### ***Pre-conscription, spontaneous First World War commemorative shrines***

Winter (1998:79) categorises British war memorials into three distinctive ‘spaces and periods’: first, those scattered over the home front before 1918, these spontaneous street memorials appeared around Britain soon after the First World War had started. The second category, the subject of this thesis, the post-First World War memorials in churches and civic sites, these were constructed in the ten years following the First World War. Third, those memorials erected in war cemeteries abroad.

After the onset of the First World War the category defined as the first category of war memorial by Winter (1998) started to appear. Before the wave of more official public memorialising, people in small communities had already begun to erect their own small monuments, or ‘shrines’, to the people who had enlisted from their street, workplace or organisation to which they belonged<sup>11</sup>. These shrines would be a record of all the names of the volunteers from a particular community and as well as being viewed as a celebration of the act of volunteering, they were also seen as a way of promoting the war effort and



<sup>11</sup> A typical WWI street shrine

contributing to war propaganda (Winter 1998, King 1998). Winter describes these early monuments as a method of encouragement of further enlistment and: ‘...a permanent and immediate chastisement of those who chose not to go.’ (Winter, 1998:80).

So, one function of the pre-cription street shrine war monument was to encourage people to go to war by evoking a sense of shame in those who had not volunteered to go. Speaking of the proposal to erect a shrine in Islington, Alderman Saint hoped that it would:

...also serve as a stimulus to the people not to be a party to an inconclusive peace which might mean a repetition of this terrible slaughter in the course of the next generation.

(Saint, quoted in King, 1998:54)

It is clear that the spontaneous memorials, that numbered 267 according to Furlong et al. (2003), were viewed by some at the time as a way to encourage participation in warfare, but what role could the second category, the post-war memorials have taken?

### ***The widespread commissioning of First World War memorials***

Perceptions of the second post-war category differ from those of the spontaneously erected memorials. Winter describes these as having ‘...ecumenical and conventional patriotic elements, emphasizing at once the universality of loss and the special features of national political and aesthetic traditions.’ (1998:79).

It is this emphasis on ‘national political and aesthetic traditions’ that offers an interesting avenue of enquiry into the role played by the state in the erection of commemorative war monuments. Winter continues:

These local war memorials arose out of the post war search for a language in which to reaffirm the values of the community for which soldiers had laid down their lives.’

(Winter, 1998:79)

This quote suggests that Winter seems to downplay the role of the state, by aligning the ‘national political and aesthetic traditions’ with ‘the values of the community’ for which people have sacrificed their lives, Winter hints at an acceptance, a naturalisation, rather than the questioning, of the concept of sacrifice of one’s life for the nation-state.

In each location, war memorial committees consisting of representatives from public officials to 'lay' people and religious figures, decided on the plans for location and form of the monument to be erected.<sup>12</sup> The cost of commissioning and erecting a war memorial, at least in the provincial towns and villages, did not depend on central government funds. Financed largely through public donation and subscription, plans for the war memorials were considered for their perceived representation of both grief and gratitude, but also for their financial burden. Many plans had to be revised, for example a change of material or size of the intended monument, due to lack of funds (Winter 1998, Quinlan 2005). King's work highlights the financial role of the public in the commissioning process; it seems that although they were not usually actively involved in design choice, the amount of money they could donate determined the size and quality of the memorial that could be selected by the committee. King points out that spontaneous public interest alone was not sufficient to secure the commissioning of the monument; apart from disappointing levels of contributions, attendance at public meetings was sometimes low (King, 1998).

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<sup>12</sup> Quinlan gives the description of two such committees; one in Sleaford, Lincs: 'It was composed of 12 councillors, 12 clergy, 15 ratepayers, 18 ladies and 15 ex- Servicemen.' and the other in Bethnal Green, London: '...was composed of the local council, Christian clergy, the synagogue, two benevolent funds, the friendly societies, two hospital aid funds, the Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, the rifle club and the special constables' (2005:43).

According to some historians (see, for example: Winter 1998 and Quinlan 2005) the primary motivating factor in the construction of so many First World War memorials was to provide the public with a place at which to mourn; according to Winter they were an expression of grief and a show of support to the bereaved (Winter, 1998). It is true that the provision of this facility was partly deemed necessary due to the absence of individual graves to mourn at; in the First World War families of soldiers would be told about the deaths or the disappearance whilst in action of their relatives, but often nothing, or very little, else. In most cases individual bodies could not be identified or located; even if it had been possible to distinguish an individual soldier's body on the battlefield a non-repatriation policy was practised by the governments involved in the First World War (Commonwealth War Graves Commission, online reference).<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the families had no corpse to bury. So, according to Winter the war memorials act as a 'grave' for these families to attend, providing a focal point for grief: '...a framework for and legitimisation of individual and family grief' (Winter, 1998:93).

Viewing the war memorials solely as a facilitator of personal grief is, as has been suggested by Ashplant et al. (2004), a singular way of viewing the use

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<sup>13</sup> Founded by Sir Fabian Ware, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission was established in 1917 and was charged with the responsibility of the burial and commemoration of war dead abroad.

of war memorials; it places their ownership and origin with the individual, rather than the collective and suggests a uniform interpretation of both the expression and the interpretation of the meaning of the war memorial. Notably, Winter's work (1998, 1999) emphasises and discusses in some depth the memorials' function at the time they were erected as a mourning site, and locates them as an act of individuals rather than in: '...some state-bounded space of hegemony or domination' (Winter, 1999:60). However, looking closely at his own descriptions of the war memorials, we can see that his comments in themselves reflect multiple meanings and hegemonic influence; he describes the erection of the war memorials after 1914 as:

...an act of citizenship. To remember was to affirm community, to assert its moral character, and to exclude from it those values, groups, or individuals that placed it under threat.

(Winter, 1998:80).

Despite this tacit acknowledgement of the hegemonic function of war memorials, Winter argues strongly for the reading of war memorials as a private, personal expression of grief rather than one of nationalism and hegemonic influence. He urges people to consider the background to their

construction in order to understand their 'true' meaning and is critical of readings that focus on war memorials as political symbolism saying: 'What these people did was much smaller and much greater than that' (Winter, 1999:60). Viewing the war memorials as both a symbol of grief and a site for grieving concurs partly with the view of Gregory (1994) who, as well as acknowledging this humanistic role, also acknowledges their hegemonic function when he describes the language in their inscriptions as drawing heavily on:

...pre-war rhetoric of God, Empire, King and Country, on notions of sacrifice and on presenting the war in terms of a crusade for human dignity and liberty.

(Gregory, 1994:24)

Surely, we should conclude that whatever else they may be the memorials are undoubtedly sites of political expression? For a view of the memorials as being symbolic of a political act we can turn to King (1998) who argues that in order to reconstruct meanings of war memorials, their own creative process has to be examined; of this process he says:

This process was fundamentally political, because it relied for its organisation on the institutions of local politics, on the

press and on other forms of association whose activities, if not overtly political, had political implications.

(King, 1998:5)

***Participation of elitist groups in the commissioning of commemorative war monuments***

Authors (Gregory 1994, King 1998, Gaffney 1998) record the extent to which elites in each community struggled with each other for power over the decisions on the type of war memorial they would have in their areas from their conception to the unveiling ceremonies, this is clearly seen in Wales where Gaffney (1998) conducted her research on First World War memorials. In this work, Gaffney (1998) looks closely at the political debates that surrounded the construction of commemorative war memorials and monuments, the people who were involved and the political motivations and influences. Whilst acknowledging political and hegemonic readings of the memorial process, she cautions against a singular interpretation and recognises a plurality of approaches to the memorials seeing them as:

...potent evidence of the both the catastrophe of the Great War and of the challenges faced by those seeking to commemorate the fallen.

(Gaffney, 1998:24)

The political significance of the commemorative war monument is also prominent in the construction of the monuments in the South Wales Coalfields area where they appear in abundance. The process of their construction was managed by people who were positioned at a high level in the mining industry that dominated the area. Death was commonplace in the industry; Gaffney (1998) cites the example of the Senghennydd mining explosions, one in 1901 which killed 79, and another in 1913 that resulted in the death of 439 men and boys. Despite this major death toll, no memorial to the miners was erected at the time. However, in 1919 a war memorial committee was established and the Senghennydd war memorial was erected in the town centre: ‘...an impressive clock tower in a prominent position’ (Gaffney, 1998:99).

Gaffney cites a prime example of the complex political jostling that preceded the erection of a war memorial; the events that took place during the commissioning process of the ‘national’ war memorial in Cathays Park in Cardiff. Attempts by the local authority in Cardiff to get contributions from surrounding councils towards the erection of the Welsh National War Memorial

in its civic centre failed. Fearing that a 'national' monument in Cardiff would deny them the erection of their own memorial, councils refused to give money to fund the 'beautification of Cardiff' (Gaffney, 1998 quoted in Quinlan, 2005:59). Gaffney (1998) describes in some detail the hostile debates that surrounded the proposal to have a memorial in Cardiff that was meant to act as a memorial for the soldiers of the whole of Wales.

However, the concept of a united Welsh national identity, with Cardiff as its focus, was unattainable as Gaffney's work demonstrates:

It is clear that the invitation from Cardiff City Council to local authorities throughout Wales was treated with a mixture of indifference, suspicion and hostility.

(Gaffney, 1998:51)

Having failed to start a national fund, the council decided that a city fund would be the only means of raising the funds (Gaffney, 1998). However, the Cardiff based Welsh newspaper, The Western Mail, which had a large circulation throughout Wales, persevered with the notion of a national memorial. In an article published in 1919, they promoted the proposal for a national monument, arguing strongly that in Wales all actions are habitually taken from a national standpoint (*ibid*). Appealing to their readers to rally

together as one, under a single national identity, they started a subscription fund with their own donation of a hundred pounds (Western mail, 24 October 1919, in Gaffney, 1998:53).

We find echoes of the wider British political climate in Wales by looking at Gaffney's work who proposes that the Western Mail had its own reasons for pushing the nationalist case. She cites the immergence of socialism within many local authorities that was challenging the Liberal stronghold as the motivation for the Western Mail's national flag waving. According to Gaffney, the Western Mail had enjoyed commercial domination in Wales and feared the emerging socialist trends within the local authorities:

...the appeal for national unity provided the paper with an opportunity to assert its position in Wales.

(Gaffney, 1998:54-55)

The Welsh public responded well to the newspaper's campaign, eventually raising a large sum of money: £24,000 by the time it closed in 1920 (Gaffney, 1998). In this example we can see sacrifice, memorial and a Conservative brand of nationalism coming together to mutually support each other.

Gaffney's research helps us to see that war memorials are indeed complex cultural resources that are created with the help of many societal establishments and, in some cases, with significant input from individuals. The nature of the individual and elite input into the process leads to a conclusion that war commemoration in the form of monument commissioning can be viewed from a hegemonic perspective, as the elite establishments of government and media called for a particular response from the public who responded by giving what they could from their limited incomes, yet, despite their significant financial commitment they were not invited to participate in the design decisions or in the unveiling ceremonies.

### ***The choice between symbolic and utilitarian memorials***

The decision to put limited resources into a war memorial, rather than much needed facilities, was a common occurrence throughout the UK. However, a war memorial was also taken as an opportunity to increase facilities. Weekly house-to-house collections would be made in some of the most poverty stricken areas of the country and it is the poverty that these families existed in which provides a clue as to why people with so little may have given to the fund. By the selection of a utilitarian memorial, such as a hospital, library or recreational facility, rather than a symbolic memorial,

Gaffney states that the memorial process enabled many communities to create facilities for themselves that otherwise would never have been provided for them by the authorities (1998). An example Gaffney cites is that of Trehafad, in The Rhondda Valley, where the desire for a utilitarian memorial outweighed the desire for a symbolic. Local newspaper the Rhondda Leader wrote in 1924:

Cinderella of the Rhondda...without an Institute, a recreation field, and even without a playground for children, apart from those attached to the schools. The residents, with characteristic thoroughness, are making a splendid effort to meet these long and deeply-felt wants, and they have set their hearts upon providing a War Memorial Institute.

(The Rhondda Leader, in Gaffney, 1998:108)

Elsewhere in historical evidence we see that the urge to create a symbolic monument overrode practical needs, we also get a sense of what the commissioning committees believed they would achieve by choosing a symbolic monument. All memorial committees were faced with a similar choice when considering the construction of a war memorial: a symbolic, or a utilitarian memorial. Debates on this choice centred on two schools of thought: emotional urges to create a permanent memory of sacrifice for posterity in the form of a symbolic memorial and a facility that provided a practical benefit for ex-

servicemen. King (1998) says that, whilst this was a point of disagreement, they all agreed that the purpose was to honour and mourn the dead. According to Moriarty (1997) the public decided which kind of memorial (i.e. utilitarian or symbolic) they would commission through a series of public meetings. There was much disagreement over the choice of memorial, King (1998) quotes artist W Reynolds-Stephens, designer of the memorial in Cleveland amongst others, who said a utilitarian monument:

‘...evinces no real desire to keep green the memory of the great heroism of the fallen.’

(Reynolds-Stephens, 1918 quoted in King, 1998:66)

King asserts that social, ethical and political ideas unrelated to honour and mourning were all introduced into the debate as a means of developing a preference for a particular type of memorial. At the same time, King argues that there was no correlation between left/right political positions and the preference for a symbolic or a utilitarian memorial. He refers to two political figures: Philip Gibbs a Liberal politician, and the Conservative councillor, George King, who are quoted giving different perspectives on the purpose of a memorial. Gibbs talks about the role of the memorial as an anti-war statement:

...should be not only reminders of the great death that killed the flower of our race but warnings of what war means in slaughter and ruin, in broken hearts and agony.

(Philip Gibbs, in King, 1998:76)

Whilst the comments of Councillor George King reveal a different ideological position; he speaks of memorials as representing:

...the great cause for which our gallant men laid down their lives – the cause of justice and freedom.

(George King, in King, 1998:76)

When faced with the decision about the type of memorial to erect many communities decided on a utilitarian model, maybe a hospital extension or a recreation facility, but some were able to afford both a utilitarian and a symbolic memorial. An important point to make about the symbolic memorial is that, unlike a utilitarian memorial that invites certain sections of a community into it at certain times in their lives, a symbolic memorial offers the opportunity to anyone in the community to gather around it to commemorate war in future ceremonies and it is their potential for the projection of an ideological position on sacrifice for the nation-state that makes the war memorials an important cultural resource worthy of research. Moriarty attributes the desire to create a

symbolic memorial to the fear of forgetting: '...what the dead had died for and their example of self-sacrifice' (Moriarty, 1997:128). Whilst King asserts:

But it is clear that much of what was said was less concerned with the memory of the dead than with the needs of the living.

(King, 1998:82)

Although it is tempting to take a romantic view of the erection of the First World War commemorative monuments as a spontaneous act taken by individuals in a community who were somehow not associated with powerful groups, evidence in the literature suggests we should view their commissioning as a deliberate act of power holders. This is evident in the story of the construction of the Cardiff monument exemplifies what King describes as: '...an exercise in official and unofficial power.' (King, 1998:6). Indeed, King discusses a range of factors that influenced the decision to create a monumental war memorial rather than a utilitarian memorial and also the benefits that resulted from taking that decision; these went far beyond the realm of the simple act of remembrance of the war dead.

Discussions about the kind of memorial a town or village should have led to extensive debates on social, ethical and political ideas. Power struggles

emerged to gain control of the memorial fund (King, 1998). Making it clear that, in his opinion, the erection of a war memorial was a political activity, King says that consideration of such factors are essential to the interpretation of the meaning of war memorials. It is clear that the spontaneous memorials were viewed by some at the time as a way to encourage participation in warfare. Yet, views of the role of post-First World War country-wide commissioning of central public war memorials seem to differ.

The call for more permanent war memorials in central civic spaces throughout the country was promoted by newspaper reports and political figures towards the end of the First World War (King, 1998). According to Mosse (1990) the construction of the Cenotaph in London was first proposed during peace celebrations in July 1919. He also emphasises that the proposal had a political motive: to combat a perceived threat of bolshevism in Britain. Indeed, as the earlier part of this analysis has demonstrated, the fear of Bolshevism was common throughout Europe at that time and influenced many aspects of political life in Britain.

Despite the rise of proletarian socialist movements, according to Hobsbawm it is during the First World War period and its immediate aftermath that mass nationalism triumphed against rival ideologies (Hobsbawm, 1992:123), but how would a designer go about representing nationalism in a

commemorative war monument? Perhaps we can see this process in the history of the creation of the most well-known British war memorial on which the annual national commemoration of war still centres: The Cenotaph in London. As the erection of war memorials spread throughout the country, committees were faced with a vast selection of choices regarding the design of their monument. Many factors had to be considered, not only environmental factors, but also how the soldiers were to be portrayed in those monuments that featured statues that represented the soldier who had suffered severe physical and mental distress during and after the war, as King (1998) points out:

There were also the distress and grievances caused by economic problems in the aftermath of war to contend with, especially those of ex-servicemen.

(1998:156)

Perhaps these complexities were considered too vast when the choice of the design of the National monument had to be made.

### ***Centralising war commemoration and the issue of design***

Thinking that the creation of a symbol in central London would: ‘...work up patriotic feeling’ (Hombberger, quoted in Mosse, 1990:95), Mosse refers to the move to construct the Cenotaph as a conscious effort to engage the public’s attention and enthusiasm in the new age of: ‘...mass politics’ (Mosse, 1990:96). It is the Cenotaph that is still the focal point of the annual Remembrance Parade each November. Originally the architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens, was asked to design a structure referred to as a ‘catafalque’; in effect a stand on which rests a coffin. Lutyens thought that this was not harmonious with the fact that the bodies of the dead were absent, so he preferred a cenotaph. The name ‘cenotaph’ originates from the Greek ‘kenotafion’ meaning ‘empty tomb’ (Moriarty, 1995:13).

This style of memorial was soon adopted throughout the country, the UK National Inventory of War Memorials lists their number throughout the country as 267 (Furlong et al. 2003). The apparent lack of reference to an actual body or coffin is interesting when considering the linking of the 1920 Armistice memorial service with the burial of the body of the ‘Unknown Warrior’ at Westminster, the body is that of a British soldier; the identity of whom is uncertain. Moriarty (1995) points out that a symbolic memorial, lacking representations of soldiers, dead or alive, is a way of appealing to each

individual of the bereaved population. In the case of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior at Westminster the body of the soldier buried within could be imagined by a bereaved family to be that of their relative, whilst at the same time the Cenotaph conveys anonymity; making it accessible to the whole of the bereaved population. Although representation of a soldier was rejected by the designer, Lutyens, of the Cenotaph, he did include a figure of a draped corpse on the top of his other cenotaph-style memorials at Manchester, Southampton and Rochdale (Moriarty, 1995:15).

It seems that although the cenotaph format was widely adopted as a memorial style throughout the country, it was often modified to include figures; these were more often male soldiers, but occasionally female figures were included. Yet these figures did not reflect the physical reality of the soldiers, neither did they reflect the reality of the environment and manner in which they were killed. In comparison with Moriarty's view, King's comments on monument design process preferred by artists and committees portray innocence in regards to their expectations of the emotional needs of the public; King says:

In memorial design, simplicity and reticence were urged by artists and critics, and it was also much appreciated by lay

people – at least those whose views are recorded in memorial committee records.

(King, 1999:161)

However, Moriarty has an entirely different perspective; her description of the outcome of debates that were held over the design of commemorative war monuments alludes to the thinking behind architects' design of the images of the male soldier:

They represented a pure race unsullied by foreign blood. The splendid physiques belied the reality of pre and post-war poverty, malnutrition and disease.

(Moriarty, 1995:20)

If King's assessment of 'lay' people's appreciation of the simplistic images of the soldiers is accurate, we are urged to speculate about why people would be more appreciative of images that idealise their dead? Moriarty explains that as with the fictitious heroic soldiers in the imaginations of people at home, representation of their actual looks and conditions in which they served on the front line was no more realistic in the memorial monuments. As Scarry commented:

...the persistent content of war-injury-often slips from view by a process of omission or redescription. British war memorials played a vital role in this process.

(Scarry, 1985 quoted in Moriarty, 1995:19)

During the commissioning process the design choice made by the commissioning committees were often governed by financial constraints; the inclusion of a sculptured statue would significantly increase costs (King, 1998). But when money was available for a statue to be included, what part did reality play in the choices made in the representation of soldiers? According to King, rather than individuals on war memorial committees coming up with designs and ideas on the representation in the memorial, artists or sculptors were consulted and their opinions usually treated with respect. Artists would advise committees on the appropriate memorial for the intended location, King (1998) cites architect Edward Warren who wrote that simple memorials, such as crosses, were appropriate for smaller communities whilst larger areas such as towns should opt for a figurative sculpture. King notes that although there were many disagreements regarding the selection of a memorial, artists, rather than clients, led the way in choice of memorial.

Moriarty (1995) documents the processes that governed the choice of the bronze figure; saying that 'traditionalists', some of whom had served in the

war, were awarded the majority of commissions. Awarding the work to the traditionalists had a significant impact on the resultant style of representation in the First World War commemorative monuments. The end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries saw a change in attitudes of modern sculptors toward the sculptural understanding of the human form, Moriarty refers to this new style as: ‘...a new acceptance of the incomplete body’ (1995:20). This ‘new’ approach of stripping the familiar, choosing to disguise the appearance, and consequently, the meaning communicated by a representation conflicts with the choices made by the sculptors of the First World War commemorative monuments. They chose the opposite of reality; rather than thin, tired, wounded soldiers, they chose complete, healthy bodies with neo-classical forms clothed in contemporary military uniforms. Their depictions of the human form remained consistent with established tradition, redressed in First World War uniforms (Moriarty, 1995).

The selection process was largely governed through a process of institutional, elitist control, as King says, the choice was ‘...largely determined by institutional and financial power’ (1999:160). Indeed, sculptors would have been trained by established design schools all advocating particular, traditional theoretical positions on representation, therefore, we would not expect to see a wide diversity in the final images of those memorials that featured human

figures. Also, uniformity in approach is reflected in opinions on the choice of language<sup>14</sup>.

A designer who received some attention for being different was Charles Sargeant Jagger. His memorial for Hoylake and West Kirby is described by King as 'unconventional'. Sir George Frampton commented that it was one of the best, if not **the** best statue he had seen (Frampton, 1921 cited in King, 1998:114). Jagger is known for a more primitive, rugged style of art. He was a serving soldier in the First World War and was injured and received military decorations. This experience may account for his style of representation; his figure of a dead soldier in his memorial in Hyde Park, London, was too realistic for some and resulted in criticism in letters to *The Times* (Compton, 2004).

Public records viewed at the Glamorgan records office during the background research I carried out on the Welsh National War Memorial in Cardiff show that Jagger's memorial statue for Great Western Railway in Paddington station so impressed one of the war memorial committee members in Cardiff that they invited Jagger to submit a design for the Welsh National War Memorial. However, his design did not succeed in being selected. Unfortunately, the records do not indicate what his design consisted of, or why

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<sup>14</sup> Inscriptions on the commemorative war monument data are analysed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

his ideas were finally rejected (Welsh National War Memorial Order of Service at the Unveiling of the Monument, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1928, Glamorgan Records Office, D/DX684/1). This rejection without discussion seems unusual; historians record that discussions with the artist regarding design of memorials were common, and as we have already seen decisions regarding design were usually left to the professional artist (King, 1998). A hint as to why the commissioning committee in Cardiff rejected Jagger may lie in criticisms that were made of another of his projects. According to both Compton (2004) and King (1998), he had received criticism from the committee responsible for the commissioning of the Royal Artillery memorial in Hyde Park; they criticised his use of 'bulky clothing'. Nevertheless, this criticism had not deterred him from his design choices; Jagger's response to the criticism was:

I am most anxious to conform to these criticisms...except beyond the point where to do so would seriously affect the design as a work of art.

(Jagger, 1921 quoted in King, 1998:118)

An insight into what may have guided another designer of war memorials can be found in the words of one prominent architect, Sir Herbert Baker, who was one of the Principal Architects of the Imperial War Graves Commission:

My inclination for war memorials at home was the same as for the war graves cemetery, that generally they should express the sense of reverence and peace: uniting the living with the dead in manifold memories.

(Baker, in Quinlan, 2005:46)

Baker's view of the function of the war memorial clearly sees spirituality as an important feature in their design. Contrast this view with that of a Colonel Earle in a speech he gave at the unveiling of the war memorial at St Alfred's school in Wantage, Oxfordshire. Colonel Earle, whose speech Quinlan (2005) quotes from, sees the war memorial as a reminder of sacrifice past and an acceptance, one could say even welcoming, the possibility of sacrifice in the future:

...the other object of the memorial is to teach us Duty towards our King and fellow citizens – generous wholehearted duty as was given by those whose names we honour today in order that we might live and preserve all that we hold most dear. May we prove worthy of their sacrifice.

(Earle, in Quinlan, 2005:70)

These two quotations illustrate the expectation that war memorials have a particular didactic function, in that they should give people a resolution to death, and also to teach respect for sacrifice of life for the nation-state. How are these ideological expectations realised in the design and construction of a war memorial?

Moriarty (1995) refers to the inclusion of a sculptured representation of a soldier as the 'instantaneous function', and argues that this is far more effective than a cenotaph, an obelisk or a cross. She cites Edmund Gosse, a proponent of the 'new' style of sculptor who believed that bronze casting 'is not a translation of the original but that original itself' (Gosse, 1894-5 cited in Moriarty, 1995:23). According to Borg (1991), Gosse coined the term 'new sculpture' that described a new realism and naturalism in British Sculpture originating in France from where many tutors came to teach at the Royal College in South Kensington, London. Moriarty (1995) says that every effort was made to create a finished image that looked whole and seamless, noting that, in some cases, efforts were made to replicate conditions that the soldiers had faced in Flanders fields; soldiers' boots sinking in mud, pitted bronze to resemble the clay models that the bronzes were cast from, claiming that the clay itself was symbolic of the mud the soldiers were living in.

Commenting on the use of bronze, Moriarty says that the figure set permanently in bronze has no fragility, the act of casting the sculpture renders the soldier immortalised, as a soldier either, sturdy in battle, ready to fight, or victorious after battle, and she claims it is this message that ensures the continuous regeneration of the acceptance and expectations of war (Moriarty, 1995). As Moriarty puts it:

The dead's very absence facilitated the process of idealisation of whom they had been as people and the circumstances of their death. The Sculpted body shaped private personal memory as well as creating public myths. By avoiding any reference to physical and social fragmentation it engendered a literal and metaphorical remembering.

(Moriarty, 1995:37)

Although Penny wrote that the purpose of the memorials were to '...portray the typical, indeed the common, victim or participant' (Penny, 1981 quoted in King, 1998:132). King acknowledges the importance of institutional control in the war memorial process, he says that:

...the expressive possibilities of war commemoration were not shaped by a system of values encoded in commemorative symbolism, but by the nature of the institutions through which commemoration took place, and by the interests of participant groups, pursuing goals determined by their own sectional values.

(King, 1998:248-249)

Bourke (1996), commenting on the choices faced by committees when selecting a war memorial, cites a member of the Llandudno committee:

‘...any memorial of a pronounced warlike or realistic character should be avoided.’

Bourke notes they chose an obelisk because it:

‘...had been used as a commemorative monument by successive civilisations for nearly 4,000 years.’

(Llandudno War Memorial Unveiling Ceremony and Dedication, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1922, (Llandudno, 1922), 3. cited in Bourke, 1996:227)

Disagreeing with this view, the Colwyn Bay war memorial committee opted for a bronze figure of a soldier. However, they too were mindful of creating something that avoided association with realistic war imagery preferring that the image showed:

‘...no suggestion of callousness or brutality associated with war.’

and the representation of the soldier was to be:

...typical...Called from his uneventful civil pursuits by the stern life, whilst the knowledge of the horrors and possibilities of War enhance[d] his valour.

(Book of Remembrance, Colwyn Bay War Memorial 1914-1918, (Colwyn Bay, 1922), quoted in Bourke, 1996:22)

On the subject of real and idealised war and soldiers, another intriguing design is the memorial in Burnley, Lancashire. Moriarty makes an interesting observation on the way this memorial used imagery related to childhood. This, she comments, urges the viewer to see the dead as ‘...children, rather than fighting men’ (Moriarty, 1997:139). She provides evidence for her assertion in the form of the local newspaper report that tells its readers that it was the

intention of the sculptor to avoid all association with death, or 'slaughter' and to emphasise the fact that the boys had done their 'duty' (The Burnley Express, 11 December 1926 in Moriarty, 1997:139). The newspaper's description of the memorial tells the viewer how the memorial should be read and even offers its own view of how a grieving mother would feel when viewing the memorial:

The cenotaph merging into the three figures of sailor, soldier and airman is intended to express the emotion felt in the human heart at the ideals of those who have fallen in the Great War. The mother, overwhelmed in this emotion, places a wreath in memory of her son at the foot of the Cenotaph, and, as she stoops, the cenotaph shapes itself in her heart into the features of her son.

(Burnley Express, 11 December 1926 quoted in Moriarty, 1995:19)

Moriarty also documents the processes that governed the choice of the bronze figures that are found in a large number of the monuments, noting that most of the work went to 'traditionalists', some of whom had served in the war. The end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries saw a change in attitudes toward the sculptural understanding of the human form, Moriarty refers to this new style as: '...a new acceptance of the incomplete

body' (1995:20). It is important to note that this 'new' approach of stripping the familiar, choosing to disguise the appearance and consequently the meaning of a piece conflicts with the choice of artistic style of representation selected by the sculptors of the First World War memorials, they chose to follow the opposite approach; complete, healthy bodies with neo-classical forms clothed in military uniforms, portraying not new, but classical sculpture redressed in First World War uniforms (Moriarty, 1995).

If the Modernist movement was dictating a new style as art critics suggest, why did the majority of First World War artists choose the continuation of a classical style constituting, as it did, a resistance to new directions in art? Could it be that because of the subject matter- war-the cause of the nation-state and nationalist discourses had superseded the inherent desire of so many artists to challenge traditional methods of representation?

Moriarty also gives an account of the significant amount of religious ritual that was acted out at the unveiling of a war memorial. Religion and nationalism came together; the moment was usually covered by a Union Jack, they would then have a church service, singing hymns and saying prayers that offered the sacrificed to god. The dignitaries who spoke at the ceremonies would be influential religious, as well as political figures.

In accordance with King (1998), Gaffney (1998:120) acknowledges the cross, '...whether 'traditional' or Celtic in design', is the most common icon featured on British war memorials. However, despite the domination of Christian ideology in Britain at that time, sects within the church existed in the form of the many denominations, as did other religions, such as Judaism. The cross, which was used to symbolise sacrifice, became a popular feature in the war shrines and memorials. King says this image became to refer, 'in most people's minds' (King, 1998:129), to the sacrifice of the soldier likened to the Christian belief that Jesus had sacrificed his life for mankind. This idea transferred easily into the:

'...supposedly willing and generous laying down of their lives  
by soldiers in defence of their country and their ideals.'

(King, 1998:129)

Taken from traditional funerary symbolism and markers, the torch, according to King, was used to remind people of the need to continue the struggle on behalf of soldiers who had died so far. The obelisk and inscribed wall-tablets were also commonly used in the memorials. King attributes the use of the obelisk to two motives: the use of classicism in civic design and the tradition of aristocratic landowners incorporating an obelisk into their estates.

The fact that there was an attempt to fit with current town planning design trends suggests that town planners made a significant contribution to the choice of style a centrally located war memorial would be. As he says, the obelisk is not a feature of the small village memorial, so an awareness of aesthetic appeal and contemporary trends was obviously a consideration in the debates on the commissioning of a war memorial.

Usually, it would have been the cost of a proposal, rather than the design that resulted in any drastic changes (King 1998) and where professional designers were consulted, their knowledge was respected and acknowledged by the commissioning committees. It is also important to note that many committees, restricted by limited funds, did not approach designers for an original piece of work, instead, they chose from a catalogue of designs held by monument masons (King, 1998). Yet, when this is the case the designs in the catalogue come from the same body of designers that are approached individually; all of whom learn their trade via the same institutional process.

So far, we have been able to establish a classic approach to the design of British First World War memorials, one that aims to steer well clear of reality and present an idealised form of war and the soldier. The institutional thread that binds the programme of the commissioning process together has been traced from the political climate to the media and in the main, finds that the

ultimate decision rests with the artist. The artists, of course, are products of their cultural heritage. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) emphasise the importance of recognising the relevance of culture to the analysis of semiotic resources. However, it is difficult to objectively view one's own cultural norms, sometimes only by comparison with the cultural norms of others do we get a clear understanding of our own practices.

### ***Cultural influences on commemorative war monument design***

The relevance of British cultural practice and norms in commemorative war monument design is apparent when compared to the design customs in non-British territories. Representations found in mainland European memorials differ from those in Britain. Mosse's (1990) discussion of the factors taken into consideration when selecting a war memorial include: noise; spatial awareness and whether the memorial should serve in providing some function for the living as well as acting as a memorial for the dead. Speaking of German war memorials, he notes that modernity was: '...absorbed by war memorials, while it was ignored by military cemeteries and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' (1990:101). He identifies a common European theme in the war memorials: the ideal warrior, and, in Italy and France particularly, the resurrection of the soldier. He also noted differences between the European choices of memorials;

according to Mosse, England did not usually use images of soldiers in poses that were: '...semi nude or aggressive' (1990:105) and he highlights the role of the memorial in Germany as preserving 'the myth of the war experience' (1990:106), which, he asserts, helped the right wing politicians to promote nationalism, offering an alternative to the reality of post WW1 Germany.

Mosse's work on Germany's commemoration of both World Wars is interesting, as it considers the commemoration of a nation that is unable to celebrate victory in their commemorative monuments. Mosse finds that the German nation avoids tackling the topic of defeat and manages to celebrate itself by utilising pre-industrial symbolism in their commemorative war monuments.

The German style of commemoration contrasts with that of France; evidenced by Kidd's (1997) discussion of memorials in Lorraine. He discusses the pre 1914 war memorials that commemorated earlier wars, some following of neoclassical forms by their use of the obelisk. However, the diversity of the imagery used in the First World War memorials also seems vast in comparison with the British range. Kidd talks about: flags, female figures, sometimes in local costume, one wearing 'rough country shoes' (1997:144) and a wounded soldier holding a flag. He notes the:

...industrialisation of warfare during the First World War, and the need to commemorate millions of dead in all the belligerent countries, which 'democratized' memorial practice and production.

(Kidd, 1997:145)

Kidd describes the variety of representation to be found in Lorraine memorials as: '...angels, crucifixes, Sacred Hearts, symbolic and 'real' female figures' (1997:151). The religious emphasis in France is understandable given the Catholic tradition they predominantly follow. Mosse's comments on the German preservation of the 'war myth' are interesting, he notes that they moved towards modernist styles of representation, however, despite the alternative choice of artistic style in comparison with those chosen by British artists, Mosse's argument is that the end result is still the promotion of nationalism. This view of war memorial and commemoration as a promotion of nationalism concurs with that of Raivo (1998) who notes that all sites of commemoration are fundamental parts of the national iconography of modern states, saying:

‘The sense of nationalism – the ideology of belonging to the nation – is an essential part of war remembrance.’

(1998:6)

Raivo’s analysis agrees with Mosse’s (1990) analysis of ‘the cult of the fallen’, focussing on German commemoration, that asserts that sites of commemoration are places where both the local community worship the nation and the nation worships itself. Mosse makes the point that the spirit of mourning was not dominant in the memory of war; pride had played a major part in coming to terms with loss. In an effort to justify the enormity of loss of life, the nation had become a worthy cause for sacrifice (Mosse, 1990). Furthermore, Mosse asserts that this newfound spirit of national pride was not spontaneous, but carefully created from a myth that was built upon and communicated through many cultural channels to glorify war and death:

Those concerned with the image and the continuing appeal of the nation worked at constructing a myth which would draw the sting from death in war and emphasize the meaningfulness of the fighting and sacrifice.

(1990:6-7)

According to Borg (1991), British First World War memorial monuments divert from previous forms, whereas earlier memorials celebrated victory through the memorialising of the leaders, the First World War memorials celebrated the ordinary soldier as the hero. However, as we have seen, the 'ordinary' soldier and the conditions they endured on the front line were not considered by commissioning committees as desirable features to include in commemorative war monument design. What were the outcomes of the cautious approach taken towards 'realistic' representation, one that avoided representing the horrors of the battlefield, by the commissioning committees?

The next chapter continues the analysis of the commemorative war monuments by applying the social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analytic approach outlined in chapter three to examples taken from the database. The analysis refers to theoretical positions on nationhood for wider contextual consideration of the implication of the semiotic choices made by the contributors to the commemorative war monuments and is divided into five sections. By foregrounding the theoretical tool kit applied to the analysis of the monuments, the first section demonstrates how the individual modes of communication discussed in chapter three contribute towards the meaning potential of the whole. The second section, whilst using the same theoretical tool kit, presents the analysis in a holistic format and concentrates on an analysis of the representation of women in commemorative war monuments.

The third section considers the missing discourses in the monuments in its analysis of anti-war commemoration, whilst the fourth section examines recent commemorative war monuments and considers their changing discourses and the implications for the future of war commemoration. Finally, the inscriptions are analysed applying Fairclough's (2003) analytical tool to expose the 'assumptions' that form the basis of ideological positions within the text. Following Kress and van Leeuwen's (1976) adaptation of Panofsky's (1972) theories on iconographical and iconological representation in art, the analysis begins with an examination of iconology found within typical examples of commemorative war monuments.

## **Chapter5: Multimodal analysis**

### **5.1 The theoretical tool kit foregrounded**

#### ***Iconology and iconography: From Classicism to Christianity***

In his introduction to Cirlot's (2002) work on the definitions of symbols he cites English poet and critic, Sir Herbert Read who said that 'at no stage in the development of civilization has man been able to dispense with symbols' (Cirlot 2002:X). Symbols can be traced through each stage of human artistic development; each civilisation builds upon the practice of previous civilisations in using symbols as carriers of meaning in their artistic representations (*ibid*).

Reynolds describes commemorative monuments as: '...embodiments and symbols of our traditions and values.' (1996:59). It is important to recognise here that when commentators talk of 'our' values and tradition they are really distinguishing between an 'us' and 'them' and according to Billig (1995), in doing so they create a false notion of the nation as a uniform group. This perspective raises interesting questions about the origins and use of the symbols of 'our' traditions and values and also the link between commemorative war monuments and the promotion of the nation, or nationalism. According to Borg, the strength of the modern memorial can be

attributed to the form and iconography of the traditional style of memorial, he says they use:

...a tried and tested vocabulary of memorial forms, artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been able to provide war memorials with an unprecedented range of symbolism and meaning.

(Borg, 1991:67)

The symbolism referred to by Borg can largely be traced back to the mythological art of ancient Greece. This 'tried and tested' form goes back even further in the case of the obelisk to ancient Egypt. The obelisk is a common feature in commemorative war monuments that was developed by the ancient Egyptians as a symbol of their attempts to communicate with the focus of their deity: the sun god. Their obelisks were inscribed with details of battles, proclamations of victory and praise of the pharaoh (Borg, 1991).

We could say that the Obelisk is at the root of the design of all modern commemorative war monuments; it was the first symbol to be used to intertwine the two themes of war and religious belief. Going back to ancient times the memorial column has been used to mark the entrance of a holy place and obelisks were later adopted by the Romans who used them to symbolise victory (Borg, 1991). Later, in early Christian art they were topped with crosses;

thus continuing legitimising war by proclaiming approval of a deity for the taking of, and the self-sacrifice of life during war.

The UK National Inventory of War Memorials (UKNIWM) lists 730 obelisks and 441 pillars, or columns, erected to commemorate the First World War (Furlong et al., 2003). These obelisks resemble the ancient forms in their simplicity, but far more prevalent are the Christian versions that are embellished with additions; these are listed by UKNIWM as numbering 4,781 (Furlong et al., 2003). In itself, this figure is significant as it represents the prominence of divinity in war memorial discourses. Saunders (2003) comments on their use in the First World War as being the materialization of pre-Christian belief, Catholicism and folklore, referring to their relevance as:

‘...an icon-dependent belief system which the pressures of industrialized war were to revitalize.’

(Saunders, 2003:9)

Saunders notes that images of Christ’s crucifixion appeared everywhere during the war, citing Fussell’s (1975) work on cultural representations of the First World War in which he commented that the shape made by the military punishment of tying men to a wheel resembled the pose of Christ on the cross.

After the war had ended a column topped with the cross was used to commemorate soldiers' sacrifice by being placed in the grounds of churches.

The embellishments on the columns give an opportunity to the designer to include an extra layer of meaning to the overall piece; exemplified in the commemorative war monument we can see in St Giles, Oxford today:



A closer look at the roots of the semiotic resources the memorials rely on, beginning with the memorial in Oxford, reveals how these memorials iconologically manage to communicate the idea that war is an ever-present feature of human existence. The central column is a re-interpretation of the original obelisk with the additions of steps, an inscribed base and the cross on the top. The elaborations in this monument are particularly interesting, the steps upwards, often seen at the entrances to European churches, elevates the structure towards the sky forcing the viewer to look upwards ascending

towards the imagined direction of the religious notion of heaven. This upwards angle connotes power; in this case the power of sacrifice for God as an ideological goal. These ideals are given further credence in the elaborate decorative additions to both the cross and the base that provides a platform for the inscriptions.<sup>15</sup>

The inscriptions appear on shield-like shapes that themselves denote objects used in ancient battles, the cross is surrounded by flourishes giving it an aesthetic appeal and connoting beauty in sacrifice, rather than an instrument of torture as it may have connoted had it appeared in its original, simplistic wooden form. The Oxford monument succeeds in combining an ancient, abstract form symbolising sacrifice to the Sun God with another religious symbol of sacrifice. This combination results in a continuity of forms of religious belief presented as giving rationale and justification to both war and the sacrifice of life. However abstract the form, the message will resonate with the viewer who understands the meaning behind these forms, as they have embedded themselves into the consciousness of Western culture. This is illustrated in the work of Saunders (2003) on the significance of the crucifix in the First World War.

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<sup>15</sup> The content of the inscriptions will be discussed later in the analysis.

Saunders gives a touching account of a letter from a First World War soldier, Private John Scollen, who died on the first day of the battle of the Somme. In this letter to his family he tells them he is about to charge against the Germans and he may not survive. With his letter he enclosed a cross that he made from a French bullet for the family to keep as a souvenir of his sacrifice. Saunders calls this an: ‘...act of self-commemoration before the fact (i.e. of death).’ (2003:17), noting that for this soldier, the cross materialized his experience, emotions and impending death. From a semiotic perspective, what the designers of the post First World War commemorative war monuments have achieved by including the cross in their designs is echoed on an individual basis by this soldier during the First World War. The soldier remakes religious semiotic material to create a new sign for his family that points to the sacrifice of his life for the nation, in performing this action he is, as Kress (2010) puts it participating in: ‘...a chain of semiosis’, that is: ‘...a process of a ceaseless remaking of meaning, of *interpretants* newly formed in the transformative engagement with a prior sign.’ (Kress, 2010:62).

The inclusion of objects in the war memorial, particularly those related to religious symbolism, goes back to ancient times. To the Ancient Greeks this inclusion of objects usually represented victory or peace, a practice described by Barthes (1977) as ‘...accepted inducers of ideas’ (1977:23). The ideas associated with these objects may well have been obvious to the Ancient

Greeks, but it is interesting to consider how their meaning is understood by the minds of the twentieth century viewer. Consider the example from Chippenham, Wiltshire, below:



This memorial, void of any represented human form, relies on a viewer's ability to attach meanings not only to objects, but to structure, shape and form; all of which combine to give the overall message of death and sacrifice for a 'higher' cause. In this example, as in many others, the shape and form of the architectural features reflect a classical style and symmetry that combine to give a sense of balance and elegance and, in doing so, come to represent social and moral ideals. Several architectural forms connote religious use: the columns that are shorter versions of those found in ancient temples and the cenotaph structure, similar to the Greek burial tomb. But perhaps the most striking feature is the semi-circular stand supported by shorter columns that resembles a church altar. Church altars themselves were originally the open air focal point of early Christian worship where the sacrifice of Christ was

commemorated. Before Christianity arrived in Britain altars were used to sacrifice animals to pagan gods. The inclusion of an altar in a 20<sup>th</sup> century commemorative war monument is another example of a remaking of semiotic material carried over from ancient pagan and more modern religious practices into the commemoration of sacrifice of citizens' life for the nation during war.

The urn has been used to contain the ashes of human remains since ancient times, so its presence on a monument to commemorate the sacrifice of dead soldiers is unremarkable, but its iconographical history allows it further connotation. According to Cirlot (2002) it is a symbol of containment that has a wider connection to earthly things: gold, silver or other precious materials. However, in Christian symbolism, the urn has also been used in an iconological way to symbolise a container of life itself, particularly the womb of the virgin. So we can see its profound significance in the context of a commemorative war monument. The urn serves two purposes: it connotes death and sacrifice, but also rebirth; thus providing the message for grieving relatives of dead soldiers and future soldiers that death, particularly death in war for the nation, leads to life in an alternative form.

In the Chippenham example we can see iconological power brought to the meaning of a commemorative war monument partly by the inclusion of a single object. However, as illustrated at the beginning of this section many First

World War commemorative monuments also include a human form, often featuring characters and objects that stem from classical art. The idea of the 'hero' in war commemoration was established by the Greeks who represented them in aggressive, commanding poses often offering gifts of thanks for their victory (Borg, 1991). The modern use of similar objects is well-illustrated in the following examples from Exeter (picture 1) and Cardiff (pictures 2 & 3):



The figure in picture one is holding a dove upwards towards the sky in the right hand and a downwards facing sword in the left, with the downwards direction signifying the end of its use for now. The dove in ancient Greek mythology was the bird of Athena and symbolised the renewal of life, it was later employed in Christianity to symbolise the Holy Spirit arriving from heaven. Similar use of the dove is widespread in today's culture: in Italy they still use it in a religious context by celebrating the Christian Easter festival with a cake in the shape of a dove and we can see it similarly used on the front of Christmas

cards, often carrying an olive branch. Also, the political organisation Amnesty International, which was set up to campaign for the release of political prisoners, regularly sells gifts that feature dove emblems.

What is interesting about its use in this monument is its appearance alongside the sword. The sword appears in ancient Greek art with Themis, the goddess of justice. It can be seen today held by statues outside courts, such as the one at the Old Bailey in London where the figure holds a sword in one hand and a pair of scales in the other. So, in the Exeter monument the message provided by the inclusion of the dove and the sword is the renewal of life, a message that is brought about by the use of a sword which, with its connotations of justice, tells us that it was a *just war*.

The Welsh National War Memorial at Cardiff displays many typical features of classicism. The central figures are surrounded by columns that resemble those at the Acropolis in Athens<sup>16</sup> displaying clean, smooth lines that connote certainty, references of this sort connote death through both sacrifice to nation as specifically depicted in the inscriptions<sup>17</sup> but visually through

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<sup>16</sup> The Acropolis in Athens

<sup>17</sup> Inscriptions are discussed later in this chapter

themes of classical civilisation with high ideals and moral balance. The monument features a winged figure, again holding a sword, and a contemporary soldier, sailor and airman; each holding wreaths. Both the winged figure and the wreath can be traced back to Nike, the Greek goddess of victory. In Greek sculpture she can be seen with her wings spread out hovering over victorious soldiers and carrying either: a palm branch, a wreath or a caduceus (MacDonald, 2009).

Modern viewers are more likely to immediately link the wreath with the notion of death as it is commonly used as a floral tribute to the dead in funerals. What we are actually doing by using the wreath in this context is signifying a belief in victory over death, i.e. the belief in the existence of an afterlife, but we can also see it used as a symbol of victory in sporting victories such as motor racing and Olympic competitions. As death and victory come together in the use of this symbol in the commemorative war monument, we are led seamlessly into accepting the connotation of victory in a 'just' war and death as not only an unquestionable consequence of war, but something that can be overcome.

The significance of objects is relatively easy to map and their ideological use in the commemorative war monument is not complicated to establish, however, there are more complex images in some monuments. Perhaps

unexpectedly, the examination of a more modern monument provides evidence of a more obscure use of an ancient symbol; the commemorative monument to the Royal Signal Corps (see below) demonstrates this obscurity:



This is the memorial to the Royal Signals Corps in the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, England. The National Memorial Arboretum was first established in 1997 on a site of about 150 acres of land, and at the time of writing it is home to about 160 dedicated war memorials. According to its website, The Royal Signals Corps is currently ‘...engaged in operational duties across the globe’, confirming that they are a contemporary fighting unit, set in this twenty-first century context, the memorial to their dead seems a bizarre image to use. The iconological symbolism of this monument provides the key to the selection of the figure. It is based on the emblem of the Royal Signals Corps: a representation of the Greek figure Mercury<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Mercury is the Roman name for the God, the Greeks called this God ‘Hermes’ – the messenger to the gods.

Mercury was the winged messenger to the gods and appears in winged sandals carrying a caduceus in his left hand<sup>19</sup>. In this memorial 'Mercury' is shown in a flight type pose, wearing a helmet. Many traditional depictions of Mercury feature a helmet, but usually with wing-like feathers on either side, presumably enabling flight, later the Roman depictions featured no feathers on the helmet, whereas the helmet in this war memorial is featured with a single feather-like attachment on the left side; resulting in a helmet that is much more akin to feathered military headgear than those originally depicted in images of Mercury<sup>20</sup>. The result is a 'militarised' Mercury, far enough removed from the image of a real soldier to glorify their image, but with military connotations to enable the viewer to interpret the monument as a commemoration of war instead of an ancient Greek mythical figure. We see similar devices at work in the war memorial at Ashton-under-Lyne:

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<sup>19</sup> A caduceus is the staff, or wand, that Hermes is said to have used to separate two fighting snakes; hence its subsequent use as a sign of peace.



<sup>20</sup> Military headwear



This monument features a wounded soldier exchanging a sword for a laurel wreath with a mythical winged figure who in Greek mythology has been portrayed as victory or peace. By the time the First World War was taking place soldiers no longer used swords, but the sculptor, J. Ashton Floyd, chose to use the sword rather than the more realistic gun. We have seen how the sword has been used by the Greeks to signify justice, but Cirlot (2002) says that the Romans believed that because of its association with Mars, iron was capable of warding off evil spirits, but that its primary association is of receiving and giving a wound; resulting in meanings of liberty and strength gained through the presence of the sword (2002:323). We can see that the message of strength is reinforced in the presence of lions at either side of the memorial.

Twentieth and twenty-first century British war monuments rely heavily on the iconographical and iconological, it has been at the foundation of Western art for centuries and is embedded deep in the viewers' cultural resources,

where it rests acting as a kind of standard of excellence. Consider this quote regarding the 2007 Armed Forces Memorial:

‘The bronze figures in the sculptures draw on classical imagery to produce an emotional response.’

(Veterans UK, online reference)

If we asked this writer why classical imagery is guaranteed to produce an emotional response what would they reply? Maybe they wouldn’t be able to point to a specific reason, but would say that it is because the viewer can ‘relate’ to it, or that it is important to include it if you want to make an ‘impression’ but they are unlikely to be sure exactly why that is. Iconography and iconology are so integrated into cultural practice that it is completely naturalised in our worlds of art, marketing and advertising symbols alike.

Consider the use of the rod of Asclepius<sup>21</sup> in the medical world, a symbol that is often mistaken for a caduceus. It comes from Greek mythology and was carried by the God of medicine, Asclepius (Berard, 1989). Today, it is the symbol



<sup>21</sup>

The World Health Organization logo the Asclepius; the rod carried by the Greek God of medicine Asclepius.

used by the World Health Organization and is widely used in the American private medicine sector where competition for customers is present. As a sign it functions to legitimise the company as a trustworthy supplier of medical services, but although most people recognise it and would probably be able to interpret it in context, they would probably be unlikely to explain precisely why it is significant.

In the commemorative war monuments iconographic symbolism extend into iconological interpretation to give credence to the legitimisation of sacrifice in war to the twentieth century mind; it allows it to view itself as part of a practice that not only has persisted since the beginning of recorded time, but one which is legitimised and cherished by its linking to an approving 'God', whether that be the ancient mythological, or the Christian god. Perhaps the most significant use of iconographic symbolism is not only that it legitimates sacrifice, but also that it gives support to the act of war, in that it allows participant nations to claim they are in the 'right' as they have 'God' on their side.

Meanings are also realised in the selection of physical features chosen in the representations of soldiers; particularly in the monuments that commemorate the First World War, but also in newer commemorative war monuments. We see similarities in the features and physical forms of all the

represented participants, Moriarty (1995) referred to these 'soldiers' cast in bronze, marble and stone as depicting 'Greek Gods' and belonging to a 'pure' race. Look at the three examples below from: Abertillery (1), Portsmouth (2) and Portsmouth (3), each designed in a different decade, yet the faces of the soldiers share similar features:



(1)



(2)



(3)

Typically, the represented participant soldiers in the memorials share faces of perfect symmetrical proportions, square jaws, long slim noses and almond shaped eyes, their faces can never be considered either plain or unattractive. As evidenced in the following three monuments standing in: Hyde Park Corner (1), Exeter (2) and Richmond upon Thames (3), their physical proportions are similarly perfect, they are tall and slim and, where flesh is uncovered, their bodies are represented as perfectly proportioned, muscular and lean:



(1)

(2)

(3)

Compare the commemorative war monument representations of soldiers with photographs of First World War soldiers and it becomes clear that monument soldiers bear no resemblance to their real life counterparts:



The figurative representations of the soldiers create physiognomic stereotypes (van Leeuwen, 2001:96) that create the illusion of a common ethnic identity and a race that exists within the nation that shares only desirable physical features. The efforts to create the illusion of the nation as a

homogenous group is discussed by Billig (1995) who argues that notions of a homogenous national identity are commonplace and are based on false stereotypes. The practice of racial homogenisation that we see represented in the commemorative war monuments is an inversion of visual representations of black people that used a range of poses and exaggerated physical features that revealed unequal power relations between blacks and whites (Nederveen Pieterse, 1992 cited in van Leeuwen, 2001).

The common denominator in the represented physique of the soldier in the war memorials is strength; this is evident in the muscular bodies and strong, square jaw lines of the soldiers. This fictitious racial stereotype works well to create the myth of ethnic nationalism, giving the appearance of the required strength to its military force; a strength that is needed to enable it to fulfil wider political aims of conquest during war. Theories on the relationship between warfare and nationhood can help to elucidate on the wider role the commemorative war monuments play in creating and maintaining a particular relationship between an individual and their government's military establishment.

The importance of military recruitment to the survival of the nation is discussed by Posen (1993) who argues that warfare is made possible through promotion of nationalism. Posen is one of the few authors to examine the link

between nationalism and the military. He argues that not only does nationalism increase the intensity of warfare, but:

‘...it is purveyed by states for the express purpose of improving their military capabilities’

(Posen, 1993:81)

A crucial point made by Posen is the egalitarian appearance that nationalist ideology manages to promote through its military recruitment from all social classes. It has to be said that it is difficult to argue that the military is solely an elitist instrument of domestic repression when the opportunity to belong to the army is open to all sections of society and, theoretically, the opportunity to rise to higher ranks is open to those who enter at the basic level. Indeed, when looking at the way the British army is promoted in the media through advertising campaigns and within their own marketing literature, we see that the training and skills which the army offers to recruits are foregrounded as the main advantage of British army life; training and skills that those with limited or no qualifications at secondary school level might otherwise find difficult to access in civilian life (Abousnnouga, 2005).

However, Posen forthrightly argues that elites trick the lower classes into thinking they are engaging in an egalitarian form of democracy by widespread

military recruitment. He demonstrates how nationalism has been used by elites both to prepare citizens for possible wars and to intensify on going wars. He pinpoints the 'problem' faced by elites: how to maintain support of soldiers once on the battlefield when:

...the problem becomes how to keep these dispersed, scared, lonely individuals risking their own lives, and cooperating to take the lives of others.

(1993:84)

He further argues that through the sponsorship of cultural and ideological components of nationalism, citizens will be prepared and ready to take up arms and continue in battle and asserts:

'The more successful states are in achieving this goal, the more competitive they will be.'

(Posen, 1993:84)

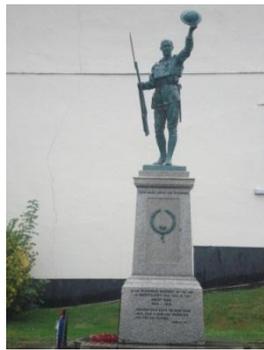
In his discussion, he claims that the promotion of nationalism is achieved through literacy and ideology delivered to the citizens through schools, media and indoctrination within the military. States, therefore, act purposefully to produce nationalism because of its utility in mass mobilization warfare, and

nationalism is the answer to the problem created by a vast increase in deaths due to advancement military technology; nationalism will provide more willing volunteers; more soldiers to commit to ever demanding warfare. I argue here that representations of masculinity that we find in commemorative war monuments, such as those in Exeter, present such an idealised sense of positive self-identity for young male participant viewers that they can only serve to add to the nationalist ideological package. Further evidence of positive representations of the soldier can be found in the bodily poses that are struck by the soldiers in the commemorative war monuments.

### ***The role of bodily pose in the commemorative war monument***

Borg (1991) comments that, in contrast to earlier commemorative war monuments that featured officers, representations of the soldier who fights and dies without questioning the necessity of war were increasingly featured in the British commemorative war monuments erected following the First World War. But how can the viewer of the monuments sense the statue soldiers' lack of questioning? The study of bodily pose provides us with a layer of information.

First World War soldiers were featured in confident poses; triumphant, satisfied and able to cope with any situation, as seen in the examples at Abertillery (1), Abergavenny (2) and Exeter (3) below:



(1)



(2)



(3)

The soldier in picture one raises his hat in triumph, holds his gun in mid-position above the ground, as if to signal its part in his achievement, his legs are in a relaxed, elegant position. From an interactive viewing perspective, it is understandable that the notion of triumphalism in the face of death would be an appealing idea to any war monument viewer. The notion acts as a denial mechanism, allowing people to believe that despite the violence of their deaths and the huge numbers sacrificed, the soldiers remain undefeated. In such representations the celebration of the outcome: triumph, is the theme of the message, rather than the mourning of dead soldiers. What do the poses that the soldiers strike in the commemorative war monuments communicate about their attitude towards their role in war?

We see a representation of a soldier's attitude to war in the second picture where the soldier is represented with his upper body leaning on his upturned gun, legs apart, with his weight on his back leg and using his front leg as a prop for the gun. The pose is casual, as that adopted by a gardener leaning on his spade and stopping to admire the fruits of his labour. The inclusion and position of the gun is again relevant to the overall message: as the spade is the tool of the gardener, the gun appears as the tool of the soldier. The pose functions to communicate the soldier's satisfaction and contentment, but the viewer is not specifically told what the soldier is contented with, is it the sense of achievement from killing he has had by the use of the gun or is it the sacrifice of his own life?

The third picture features a sailor; half naked, trousers rolled up, feet bare, his large, muscular frame sitting astride a small boat that appears tiny in comparison to the sailor himself. He effortlessly guides the boat with only one hand, his right hand, his left hand pulling back on the line. The pose indicates that this sailor has mastered the sea; evident by the confident, strong bodily stance he takes and his large frame, which is accentuated by its relation to the tiny boat.

As Barthes (1977:22) points out it is, '...the very pose of the subject which prepares the raising of the signifieds of connotation'. In these three poses we

find triumph expressed in three forms: celebratory, connoted by the raising of a hat and gun; satisfaction, signified by the casual leaning on a rifle; and finally, strength, signified by the confident pose that demonstrates effortless control of the boat.

Poses are a semiotic resource that can be utilised in commemorative war monuments to connote meanings that are contrary to the reality of war. They connote discourses of victory, not war and its inevitable consequences: suffering, killing and death. Partly by the vehicle of bodily pose, the viewer is guided to view war in the Barthesian sense: a cultural myth that constructs war as an activity that does not maim or kill, but as an activity which men can effortlessly survive without suffering. Viewers are also guided as to the power relationship they have with the soldiers in commemorative war monuments; this is achieved by the use of viewing angle and height.

### ***Angle and height***

When Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) examined the relationship between power and the vertical angle, they pointed out that images taken from a low angle force the viewer to look upwards at the image, thereby affording a position of power to the represented participant in the image over the viewer.

In this section of the analysis I adapt their theory, translating their concept of angles of photographic images and the positioning of images onto the top, or 'ideal' and bottom, or 'real', sections on a page layout to the viewing angle of the participant viewer of the commemorative war monuments.

The First World War monument figures, slightly larger than life-size, tend to be placed on plinths that allow them to stand roughly six feet above the ground. The plinths force the viewer to look upwards to the figure, creating a power relationship between them and the figure. The represented figures have to be physically looked up to which, according to Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic theoretical position, creates a metaphorical power relation distance between them. Conversely, if they were at eye level the viewer would relate to the figure as an equal, or if placed lower the figure would be looked down on as when looking at a child. Placing the figures literally out of reach gives them special status in the viewer/figure interactive relationship; the dead soldiers aren't engaged with the viewer as an equal, nor are they devoid of strength and power, instead they are elevated to the ideal; a place that commands respect from the viewer gained by the lifting of their heads upwards.

An interesting aspect of the commemorative war monuments are the various shifts in approaches to height taken by modern artists. Look at the

examples below: Abertillery (1): a First World War commemorative monument figure; Portsmouth (2): a monument figure to commemorate the Falklands War erected in 1992 and Portsmouth (3): a commemorative war monument dedicated to those who died in the Second World War erected in 1997. The first statue is of a typical height for war monument sculpture, slightly larger than life-size; this way, when raised high on the plinth it appears as a normal height from the perspective of the viewer. The third statue isn't raised on a high plinth; it is life-size, but mounted on a low plinth that maintains its life-size proportions to the viewer:



(1)

(2)

(3)

However, the second statue departs significantly from the practice of life-sized representation. 'The Yomper' (picture 2), sculpted by Phillip Jackson and unveiled in 1992, takes its subject matter from images from The Falklands/Malvinas Islands that were the subject of a power struggle in 1982 between Britain and Argentina. Photographs of the soldiers carrying the Union

Jack flag, walking, or 'yomping' towards Port Stanley appeared in British newspapers at the time<sup>22</sup> are described by Boorman (2005:35) as one of '...the enduring images of the Falklands War.' Although The Yomper does not stand on an elevated plinth, it is huge in proportion: about twice life-size. Its strength comes largely from its enormous proportions and reflects the widespread political climate that surrounded the events in the Falkland/Malvinas Islands in 1982.

By 1982 Britain was no longer a major colonial power in the world, yet when challenged for territory by Argentina, Britain was able to respond with some considerable force, sending its army halfway around the world to demonstrate to Argentina its determination to hold on to the territory in the face of counter-claims by Argentina. The political mood was reflected in the



22

British soldiers 'yomping' to Port Stanley in the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war.

press at the time, the rhetoric was largely aggressive and jingoistic in nature<sup>23</sup>. Although not raised into the ideal by means of a plinth, the imposing height of 'The Yomper' does raise the figure high into the ideal, and in doing so it embodies the nature of that particular war; it looms over the viewer, its size connoting continued power and strength of the nation, demonstrated by their military capability. In complete contrast to 'The Yomper' is the 'Soldier of WWII' by the artist Vivien Mallock.

After the Second World War there was no nation-wide movement in Britain to commission commemorative war monuments as there had been after the First World War. Furlong et al., (2003) attribute this to the much lower casualty figures in the second war, saying that this is the reason that new memorials were considered unnecessary. To commemorate the Second World War dead, the names of the dead servicemen were usually inscribed on a plaque and attached to a section of the existing First World War commemorative monument in each city, town or village.



23 A typical tabloid headline of the period celebrating events of the battle.

So, with a time period of nearly fifty years having elapsed since the Second World War, Vivien Mallock's Second World War soldier is represented in a life-size model of a young man; head bowed, looking sad, tired and clutching a letter from home. This sculpture departs from the style of previous commemorative war monument sculptures; mainly due to the angle it is viewed from. The height of this monument encourages the viewer to look down towards the young soldier who appears to be not much more than a child. The relationship of adult to a child is enacted in the height differential between the figure and the viewer. This change in height profoundly impacts on the viewer/sculpture relationship; no imposing, awe-inspiring power is connoted, the viewer looks down at the seated soldier and in doing so is encouraged to view the soldier with tenderness and pity rather than awe.

The lack of celebration of victory is notable when considering the war it commemorates ended in victory. Instead of awe, viewers are encouraged to feel familiarity with the soldier and to see him as an individual. Its height allows the viewer to touch the figure, and the ability to touch encourages the viewer to relate to the soldier. The social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analytic framework utilised here reveals that combined with the sad expression and pose of the figure, the height differential between viewer and representation creates unequal power differentials between viewer and the represented soldier. I argue that this differential is achieved through a

combination of facial expression, bodily pose and angle that have all combined to create a relationship akin to that of a child and an adult; which in turn encourages the viewer to feel tenderness towards the soldier. This view is supported by reported reactions to the statue by a viewer whose letter appears on the sculptor's website. Ted Reynolds wrote:

'... I looked across the road and saw the new statue of a wartime soldier that brought tears to my eyes.'

(T. Reynolds, in a letter to Vivien Mallock, online reference).

In another letter, the same writer describes seeing a woman weeping in front of the statue, her husband had been killed as a young soldier in the battle of Arnhem and the woman now frequently visits the statue and talks to it as if it were her husband. The statue obviously invokes strong emotions in some viewers, the writer of the letter is an ex-serviceman who fought in the Second World War, he relates to the statue that he says captures a familiar scene he has in his memory, whereas the woman imagines the statue as a representation of her dead husband.

It could be argued that these responses would be different if the represented soldier was depicted in a different stance or pose, such as the Paddington statue. The soldier in the monument at Paddington Station, London

(1), is also shown reading a letter from home, but standing tall, upright, rather than sitting with a bowed head:



(1)

(2)

When compared alongside each other it becomes apparent that the two statues communicate very different viewer/represented participant relationships. Although the situation is similar in both monuments, receiving a letter from home, it is the power differential created by the height and viewing angle that encourages a different relationship with the viewer. Even the rare representation of a dead soldier in the Royal Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner, London, gives power to the soldier due to its elevated position:



As Kress and van Leeuwen argue:

...if a represented participant is seen from a high angle...the represented participant is seen from the point of view of power.

(2006:140)

It may be that the emotional reactions of the viewers of the Second World War soldier in Portsmouth are triggered by this inversion of power. We are used to seeing soldiers represented as powerful in British commemorative war monuments, when confronted with a powerless soldier we are forced to consider the reality that war can render the hero weak. Could it be that it is the possibility that his weakness will leave us undefended that frightens us?

We have seen that it is the choice of vertical angle that partly makes the monument to the Second World War soldier in Portsmouth stand out amongst figurative memorials that feature soldiers, because it results in connoting vulnerability rather than strength. This latter departure from the connotative meaning found in traditional monuments could suggest that a new way of viewing war and soldiery is emerging in the late twentieth/early twenty-first century. However, we should guard against making a rash conclusion on the nature of modern war commemoration based on this figure alone as the modern memorials found at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire do not follow a pattern of connoting vulnerability; I examine these points more closely in later sections of the analysis.

What I am able to conclude from this section of the analysis is that the example in Portsmouth that utilises a unique approach to height in commemorative war monument sculpture allows for a very different interpretation of soldiery and war than the more customary semiotic choices made by the sculptors. The uniqueness of this monument amongst commemorative war monuments also leads to speculation on the significance of the gender of the sculptor. Whereas all the other examples discussed in this thesis are the works of male sculptors, Vivien Mallock is female. It is far beyond the remit of this work to discuss the relevance and possible impact of gender on the work of sculptors, so I choose here to present this fact as contextual

information rather than making a statement on its significance; a point I will return to in chapter six.

### ***Materiality and colour***

When sculpting a monument intended for use in an open space, artists must choose a material that is durable; initially, this constraint may appear to limit possibilities for analysis of the material as a semiotic resource. However, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) point out that the durability itself is a sign for the attitudes society has towards their heroic figures:

It is no accident that the statues erected to commemorate heroic figures are made of durable materials, or that tombstones are still carved: the durability of the materials makes them usable signifiers for the meanings of permanent feelings we intend to produce.

(Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006:225)

The analysis can be extended by examining what contribution towards the meaning potential of the commemorative war monuments is made by materiality and colour by looking more closely at the range of durable materials

available to the sculptors of the war memorials and then to consider the contributions each one makes to reader's interpretation of the final piece. The majority of commemorative war monuments featuring figures are cast in Bronze, other materials such as stone or marble are sometimes, although less frequently, used and the contrast in meaning realised by the choice of bronze as opposed to these other materials is significant and worth exploring here.

Look at the examples from Paddington (1) – a First World War male soldier in bronze, from Cowbridge (2) a First World War male soldier in marble and a First World War male soldier in stone, from Almeley (3) below:



(1)



(2)



(3)

In the first example, despite the poignant action of reading a letter from home as discussed in the previous section, the soldier appears sturdy; this is partly due to the characteristics of the material: bronze, which are a naturally dark colour and heavy in weight. In addition, the sculptor has chosen to place

the coat on the soldier's shoulders, letting it widen out at the hem; a feature that emphasises the broadness of the soldier's shoulders. The appearance of the soldier wearing such a heavy garment with apparent ease seems to make this soldier appear strong to the viewer, but how do viewers interpret strength through materiality? Kress and van Leeuwen explain this by relating appropriate material signifiers to humans' ability to match concepts on the basis of their physical experiences of the relevant materials (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:75).

According to the Kress and van Leeuwen's theory (2001) viewers interpret the soldier's strength metaphorically through a combination of the known heavy weight of the material and the dimensions of the garments, understood through their '...physical experiences of the relevant materials.' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:75). Perhaps we can better understand this effect if we imagine the other two figures (2 & 3) cast in bronze instead of the white marble and stone and vice versa.

The memorial at Cowbridge (picture 2) is cast in white marble. This is a good example with which to explore Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) point regarding the flexibility and multimedial nature of semiotic principles and the importance of defining the key principles that lie at the basis of synaesthetic correspondences. The material selected here, white marble, has a range of

experiential meaning potentials to the viewer; I use 'experiential' in reference to a viewer's possible previous encounter with the material. The qualities of marble are cold, heavy and smooth. For many years its coldness was exploited in the food retail industry where thick marble slabs were traditionally used in small food retail outlets as counters and cutting blocks for cheese and cold meats.

However, the heavy and cold qualities of the material give way to its smoothness when drawing on its correspondence with classical art. In this context marble lends antiquity to the meaning widening the meaning potential of the commemorative war monument. The use of marble goes back to the sculpture of much earlier periods: Ancient Greek, Roman and Renaissance art, such as that of Michelangelo, the Italian renaissance artist<sup>24</sup>.

In the context of more modern public art, the choice of material gives extra support to the meaning potential of the commemorative war monument when considered in conjunction with the pose of the soldier. The Cowbridge soldier is represented in a pose that signifies mourning, physical strength and a



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'David' sculpted by Michelangelo in the early 1500s

show of might are not relevant to this action; mental strength here being a more important attribute. The use of smooth, white marble enhances this action, bringing elegance to the pose, whereas bronze would bring with it an unnecessary physical strength. It could be argued that by using this material the artist gives the soldier a link to much older civilisations, placing him in a tradition going back many centuries, and in doing so, naturalises and legitimises his place in society.

This link to ancient traditions is also connoted by the use of stone that has been used for centuries to create representations of nobility, kings and saints<sup>25</sup>. In keeping with the theory proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), we can argue that viewers draw on their experiential associations of seeing stone figures adorning ancient buildings, and that they also draw on their knowledge of their cultural practice which uses stone to create those buildings. This practice of building ancient castles and cathedrals in stone give the material a meaning potential of longevity and ties it to the established dominant institutions of monarchy and religion. In addition, stone has an organic quality that lends a concept of naturalness and evolution to the object it forms.



<sup>25</sup> Lord Rhys, in Saint David's cathedral, Pembrokeshire

Comparing the stone and bronze soldiers also enables us to appreciate the association of physical strength that bronze gives to the soldier:



(1)



(2)

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2001, 2006) have highlighted the multiple qualities of materials, they note that once artists had a wider selection of materials available to them from which they could create their pieces the material itself became an integrated part of the work:

‘...the material becomes a fully exploitable and exploited resource.’

(Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006:224)

Whilst stone carries strength in its use as a building material, it also has the ability to be carved easily into smooth, rounded shapes giving sculpted

figures softness. The First World War stone soldier above in Almeley (1) seems a much softer, gentler person than his bronze comrade in Exeter (2); this is partly due to the pose and facial expression, but the material also brings its share of physical softness to the meaning potential of the image.

In choosing bronze to cast their statues, the war memorial artists have brought extended meanings of strength and power to the soldier and to war. By rejecting white marble or stone they reject meanings related to other human characteristics: purity, beauty, softness and elegance. They could also have chosen to cast the soldiers in aluminium, for example, like the famous statue of the archer in Piccadilly, London, generally interpreted by the public to be 'Eros'<sup>26</sup> but was actually named by its sculptor Alfred Gilbert 'The Angel of Christian Charity' and was created to commemorate the charitable works of the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shaftsbury (Potts 2000). This was the first public statue in the world to be cast in aluminium, although the fountain on which the statue sits is cast in bronze, the artist chose aluminium to cast the naked winged archer.



<sup>26</sup> 'Eros' the sculpted winged archer by Alfred Gilbert that has stood in Piccadilly, London since 1893.

Clearly, a winged archer must be light to enable effortless flight; consequently a heavy bronze would not suit the representation, the light weight of the aluminium harmonising with the object. Unsurprisingly then, the use of aluminium was not taken up by the war memorial artists; we can see why. Had they chose aluminium with which to cast their soldiers the meaning potential would have been partly realised through the qualities of aluminium material: lightness and fineness; altering the meaning potential of the object into a light, fine soldier, aluminium certainly would not have brought with it the strength that the artist has achieved by the use of bronze.

It is important to note that each element of the sculpture is a mode, or a channel of communication, and whilst each element contributes significantly to the meaning potential of the object, they work together, not alone, to contribute towards the realised meaning of the whole. So, when assessing the effect of the material in combination with the other modes of communication, such as pose or size, we could assert that in the case of 'Eros', the height, pose and size of the statue, in combination, require a light material contribute to the communication of its object: a flying archer.

### ***Hallidayan-inspired tools: Speech acts and gaze***

Human gaze behaviour is complex. Either fixing or avoiding one's gaze can signal extreme emotional states, just as it does amongst animals, but in its simple form gaze amongst humans is a cue to our verbal interaction, as Morris, biologist and anthropologist, says:

'It is, in fact, the evolution of speech that has made eye contact such a significant and useful human signalling device.'

(Morris, 2002:107)

Adapting semiotic features of Halliday's (1985) theory of speech acts, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) assert that a choice between 'offer' and 'demand' has to be made whenever people are depicted, the choice will affect the imaginary relationship between the represented participant in the image and the viewer.

The interactive relationship between the viewer and the figures in the commemorative war monument is restricted due to the tendency of the figures to gaze upwards, downwards or away into the distance, making eye contact with the viewer impossible from the usual viewing angle.

The following three examples illustrate the effects of gaze: the first example, situated in Paddington Station, London, shows the figure reading a letter from home; the second in Exeter features several figures, all of whom look into the distance and the third, situated in Maesteg, has the figure looking straight ahead. In the case of the Maesteg example if we take the bayonet he is holding into account, we could say he is engaging eye contact with an imaginary enemy:



(1)

(2)

(3)

Generally, it is clear the artists are making a choice in not engaging the representation in a speech act with the viewer, but what does this say about the relationship we, the viewer, are meant to have with the soldier? The war memorial figures neither demand information, nor offer information, so we have no opportunity to 'ask' them about their experiences or their opinions on war and the gruesome conditions they were subjected to, nor are they asking

us what we think of the situation that led to their deaths. Consequently, the viewer is a mere voyeur of soldiery and war, separated by the social distance created by the lack of eye contact. We are not encouraged to 'ask' the represented soldier about his experiences; nor can we ask the wider questions about the point of war.

The viewer is led to see their relationship with the soldier in a particular way, not quite as an individual they would readily interact with as they would with a relative, or a friend, but as someone who exists outside of their circle. We could say that his lack of acknowledgement puts him slightly out of their reach.

It is not just eye to eye gaze, or as Cain (2006) called it 'the thousand yard stare', which is absent in the war memorial monuments. Consider the following example; the 'Shot at Dawn' memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum:



This monument represents the soldier with his eyes covered completely; it helps us to appreciate the importance of the eyes being visible to the viewer in artistic representation of figures. The covering of the soldier's eyes removes the opportunity to have an interpersonal relationship with the viewer on any level; he stands there alone in his terrifying world.

This monument was erected to commemorate the 'Shot at Dawn' events: cruel executions of First World War soldiers by their own army. As will be demonstrated in the discussion of this monument in a later section, the connotations brought to the meaning potential by its other elements do not lead the viewer to criticise these events. But for now, we can see the

monument in terms of the power of gaze, present or removed, to create a particular relationship with a viewer.

***Hallidayan-inspired tools: Agency, action and behavioural processes***

The huge commemorative war monument in Newcastle by the sculptor Sir William Goscombe John offers a good starting point from which to explore the element of agency, action and behavioural processes represented within the commemorative war monuments. The theme of this monument is recorded as being the raising of the four battalions of the Northumberland Fusiliers in response to the call to war (Borg, 1991) and according to the information held by the national archives (Your Archives, The National Archives, online reference) it was commissioned privately by Sir George and Lady Renwick to also commemorate the safe return of their five sons from the war and Sir George Renwick's 50 year anniversary in public life.

The sculpture's main feature is a large crowd scene, a procession of life size figures can be seen; said to represent the volunteers who have joined the forces and are now enthusiastically going off to war. Other figures; women, children, drummers and a horn-blowing representation of the mythological winged victory can be seen floating above the group:



According to Borg (1991) this memorial represents the 'patriotic confidence' with which Britain entered the war. This is a singular representation of military recruitment in the First World War. After an initial enthusiasm that brought about a million volunteers forward, other measures, such as changing the age limits for entry into military service and conscription had to be introduced to compensate for the decrease in volunteers; resulting in an army numbering nearly five million (Dewey, 1984). Nevertheless, the sculpture manages to realise its singular message of enthusiastic, voluntary military service through a number of material and behavioural processes.

The group is shown collectively moving forward towards the left, as seen by the viewer, or their right; most men are wearing uniforms and carrying

guns, connoting military service, enacting the behavioural process of a readiness to fight (1), two at the front of the procession are shown in the material process of drumming (2), whilst others are seen with their arms around women or children (3), in the behavioural process of protecting them from the imagined enemy who typically is not shown, but suggested. In this way, the memorial at the same time communicates enthusiasm for war and suggests a rationale for war: the protection and defence of one's family:



(1)

(2)

(3)

The behavioural process of protecting and defending can also be seen in the memorial at Maesteg, this time the soldier is positioned on the battlefield:



Here the soldier is shown in the behavioural process of defending his injured friend from further attack by the enemy. He stands with one foot forward suggesting purpose (Davis, 1989), yet, in contrast, whilst his pose and the presence of the gun suggest his readiness to fight, the expression on his face remains calm; there is no evidence of a mental process of aggression in his face. The sublime expression affords him a dignity that an aggressive expression could not provide, in the face of the enemy he remains calm, judging by his facial expression he could be described as content, or satisfied. The pose, the object and the fallen friend all suggest a readiness to fight, yet the facial expression suggests calm contentment. The modes communicate two separate messages that combine to communicate one thing: the soldier's willingness to sacrifice and his contentment with his role as defender and protector.

A particularly low-modality representation of an individual soldier willing to defend colleagues is found in the commemorative war monument at Oldham:



Designed by Albert Toft and unveiled in 1923, the topic of the monument is said to be a scene from the trenches (Borg, 1991). The image features soldiers in vigilant poses, all moving forward as if to attack, with guns at the ready. The pyramid formation allows the positioning of the soldier at the top of the mound. Looking at his pose: arms down at his sides; casually holding the gun held in his right hand and one leg bent at the knee, we see a calm, confident, unthreatened stance. If he were to have stood at the top of a First World War trench in this way a sniper would have shot him immediately, but the relaxed, fearless pose of the represented monument soldier allows connotations of infallibility. The presence of the mud, denoting the trench, brings an extra layer to these meanings than would not exist if the figure was

positioned directly onto the plinth; even with the most basic historical knowledge of trench warfare, the viewer is able to infer the great danger in the situation. This awareness of danger enhances the status of the hero who takes on a greater level of infallibility in his defiance of death.

The willingness to fight an unseen enemy is frequently connoted in the memorials through behavioural processes, although not always in the same common format; look at another Sir William Goscombe John sculpture in Llandaff, Cardiff:



This monument is unusual in that its two represented child participants are not being protected, but sent to fight. Positioned near a school, it shows two young boys, one of whom is wearing short trousers, standing either side of a robed female figure. She is intended to be a personification of Llandaff (Borg,

1991), her clothing connotes ancient, mythical figures and the shield she carries connotes protection.

Both boys are carrying guns and stand with one leg slightly forward in confident poses. Although they have guns, they aren't yet in military uniform, suggesting they are about to leave to join the war. The female is carrying a shield in her left hand that is held up in a position which suggests she is motioning the boys forward; presumably into battle. Her right hand is raised in front of her, as if she is being sworn in before giving evidence in a court hearing. It is said that she is blessing the two boys (Borg, 1991), but considering the position of her hand in relation to the two boys, i.e. either side of her, not in front of her, she seems more likely to be engaging in the verbal process of bearing witness to something; perhaps she is bearing witness to the boys' intention to go to war.

It is reasonable to assume that the idea of legitimising the participation of children in war is repugnant to the contemporary viewer of the monuments. We regularly see critical media reports of the recruitment of African child soldiers; Western viewers frown at this practice that seems alien to their societal norms. Yet, for nearly a hundred years British school children have viewed the Llandaff memorial every day on their way to and home from school. They are daily presented with an image of themselves as prospective

soldiers. So, for these children soldiery becomes normalised and may be seen as an elevated behavioural process, as presented as being approved of by a mythical figure who appears to give credence to the act of soldiery.

Bringing mythical figures, iconographic symbolism and children together to enact behavioural processes of protection and enthusiastic participation in war is seen again in an extreme form in the following monument at Richmond upon Thames:



Unveiled in 1923 this monument, by the army officer and sculptor Capt. R. R. Goulden, relies on a number of iconographical symbols and behavioural processes that combine to celebrate sacrifice. The representation is of a partially naked man shielding two children; he carries a torch in his raised left hand and a sword in his lowered right hand whilst he stands amongst thorns that are serpent-shaped and twist around his feet, going up between his legs and falling over his right shoulder.

The most striking feature of this monument, in comparison with those discussed so far, is the lack of a military uniform; indeed, the lack of clothes to this extent on a male figure is not a common feature of the commemorative war monuments. Nakedness, or as in this case, near nakedness is part of a Christian theme, Ripa in 1539 (in van Straten, 1994) talked about nakedness being used to symbolise contempt for all material things in the world, therefore being associated with truth.

In the Richmond upon Thames monument the sword the male figure carries in his right hand connotes war, it is turned downwards; a position that has been said to signify the end of the fighting for now. The torch he carries aloft in his left hand was used in Greek mythology to symbolise truth; literally casting light on the truth (Cirlot, 2002). So we see a finished battle symbolised

by the sword and 'truth' or 'right' symbolised by the torch: war fought and legitimised in two attributes.

The now familiar behavioural process of protection is enacted with the presence and posture of the children. Their facial expressions tell us how they feel about the soldier they cling to. The child standing to the front of the sculpture looks up in awe of the soldier, whilst the child standing at the back hides behind the sword in fear, an act that suggests the child looks to the soldier for protection. In some commemorative war monuments ancient mythical symbolism gives way to later theocratic ideological positions. It is interesting to observe the blending of such ideological positions with representations of the concept of self-sacrifice for the nation as the images serve to illustrate Smith's comments on the practices of nationhood.

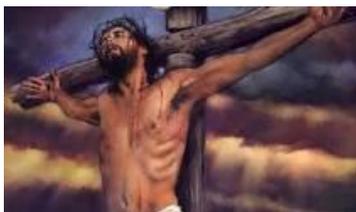
Smith (2001) commented that commemorative ceremonies that glorify the war dead lead us to view the nation as 'a sacred communion of citizens'; a process that accords with an interpretation of nationalism as a 'surrogate religion' (Smith, 2001:35). We have seen how this is possible in the examples of commemorative monuments that use behavioural processes to construct a 'communion of citizens', but what of sacrifice of life? The commemorative war monuments were built to commemorate the deaths of those who fought, how do commemorative war monuments communicate the concept of sacrifice of one's life during war for the nation?

The large cluster of serpent shaped thorns, representing the entanglements of war (Borg, 1991), twists its way around the feet of the male figure, travelling upwards between his legs and draping itself around his body. Thorns connote pain, according to Cirlot (2002) the rose-bush emphasizes a number of opposites that include pleasure and pain and it also relates to the symbolism of the cross. The serpent has appeared throughout history in a variety of forms and has a complex range of associations, but the encircling serpent, such as the one we find in the Richmond upon Thames monument, signifies the principle of evil (Cirlot, 2002).

There is also a story in Greek mythology of the friendship that was created between a lion and Androcles after he pulled a thorn from the lion's foot (Macdonald 2009). Thorns symbolising punishment appear in the bible; the most common of these stories is the Christian story that tells of the crown of thorns that Jesus Christ was made to wear as he died on the cross; many images depict a Christ with blood running from the wounds the thorns had made around his head, the face of Jesus is usually depicted as sad, but viewers of those images easily understand that he is suffering by the presence of the thorns and the nails in his hands and feet.

The male figure in the monument at Richmond upon Thames shows no sign, in either his facial expression, or his body posture that he is feeling any pain, but in reality thorns twisting around naked flesh would be unbearably painful. So the viewer reads the image of the thorns in his flesh that connote pain, with the sublime expression on his face that connotes serenity and the behavioural act of protection and understand that the soldier has overcome physical discomfort to triumph for his cause.

There is a wider symbol of sacrifice; the male figure in the memorial is almost naked from the front apart from the thorn branch draped around him like a loin cloth, this is an image that, in part, resembles common images of Christ on the cross, bleeding from the wounds made by the thorns around his head <sup>27</sup>. The representation in the war monument tells us that not only has the male has overcome the pain of war and triumphed, but also that he has willingly and painlessly sacrificed his life; just as Jesus Christ did according to Christian belief. These themes can be seen represented more explicitly in the following example from Dover that was again designed by the sculptor R.R. Goulden, who was born in Dover, and unveiled in November, 1924:



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The elements that connote Christ's sacrifice are brought more readily to the viewer in this example. The body is much leaner than the muscular soldiers that commonly appear; notice how the rib cage stands out on the torso. The soldier is represented wearing a loin cloth, as found in images of the crucifixion<sup>28</sup>, again a difference from the crucifixion images of Christ and this representation is the position of the thorns that, as in the Richmond-upon-Thames monument, are positioned around the feet and connote pain, as we saw in the Richmond upon Thames monument the thorns relate to the rose



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bush, and according to Cirlot symbolise a triumph over physical constraints (Cirlot, 2002).

The symbol of truth seen in the nakedness features here, as it did in the Richmond upon Thames example, but the most obvious emblem of religious ideology here is the cross that the soldier is holding upwards towards the sky. Here the cross is in flames, which, according to Cirlot (2002), has significant symbolic meanings. He outlines the use of fire in a number of pre-Christian societies and its relation to the '...solar symbolism of the flame.' (2002:105). Fire was considered to come from the sun, the giver of life through its power to enable growth of food sources. This idea then develops into the symbol of eternal life that extends to the notion that transcendence of fire is necessary to achieve purification and regeneration, '...purification is the necessary sacrificial means of achieving the sun's triumph.' (2002:105).

We now understand the reason for the use of the flame alongside the Christian symbol, the cross; a cross on fire tells people that sacrifice of life as Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is necessary to reach a pure, eternal form of life. So, in the commemorative war monument at Dover we have a justification of death in war as not only a purifying triumph over an evil enemy, but a necessary act to achieve immortality.

The Christian ideology of sacrifice predominates in many First World War commemorative monuments; this is also the case with one of the major contemporary war memorials, although the symbolism used here is slightly more obscure. The Armed Forces Memorial at The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire is 'a living memorial' in the sense that it is constantly being updated with the names of soldiers who have died on duty in on going wars or who have been killed in terrorist action; 119 names were added in 2009. Standing on a high mound, it is made up of huge circular shaped walls, an obelisk, two large sculptures and a stone wreath in the centre.

The two sculptures are group scenes that are intended to be seen in sequence and read as a narrative (The Armed Forces Memorial Sculpture, [online reference](#)). At the core of their subject matter the sculptures have the death of soldiers and their resurrection, at the same time they incorporating the role of the family in the process of war and sacrifice; see pictures 1 and 2 below:



(1)



(2)

These two monuments are part of the huge 'Armed Forces Memorial' at The National Memorial Arboretum, sculpted by Ian Rank-Broadley and dedicated in 2007. Ostensibly, the memorial seems void of ancient iconographical references, yet the description of its narrative by the sculptor state that both Greek mythology and the Christian religious story both profoundly feature in the sculptures (The Armed Forces Memorial Sculpture, online reference).

The first picture (numbered 1 above) is said to be based on the story of Achilles and Patroclus, as set out in Homer's *The Iliad*, which tells the story of the battle between the Greeks and the city of Troy, during The Trojan War. In the battle Patroclus was killed by Hector, after his death Patroclus' body was carried from the battlefield on Achilles' shield and held aloft. The story continues that Achilles was so distraught after the death of Patroclus that he refused to part with his dead body until an apparition of Patroclus appeared to

him asking him to cremate his body so that he could enter Hades; the home of the dead in Greek mythology (Holoka and Weil, 2003).

This idea of life continuing after death is continued in the second sculpture, the second picture (numbered 2 above) symbolises the Christian belief in life after death and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This piece is meant to give a resolution to the soldier's sacrifice, signified by the gap in the doors being pointed to by a soldier; these doors lead to paradise where, in keeping with Christian belief, the soldier will come back to life after his death on earth. In addition to being part of the narrative of resolution, the doors have been designed to act as a practical conduit of the sun, enabling them to participate in the annual remembrance ceremony. The architect, Liam O'Connor, is said to have created the gap in that precise position in order to allow the rays of the sun to shine on a stone wreath<sup>29</sup> in the centre of the structure at the exact hour of remembrance each year: 11 o'clock on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November (The Armed Forces Memorial Sculpture, online reference).



<sup>29</sup> The stone wreath (and gap in the doors) at the centre of The Armed Forces Memorial.

In the first sculpture the viewer is presented with a confusing scene of three groups: in the central group we see the dead soldier being held aloft on a stretcher, the stretcher put together with the stretcher bearers, the soldier's comrades, connote the battlefield, but at the right and left of the central group we see his family engaged in the mental process of grieving; on the left we see his wife who holds up her arms towards the body with his child clinging to its mother and on the right we see his father comforting his grieving mother on the ground.

The presence of the family at the battle scene demands a somewhat greater leap in imagination by the monument's viewer; British soldiers have for centuries gone abroad to fight their wars whilst their families remain at home. Therefore, this scene only seems plausible if the soldiers were actually at home defending their home nation from an invading army. It could be argued that the choice of including the family at the scene allows the viewer to interpret the events and the soldiers more precisely as protectors and defenders of the home nation. If this is the case, the notion of the survival of the nation adds to the legitimacy of soldiery and war in the viewer's mind as they interpret the meaning of the scene.

However, Billig (1995) challenges the whole concept of nation-state division proposing that before an individual can readily accept the concept they have to first identify the identity of their own nation, imagine that nation

as a cohesive community and then see him/herself as part of it; a task which, according to Billig, is neither natural, nor simplistic. Yet in practice, people **are** persuaded to not only imagine the nation as a community to which they belong, but also to accept that the nation is worth dying for; how is this achieved? I argue here that social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis allows us to reveal complex representations within the commemorative war monuments that contribute towards enabling individuals not only to see themselves as part of the cohesive community of the nation, but to conceive the nation as a cause worth dying for.

Of course, an alternative interpretation of the presence of the grieving family is possible; it could be that their presence helps the monument to communicate the message that war has destructive effects on the family; criticising rather than legitimising the war process. However, this interpretation is less likely when considering the resolution to the event as portrayed in the second monument. The primary agent in the second sculpture is the figure on the left of the scene who is engaged in the behavioural process of directing the central group towards the open doors, indicating the path of resurrection for the dead soldier. The central group is made up of the dead soldier and two of his colleagues: a female and a Ghurkha soldier. On the right there is a figure of a stonemason who carves the name of the soldier in the wall, this act replicates the actual process of inscribing the names of dead

soldiers on the inside walls of the monument at its centre which lies through the open doors.

This inclusion of the material process of inscribing completes the journey of the dead soldier for the viewer; telling them that the soldier will be resurrected, thereby negating his death, and reminding the viewer that he will live forever in the memory of the nation by means of his name having been recorded on the National Armed Forces Memorial.

It is possible to view the inclusion of the processes of pointing the way towards resurrection and the recording of the name of the soldier as a feature that may have allowed the subject of the soldier's death to be presented in a form that the viewer can accept more readily as a resolution to the conflict and to the act of sacrifice. This was not the case when Charles Sargeant Jagger's memorial to the Royal Artillery was unveiled in Hyde Park, London in 1925; reactions to the inclusion of a dead soldier were mainly negative (Compton, 1985). The memorial has four soldier figures around its base, one of which is a dead soldier, fully clothed and partially covered by his heavy military coat. When the monument was unveiled it caused controversy from the public who, due to censorship of images of war deaths, were not used to being confronted by images of dead soldiers:



Here, the viewer is confronted with a glimpse of a dead soldier who lies under a coat with no indication of how or when he will be buried; the viewer is unable to resolve this uncertainty, as a dead body must normally be disposed of. When compared with this memorial we can see how the processes offered in the Armed Forces Memorial make the subject of a soldier's death more 'acceptable' to the viewer.

In their participation in war, the soldiers have to face death as well as bringing about the deaths of others; whatever else it may involve, it is undeniable that war involves killing. However, whilst we have seen examples of a soldier's death almost barely represented in the Royal Artillery memorial at Hyde Park, we do not see the material process of killing anywhere in the commemorative war monuments. The closest we come to seeing a depiction of a killing in the war memorials is found in the representation of a female in the monument at Mountain Ash.

The Mountain Ash war memorial was designed by James Harvard Thomas and completed by his son George after his father's death in 1921 (Turner, 1996:744). The opening ceremony took place on June 5<sup>th</sup> 1922 and was attended by the usual list of local official elites of civil, military and religious sectors. As if to emphasize the hierarchical nature of these ceremonies the order of procession ends with a curt notice:

The General Public are warned that they will not be allowed to take up any position on Memorial Site until after the Procession arrives.

(From a copy of the original details of proceedings of the unveiling ceremony, supplied by The Public Library, Mountain Ash)

In their article on the unveiling ceremony that took place on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1922, the local newspaper, The Aberdare Leader, described the memorial as:

The bronze statue is a magnificent female figure of Victory holding forth a graceful palm. At her feet is a nude figure of the Evil One: the whole subject being emblematical of "Right over Might". The inscription carved on the granite runs as follows – "the Great War, 1914-1918. Sons of this town and

district. Let this of you be said – That you who live are worthy of your dead. These gave their lives that you who live may reap a richer harvest ere you fall asleep.

(The Aberdare Leader, Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1922)



The female figure here is robed and, although not winged, it is clear she has a resemblance to Nike the Greek God of Victory. She holds a dagger in her left hand that is raised above a naked, fallen man. We have no visual clues as to the identity of the fallen man; he has no uniform so he could be the enemy, the relief panels below the main sculpture featured four service members: a soldier, a sailor, an airman and a nurse<sup>30</sup>. The main figure in the monument

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<sup>30</sup> The relief panels were stolen in 2008, when I first visited the monument to photograph it they had not yet been replaced. The panels featured four figures: a soldier, a sailor, an airman and a nurse. The local council commissioned a replacement for the panels, restoring the work to the original form. A re-dedication ceremony was held on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2010.

stands out in terms of the process it represents: killing and the triumph expressed in the way she holds the dagger. Although close to a representation of killing, it communicates through: the object; the dagger and the fallen man, not through a material process; indeed, the elegance of the robed figure contradicts the act of killing. Compare the behavioural processes in this monument with this 16th century sculpture by Giambologna that is entitled 'Samson Slaying a Philistine':



Samson's left hand holds the Philistine's head back by the hair whilst his right hand is poised to cut his throat with the dagger he is holding. Samson is undoubtedly engaged in killing a present enemy; imagine the effect on the viewer if contemporary soldiers of the war monuments were shown to be engaged in the process of killing the enemy rather than the process of defending loved ones and fellow soldiers. In avoiding representing the war monument figures in the material process of killing, the viewer is guided to see

the soldier as either a protector or as someone who is capable of doing physically demanding jobs; either way, the figure is presented as heroic but not tragic.

The few monuments that do represent death either allow the viewer to take a controlled peek at the physical sacrifice of the soldier, as in the Royal Artillery Memorial in Hyde Park, or they resolve the difficult subject of death with an ideological confirmation of the soldier's resurrection, as in the Armed Forces Memorial in The National Arboretum. The viewer is never allowed to consider victims of war in any realistic manner. Another excellent example of representation of war as victimless is the monument at Carmarthen:



This monument, designed by Cardiff born sculptor Sir William Goscombe John, provides the viewer with two views of warfare: injury and the

soldier's imperviousness to injury. It features a soldier wearing a medical bandage around his head and although the bandage signifies injury, this message is overridden by other communicative channels; a relaxed body posture, a composed facial expression; a heavy, strong body, the latter is also metaphorically understood by the viewer through the use of bronze material. Strength is further connoted through the presence of the gun, notice how high the gun stands in relation to the soldier; it is almost as tall as he is.

The Mountain Ash and the Carmarthen monuments achieve the same meaning potential through different means. The Mountain Ash monument is unusual in its representation of a dead enemy. The image takes its iconography from the distant mythological past; connoted by the robed female and the naked dead figure. Far removed from the reality of World War One images and participants, the monument preserves the image of the soldier as protector and hero by representing killing as a mythical process, in doing so it relieves the viewer of having to contemplate the horrors of battle. It also serves to maintain a view of war as having no negative consequences; the soldier is affected by neither injury nor war; as we have seen in the Carmarthen sculpture which reinforces the message that the soldier is impervious to injury. The commemorative war monuments help to remind individuals that war is part of their past, but they also act as representations of future wars for young impressionable viewers.

If we contemplate the monuments' role as part of a wider, banal military recruitment tool we can understand the possible reasons for such mythical, as opposed to realistic, representations of the dangers of war to the individual. Billig (1995) argues that the difference between recruitment to fight for the modern nation in comparison with medieval war is that during mediaeval times recruitment to war depended on the cooperation of feudal barons, whereas in the modern period recruitment to the military is sought directly from the people who are urged to fight for their nation (on this point he cites Reader, 1988). Billig also comments that whereas fighting under the command of the mediaeval land-owner was compulsory, the majority of modern-day military recruitment is done on a voluntary basis. These comments provide a useful elucidation of possible motivations for such mythical, positive representation of injury during war. Billig (1995) argues further that the maintenance of the idea that war is necessary, and inevitable, is crucial to the survival of the nation; because it is in this way that future recruitment to participating in war on behalf of the nation is ensured.

The analysis and theoretical positions discussed so far have contributed to our understanding of discourses of masculinity in relation to warfare found within commemorative war monuments, but what of representations of women? The following chapter discusses female representation in war monuments, demonstrating how the theoretical approach is used holistically

to analyse monuments by examining each monument in detail and continues to incorporate wider contextual information to enhance the analysis.

## 5.2 Representations of women

### *The passivization of women*

One of the most striking features of the First World War monument is the relative rarity of representations of female figures. Where they do occur, they are mainly represented in the form of protected wives and daughters, or mythical figures, such as the one in Newcastle discussed earlier in this chapter. Citing Woollacott, Billig made a point about the passive role of women in the First World War:

Men may be called upon to sacrifice their bodies; but women are to prepare themselves to sacrifice their sons and husbands; and in the First World War, the sacrifice of the older brother took on special significance and grief.

(Woollacott, 1993 quoted in Billig, 1995:126).

Sacrifice and a woman's grief are central to the First World War commemorative monument at Merthyr Tydfil:



The WWI commemorative monument at Merthyr Tydfil<sup>31</sup>

Designed by L. S. Merifield and unveiled on Armistice Day in 1931, the monument features two women and one man. The central figure is a robed St Tydfil, according to legend she was a king's daughter who had been killed by pagans in the fifth century (Breverton, 2000). She stands within a central Portland stone screen, on top of a base that supports several objects: a helmet, crossed swords, a ram's head and garlands. According to the artist's

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<sup>31</sup> At the time of data collection the monument was not available for public viewing as it was undergoing extensive restoration following years of vandalism. Thanks to the library at Merthyr Tydfil for this image.

description (Monument Records, Merthyr Tydfil Library) these objects represent 'an altar of sacrifice'. The central figure is a robed St Tydfil, according to legend she was a fifth-century king's daughter who had been killed by 'pagans' (Breverton, 2000). This ancient figure of authority commands, by the bodily pose of her raised arms, the two figures that stand either side of her. To her right is a man representing a local miner (Monument Records, Merthyr Tydfil Library) standing with his head bent down and gesturing towards the ground. The woman on her left, also standing and gesturing towards the ground with her right arm, with her left arm she supports a baby, a blanket wraps around both their bodies. Dark (1991) describes the figures as having been sculpted with 'particular intensity' (1991:138), but what features inspire Dark to make this comment?

The bodily pose of the two figures: lowered heads and gesturing towards the ground, communicates grief if we are reading the spot on the ground as a grave. We can make this assumption if we consider the contextual feature of purpose; the purpose of the monument being to commemorate war. The most unusual feature of the monument is the choice made by the sculptor to carve the mother with 'hollow eyes'. The earlier discussion of the significance of gaze to the participant viewer/monument relationship now takes on a new perspective. How are we to determine the speech act (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, 2006) that is communicated if there is an absence of eyes? Had she

directed her gaze towards the ground, as the figure of the miner has, we could discuss the refusal of the woman to discuss her grief with the participant viewer. But this woman has no eyes; she has been rendered powerless by the sculptor. She has been denied the power to choose whether to interact with the viewer or not, this lack of ability to interact takes away her voice; she has no ability to comment on the war that has taken the life of her loved one, no opinion on the validity of the war that calls for the sacrifice of life. She can neither offer, nor demand information; the woman is a passive figure in the conflict.

A prominent example of a form of representation that exemplifies the passive role of women is the monument at Port Sunlight in Cheshire:



This monument was commercially sponsored by the company Lever Brothers to commemorate the loss of their employees. It shows a Celtic cross placed on an octagonal plinth that has relief panels depicting members of various services: ambulance men; wounded soldiers; gunners; sailors and anti-

aircraft personnel. The main sculpture sits above on the plinth and is comprised of three soldiers: one wounded and crouched low; another with his gun at the ready; a third with his bayonet fixed. There are also two women, one of whom seems to be trying to reach the wounded soldier, the other crouched low protecting some of the six children represented in the sculpture.

As with the Cardiff monument, the figures on the Port Sunlight monument are viewed in a circular pattern. According to Borg (1991) this monument draws on a tradition of ancient, continuous narrative found in both ancient Greek art and the paintings of the Renaissance period. However, the represented narrative within the image is misleading. Just as we find in the narrative of the contemporary Armed Forces Memorial, the viewer would not expect these figures, civilians, to be present in a real battle. The pose of the soldiers, one of armed readiness to defend the women and children along with the presence of the wounded soldier, misleads the viewer into interpreting the location of the scene as being on the nation-state territory, rather than in the fields of France or Belgium. The image also denies the extent of female participation in war.

Whilst women's role in the First World War was not present in the form of official military personnel, they did play a crucial role in the war. An examination of the extent of their involvement provides a context in which to

examine their representations in the First World War commemorative monuments.

During the First World War women were directly addressed in government propaganda posters to urge their male relatives to go war. Although women had not yet been allowed to vote, the authorities claimed that a woman had a duty to her country to persuade her husband, brother or son to fight for the nation. An example of one such poster addresses women via a series of questions based on fear of invasion and guilt, finally asking “WON’T YOU HELP AND SEND A MAN TO JOIN THE ARMY TO-DAY?” (Grayzel, 1999:64).

With so many men leaving their jobs to join the military, a chronic shortage of labour emerged; this shortage was made worse by the introduction of conscription for men in 1916. Women, mostly working class, were urged to fill this gap and they responded. Braybon and Summerfield (1987) note that the unemployment figure for women in October 1914 had dropped to 139,000, the figure for the previous month had been 190,000, by December 1914 it had gone down to 75,000 and to 35,000 by February, 1915. As these figures suggest, hundreds of women went to work in the munitions factories, risking losing their lives to bombing raids, toxic poisoning and accidental explosions. Indeed, many women lost their lives whilst doing their

work; a fact that was recognised in contemporary media reports such as the one in the Manchester Guardian in 1916, paying tribute to the munitions workers in 1916, the writer of the article marvelled at their ‘...courage ... and ... perfect discipline...’ (Calkins, in Cook, 2006a:238).

### ***The semiotics of the uniform***

As well as having civilian paid employment opportunities for the first time, the onset of war in 1914 led many women to form military style groups. Soon after war was declared, a Women’s Emergency Service (WEC) was formed; this eventually became the WVR (Women’s Volunteer Reserve). These women based themselves on military hierarchical lines, wearing military style khaki uniforms and drilling on village greens (Grayzel, 1999). The wearing of the khaki uniform was a source of much criticism from both men and women who regarded it as an act of ridicule of the sacred nature of the uniform. Their argument was that as women would not be called to fight on the front line, the uniform would never be stained with blood, nor would it ever form their shroud after the sacrifice of their lives, as it would with male soldiers (Grayzel, 1999). It seems that men jealously guarded the uniform as a symbol of their pending deaths.

Male reaction to females wearing the military uniform is reported to be in contrast to the reaction evoked by the uniform of the VAD (Volunteer Aid Detachment) that had 74,000 nurses, two thirds of them female, working both at home and abroad (Watson, 2004). The nurses' uniform symbolised care for the wounded or dying soldier; supporting him, not competing with him, attracting both admiration and respect. It is in this context that we see occasional tributes to nurses in the First World War commemorative monuments:



(1)



(2)

The Portland stone statue of the nurse on duty (2) is part of the Hereford war monument (1). She does not occupy the monument alone; in keeping with the First World War commemorative war monument tradition, she shares the monument with a soldier, a sailor and an airman. Her uniform is carved in

detail, she appears ordered and tidy with her hat perfectly in place and her bodily pose connotes the carrying out of nursing duties, efficiency and reliability. We see a similar representation below in the monument at Mountain Ash:



The pose of this nurse is one of controlled composure; her hands are clasped neatly in front of her body, she wears full uniform and stands ready for duty. Her facial expression is one of kind passivity, suggesting she is content with her role. As with the Hereford monument, she is not acknowledged individually, but she appears as part of representations of other male personnel (see below):



Just as we find in the representations of the male personnel, the representation of the nurse is low in modality; without a trace of the difficult conditions the nurses found themselves having to cope with. Nurses in the VAD served both in hospitals at home and at the battlefield hospitals near the front lines in France and Belgium. Whilst abroad, their lives were at risk from shell attacks and sniper fire as they raced to collect the injured soldiers from the battlefield. Just like the male soldiers on the battlefield, they too suffered the symptoms of 'shell shock': a nervous disorder brought on by the loud shells flying past their heads.

Some nurses had mental breakdowns resulting from the pressure of dealing with the horrific wounds presented by the soldiers on the wards, medication to treat them was insufficient and the sheer workload entailed in their role put the nurses under considerable mental strain. Bagnold's (1978) account of a VAD's work in a London hospital describes in detail the horrific wounds on the men who had been sent home from the front. The nurses

needed either tremendous strength, or an abnormal indifference to human suffering to be able to nurse in the horrific conditions of the First World War.

However, despite the major role women played and the respect they apparently received from the wider society, is not common to see nurses at all in First World War commemorative monuments. Other examples of shared monuments that feature figures representing a soldier, sailor and airman, such as the one in Cardiff, have omitted to include a representation of a nurse. In the First World War commemorative monuments there is only a token presence of women. Could this lack of recognition in the form of public sculpture be linked to notions of sacrifice and the significance of death at the hands of the enemy for the nation-state? This idea can be explored by comparing two real examples of notable female figures from the medical profession who participated in the First World War.

The first example is the remarkable achievement by a Scottish doctor by the name of Elsie Inglis<sup>32</sup>, who, after a successful career as a doctor in Scotland, had the idea of providing a fully equipped hospital unit staffed by



<sup>32</sup> Dr. Elsie Inglis, 1864-1917.

women to support wounded soldiers either at home or abroad. After a struggle, she managed to secure funding for the first hospital in France: this was the beginning of the Scottish Women's Hospitals (SWH). Dr Inglis later led teams of doctors and nurses deep into Europe, establishing field hospitals in Serbia and Russia amongst other sites. Leneman's (1994) account of the life of Elsie Inglis reveals remarkable feats accomplished by the doctors and nurses of the SWH. The women showed tremendous skill and courage, working in hard environments; some collapsed under the strain suffering mental breakdowns, others died from the diseases they encountered. Their advancement in treatment contributed greatly to the limited knowledge of the age, Crofton's (1997) discussion of the skills they developed in the treatment of the effects of gas, burns and gangrene at the hospital in Royaumont, France led the way for other medical centres to follow.

Elsie Inglis died of cancer before the war ended in 1917. Her stunning achievement was not recognised in a public memorial, there is a memorial hospital in her name and a plaque to her memory in St Giles Cathedral, both in Edinburgh, but there is no public sculpture commemorating her war contribution. Would it have been different if she had died at the hands of the enemy? This was the way the second example discussed in this section, Edith Cavell, died.

Edith Cavell<sup>33</sup> was a nurse from Norfolk who served in military hospitals and clinics on the front line in Belgium during the First World War. As well as training other nurses and nursing wounded soldiers, she also actively helped many British and French soldiers to escape into Holland from where they could find their way home and be redeployed into military units. Information regarding these activities made its way to German military command; she was caught, arrested and tried in a German court martial. Britain and American authorities were aware of the story of her arrest and trial at the time, whilst Britain felt it could not intervene to get her released, American authorities did try to persuade the Germans to consider saving her life for humanitarian reasons. However, the German military found her guilty and she was executed by a dawn firing squad in October, 1915.

By the time her dead body was brought back into Britain by train, news of her situation had circulated and hundreds came to each station on the route to pay their respects (Souhami, 2010). Her contribution to the war was considered so significant by the government she was given a state funeral (*ibid*). Her death at the hands of the enemy gave the British government the



<sup>33</sup> Edith Cavell, 1865 - 1915

opportunity to conduct a rousing propaganda campaign<sup>34</sup> that highlighted the inhumanity of the enemy and urged people to join the military to fight brutality. Souhami credits her with substantially increasing military recruitment, saying that her death doubled army recruitment figures in Britain. This claim may not be entirely reliable; the introduction of conscription in 1916 should be taken into consideration before attributing the sharp increase solely to Edith Cavell. Nevertheless, the interesting point in relation to commemoration is that, unlike Dr. Elsie Inglis, Edith Cavell has public memorial monuments dedicated solely to her; the most notable is the memorial designed by Sir George Frampton in St Martin's Place, near Trafalgar Square, in London:



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A propaganda poster from WWI showing the dead body of Edith Cavell and the German soldier, who had been responsible for her death, standing over her body.



We can contrast this representation of Edith Cavell with those found in the typical commemorative war monument representations of nurses, such as the one in Hereford. Firstly, instead of the expected nurses uniform, she is wearing a long dress and a full length wide coat with huge sleeves, this style of garment is found on statues of the mythical figures such as the 'Victory' we have seen represented in other monuments, connoting both the classicism of the Greek period, and to the modern viewer the wide sleeved robes worn by judges and barristers when in court.

Yet, Edith Cavell was a nurse who in her war role would have worn a nurse's uniform and who asked, according to one biographer, to be remembered as a nurse, not a hero or a martyr (Souhami, 2010). It is worth considering the widespread absence of the inclusion of representations of

nurses in uniforms in commemorative war monuments, as women in uniform invoked a mixture of reactions towards females in the workplace at the time. The preference of the robes over a nurse's uniform could also demonstrate the ambivalence with which the female wearing of uniforms was perceived; whilst Grayzel (1999) points out that the khaki uniform eventually became more widespread and respected in the First World War, Watson (2004) comments that women wearing the uniform also attracted the attention of men who associated its wearer with immoral behaviour. But the substitution of the uniform with the robes also reveals an opportunity to use Cavell to portray a wider ideological position.

In the early twentieth century, women who entered public space were bound to be judged negatively in some way whether they were: deemed to be taking jobs that rightfully belonged to men; pretending to be as skilled as men in expecting equal pay; trying to become soldiers but not offering themselves for sacrifice on the front line, even though they were not permitted to do so; or behaving in a sexually immoral way by volunteering to leave the home to do war work of any kind. Only patriotism was recognised as a 'moral' reason for taking employment; personal benefit was seen as an immoral motivation.

Even the nurses were not exempt from moral judgement. Darrow's (1996) description of the role French nurses played in the First World War

paints a consistent picture that displays hostility to nurses based on similar suspicions held by British society towards its female military volunteers. Nurses in France were portrayed as morally dubious, scheming, husband-hunting or seeking erotic pleasure from seeing naked, defenceless soldiers' bodies, she notes:

'Anything women did to contribute to the war, even nursing its wounded heroes, was suspect.'

(Darrow, 1996:106).

Furthermore, the notion of women fighting, rather than being a reason for fighting, was a threat to societal perceptions of both masculinity and femininity. Watson says the term "military women" was an 'oxymoron' (2004:19) to people who saw women as those who needed protecting; they did not consider women amongst those who would do the fighting. These attitudes partly explain why Edith Cavell appears in the robe-like garments.

The absence of the uniform in the Cavell monument demonstrates ambivalent attitudes of men towards women's role in the war and how clothes define women in society. Furthermore, Edith Cavell's death at the hands of the enemy was a sacrifice of life that women were officially not allowed to give, preserving the sacrifice of life for the nation as a male-only right presents a

conflict for commemorative monuments; a conflict that is resolved with the lifting of Edith Cavell into the realm of the mythical women of ancient Greece. As a notable victim of 'the enemy' Edith Cavell became a symbol of the cause for war. Her transformation from the everyday nurse to the mythical, robed figure connotes grandeur; in turn this lends legitimacy to the ideological position taken by the nation, thereby reinforcing the justification for sacrifice. A nurse's uniform, it seems, could not be considered a sufficient vehicle for the connotation of sacrifice for the nation-state. Also, notice how she stands in a regal style pose, not like the dutiful pose of the nurse in the Hereford monument, again connoting grandeur; her firm stance shows neither servitude, nor vulnerability.

The words 'humanity' and 'dawn', at the head and foot of the inscription respectively, tell the viewer that she, or the nation, is a symbol of humanity and in doing so implies the enemy as 'other' who showed a lack of humanity in the act of her dawn execution. By connoting mythical figures, Edith Cavell is transformed from the nurse into the nation, reminding men of the reason for their own sacrifice; in this case not the vulnerable women at home, but the nation itself embodied by the female.

***Women as personification of the nation, emotions and concepts***

This conflict in attitudes towards women's participation in war and the practice of representing the nation in a female form is combined in the following examples from Aberystwyth (1, 2, & 3) and Finchley, London (4) showing a naked woman. These monuments stand out as they represent women not as the vulnerable, but as the spiritual ideal:



(1)



(2)



(3)

The monument at Aberystwyth was designed by the Sicilian sculptor Mario Rutelli and unveiled in 1923. The length of the obelisk is decorated with palm fronds, in Greek mythology the palm was a symbol of military victory. In the early Christian age it became a symbol of victory over death as acted out in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. According to Cirlot (2002) it is also an emblem of fecundity; this explains its common use with female figures. It is topped with a winged victory who is poised on an orb, holding a laurel wreath in her right hand; all familiar symbols of triumph and peace, but it is the female figure at the base that makes this memorial unique. Riley (2008) asserts that in war, whatever their role, women's bodies often become the primary consideration

for both military and state leaders, resulting in a visibility problem for women during wartime. This uncertainty is transferred to the commemorative war monument in the Aberystwyth example.

The naked woman at the base of the monument represents 'humanity' rising out of the entanglements of war, although she is commonly referred to as 'peace' (Borg, 1991). We can see she is involved in the behavioural process of freeing herself from the thorns; thorns carry their own connotations of punishment and pain, as discussed in the analysis of the Richmond upon Thames example, going back to Greek and Christian allegory. The pain of the thorns is intensified by their impact on naked flesh, a pain that the viewer feels metaphorically through their experiential association with thorns (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). The naked form itself has its own Greek and Christian-based meaning potential; this will be discussed in more depth further in the analysis. She uses both hands to push herself forward from the thorn bushes; the pose allowing the viewer to feel the effort she makes to free herself. Her naked flesh is surrounded to the hip by the thorn bush and, as we saw in the Richmond upon Thames male figure, her facial expression shows no pain. Her physical strength, connoted by her endurance of the thorns, is emphasized further by the exaggerated muscles that feature on her body, arms and legs.

This biological 'overdetermination' (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996) reflects an important overcompensation and conflict in the representation of the female form as a persona; representing 'humanity', she is portrayed as strong enough to endure whatever humanity encounters, especially war, but she is at the same time the female who reminds the viewer why war is fought. She has long, swept back hair, very unlike the styles worn by the classical figures, although her body shape is similar to that of the classical sculpture the Venus de' Medici<sup>35</sup>; this is undoubtedly due to the classical training all sculptors are given as they learn their craft. Despite her physical resemblance to an ancient figure, she is still featured as a more contemporary figure than a classical figure; evident in her posture and physical features. The overdetermination of her physical features that connote strength, sit in juxtaposition with the overdetermination of the physical features that connote femininity: exaggerated curves and long flowing hair.

Unlike the male figure in the Richmond upon Thames monument she carries no sword, so we cannot associate her with battle through objects. Nor does she protect children, so we are unable to associate her with battle

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35

The Venus de' Medici

through behavioural process of protection. Her association with war depends both on the context in which she is featured: a commemorative war monument, and on the various elements of the monument. Although the whole monument is set above the viewer, within the monument itself the naked woman is placed a long way beneath 'the ideal' position of the Victory figure, set in 'the real' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, 2001), standing upon a base that has bronze reliefs showing the Aberystwyth coat of arms and the Welsh dragon.

Her physical location within the monument, that is well below the towering Victory figure but close to the symbols of local and national identity, combine with her contemporary appearance to connote a contemporary woman in society. The female represented participant in the Aberystwyth monument carries within her three identities: she is humanity; the nation and the struggling female that war is fought on behalf of. All this is present without any acknowledgement of the sacrifice made by women in the First World War. Yet, literature tells us that women also made a contribution to military activity during the First World War.

Far from the stereotypical perception of women as support workers to male fighters, Watson (2004) refers to women belonging to a WAAC corps being killed in a trench shelter in France after being hit by a bomb. Although

these accounts do not appear in cultural representations of the First World War soldiers, some women were awarded a military medal. Watson points out that these women were all buried in military cemeteries with military honours. She also emphasises that they were on active combat, despite the fact that their roles were not officially described as combat roles.

These accounts of women as military nurses and soldiers conflict with the representations of female nudity in some commemorative war monuments. In the art of ancient Greece the naked female body was celebrated as a thing of beauty, athletes often ran with little or no cover on their bodies to celebrate the attainment of the perfect, accomplished human being (Greer and Lewis, 2004). Initially, following the traditions of the ancient Egyptians, only male bodies were represented, but they moved on to the subject of the female naked or half naked body, Greer and Lewis comment:

Greek sculptors achieved an idealization of feminine strength and serenity that paralleled the earlier idealization of the male body.

(Greer and Lewis, 2004:94)

This practice changed under the influence of Christianity, as Loverance (2007) says, the early Christian artists struggled with the identity of the naked

female in art, seeing Eve as a naked, evil temptress. Initially they did not adhere to the Greek tradition of three-dimensional representations of the naked, beautiful woman. However, this early Christian attitude changed to one that associated nakedness with truth and a rejection of the material world (Ripa, 1539 cited by van Straten, 1994). So, earlier practices were soon resurrected in the work of the Renaissance artists who attempted to replicate the ideals of the ancient Greeks in their work<sup>36</sup>. Hence, once again the female form was represented naked and as a thing of beauty.



(4)



<sup>36</sup>

'The Night' marble sculpture by Bounarroti (1475 – 1564)

The conflict in approaches to the representation of the female body is evident in the monument in Finchley, London (4). Designed by Emile Guillaume and unveiled in 1927, the monument, called 'La Delivrance', was described by Borg (1991) as the '...only statue in London to be sexy.' (1991:103). The shape of this woman's body differs to that of the woman represented in the Aberystwyth monument in that the curves are less defined, giving a more athletic appearance to the figure. The pose also suggests athleticism with the head and arms raised upwards, legs tight together and the delicate balance on the balls of the feet.

The apparent readiness to move onwards and upwards is typical of the art of the then new century, rather than the idealised yet natural forms that have been discussed so far, some artists experimented with the body as a symbol for a utopian future (Michaud, 2004). Two objects contribute connotations of war and expanding territoriality: the sword and the globe; the latter placed under the feet of the woman, as will also be seen in the Bridgwater monument. An ideological expression of war and territorial gain is achieved through the use of objects such as those we find in both the Finchley, and the Bridgwater monument to be discussed later in this section.

The Greek and Renaissance tradition of depicting women as a thing of beauty clearly gives the commemorative war monument artists a dilemma, perhaps this is why we see representation of women falling largely into three categories: those who need protecting; those who serve the soldier as nurses and those who play a mythical or divine role in the narrative, such as 'Victory', 'Justice' or those who personify a town such as the monument at Llandaff. In the example at Bridgend we find another representation of a woman's body as the personification of the nation:



The figure known as 'Britannia' goes back to Greek mythology's 'Athena', the daughter of 'Zeus', from whose opened head she was born, fully equipped for battle. A Goddess of war and wisdom, amongst other things, Athena was widely associated with defensive wars, from which she always emerged triumphant; she was usually depicted carrying a spear or a shield (Hard, 2003). This mythical resource is drawn upon in the Bridgend commemorative war

monument as Britannia carries the objects of war: a sword; a banner and wears a helmet.

As well as her link with warfare, stories also refer to her beauty and her encounters with various males who were attracted to her; she is said to have beaten off their advances, killing them in the process (Hard 2003, Harris and Platzner 2003). This fearless, wise, sexually desirable woman evolved into Minerva in ancient Rome and, via Roman occupation of the British Isles, became the symbol for the British nation. Rodriguez sums up the widespread cultural practice of the adoption of the female to symbolise nation as:

Within patriarchal discourse, women are considered biological reproducers of the nation, and are thus constructed in traditional nationalist discourse as symbolic bearers of the collectivity's identity and honour: the icon of a mother symbolises in many cultures the spirit of the nation... (Rodriguez, 2006:3)

In the Bridgend monument Britannia stands against an obelisk, Christian symbolism is used in the form of the cross, the wreath of bay leaves and the palm; symbolising sacrifice, victory and peace. The foundation of Christian ideology; sacrifice, is connoted by the pose Britannia strikes with her bare leg

forward, reminiscent of the image of Jesus Christ on the cross. We see in this example how sacrifice for the nation is legitimised by being brought into war commemoration through a number of cultural resources taken from ancient civilisations, myths and ideologies: Ancient Egypt, Greek and Roman mythology and Christian ideology.

The personification of the nation is also seen in the monuments at Weston Super-Mare and Bridgwater, but these monuments specifically symbolise the connection between nation and expanding territoriality; expanding outside the legitimate limits of the nation-state:



In the Weston Super-Mare monument (above) the figure, a winged victory, stands with outstretched arms on an orb; symbolising the world. She holds an olive branch in her hands; symbolising peace (Cirlot, 2002). The 'world' is, significantly, placed under the feet of the figure, a position that connotes power and control over the object, and that which it symbolises.

Within the context of the commemorative war monuments, the message symbolised by the olive branch tells the viewer that peace is achievable by war and that control over the world is the achievable aim of war. This linking of the British nation and the rest of the world is taken further in the example at Bridgwater:



The designer of the Bridgwater monument, John Angel, called this winged figure 'civilisation', although she is known locally as 'The Angel of Bridgwater'. Angels are usually depicted upright, or in flight, so it is interesting that in this representation she is seated on a throne in the manner of a mortal queen. This seated physical position gives her a worldly, rather than supernatural, quality; achieved by the connotations of a royal ruler seated on a throne. 'The Book of Law' rests in her lap, guarded by two angels, In her right

hand she holds an orb, symbolising the world, that is surrounded by four figures representing the four corners of the earth and holding a banner that represents its unification.

In this small section of the sculpture the viewer sees that their nation has control of the earth; not too far from the reality of the time as Britain's colonial empire in the twentieth century was still vast enough to warrant the notion that that the sun never set on its territory. The relation between these territories and their ruler was, of course, one of inequality, however, the monument naturalises and legitimises the ideological position that views the nation's claiming of external territory through war as a given; this point is made clearer by examining the other symbols in the monument.

Under the feet of the seated figure there are four grotesque images: a monstrous head; a skeleton; a figure holding its head in its hands and figures in combat. These images are said to represent the atrocities of war and are cited by the designer as being representations of: bloodshed; corruption; strife and despair. In this composite image the horrors of war are acknowledged, so could we argue that in representing the horror of war, the monument condemns the practice? Crucially, the 'atrocities' positioned under the feet of the figure are therefore represented as being kept under control by the feet of the nation. The ugliness of war is not completely avoided; instead, war is presented as something that the nation has to keep at bay. At the same time,

the fact that the atrocities are acknowledged in the monument warns the viewer that war is a necessary evil in order to keep the world civilised, which, as we see connoted by the presence of the book that is guarded by divinity, is attainable through the implementation of this nation's laws.

Moving to the back of the monument, the viewer sees the angels' wings forming a canopy that shelters a small group of figures said to represent: Labour; Education and The Home (below):



Protected by the angel, these figures serve to remind the viewer of the reasons for war: to preserve 'the cornerstones' of civilisation. The inclusion of the figures representing civilisation and the symbolic representation of the world plays an important role in the wider communicative potential of the monument.

As the analysis has uncovered, war is presented as the means by which the nation, personified by the female, 'protects civilisation' by the means of territorial domination, or territorial gain. Territoriality plays a crucial role in nationalism, as Penrose (2002), whose work takes a territorial or 'spatial' perspective to the subject of nationalism, explains. Penrose outlines both the practical and the emotional links to territory created by people who live within defined borders. In practical terms, the territory one occupies usually provides all that is required for survival: air, water, food etc. In emotional terms, territory satisfies emotional requirements of belonging. Bonding with a territory is achieved, for example, by caring for land in where the bodies of ancestors have merged with the soil after burial or cremation. Most significantly, Penrose identifies the control of space as '...an extremely potent component of power relations' (2002:279). As she points out, the creation of territories gives symbolic meaning to notions of 'us' and 'them' and 'ours' and 'theirs'.

After distinguishing two elements of territoriality: the material power of space and the emotional power of space, Penrose explains how nationalism feeds off both the material and emotional powers of territory. In her discussion of the relation between territoriality and nationalism, she acknowledges the significance of the wide body of work that takes the view

that nation-states are a relatively modern invention, forming over the past 200 years and that nationalism has been successful way of organising society and space, (for example: Nairn 1996, Breuilly 1993, Greenfeld 1992, Hall and Jarvie 1992, Hobsbawm 1992, Hroch 1985, Anderson 1983, 2006, Gellner 1983).

However, Penrose asserts, much less explicitly acknowledged, are the links between the modern nation-state as the dominant form of social and spatial organisation and shifting perspectives on the significance of territory, Penrose says:

...the success of the ideology of nationalism seems to lie in the flexible mobilisation of the emotional and material powers of territory through the combination of nations and states.

(Penrose, 2002:294)

Penrose's (2002) point, that a nation construct has the ability to satisfy both material and emotional needs, is embodied and demonstrated in the commemorative war monument in Bridgwater, by the positioning of the symbolic world under the feet of the female personification of nation and by the inclusion of the figures that protect the 'reason' for war: the tenets of civilisation.

With this perspective in mind, it is interesting to compare the monuments erected at a time when Britain was an imperial power, personifying the nation and its goals in the female form, with the representation of women in contemporary war monuments. These contemporary monuments have been erected in a post-colonial period, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century; this change in status removes the option of representing woman as a personification of the nation that conquers the world. Before examining the monuments themselves to reveal which of the alternative representations modern artists have selected, a contextual overview of the extent and nature of the role women played in the Second World War is provided in the following section.

***Representations of the roles played by women in Second World War monuments***

When the Second World War started, women again played a major role at home in replacing male employees in the workplace. This time the government did not rely on poverty and a sense of national duty to lure women into employment, instead they conscripted women into employment under 'The Control of Employment Orders', which meant that civilian men and

women could be ordered to work anywhere in the country, miles away from their homes, unless the women had children under the age of fourteen, or were married. In these cases they would usually be allowed to remain at home, or if deemed suitable, given work closer to home.

Women also took the place of men in agricultural roles in the 'Land Army', as they had in the First World War and some joined the VAD (Volunteer Aid Detachments). Taking voluntary work into consideration, an estimated 80% of married and 90% of single women were contributing to the war effort in 1943. The pay inequality issue persisted in the Second World War, some women protested against the unfair conditions; Braybon and Summerfield, (1987) cite an example of women striking against the unfair pay differential between males and female wages (73 shillings and 43 shillings, respectively). The women were publicly condemned for striking; eggs and tomatoes were thrown at them and they were accused of '...letting the country down' (1987:176). Similarly, in Bristol contempt for females employed as bus conductresses, a person employed to go around the bus collecting fares and giving tickets, was shown when men gathered to throw stones at the trams whilst calling for their dismissal (Beddoe, 2000). The expectation that women should relinquish their employment in favour of the returning male soldiers can be traced back to First World War official discourses, as Noakes (2006) points out, the largest union representing women workers in 1918, the

National Federation of Women Workers, supported their relinquishing of their employment.

Women also joined military groups that were set up during World War One, these were: WAAC (The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps), WRNS (The Women's Royal Naval Service) and the WAAF (The Women's Auxiliary Air Force). Their involvement in military roles, although eventually accepted, were deeply resented by many and was always presented as a temporary situation that would end as soon as the war ended and men returned to reclaim 'their' roles in the workplace. In the military units the women did a variety of jobs, both at home from the age of 18 and on the front from the age of 20, including: clerical work, driving, telephone and signals operators, coders and decoders, mechanics to name a few (Calkins in Cook, 2006a). Their role in intelligence through the map-making process was crucial, Maddrell's (2007) accounts of the role females played wartime geographical intelligence shows not only the wide extent of their contribution, but the extent of the lack of recognition for their contribution to the discipline of Geography.

In contrast to the First World War, there was a marked increase in the militarization of women in WW11, it is reported that 640,000 women had served in the three 'auxiliary' services: the ATS, WRNS and WAAF (Mellor, 1972 cited by Doerr in Cook, 2006a). Although they were not officially engaged in

battle as their male counterparts were, many lost their lives in battle situations. The heaviest loss for the WRNS was in the sinking of the *Aguila* in August, 1941. It had been torpedoed whilst sailing in a convoy from Liverpool - twenty one Wrens were killed in the attack (Crabb, 2006). Crabb lists the known numbers of women lost as: 225 British women on British service ships and 222 on British Commonwealth service and mercantile women during the Second World War (2006:214-230). He also lists nine known memorials to the lives lost on ships, but notes that 'only a few' are dedicated solely to women.

The three auxiliary services reported a total of 624 female fatalities, with many more wounded or taken prisoners of war (Mellor, 1972 cited by Doerr in Cook, 2006a). This figure does not include the deaths whilst serving in the Special Operations Executive (SOE) – they parachuted fifty female agents into occupied Europe. Some disappeared completely, fifteen were captured by the German army, tortured and, apart from three, were executed (Doerr in Cook, 2006a:243). In a key role working as an intelligence officer in the British secret service, Vera Atkins liaised with the French resistance in occupied France. She recruited over four hundred agents, thirty nine of them women. Thirteen of the female agents were killed; some executed by their German guards after being captured and tortured (Cook, 2006a:34). According to McIntyre (1990) women were as vulnerable to bombing as any soldier, sailor or airman, not only because they worked in targeted locations, such as munitions factories,

but also because of their military involvement; 400 women in the ATS died whilst on active service between 1939 and 1945 (1990:151).

It is against this background that I will analyse the few commemorative war monuments dedicated to the women who participated in the Second World War. The most prominent memorial to the women of the Second World War is the monument erected in Whitehall, London in 2005. The design had been selected from 12 entries in a competition that was judged by a group of people occupying high status positions in the world of art. The designer states that his inspiration comes from the memories he holds of his mother's employment in the manufacture of munitions (John W. Mills, online reference). The memorial is described as depicting the contribution made by all women to the war, not just the military personnel:



The monument is in the shape of a cenotaph; an empty tomb and cast in bronze. Although it is said to be the largest bronze sculpture in the City of London, at 22 feet, it is not as high as Lutyens' Cenotaph in stone that also stands in Whitehall; that monument has an overall height of 35 feet. The north face gives details of the unveiling; the south face of the memorial has the following inscription:

‘This Memorial Was Raised To Commemorate  
The Vital Work Done By Nearly Seven Million Women  
In World War II’

Void of human figures, ‘the tomb’ has a further function: it acts as a wardrobe, providing an unusual visual synecdoche. On each face of the monument there are clothes pegs on which hang various types of clothes worn by women in wartime. A closer inspection of the way in which the clothes hang from the pegs reveals their low modality representation. They hang in an unnatural shape, not falling the way clothes on a peg would normally fall, their odd shapes connote a whimsicalness, or sense of fun. The uniforms, 17 in number, hang in shaped poses, as if they have headless, armless, legless bodies inside. The sleeves are at jaunty angles facing toward the pockets, giving a frivolous feel to the imagined activities. Their shapes are cartoon like; fluid rather than rigid and this fluidity also seems to defy any serious associations, I

would argue that the visual impact and meaning potential of the hanging clothes overrides the meaning potential of the lexical item 'vital' in the inscription.

This monument is reportedly not appreciated by all ex-Second World War female military personnel; many of whom worked hard to campaign and raise the money for the erection of a commemorative war monument dedicated to WWII females. These women have protested that the monument has no meaning, with its lack of human images it fails to do justice to the memory of the females who contributed to the war. A former member of the WRAC who helped to raise funds for the commemorative war monument commented on the design:

It has a frieze of hats and coats around it which means nothing to anyone. What the heck does it mean? We want some say in the design. It is for us and it's our money that has paid for it.

(Lillian Edwards quoted in the Wilmslow Express, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2003, online reference)

The act of hanging up the uniforms connotes an end to the activities; an end to the war. In reality the end of the war also meant an end to many

women's jobs; an image corresponding with their actual employment role rather than their sacrifice. Lillian Edwards' dissatisfaction with the design is understandable when considering the expectations she might have of commemorative war monuments based on her previous experience of viewing the First World War monuments already discussed. Experience of viewing these earlier monuments has led individuals to expect representations of soldiers on war memorials; the fact that the representations are void of human figures suggests that the role females played in the war is more important than their sacrifice. In a sense, in celebrating their employment role the monument denies their sacrifice. In addition, the verbal component in the form of the inscription is remarkably simple in comparison with the 'sacrifice' and 'glory' found in inscriptions that usually commemorate the role played by male soldiers; focussing on 'work', albeit 'vital' work done by absent females, excludes the notion of sacrifice.

A monument to the Second World War women that does feature a figure is this one at the National Arboretum:



This monument is one of two at the National Arboretum that was designed by sculptor Andy Decomyn who used his wife as a model for the statue. The monument to the Second World War ATS women at The National Memorial Arboretum features a woman in uniform seated on a low plinth that places her at eye level to the viewer. The ATS (The Auxiliary Territorial Service Category) is described as a 'Cinderella' organisation by Braybon and Summerfield (1987) and was the only military group to use khaki uniforms; the WAFS wore light blue and WRNS wore dark blue. Apparently, they had an unglamorous, even 'immoral' reputation amongst both males and females; its members being widely associated with a lack of education and skill (Braybon and Summerfield 1987, Summerfield 1997, Grayzel 1999, Watson 2004). However, about 212,500 women served in the ATS by 1943; 335 of them were killed and several more wounded (McIntyre, 1990).

The colour of the concrete and cement render material chosen for this monument is white. It is not the common choice for commemorative war monuments that, as we saw earlier in this analysis is bronze. Yet this sculptor has chosen the same white material for his other memorial monument at the Arboretum, which will be discussed in the following section. The colours black and white are on the lowest end of the modality scale according to Kress and van Leeuwen's theory of the meaning potential of colour (1996, 2006). Although the resin used here is described as being able to withstand acid rain and vandal resistant (The National Arboretum Guide, page 54), the use of the low-modality white colour results in an associated lack of authority and strength that the colour and material bronze would have connoted; offering instead connotations of purity and innocence.

The softness of the white combines with the pose and the facial expression to emphasise classic notions of femininity. Looking at the pose of the woman you can see she is sitting at an angle, her head looks slightly over her right shoulder in a classic photo pose, her legs are drawn together, close to her body, the pose is recognisable as a characteristically feminine way of sitting. According to Argyle (1975) females take up less space than males and tend to draw their limbs to the body, whilst males spread out into the space around them, this posture was typical of those found in the commercial

photographs of females commonly found in the Second World War period<sup>37</sup>. The ATS soldier represented in the commemorative war monument has almost cartoon character features, large doe eyes and a happy facial expression and her hat and head seem overly large and out of proportion; this adds to the cartoon feel of the image. Her demeanour is almost coy and does not remotely connote battle or bravery as commonly found in the representations of males in commemorative war monuments.

This idealised image of woman has no trace of death or wounding, but reinforces conventional notions of femininity: as an object to be visually caressed, cared for and protected. This voyeuristic relationship is further defined by the element of gaze. From an interactive viewing perspective the monument follows the now established pattern; the represented participant makes no eye contact with the viewer resulting in the lack of engagement that was discussed earlier in the analysis.



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The 1941 Film, Moon over Miami.

The commemorative monuments discussed in this section typify the categories into which the female as a represented participant fall into: the protected; the mythical; the supporter of the hero and the town or the nation personified. Women are used to connote vulnerability through images that tap into protective emotions in the male viewer. Just as with the discourse of the memorials that feature male represented participants the discourses that feature women are used to legitimise warfare in the name of the nation, but they also markedly fuse concepts of war and expanding territoriality together through their appearance as personification of the nation and the addition of objects, for example, the globe under their feet. The examples have revealed how the reality of the roles women played in both the First and Second World Wars are suppressed by disguising them in the crisp uniforms of disciplined nurses who stand to attention ready to serve the hero. The choices of female representation in the modern monuments, erected in a post-colonial era that has been replaced by globalisation, have been confined to traditional stereotypical notions of femininity: the carer of the fallen hero in the National Armed Forces Memorial monument, the doe-eyed ATS pin-up girl and the jaunty angles of faceless, bodiless clothes hanging on pegs.

### 5.3 Anti-war commemoration

This section explores less prevalent discourses of war within the commemorative war monument data that reveals a noticeable absence of anti-war comment. The contextual information included in the earlier section of the analysis tells us that the countrywide the First World War memorial commissioning programme was run as a tightly controlled project management exercise. In the main, decisions on cost, location and design were taken by a few elite members of a committee. King (1998) notes that the pattern around the country resulted in a final selection that was largely determined by institutional power and that the process was open to manipulation, such as the marginalizing of opposition or 'difficult' groups of people (1998:160). So far in this thesis the analysis reveals an emerging pattern of themes, nowhere amongst them an anti-war, or plainly negative comment on the loss of life as a senseless act, rather than a noble sacrifice. We have seen that committees would avoid making reference to any violent act perpetrated by the hero (Bourke, 1996); the majority of the population seemed to be determined to create a permanent memorial to their war dead that celebrated their sacrifice of life.

Whilst much of the recorded opinion was in support for the memorials (King, 1998), there is no doubt that the country was not entirely unanimous in

its support for the war itself; we know that there was unrest in the country: labour strikes at home and mutinies abroad (Mckibbin 1974, Laybourn 1997). Anti-war sentiments were expressed by workers' unions, feminist and the pacifist groups that existed in each of the participating countries, but Simkins et al. assert that their resolve was not strong enough to combat the resolve the majority had to fight until victorious (2003:102).

The genre of public commemorative war monument sculpture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was subtly homogenous in its uncritical stance towards war and sacrifice, unlike the genre of painting, which did offer some criticism of war. A British female artist, Elizabeth Thompson, also known as Lady Butler (1846-1933), who was working around the time of Britain's war with the Russians in the Crimea, produced a painting that marked the change from celebrating the officer to celebrating the soldier. Horrified by the conditions she found the soldiers in, she made a conscious effort to portray the horror, rather than the glory of war. Her most famous piece was known as

both, *Calling the Roll after an Engagement*, and, *Crimea the Roll Call* (1874)<sup>38</sup>.

The painting attracted huge crowds when it was displayed; their attention drawn to the poor physical and apparent mental condition of the soldiers portrayed for the first time in British art (Cain, 2006). The stare of the central figure was typical of the gaze of the shell shocked soldiers who would start returning from the battlefields of the First World War some thirty years later, as Cain puts it:

His is what came to be known as the “thousand yard stare” during the Vietnam conflict, a sign of mental exhaustion, of the onset of what was termed in World War I “shell shock” under the unrelenting pressures of combat.

(Cain, 2006:70)

Despite Elizabeth Thompson Butler’s bold move in the representation of psychological injury, the British viewer’s confrontation with the damaged



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Crimea, The Roll Call, Elizabeth Thompson Butler

(1874)

soldier was to be a brief one. In the First World War, the work of official war artist, Richard Nevinson, titled 'Paths of Glory' (1917)<sup>39</sup> was censored by a wary government who banned it from appearing in a major exhibition of war art in London. The painting depicted dead soldiers lying face down in the mud, an image that the government decided would be offensive to those with relatives who have been sacrificed or who are still serving in the war, so the recent censorship laws enabled them to ban the work from public view (Walsh, 2007). There still exists a tension between elite power holders and artists who seek to present realistic war-related images.

In 2003 the artist Steve McQueen went to Iraq as an 'official war artist' with the brief of bringing back a visual representation of the conflict. In an interview with the Guardian (Searle, The Guardian, online reference) He describes his frustration at being embedded with the British troops as he was restricted to the barracks most of the time, apart from one visit to a local school. The result of the visit was his project called *Queen and Country*, which is a set photographs laid out in the style of a sheet of British postage stamps



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Paths of Glory, C.R.W. Nevinson, 1917

featuring close up head shots of the 98 soldiers who had been killed in the conflict up to the point he created the work<sup>40</sup>.

McQueen has said that the response of the MoD to his work was not supportive; they asked why he could not simply paint a landscape? They tried to obstruct his contact with the families of the dead soldiers; refusing to provide him their details. However, he managed to get in contact with most of them, and the majority agreed that seeing their relatives' faces on stamps would be a positive recognition of their sacrifice. Further obstruction came when the artist approached the Royal Mail asking to have the work reproduced as official commemorative postage stamps; they refused. The Art Fund has campaigned to get the stamps published, collecting thousands of signatures on a petition asking for the stamps to be published, but despite the positive response from the public, they remain unpublished.

Nevertheless, the work, which was purchased by The Art Fund for its permanent exhibition at The Imperial War Museum, has been exhibited around the country, including a major exhibition at the National Portrait



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A section of the work: *Queen and Country*, by the artist Steve McQueen.

Gallery in 2010. But so far it has not had official recognition in the form of the publication of commemorative stamps by the national institution The Royal Mail. It seems nation-state establishments have a fixed, idealistic vision of artistic representation of war deaths, evident in their response to the work of both Nevinson and McQueen and in the work of the commemorative war monument sculptors.

The work of historians such as Arthur (2002, 2009) tells us that The Army played a role that is not widely represented in the commemorative war monuments. Sergeant B W Carmichael (in Arthur, 2009) tells of his discovery of the records of men who had been punished by their own army when he was ordered to sift through boxes of files and either destroy or retain useless or useful information. The punishments listed there varied from confinement to barracks to being tied to a wagon or a gun-wheel for hours. All organisations have disciplinary procedures they use to govern the behaviour of their staff, but Carmichael accounts of his feelings of horror and disbelief as he read the accounts of the trials and sentences given to the 'cowards' and discovered for the first time that the army had given the death sentence and executed their own men:

I'm sure my hair must have stood up – I was so shocked...but  
of course with the heavy casualty lists at that time, he might

have been killed anyway – but this, by your own men, was what shook me.

(Carmichael, quoted in Arthur, 2009:186)

In 2001 the 'Shot at Dawn' memorial was unveiled by Gertrude Harris, the daughter of Private Farr, one of the soldiers who had been executed by The British Army in the First World War. Until that point there had been no public commemoration of the executions. Ostensibly, the monument can be considered to be a negative comment on the behaviour of the British Army towards over three hundred of its soldiers in the First World War, but an analysis of the monument reveals an ambiguous stance toward the memory of the events:



Designed by Andy Decomyn, the artist who designed the ATS Second World War woman previously discussed, it stands in a far corner of the National Memorial Arboretum. It is modelled on a young soldier, 17 year old Private Herbert Burden, who was executed by soldiers of his own army at Ypres in 1915. It stands at the head of over three hundred wooden stakes on which the names of the other soldiers who were executed are inscribed. According to the guide, the designer has arranged the stakes in the form of a Greek theatre ‘...symbolising the tragedy that these events signify.’ (The National Arboretum guide book).

The artist chose the same white cement resin material as he used in the ATS woman memorial, the mode of colour here acts to connote the innocence of the soldiers, many of whom suffered from shell shock and were unable to function in the terrifying environment of the trenches. The soldier stands in an erect posture, with no sign of the quivering shell-shock symptoms accounted by historians, blindfolded with his hands tied behind his back and his hair neatly combed. Another striking feature of the monument is the fact that he is dressed in civilian clothes, an odd choice in representation when you consider that in reality these soldiers would be executed wearing the clothes they wore in battle: the filthy uniforms we see in photographs of the soldiers in the

trenches<sup>41</sup>. Another feature worth further examination is the on the front of the soldier's chest, here the artist has placed a perfectly round disc-shaped pendant; this represents the piece of white cloth, or white envelope, that was attached to the soldier in to aid identification of the target, the heart, for the firing squad. In reality the cloth or paper would have been irregularly shaped, not a perfectly circular shaped disc as represented in the monument. This disc appears as if it had been mass produced in a factory, rather than a hurriedly torn off strip of cloth or paper.

The low modality of the representation of the soldier's clothes and hair is significant, through them, the monument succeeds in creating an impression of order that did not exist; it regularizes what, according to historical accounts, was a hurried, brutal military practice. There is no sign of the psychological damage these soldiers are said to have suffered, or the way the threat of the event was used to inflict psychological brutality on the soldiers by their own officers, such as recorded in the story of Private Harry Farr, executed in October, 1916 for refusing to go back to the trenches. He had been suffering



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WWI soldier suffering from shell shock (combat-related PTSD)

from nervous exhaustion repeatedly since 1915 and had been sent for medical treatment, each time returning to the front. At his hearing he reported that his sergeant major called him 'fucking coward', placed no value on neither his, nor Private Farr's life and that he would get Private Farr shot (Jones, 2006, The Guardian, online reference). The court martial records the comments but went on to find Private Harry Farr guilty of showing 'cowardice' to the enemy and executed him the next day.

When we compare the event as represented in the commemorative war monument with the accounts of their corresponding real events we find that the visual discourses in the monument have brought organisation and order to an event that was, according to witnesses, chaotic and brutal. For the viewer of the monument the executions are represented through organised modes of communication: erect posture, tamed hair, a smart set of civilian clothes and a disc. The perfectly round shape of the disc does not appear to be an improvised item, but something that has undergone the mechanical manufacturing processes that are capable of reproducing identical items by the thousands.

The 'Shot at Dawn' monument figure wears a blindfold, as many executed soldiers did, removing the gaze from the represented figure, taking away the opportunity for the soldier to interact with the viewer by either

offering or demanding information. This covering of the eyes allows the viewer to focus not on the soldier but on the event itself. The covering of the eyes also renders the figure powerless, denying him the ability to direct his gaze and denying him the ability to choose to interact, or not, with the participant viewer. Records show that Private Harry Farr refused the blindfold, ‘...preferring to look the firing squad in the eye’ (Jones 2006, The Guardian, online reference).

Deep shame was felt by the families of those who had been executed by their own army. The impact of an official declaration of cowardice on the families of the ‘Shot at Dawn’ soldiers extended beyond grief for their dead relatives, in Arthur’s (2009) interview with the widow of Private Farr, Gertrude Farr, tells of the shame she felt when the official notification of her husband’s death came from the army, it read:

Dear Madam, we regret to inform you that your husband has died. He was sentenced for cowardice and was shot at dawn on the 16<sup>th</sup> October.

(in Arthur, 2009:189)

Mrs Farr reports feeling such shame that her husband had been officially declared a coward that she decided to keep the contents of the letter

secret from the rest of her family for many years after the event. In addition to the psychological consequences, the execution for cowardice had financial consequences; as a war widow Mrs Farr would have normally expected to have received a pension, but as the widow of a 'coward' she was not entitled to a pension, leaving her and her daughter homeless and dependent on charity.

Over 300 soldiers were executed by the British Army in the First World War, many for 'desertion' or refusing to follow orders to go over the top, the irony of the story of Private Herbert Burden, the subject of the 'Shot at Dawn' monument, is that he had not run away from the battle, but had innocently left his post to go to comfort a friend who was stationed nearby (Anon, BBC news, online reference). Most of the soldiers were young boys who had joined the army before they had reached the official enlistment age, as in the case of Private Burden who aged 16 had lied about his age to join the Northumberland Fusiliers. For these young boys in particular, the horrors of trench warfare were unbearable and it was commonplace for soldiers to be found incapacitated, disoriented and wandering around aimlessly. We now understand the majority were most likely to have been suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, a psychiatric injury, but this medical diagnosis was not available at the time. Those sent to the medical huts and diagnosed with 'nervous' conditions would soon find themselves returned to the front, so men

of all ages would commonly try to get discharged from the trenches on physical medical grounds.

Arthur (2002, 2009) provides a comprehensive account of experiences of the First World War soldiers, many of whom testify to the extents men would go to in order to be excused from duty. Once they were off the battlefield, wounded men in medical facilities would pick at their healing wounds to postpone their discharge and subsequent return to the front. A Captain Maberly Esler tells that one medical hut was full of soldiers with wounds to their hands; leading the doctors to conclude that the men had lifted their hands above the trench deliberately to get wounded and sent to the medical facility (Captain Maberly Esler in Arthur, 2002:89).

Sympathy for these individuals was not freely forthcoming, as evident in the account given by a Captain Graham Greenwell, (in Arthur, 2002:175) tried to argue on behalf of a young soldier who, despite having experienced a nervous breakdown, was being ordered to go on parade, his pleas were ignored and eventually the young soldier shot himself. Yet, although Greenwell obviously felt enough sympathy for the young soldier to plead on his behalf at the time, in this later account he argues that discipline in the army was essential in order to maintain unity.

Returning to the 'Shot at Dawn' monument, facing the soldier, just behind the viewers' benches, stand six trees that the guide at the National Memorial Arboretum explains are there to represent the firing squad:



The use of the trees to represent the firing squad further lowers the modality of the representation. The choice of organic material to replace a firing squad also presents an interesting re-enactment of the event. There are no guns pointing at the soldier, no people to take responsibility for the action, nature represents an event that many would consider to be unnatural. The absence of a figurative representation of the firing squad and their replacement by the use of trees means the event is presented in an abstract form, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) discuss abstraction and the relevance of materiality, not as a sign, but as a means for representation more centrally,

asking, 'How does materiality actually enter into and shape the resources for representation, the modes?' (2006:225). The same question can be asked of the wooden stakes that stand behind the figure representing the other 'Shot at Dawn' soldiers. Both are represented using organic material, the firing squad by trees and the soldiers by stakes. Putting the practical issues of cost aside, the use of stakes presents a far less challenging, less demanding image to the viewer than a figurative representation of 300 soldiers all tied and waiting to be executed by their own army colleagues would present. The same can be said for the use of the trees, soldiers taking aim at their colleagues is not an image that would sit comfortably with most viewers.

When we consider accounts of the actual 'Shot at Dawn' events, we can see that an effort was made to conceal the source of the fatal bullet, concealing at the same time the identity of the soldier who shot the gun. The executions were carried out by the colleagues of the sentenced soldiers, not the commanding officers, who formed a firing squad at dawn. Attempts were made to keep the identity of the soldier who fired the fatal shot secret; only one of the guns would be loaded secretly with a live bullet, so the identity of the individual whose gun killed the soldier was, in theory at least, hidden. Nevertheless, it was a harrowing experience to participate in the execution of a colleague, as rifleman Henry Williamson's account of taking part in an execution of a soldier who had deserted testifies. He describes how the firing

squad was ordered to aim for the piece of white cloth placed over the soldier's heart and how efforts to keep the origin of the bullets secret failed. Williamson said that although they had not been told which of their guns had been loaded with 'ball' and which had blanks, they could tell by the recoil which weapon they had been given (in Arthur, 2002:89).

If the representation of the firing squad was in high modality, which could have been achieved by representing the firing squad and the others awaiting execution as soldiers instead of stakes and trees, it would have had the effect of drawing attention to the crime committed by the army against its own soldiers. It can be argued that such a high modality image this would cause a conflict with the image of the nation for which soldiers are expected to sacrifice their lives. As it is, the monument uses a non-verbal agentless structure in the representation of the firing squad, utilising the materiality to shape the representation and conceal identity of the agent. This structure has the same effect as using the passive structure in verbal communication, the result being that it places no blame on the soldiers who participated in the execution and by default indirectly no blame on the establishment that ordered them to do it.

The executions were used to control the soldiers' behaviour; the names of the executed were often referred to by the officers on parades, acting as a

terrifying warning to those who may be thinking of deserting or refusing to carry out orders. Yet, it appears not all soldiers agreed to take part in the firing squads; a soldier called Corporal Alan Bray claims he refused to take part once he learned that it was possible to do so without recrimination (Arthur, 2002). Despite this one reported act of defiance, the accounts in Arthur's work demonstrate the commitment the majority of the soldiers had to following orders and, to some extent, their loathing of those who allowed themselves to reveal their fragility. Evidently war and soldiery have their own discourses that do not include weakness, fragility or fear.

For many years public condemnation was aimed not at the army who had brutally executed these victims of war, but at the victim soldiers. Nowhere is this more evident than in the refusal to include their names on war memorials. As recently as the year 2000, people in Shoreham, Kent, were asked to vote in a referendum to decide whether a 'disgraced' soldier's name should be inscribed on their First World War memorial (Birkett, *The Independent*, 2000, online reference). Thomas Highgate, aged 19, is reported to have been the first soldier in the First World War to have been executed for desertion on 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1914. His story emphasises the shame families were made to feel if their relatives had been officially declared to be 'traitors'. The article reports how a local historian brought to light the story of the family who had lost three of their five serving sons. It appears that in an attempt to

record Thomas' name on a war memorial, the family had given false details about his regiment and year of death to a war memorial committee in a nearby town; his name, and the false details appear on a war memorial in nearby Sidcup. The executions and reactions to the executions carried out by the army point to a degree of willingness to unite under a nationalist cause, Gellner (2006) makes this point in his discussion of nations and nationalism, saying:

Far from revelling in the defiant individual will, nationalists delight in feeling of submission or incorporation in a continuous entity greater, more persistent and more legitimate than the isolated self.

(Gellner, 2006:127)

We can see the elements of the promotion of the sacrificing individual will in the story of Thomas Highgate which also demonstrates the importance the families gave to publicly commemorating their war dead in the past and in the present, it reminds us how little people had moved away from their restricted notions of war and soldiery by the twenty-first century. It could be said that the reluctance of people to include names of the executed soldiers who had succumbed to the psychological torture war had inflicted on them testifies to the power of the early twentieth century war monument images: the strong soldier capable of overcoming physical pain and defeating death in

the defence of their country. These repeated heroic images of the soldier have created a fixed, inflexible discourse of war and soldiery which closes down the viewer's ability to engage with other versions of reality.

Stanley (in Ashplant et al. 2004) describes combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder as an 'involuntary private commemoration'; there are no public ceremonies which commemorate the effects of battle on the sufferers, living or dead. In her work she describes the mental torment that sufferers of PTSD endure for years following the end of their service. Their experiences contrast with the memories of war that are portrayed by its public commemoration, a contrast which Stanley describes as:

Complex and paradoxical interrelations exist between, on the one hand, personal memories of trauma, and on the other hand, the range of public memories and commemorations of war.

(Stanley, in Ashplant et al., 2004:248)

Stanley's study of contemporary soldiers' experiences of PTSD tells us something of the horrors which the First World War soldiers must have been enduring in the trenches. At that time, the low ranking 'shell shocked' soldiers could expect neither understanding nor practical support from their

commanding officers, unlike those of officer rank who if deemed to be suffering from 'nerves' would be sent for medical assistance (Leys 1994, Leese 2002). The 'Shot at Dawn' episodes are a shameful part of British military history, it was not until nearly a hundred years after the beginning of the First World War in 2006 that the establishment gave a pardon to the British soldiers it had executed. As our understanding of the psychological effects of warfare on soldiers and civilians widens it may be that discourses will also widen to include the representation of participant soldiers with physical and mental injury. Widening discourses will in turn alter the way we view, and perhaps even the way we conduct, warfare. However, at present the evidence demonstrates that we are still unable to express the wider range of war experiences in our commemorative war monuments. This argument is illustrated in The 'Shot at Dawn' monument, a highly stylised, low modality representation of truly brutal acts, acts which took place not only in the name of the nation-state cause, but by the very establishment that underpins the nation-state: the army.

The commissioning of the First World War commemorative monuments followed a war that had a victorious outcome for Britain. Many monuments reflect a celebratory mood and even the huge numbers lost to the war are presented as a cause for joy; death was portrayed in an orderly, regal fashion, quite different from the face-down soldiers in Nevinson's work. It is

the horrors of war that the authorities wanted to keep out of public art, not the subject of death. We can speculate on the reasons for the avoidance of the reality of war in the discourse of war memorials in public space, maybe the concern was bound up in the desire to promote nationalism as an entirely positive ideology. We are told by Simkins et al. (2003) that during the First World War the will to fight and win was far greater amongst the public of all parties than the anti-war, or pacifist groups who rejected war; if this is the case we could speculate that a visual confrontation with the true horrors of war represented in commemorative war monuments in public spaces would present them with images that would cause a conflict with feelings that people had towards their nation. Anderson (2006) argues from this position when he used the analogy of nation and family, he argues that one does not choose one's family, nor do they necessarily love it, but it is a '...domain of disinterested love and solidarity.' (2006:144). He goes on to say that this 'natural' relationship explains the willingness of people to sacrifice their lives for the nation:

Dying for one's country, which usually one does not choose, assumes a moral grandeur which dying for the Labour Party, the American Medical Association, or

perhaps even Amnesty International can not rival, for these are all bodies one can join or leave at easy will.

(Anderson, 2006:144)

A pattern of nationalist discourses has emerged in the modes of communication selected by the designers of commemorative war monuments, the majority of which spring from a time when Britain was a nation that ruled over a significant area of foreign territory.

What of the future of war commemoration in an era of globalisation when, according to some (see, for example, Burgi and Golub 2000; Carnoy 2001; English and Kenny 1999; Maus 2006) the nation-state may decline? The following section explores this question by examining some representation choices in more recent monuments.

#### **5.4 The future of war commemoration**

Smith (2001:30) uses Anderson's (1999) comments on the way a nation recreates itself by pointing out that the concept of destiny carries with it more 'emotional freight' than notions of the future because destiny carries connotations of transcendence, maybe even immortality; the nation recreates itself not on the glories of the past, but under transformed conditions. What role do the modern commemorative war monuments play in this transformation? This section explores the discourses found in some of the most recent commemorative war monuments and considers them in the context of a very different international arena from that of the First World War.

At the time of writing the British Army is deployed in over 80 countries (The British Army, online reference), they are engaged in all kinds of military activities, including participation in conflicts as part of NATO. Whilst we think of the large scale country-wide commissioning of commemorative war monuments as an activity largely belonging to the period following the First World War, the late twentieth and first decade of the twenty-first century has so far seen significant developments in the continuation of commemorative war discourses in the form of commemorative war monuments. The National Memorial Arboretum, opened in 1997, is a combination of mass tree planting

and war commemoration in the form of monument memorials, they currently number over 160 that act as a 'living memorial' to Britain's war dead (The National Memorial Arboretum, online reference). Elsewhere, the first commemorative monument to women who served in the Second World War was unveiled in London in 2005 and many other new commemorative war monuments are appearing in towns and cities across the country; as recently as December 2011 a plaque to the memory of men who went to join the Spanish Civil War was unveiled in Swansea. In 2004 the small English town of Wootton Bassett unveiled their first commemorative war monument, having opted for a utilitarian memorial after the First World War.

Records searched during the course of the research for this thesis revealed a lengthy process which involved the whole community, including elite members and military representation in the form of the nearby airbase RAF Lyneham. The local British Legion campaigned unsuccessfully for years to have a memorial monument erected, but the campaign that succeeded was instigated by a 14 year old army cadet standard bearer, Jay Cunningham, who started to complain that she felt shame in having to tip her standard to a makeshift monument whilst on annual remembrance parades. She began the campaign by collecting signatures on a petition and as her campaign gained strength a public meeting was called that was attended by local people, including council members. At that meeting volunteers came forward to form a

war memorial committee to oversee the project. The committee had elements of the elitist committees that sprung up after the First World War, for example, a former Mayor of the town became secretary and took charge of the funds raised in subsequent fund-raising events. However, the committee had a distinctly modern element of inclusivity as the young Jay Cunningham acted as Chair of the committee.

Activities to raise funds were successful, the largest donation, £1,600, coming in from a Turkish Muslim family who ran the local kebab shop, another large donation of £1,000 was made by RAF Lyneham. The final total raised was about £20,000. The local council were made project managers, comments in the file I viewed recorded the fact that whilst the participation of the council turned out to be financially cumbersome, as charges of £4,000 were levied in management fees, the move turned out to be beneficial as it did thwart the few anti-war motivated objections to the memorial; one of which came from a council member. The file also records the participation of the local M.P. who was also heavily involved in the form of letters written on official House of Commons paper to various bodies requesting support for the project, including the local press and RAF Lyneham.

The design process was completed in two distinct phases; firstly, a stone plinth was selected by the committee and erected on the site in the high

street in 2000. Discussions with the British Legion took place regarding which names to include on the plinth, finally they decided to include only those names on the official role of honour from the First and Second World Wars. There was also a lot of discussion about the wording which was to form the dedication – ‘Lest We Forget’ was chosen, the British Legion decided this was the most appropriate form as it focused on the sacrifice rather than general comments about war itself; revealing that there was reluctance to appear to have a view on the necessity of war.



The commemorative war monument at Wootton Bassett

In the second phase a public competition was held to find the design for the monument to be placed on the pedestal, everyone was invited to enter the competition. Most of the entries came from local schools, the majority of which featured traditional war memorial elements such as crosses and statues of soldiers holding guns. Interestingly, the records show that there was one ‘non-traditional’ design which featured a collection of circles, the committee

rejected this design on the grounds that they could not connect this image with a war and sacrifice theme. The entries were finally narrowed down to eight submissions which were put on display in the public library where the public voted for their favourite entry.

The winning entry was a globe held by one hand that was designed by a fifteen year old boy from a local comprehensive school. However, when the design was sent to the manufacturers for costing, the committee were advised that having the globe supported by one hand was a weakness that may be a health and safety hazard; acting on this advice, they decided to adapt the design to support the globe with four hands. The manufacturers also recommended the use of bronze, which would suffer a colour change when placed in the elements but would not deteriorate and decompose. Correspondence amongst the records show that the selected design was commonly read by the people involved in the committee as a 'frail world' that has to be cared for and handled carefully.



The commemorative war monument at Wootton Bassett

Records also revealed that the committee deliberately had the globe placed with The Falkland Islands facing toward RAF Lyneham to acknowledge the role of the base in the Falklands War that was, at that point in time, the most recent significant war for Britain. The committee may well have chosen another part of the globe if the committee could have foreseen the prominent role Wootton Bassett would soon play in the repatriation of the bodies of the war dead from Afghanistan to nearby RAF Lyneham. From 2001 to 2007 the bodies of military service personnel were publically repatriated through the streets of Wootton Bassett from RAF Lyneham. These public repatriations soon became a common news feature as the bereaved families and members of the general public, some of whom had travelled several miles, lined the streets as the coffins went by. These events form contextual layers to the meaning of the Wootton Bassett monument as it has become a symbol of not only military sacrifice of life, but a departure from traditional, restrained public displays of grieving that were previously predominant in Britain.

The monument's unveiling ceremony took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2004. It was unveiled by the High Sheriff (The Mayor) with various committee members present. Each member addressed the crowd, including: the Chair; Jay Cunningham who had begun the campaign; the local M.P. and the Chaplain of the local British Legion. The description of the ceremony included a comment that the monument was draped in a Union Jack flag which when removed did

not 'touch the floor'. The programme of the ceremony shows that the event featured: a parade of British Legion and army cadets; a flypast by a Hercules jet from RAF Lyneham; the sounding of the last post; two minutes' silence; the singing of a hymn 'I Vow to Thee My Country' and the National Anthem featured before the standards and parade marched off. The unveiling ceremony differed very little from those of the post-First World War unveiling ceremonies in the 1920s with themes of militarism, religion and nationalism all included.



The commemorative war monument at Wootton Bassett

In contrast to the other monuments that feature a globe we have seen so far, such as the memorial at Bridgwater, this globe is not shown under the feet of the personified empire but is supported by hands. This transformation of 'globe controlled by nation' to 'globe sustained by nation' are in keeping with the discourses of environmentalism that have come to the forefront of societal discourses in the late twentieth/early twenty-first century; such as the

annual 'Earth Day' campaign which started over 40 years ago to raise awareness of environmental dangers threatening the earth's eco systems<sup>42</sup>. It is not surprising that a young twenty-first century monument designer would utilise the visual resource of the globe as environmental discourses that feature the globe are prominent in contemporary public discourses. However, what is surprising is the way children have effortlessly linked the welfare of the earth with war.

The scale of the monument also contrasts with the taller designs in the earlier examples discussed, this smaller scale enables viewers, even children, to view it from a less acute angle; bringing the monument nearer to their own height. Importantly, viewers don't look down on the monument as they do for the Second World War soldier at Portsmouth, the monument is placed high enough to fit into the ideal, but near enough to be within reach; as such it presents as an achievable goal that viewers can participate in attaining.

The rest of the globe is as significant to the nation in the twenty-first century as it was in the colonial period of the First World War. As links with the rest of the world strengthen through capitalist structures, so the interests of



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One of the images used to promote Earth Day.

the nation increasingly depend on other parts of the globe. Economic ties inextricably bind them together, just as they did during the empire building days of the colonial powers. A difference between colonisation and globalisation is that the colonial powers took world resources by overt shows of force and occupation, whereas globalisation 'takes' resources, ostensibly at least, through business acumen. There are those who would argue that colonial powers are still at force; twenty-first century elitist discourses of 'war on terror', put forward as a rationale for military engagement, are often countered with discourses that claim that wars are actually being fought not for security but for the control of a region's natural resources. Bringing eco imagery into the war memorial in Wootton Bassett realises the message that through war the world can be protected. This monument expresses dual concepts: sacrifice for nation and the nation as the means of saving the world.

In a similar move towards environmental discourses, we see connotations of nature and nationalism brought together in other modern commemorative war monument, such as those to the war dead of Australia (see 1 below) and New Zealand (see 2 below) that stand on Hyde Park Corner, London:



(1)

The Australian War Memorial



(2)

The New Zealand War Memorial

Dedicated by The Queen in 2003, the Australian War Memorial was erected to commemorate the Australians who died fighting in World Wars I and II. The design, by Australian architects Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Pty Ltd was created in association with an artist, Janet Lawrence. The principle architect, Peter Tonkin describes the rationale behind the design as:

The form chosen for the Memorial reflects the sweep of Australian landscape, the breadth and generosity of our people, the openness that we believe should characterise our culture.

(Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs, online reference)

The criteria imposed by the commissioners of the memorial, English Heritage on behalf of a group called the Hyde Park Corner Steering Group,

specified that the memorial should be sensitive to the existing form and use of the area and should not offend passers-by. The ideological stance to be taken towards war by the Australian monument is already dictated by the remit, for example, we would not expect to find a commemorative war monument that expressed negativity about Britain as a colonial power and its use of Australian soldiers to fight what in essence was a disagreement between far away European powers.

The shape of the monument does indeed show sensitivity to its environment by curving with the landscape of the park. Hyde Park Corner already features other important war monuments, such as The Royal Artillery Memorial discussed earlier and the Wellington Memorial. The Australian monument is unique amongst the other monuments in the park as it sits naturally in its location, as if it has grown out of the ground, whereas the other monuments have obviously been erected on their site.

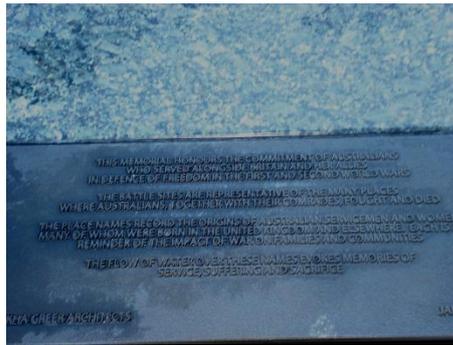
The monument is a curve-shaped granite wall that is low at one end and rises towards the middle, plaques placed on the wall are inscribed with the names of the serving soldiers' home towns, superimposed on these are the names of the 47 battle sites. Water from an underground pumping facility is programmed to flow over the wall in a set of sequences. The form connotes the classical shapes of the Greek and Roman amphitheatre designed for the

viewer to be part of. Interactive participation is made possible by the inclusion of granite seats placed in front of the wall that also supports cast bronzes of three service insignia and the Australian Commonwealth Coat of Arms.



The notion of war as a naturalised phenomenon is realised by both the water and the green-coloured granite, said by the designers to symbolise the essence of the Australian bush. Here then, in the words of Kress and van Leeuwen, ‘...the material becomes a fully exploited resource.’ (1996:238). This exploitation of material is also evident in the way the artist draws attention to the water element of the memorial in the last part of the inscription (see picture below), that refers to the water as:

‘THE FLOW OF WATER OVER THESE NAMES EVOKES MEMORIES OF  
SERVICE, SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE’



The inclusion of water in the memorial is a purifying symbol (Cirlot 2002); the water purifies the place names, both of the battle and of the origins of the soldiers. In doing so, the water realises the meaning that the names that make up the nation, therefore the nation itself, is a pure construct which acts with pure intentions. Here then, the discourse of war commemoration is one that justifies the actions of the soldiers as being pure and without sin. Next to the viewer, the bronze insignia and national coat of arms remind them that war on behalf of the nation is a natural, pure act that warrants no criticism.

As with the Wootton Bassett monument, the Australian monument does not stand as high as the older examples, at about 4 metres at its tallest point it does not tower over the viewer. Whereas the earlier memorials stood on pedestals, raised into the ideal (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996), many modern memorials sit at ground level, perhaps a reflection of the fact that in the age of multimedia, war is closer to our everyday experience; without actually being there, we see more of war than the non-combatants of the First

and Second World Wars ever saw. For the modern participant, war is less of an idealised, less of a mysterious phenomenon.

From an interactive participant perspective, there is no great power differential created by viewing the memorial from a particularly high or low angle, instead, viewer and memorial participants are nearer to equal partners (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996), but with the memorial being slightly taller having a degree of dominance over the viewer. There is another related point to consider, in terms of context, the participants are an ex-colony and its ex-master, in this changing relationship Australia is moving ever nearer to complete independence and keen to assert its new identity on the world stage.

This striving towards a new, independent identity has been commented on by Kress (1985) who pointed out the overlexicalisation in the Australian Prime Minister's inauguration speech. In this context, the scale of the monument is a significant realiser of meaning potential. Too small and the relationship with the viewer would be that of a parent/child, too big and the monument would be making a statement of dominance that would be inappropriate for its context. This is, after all, a foreign commemorative war monument in the British capital city, the monument underpins this by bringing the relationship between the two countries to the attention of the viewer with part of its inscription:

'WHATEVER BURDEN YOU ARE TO CARRY

WE ALSO WILL SHOULDER THAT BURDEN

AUSTRALIA UNITED KINGDOM

1914-1918

1939-1945'

The Australian War Memorial in London acknowledges and legitimises Australia's quest for independent nationalism. The commissioning process followed that of the elite instigators of memorials after the First World War, with Westminster City Council making their criteria very clear. By defining the space available amongst major British war monuments they ensured that they would have a commemorative war monument that celebrated victory and nationhood, but it does so in a subtle, non-aggressive, natural way that is appropriate in the context of the immediate environment and the fact that it stands on the ground of a foreign nation.

On the opposite corner of Hyde Park stands the monument to the New Zealand dead in World Wars One and Two, titled 'Southern Stand'. Designed by the sculptor Paul Dibble and architect John Hardwick-Smith, the monument was dedicated by The Queen in a service held in 2006. The monument is comprised of 16 vertical, bronze, cross-shaped pillars standing at different

heights in semi-grid formation on a slope. Each pillar, referred to by the artist as 'standards' (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, online reference) is engraved with a mixture of emblems from New Zealand life and environment, such as: flora and fauna, literary references and military references in the form of poppies and Defence Force emblems. According to the artist, the forward lean of the 'standards' give them a 'defiant pose' (Ministry for Culture & Heritage, online reference).



Machin's (2007b) comments on connotations of movement and determination created by forward leaning shapes are relevant here as they confirm the artist's perspective on his decision to tilt the pillars forward. Despite this connoted defiance and determination, the representation does not appear aggressive as it would if the pillars, or 'standards' were representations of soldiers, just as we saw in the use of trees as the representation of the firing squad in the 'Shot at Dawn' monument, the

abstract representation blurs the aggression that would be connoted if sixteen soldiers were erected instead of sixteen pillars.

Each pillar is capped with a cross that illuminates at night, the artist says that they are arranged in the shape of the Southern Cross constellation and indicate the compass direction that will direct lost New Zealanders towards home. From the daytime viewer's perspective the connotations of warriors created by the shapes and position, capped with a cross denoting religious denomination realises the meaning that the warriors are acting with divine legitimacy. As with the Australian monument, there is no challenge to a nationalist ideological position that might be held by the host country. As the New Zealand monument rises from ground level and is spaced out on the ground, the viewer is invited to mingle with the formation; to go in close where they will find images of nature, quotes from artistic literature and military emblems that are all effortlessly combined to connote a seamless unity between war and other cultural and agricultural aspects of everyday life.

Seamless associations of war and diverse cultural domains can be found in other modern commemorative war monuments, such as the one below erected at the National Memorial Arboretum:



Pictured above is the commemorative war monument dedicated to the soldiers who belonged to the Showmen's Guild. The chosen symbol here is a merry-go-round, or carousel, a 'horse' found in fun fairs. Although the accompanying inscription makes it clear who the monument commemorates:

'ROLL OF HONOUR  
 A PROUD TRIBUTE TO THOSE MEMBERS  
 OF THE SHOWMEN'S GUILD OF GREAT BRITAIN  
 WHO MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE  
 FOR KING AND COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WARS'

The designers chose not to represent their dead members in the form of a soldier, in this monument the denotative signifier is the merry-go-round horse, consequently, the denotative signified is a fairground; this has the effect of bringing wider connotations that are significant to both the potential

meaning of the monument and the suggested meaning of the nation. The visual image does not signify war, but the written text, in the form of the inscription, does. When put with the denotative signified: the fairground, the inscription tells us that citizens in every cultural domain, entertainment or recreation providers included, are capable of participating in war on behalf of the nation; reminding the viewer of one of the assertions of a nationalist argument is that: ‘...the interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values.’ (Breuille, 1993:2 in Smith, 2001:75). The significance of the realisation of the meaning potential of the Showmen’s Guild monument in the inscription is a good point from which to approach the next section of the thesis that discusses the meaning potential of the inscriptions on commemorative war monuments.

## 5.5 Inscriptions

Inscriptions appear on all commemorative war monuments, they are written forms of communication that are intended to be read alongside the non-verbal image. Whilst taking up much less of the space than the space occupied by the non-verbal image, they are always placed in a position that allows the viewer to easily read them. As Kress and van Leeuwen emphasise, it is the relation between the written text and the image that is crucial to the meaning of the whole (1996, 2006). From an interactive viewing perspective, their position tells us that the artist intended them to be integral to the message communicated by the monument, rather than superfluous additional information.

The importance of written text to a commemorative war monument is exemplified well in the monument dedicated to Merchant Seamen in Cardiff Bay that incorporates what can be described as an abstract visual image of sunken ship:



Unveiled in 1996, this monument by the sculptor Brian Fell was commissioned by the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation that was formed to oversee the regeneration of Cardiff's disused docklands area. The marketing literature about the area in which the monument stands refers to the monument as a piece that reflects a technically skilful accomplishment in the hydraulic riveting of the seam steel section and features a 'timeless face' on a beached ship's hull. As in the case of the monument dedicated to the women of the Second World War, the design of the Cardiff Bay Merchant Seamen's monument departs from the more familiar First World War representations of a military figure by using an abstract image.

As we saw earlier in the analysis, abstract design did not appeal to the ex-soldiers who had collected the funds for the monument to World War II women, recall that the ex-ATS woman, Lillian Edwards (Wilmslow Express, online reference) criticised the memorial to the women of the Second World

War because it did not 'depict anything'. Such passion suggests that people who served in the military appreciate representations of military figures in commemorative war monuments more than they appreciate abstract images. To determine whether this is the case, a wide scale research project that investigated reactions of ex-service people to commemorative war monuments using systematic interview techniques would be the only way to reveal their reactions to abstract and traditional designs. An illustration of the rich data this kind of research would generate incidentally occurred whilst I was photographing the Cardiff Bay monument for the data collection phase of this research. During this time I was fortunate to become engaged in a discussion with two other viewers of the monument who turned out to be ex-merchant seamen spending the day together in the area. Whilst their comments were not gathered using recognised academic interview methodology, they do serve to provide contextual glimpse into possible responses to the monument by ex-seamen, as well as providing an interesting illustration of how Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2001, 2006) theories on angle, height and power are possibly read by ex-service personnel as viewers of war monuments.

The two men I spoke to at the Cardiff Bay monument were members of the local Merchant Seamen's Association who had served in the Second World War, they were unenthusiastic about the monument's design; one describing it

as 'just a shell' and unrecognisable as a boat, the other man commenting that as a former Merchant Seaman he would not wish to be associated with the memorial. His preference was for another 'typical' monument in the nearby town of Newport that featured a representation of a seaman on top of a tall column looking out to sea; a monument that he described as 'beautiful'. It is worth briefly comparing the Cardiff monument with the one at Newport (below):



The monument at Newport, that was designed by Sebastien Boyesen, erected in 1991, features a half-naked figure sitting on a globe at the top of a column that stands seven metres high. The torso of the male figure features a muscular frame that is evident in commemorative war monuments discussed earlier; such as those at Exeter and Richmond upon Thames, however, the Newport monument lacks any obvious signifier of the sea. As with the Cardiff monument to Merchant Seamen it relies on its written inscription to define its purpose. The inscription tells the viewer that the monument is dedicated to commemorate the 'long standing relationship' between the Merchant Navy

and the town of Newport. But for the two ex-Merchant Seamen I spoke to in Cardiff it is the combination of the presence of a figure that represents a sailor and the height of the monument that differentiates the monument at Newport from the one at Cardiff. One of the seaman said he was offended by the positioning of the Cardiff monument, which was placed flat on the ground. He said that regardless of its declared representation of a sunken ship, commemorative war monuments should include a figure, a sailor, and should all be elevated on a high plinth as a sign of respect to the dead seamen whom they commemorate.

The comments relating to the height of the monument indicate that these viewers are verbalising their metaphorical association with height and power in line with Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2001, 2006) theory. Throughout the discussion the ex-seaman reiterated his point that something a person is able to 'literally walk over' is not something that is meant to be revered. Their comments succinctly exemplify the different approaches to the interpretation of war commemoration taken by modern artists and the ex-servicemen. On the one hand, artists may appreciate the technical skill involved in creating the Cardiff piece and the subtle connotations created by the image of a face lying on its side; on the other hand these ex-military viewers refuse to accept such artistic licence. The comments made by the ex-serviceman on the importance of height suggest that he views a

commemorative war monument as akin to a priceless rug that is hung on a wall for preservation and viewing rather than put on the floor to walk upon. These comments display metaphorical association of height with reverence and warrant further investigation in a purposely designed research project; something which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Returning to the discussion of the significance of inscriptions to commemorative war monuments it is important to note that in abstract representations without figurative military representations viewers are heavily reliant on the written text: the inscription, for full realisation of the purpose or meaning of the image. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) propose that as a significant signifying system, inscriptions should be considered as productive of meaning in their own right. In social semiotic theory inscriptions can be understood as relating to materiality and analysed as regards the options available to the artist for their format: font, size, colour etc. However, it is argued by this thesis that in order to fully expose the meaning potential of commemorative war monuments, we need to employ a discourse analysis method suited to the analysis of the inscriptions' conceptual content, rather than solely their physical form.

According to the philosopher Arthur Clutton-Brock inscriptions on war memorials:

...should be good as an inscription, just as a motor car should be good as a car. A good inscription 'says what it means simply and finely', and the lettering is also simple, fine, clear and permanent...good lettering performs its functions well, like a good motor car.

(Clutton-Brock 1917, quoted in King, 1998:110).

These, King (1998) says, are the principles followed by a number of artists, which originated in the nineteenth century with Ruskin and William Morris. But how do we go about establishing what an inscription says and what it means?

Fairclough's (2003) approach to uncovering ideological implicitness and assumptions in text will be utilised in this thesis to achieve a close analysis of the ideological significance of inscriptions found in the commemorative war monuments. Fairclough says of the relationship between ideology and assumptions:

Assumed meanings are of particular ideological significance – one can argue that relations of power are best served by meanings which are widely taken as given.

(2003:58)

Are monuments purely a symbol of grief and commemoration of the loss of loved ones, or do they have multiple roles tied to the individual's banal participation in nationalism? Raivo (1998) claimed that nationalism, the ideology of belonging to the nation, was an essential part of war remembrance, but to what extent are the 'given' meanings of nationalism, warfare and sacrifice explicit in the commemorative war monuments? At a basic level some inscriptions appear to fulfil the former function: an expression of grief and commemoration of the loss of loved ones, such as the four inscriptions on the commemorative war monument at Colne, Lancashire:

'AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM'

'ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE'

'GREAT WAR 1914-1918'

'LEST WE FORGET'

This inscription does its ideological work for nationalism through the use of the active tense that requires an agent; this is achieved by the inclusion of the personal pronoun: 'we'. This choice of words extends the meaning beyond the purpose of pure commemoration. Had the passive tense been selected, the inscription would have read 'THEY WILL BE REMEMBERED' & 'LEST THEY ARE FORGOTTEN'. 'WE' represents a community; it suggests a consentient

group of people who will all remember dead soldiers in the same way; an 'Existential Assumption' in Fairclough's (2003) terms; one which implicitly refers to the community of the nation. More explicit assumptions can be found in inscriptions such as the following on the Royal Artillery Memorial in Hyde Park:



'IN PROUD REMEMBRANCE OF THE  
FORTY NINE THOUSAND & SEVENTY SIX  
OF ALL RANKS OF THE  
ROYAL REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY  
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR KING  
AND COUNTRY IN THE GREAT WAR  
1914-1919'

The Existential Assumption at work here lies in the line 'who gave their lives'; a phrase that closes down alternative discourses that otherwise may reflect the reality of the lives of the mainly working class soldiers who joined the army voluntarily to escape poverty in 1914 & 1915, the conscripted soldiers who had no choice in participating from 1916 on and those PTSD sufferers who were found curled up on the ground shaking with fear. The inscription does the ideological work of nationalism by the specific link between sacrifice, royalty and nation. Similar assumptions about sacrifice, collective national identity and debt are seen in the inscription that accompanies the memorial at Weston-Super-Mare:



'THESE DIED  
THAT WE MIGHT LIVE'

But we cannot depend on the inscription alone for full realisation of a message. The importance of context and the relationship between the image and the inscription is exemplified in this example from the Llandaff war memorial:

‘LLANDAFF REMEMBERS HER OWN SONS  
AND THOSE OF THE CATHEDRAL SCHOOL  
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR  
NON SIBI SED PATRIAE<sup>43</sup>,

More didactic in tone, the inscription tells that the boys of the town and the school gave their lives for their country. However, the context adds a layer of meaning to this line. As discussed earlier, this memorial features images of two boys and a female personification of the town who is ‘witnessing’, or directing the boys to war. The physical location of the memorial is also significant, sited as it is on the village green in between the school and the cathedral it stands on the route where boys would be marched from one building to the other every day. These contextual features are significant layers of representation that add meaning to the whole; as such this memorial not

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<sup>43</sup> translates as: NOT FOR SELF BUT FOR COUNTRY

only supports Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) comments on the significance of context and the inter-relationship of the materiality of meaning of surface and inscription, but it also exemplifies Fairclough's point on the theoretical value of identifying assumptions within texts:

Certainly one cannot simply look at a text, identify assumptions, and decide on textual evidence alone which of them are ideological.

(2003:59)

It is also possible to see how we could argue that, on occasions, the commemorative war monument inscriptions alone provide solid evidence of ideological positions; whether they might be religious or nationalist in nature. For example, the text that accompanies the memorial at Oldham reads:

'DEATH IS THE GATE OF LIFE

1914-1918

TO GOD BE THE PRAISE

1939-1945'

These few lines carry the cornerstone of religious ideology in their existential assumptions of the existence of an afterlife. The nationalist ideology

is in the inclusion of the dates, which make reference to the two World Wars fought on behalf of the nation. If we were to see just the inscription, without the accompanying visual representation of the soldiers defying death in 'the trench', we could argue that the nationalist message is still achieved. The key is that the visual components of the monuments allow the viewer to *feel* the experiences metaphorically in a way which the written discourse, in the form of inscriptions, alone cannot achieve.

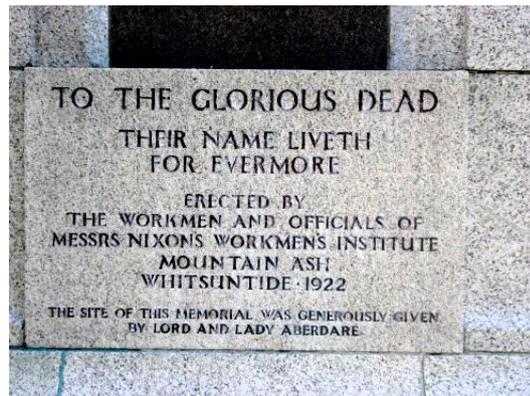
Fairclough makes the case for taking wider contextual features into account when examining the ideological function of discourses. I argue here that the examination of commemorative war monuments' potential to multimodally communicate discourses of war, sacrifice and nationalism is only achievable when taking the whole piece: representation, inscription and location, into account.

As briefly mentioned earlier, the more abstract the image, the greater need for written explanation. The Seafarers' memorial to Merchant Seamen in Cardiff Bay has, in addition to the inscription around the monument at ground level, a free-standing plaque that gives the narrative of the commissioning process of the monument:

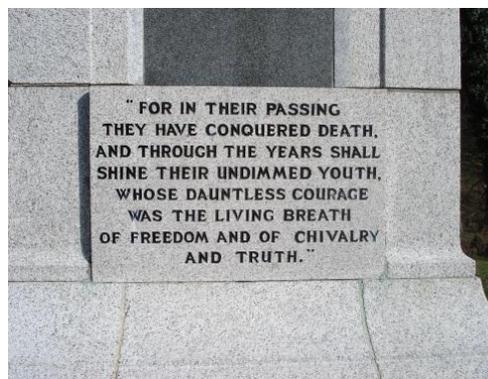


The plaque is integral to the image; its shape connotes the western practice of marking graves with a headstone that gives brief biographical details of the occupant of the grave. The plaque is fully accessible to the viewer and gives an account of the purpose of the monument; nevertheless, for the ex-seamen I spoke to the written discourse in the Cardiff monument does not offer the same satisfaction as the elements of height in the Newport monument. Neither do these memorials meet the expectations of the function of commemorative war monuments Rowlands (2001) set out as the inscription has insufficient deification of the dead and no acknowledgement of a willingness to reciprocate.

In the Mountain Ash war monument, we can see a perfect example of a text that includes the notion of the debt incurred by the soldiers' sacrifice and a willingness to reciprocate by the living. Reciprocation of the sacrificial act is specifically referred to in the inscription of the monument at Mountain Ash (1, 2 & 3 below)



(1)



(2)

The Value Assumption in picture 1 relates to the sacrifice of life for others; the deification of the dead: 'GLORIOUS DEAD' carries the assumption that dying is a valuable, desirable goal. The Existential Assumption in picture two is related to sacrifice and the existence of an afterlife: 'THEY HAVE CONQUERED DEATH' carries the assumption that the soldiers live on spiritually despite their physical demise. The text expects the viewer to accept the premise that dying for others is highly valued and that life continues on some

other level. Following this reassurance, the third plaque speaks directly to the living:

'SONS OF THIS TOWN  
AND DISTRICT  
LET THIS OF YOU BE SAID  
THAT YOU WHO LIVE  
ARE WORTHY OF YOUR DEAD  
THESE GAVE THEIR LIVES  
THAT YOU WHO LIVE MAY REAP  
A RICHER HARVEST  
ERE YOU FALL ASLEEP'



(3)

The Propositional Assumptions relating to what may or will happen: a better life for the survivors of the war when it is over. The inscription on the

Mountain Ash memorial guides the viewer through a particular ideological process: the honouring of sacrificial acts; belief in an afterlife; sacrifice is made for fellow citizens; war ensures better life for the living and a debt is owed to those who sacrifice for you. For Rowlands (2001) this is a memorial that satisfies the requirements of its function in its acknowledgement of the debt of reciprocation.

Whilst nowhere in the text do we see explicit mention of dying for 'King and Country' as we have seen in other inscriptions, nationalist messages are implicitly entwined through a series of assumptions about communal belonging and causal effects of an individual's behaviour on others in the community. In addressing its message to the 'SONS OF THIS TOWN AND DISTRICT', the text is a verbalisation of Smith's definition of a nation: '...a named human community...having common myths and a shared history...common rights and duties for all members.' (2001:13).

### ***Absent nationalism***

Fairclough (1995) emphasised the importance of analysing the meaning potential of excluded elements from texts, reminding the analyst that a critical approach to a text should include: '...the identification of 'absences' as well as

presences...' (1995:210). Similarly, the successful analysis of a piece of visual communication involves a crucial first stage of describing the elements that are present in text, as well as the equally crucial second stage of describing those elements that are not present. We are socially conditioned to expect certain discourses to contain certain properties (Fairclough, 1989), if we are to understand the full meaning potential of a text it is essential to give some consideration to what is not present and to consider the meaning potential created by the absence of elements one would normally associate with a particular subject.

No doubt, many would agree that the significant semiotic resource that denotes a nation is its national flag; in the case of Britain the Union Jack. Yet, the examination of the commemorative war monuments in this thesis has found that the flag does not feature as a component in their design. The Union Jack was a common feature in the spontaneous street memorials that sprung up during the First World War, as can be seen in the following three pictures:



(1)

(2)



(3)

In these three shrines we can see religious semiotic resources in the form of the cross, commemorative semiotic resources in the form of the flowers and nationalist semiotic resources in the form of the flag – both the Union Jack and St George’s flag feature in the second picture.

According to Boorman (2005) the memorial to commemorate the Falklands/Malvinas war in Portsmouth, The Yomper, was based on popular press images that showed a British soldier ‘yomping’ across the terrain with the Union Jack on his back:



The back of the monument 'The Yomper' has been carefully designed to accurately represent the equipment carried by the soldier, a CPL Robinson of the Royal Marines, but it does not feature the flag as part of the sculpture:



Publicity pictures on the artist's website clearly show the monument with a real Union Jack flying from the radio antenna, just as it does in the

picture of CPL Robinson. So, the design of the monument does allow for the optional insertion of an actual flag, but the artist could have chosen to make the flag a permanent feature by sculpting a permanent Union Jack in bronze. In the absence of this main denotative signifier, is the monument still able to do the ideological work of nationalism? This is achieved by a combination of other signs; each one able to do denotative and connotative work for nationalism: firstly, the uniform, that denotes a soldier; also the crest that features on the accompanying plaque and on the soldier's hat.



The iconographical elements of the badge of the Royal Marines combine to provide a nationalist message: the globe at the centre, denoting the earth's terrain and seas; the laurel wreath, the symbol of victory; the lion, a symbol of '...the possessor of strength and masculine principle.' (Cirlot, 2002:190); the crown, a symbol of 'the kingdom'; Gibraltar, a symbol of the conquest of the

island in 1704; the anchor, a symbol of their attachment to the Royal Navy and the motto, 'Per Mare Per Terram' – 'By Sea By Air', signifying their attachment to both the army and the navy. Each element realises the meaning that the bearer of the badge belongs to a powerful nation that has the globe within its sights. The inscription on the plaque gives basic information in comparison with others; listing the ceremonial dedication details, the name and location of the war and the regimental unit. There is no mention of sacrifice. Neither the inscription, nor the represented soldier fulfils the commemorative function of other memorials by praising those who died in the war; there are no connotations of mourning.

Despite the absence of the flag, the memorial is a tribute to nationalism. It carries meanings of war that promote territoriality, as Penrose (2002) proposes, but it does so without signifying the sacrifice of life that is necessary to achieve the goals of the nation. The Yomper appears not to be as much about memory and commemoration, but more about a show of national strength. The nation here is embodied in its visual realisation of its military force, overt references to 'country' are unnecessary, as are references to 'glory' and 'sacrifice'. These are examples of the ideological 'given' that Fairclough (2002) refers to in his discussion of assumptions, as he says: '...one can argue that relations of power are best served by meanings which are widely taken as given.' (2002:58).

As these examples illustrate, not all inscriptions appear solely as verbal messages; they are often accompanied by a visual image of a regimental emblem. The elements of these emblems themselves; their crests and Latin mottoes, ensure that the work of nationalist discourse is carried by the emblem.



‘TO COMMEMORATE ALL THE ROYAL MARINES AND THOSE WHO  
SERVED WITH THEM IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC DURING THE  
FALKLANDS WAR OF 1982’

At Weston-Super-Mare the original First World War commemorative monument has been added to in the form of an accompanying monument that was erected purely for the purpose of extending the information on the original by additional inscriptions:



Standing on a higher level of the gardens, about six metres beyond the original monument, there is an altar-shaped monument comprising of three sections. The centre section carries the emblem of the regiment and the names of the military personnel killed in the Second World War. An unusual feature stands either side of the military panel in the centre; there is a section that is reserved for the names of civilians who were killed as a result of the war.

Unlike in the First World War, advances in airborne weaponry meant that civilians in Britain became victims as a result of German bombing campaigns

resulting in tens of thousands of fatalities. Generally, finding actual names of the Second World War military personnel on British war memorials is not common; most commemorations of the Second World War were simply added to existing First World War Memorials. The limited space on these monuments meaning that the simplest inscriptions were added to available surfaces, such as this one at Bridgend that has a bronze plaque commemorating military personnel who died in the Second World War and a smaller white plaque commemorating those who died in the Falklands War:



Smith (2001) argues that nationalism has its sights set on: ‘...the ideals and problems of identity, autonomy, unity and authenticity...’ (Smith, 2001:33). I argue that the inclusion of civilian names in the Weston-Super-Mare monument is an act of nationalism. By emphasising names of civilians who were killed, not fighting in a war for the country but by the enemy who attacked the home territory, the inscription verbalises the proposition of a communal identity. It seeks to address questions of national unity, authenticity

and identity by narrating common experiences of war and by demonstrating that these experiences affect not only military personnel, but also civilians. This may also explain why we see no commemorative war monuments expressing an overt anti-war message. However, we are used to seeing dissent expressed in cartoons, for example, when the Falklands war took place this cartoon appeared in the British news magazine Private Eye:



This cartoon commemorative war monument utilises the style of the cenotaph and incorporates the familiar symbol of the wreath. At the top of the memorial sits a figure of the head of the British Prime Minister, who was in power at the time of the Falklands/Malvinas war, Mrs Thatcher. The inscription below follows the format of the inscriptions we saw on the memorial at

Weston-Super-Mare (These Died That We Might Live) except here, in this anti-war sentiment it is ironically expressed as:

‘THEY DIED TO SAVE HER FACE’

As if to reinforce the point that this type of war memorial is the complete antipathy to the sentiments of those war memorials that exist in reality, the cartoon has a verbal expression that signifies this to guide the viewer, ‘NEW WAR MEMORIAL’. This imaginary war memorial exemplifies how the format of commemorative war monuments is indeed a ‘given’ ideological form of expression. When we consider alternative commemoration discourses in an imaginary, humorous form within the context of a satirical publication we realise the possibilities for expressions of negativity in relation to past and present wars.

In summary, the theoretical approach applied to the inscriptions on commemorative war monuments has revealed how they work to realise meaning potential. Firstly, they play a crucial role in identifying the purpose of the monument for the viewer. But also, buried within their grammatical structures and occasionally in their use of visual semiotic resources, are subtle nationalist messages that treat the participant viewer as part of the community of the nation. In this way, they are capable of expressing a debt of

sacrifice owed by the viewer to the community thus ensuring the legitimacy of war and sacrifice for the nation.

This chapter has demonstrated how the analytical approach, social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis, has enabled the combined elements of the monuments themselves to reveal the meaning potential of the data, without the analyst having to take a fixed 'top-down', social agency or personal memory perspective (Ashplant et al., 2000, 2004) as the starting point of analysis. Demonstrating a convergence of semiotic and CDA language related theory, the analysis of the inscriptions using Fairclough's (2003) adaptation of the Pragmatic based theory of presuppositions: 'assumptions', revealed a crucial addition to the meaning potential of the whole monument. In the previous chapter, further meaning potential was revealed by the exploration of the historical and socio-political contextual information, which allowed for a consideration of other narratives that were available to the monument designers, but which were overlooked in the design process. The following chapter brings the findings of the analysis together and considers the significance of these findings within the wider context of theoretical perspectives on the relationship between militarism and nationalism.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion, conclusion and recommendations for future research**

This thesis has answered the call by authors in the field of commemoration studies (Danzer 1987, Ashplant, Dawson and Roper 2000, 2004, Niven 2008) for alternative approaches to the traditional ways of viewing war commemoration by employing a combination of social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis, together with historical and socio-political contextual information. In this chapter I discuss the conclusions of my research, relating them to previous work on war commemoration as laid out in chapters two and three, outlining how, by the adaptation of existing methodological approaches, an original contribution to the understanding of the ideological function of commemorative war monuments has been achieved.

Even in this age of modern warfare, the horrific consequences of war are undeniable. Lives of innocent civilians lost or ruined through injury, hunger and bereavement, the lives of soldiers brought to an early end or changed forever by the physical or mental scars inflicted by battle, homes and other buildings reduced to heaps of rubble, these are the real consequences of war. Yet, in the commemorative war monuments examined here, these undeniable consequences have been recontextualized for viewers in ways that appeal to

noble sentiments and aesthetic preferences: physical strength; handsome features; heroism; protection of loved ones, the nation and the planet.

The analysis has shown how the sculptors of the First World War monuments resisted the early twentieth century modernist sculptural trend, instead relying on classical styles of representation; it is argued in this thesis that this stylistic choice allowed the monuments to realise a variety of meanings, including: restricted notions of male and female participation in warfare and subtle, banal traces of nationalist ideological expression. The fact that the images stand in an artistic tradition practised over many centuries eases the recognition process for the viewers who are able to use their cultural experiences and latent knowledge to interpret their messages. This complex process is perfectly illustrated in the representations of women.

Both early and more recent representations of women in commemorative war monuments are significantly more complex than those featuring male representations. Strength is connoted in some images of women who participate in the work for the nation; either by being presented as the personification of it, or more rarely, as a physically strong, yet sexual being, that is able to overcome both the physical pain of thorns digging into the flesh and mortal enemies. There exists a conflict in the imagining of the woman; commonly represented as either physically desirable, or an efficient,

but temporary, skilled worker. In this conflict we see options of both strength and beauty entwined in the character and physique of the nation's women. Further conflict is revealed in their represented role as one of service to the soldier in the form of a nurse; again represented in a stereotypical form which connotes composure, discipline and submission, or as in the case of a more recent example, the chief carer of the fallen male soldier.

Conversely, the third category of representation of women: woman as civilian wife or child in need of protection, gives both power to the soldier and legitimises the act of war in the interests of protecting the homeland and loved ones. Above all, the analysis of monuments that include a figure of a woman revealed that despite the evidence provided by the contextual historical information to the contrary, women are not represented as active participant fighters who sacrificed their lives in the nation's wars. This section of the analysis leads to a conclusion that representations of women in the commemorative war monuments demonstrate the myth of *passivity* of wartime women who acted solely in support of males to achieve nationalist endeavours. The role of the male in warfare is represented in a narrower range of themes.

Wingate's (2005) conclusion that the monuments she studied fulfilled ideological aims of nationalism by connoting patriotism and idealistic

masculinity is substantiated by the social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis utilised in this study. My research has revealed the means by which nationalist ideology is presented through representations of masculinity, which form a biologically homogenous group with certain desirable physical characteristics that work to create a strong, powerful homogenous ethnic and consentient national group that acts uniformly to carry out the will of the nation-state. Connotations of power are further created by a combination of materiality that lends strength to the represented soldier. Angles and height differentials that force the viewer to look up to the soldiers, which in turn results in their veneration by creating a metaphorical 'looking up to' or 'respect for' him. The soldiers are made more powerful by their indifference to physical pain, but their ultimate power lies in their ability to cheat death.

The way in which soldiers are represented as having sacrificed their lives, whilst simultaneously being represented as strong and proud, along with the inclusion of objects that link sacrifice in war to ancient mythical and religious ideology, has been revealed by the application of the multimodal critical discourse analysis of the data. These findings demonstrate Rowlands' (2001) argument that modern day sacrifice for the nation has replaced ancient sacrificial practices carried out for a 'God' and support Raivo's (1998) conclusion that nationalism is an essential part of war commemoration. My analysis has shown how sacrifice for the nation is presented in the

commemorative war monuments as the means by which a soldier can cheat death; this illusion forming part of the 'myths of the nation' (Hobsbawm 1992, van Evera 1994).

The approach taken to the analysis of the three-dimensional data in this thesis supports Biesecker's (2002) findings on the non-three-dimensional commemoration data she analysed. In her study Biesecker concluded that the common theme linking diverse types of data was nationalist ideology. This thesis also supports the findings of Griswold (1986), Haines (1986) and Wingate (2005) whose analysis of commemorative war monuments concluded the same. By utilising and extending social semiotic based multimodal critical discourse analytic approaches, the analysis of the commemorative war monuments has revealed the processes by which the monuments create their banal nationalist war discourses.

According to Posen (1993) warfare is made possible through the promotion of nationalism, he accuses nation states of purveying nationalism '...for the express purpose of improving their military capabilities' (1993:81). My analysis has demonstrated how the commemorative war monuments play their part in this process. I argue that the commemorative war monuments work through combined modes to tap into a visceral connection, similar to that proposed by Anderson (2006), with the home territory as discussed in chapter

four where it is shown that war is represented as having no negative effects and is legitimised as the route to the preservation and expansion of the nation by the use of a variety of iconographical resources. In keeping with historical political context, globes denoting the earth's territory appear in First World War monuments as possessions under the feet of the personified nation, but contemporary monuments reflect contemporary political concerns by representing the world in the safe hands of the nation's children. However, I argue that in both cases the objects serve to connote the achievements of warfare and the rationale for sacrifice.

Another prevalent feature in the discourses of the commemorative war monument is the concept of denial. The analysis has illustrated how behavioural processes work to deny the negative aspects of war on both the soldiers and wider civilian populations. Denial of killing appears in the absence of behavioural processes that demonstrate the act of killing, but which instead depict frequent acts of protecting colleagues and loved ones. These behavioural processes at the same time work to create meanings relating to protection of the homeland, even though history has shown that the homeland was not the location of battle in the First World War. These processes of representation comprise the 'whitewashing myths' of the nation (van Evera, 1994) and are demonstrated and perpetuated for future generations.

Myths of the nation are also evident in the practice of denial as demonstrated in the representation of the First World War practice of executing soldiers at dawn for 'cowardice'. My analysis of the monument that commemorates the 'Shot at Dawn' events demonstrates how the expression of mental breakdown, or in some cases individual defiance, has been re-packaged by the use of materiality and visual cues that sit more comfortably with a positive image of the nation. This thesis suggests that if the reality of these negative events were represented, it would cause conflict with positive identity perceptions an individual might hold of their nation; they would clash with the nationalist practice of a nation loving itself (Gellner, 1983, 2006).

The analytical approach applied to the data has brought to light the presence of nationalism created by absence: both in the absence of anti-war monuments and in the absence of overt representations of references to the nation. Banal nationalism, as discussed by Billig (1995), drew attention to the metaphorical and literal 'flagging' of the nation in our public spaces. In the commemorative war monument data the name of the nation is not specifically mentioned, where examples that do refer to the nation have been found, it is generally referred to as 'their country'. Neither do we see flags commonly utilised as semiotic resources; the absence of these, perhaps the most obvious symbol of nationalism, serves to demonstrate how the commemorative war monuments act subtly to disseminate banal nationalism. This is achieved

through a collection of less obvious semiotic resources, for example, emblems of the regimental crests. These emblems utilise much more ancient iconographical symbols than the more modern national flag; as such, they tie the concept of the nation into more ancient practices. It is this form of mundane nationalism that plays a major part in the shaping of public consciousness (Billig, 1995).

The application of social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis has explained how commemorative war monuments act as banal communicators of nationalism through visual images, and how they disseminate ideological messages through their inscriptions. The inscriptions work in a similarly banal way as the visual images, by reliance on three types of assumptions (Fairclough, 2003): Existential; Propositional and Value Assumptions. These relate to the existence of God, the resurrection, the willingness with which men gave their lives for the nation and the glory of dying in a war fought on behalf of one's nation-state. These assumptions treat nationhood and nationalist sentiment as a 'given' ideological position, acting as banal disseminators of verbal nationalism alongside the visual resources.

My analysis of the inscriptions reinforces Rowlands' (2001) observation that a good war memorial should acknowledge the collective debt owed by the surviving community and the processes by which this 'debt' is communicated

to the viewer. The inscriptions address them as one who belongs to a national community, and consequently, who owes the debt of sacrifice to the nation in payment for the sacrifice of those commemorated in war memorials; thus, the nationalist cause is perpetuated amongst subsequent generations demonstrating Smith's (2001) assertion that nationalist visions of the nation involve a community with both a unique history and a unique destiny.

Posen (1993) argued that nationalism is used by elites both to prepare citizens for possible wars and to intensify on-going wars and that through the sponsorship of cultural and ideological components of nationalism citizens will be prepared and ready to take up arms in battle for the nation. The analysis addressed the role that commemorative war monuments play in this process showing that they have the potential to reinvent themselves in the guise of diverse cultural domains: ecology; recreation and agriculture. Through these evolving representations, this thesis argues, they play a part in recreating and transforming the destiny of the nation. If the nation-state structure and nationalism remains in the wake of ever-expanding globalisation, new conflicts will undoubtedly arise; some no doubt being resolved by military means. The elites, then, will need to go on convincing citizens of the need to take up arms for the cause of the nation. According to Posen, the more successful states are in achieving this goal, the more competitive they will be (1993:84).

The twenty-first century has so far seen wars fought away from the boundaries of the nation-state and the sacrifice of soldiers; their bodies brought back draped in the overt symbol of nationalism: the flag. My analysis of the monument that stands in the centre Wootton Bassett, the town to which dead service personnel's bodies were returned publically for a number of years, uncovers a modern approach to territoriality based on semiotic resources taken from ecological discourses. The social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analytic approach has illustrated the evolution of nationalist commemorative discourses in the form of commemorative war monuments; the use of the symbols may have changed, but the message remains consistent, appearing in ways that seem so '...harmlessly homely' as Billig (1995) claims.

The analysis has also brought to light an instance of a departure in the emotional expression of soldiery as seen in the monument to a soldier of the Second World War in Portsmouth. Here, we saw how an exception to the norm, in the form of an alternative representation of the soldier as a sad child-like figure, brings connotations of vulnerability, love and sympathy not seen in earlier monuments. Anderson (2006) refers to similar emotions that he claims individuals have towards the nation, arguing that nations inspire only the language of love, not hate, in popular culture. This exceptional monument could be an indication of a diversion from traditional discourses of soldiery.

Nevertheless, I argue that the monument remains consistent with the positive discourses of nationalism found in the other monuments included in the sample, as it inspires feelings of love for the soldier who is inextricably entwined with the nation. The analysis of the data has not found overt nationalist messages in the commemorative war monuments, but it has shown how such messages are hidden; sitting banally in the semiotic resources that are utilised in the designs. Love of nation appears in the monuments as an unspoken given, just as with Anderson's (2006) analogy of nation to the family, where one's loyalty to the family is generally accepted as ever-present; as is their loyalty to the nation.

The methodological approach to the analysis of commemorative war monuments used in this thesis has addressed concerns expressed by Ashplant et al. (2002, 2004) that previous approaches have not fully explored the role of war commemoration in the form of monuments. Recall that their criticism of the 'top-down' approach adopted by the likes of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and Anderson (1983) was that it failed to explain how the viewer identified with 'official' commemoration. They criticised the second, 'bottom-up', approach (Winter 1998, Winter and Sivan 1999) for failing to explain how official commemoration achieved its subjective hold on the viewer. The third approach, that used personal memory as a starting point of exploration of the

topic, they claimed, was more effective, although not complete, in explaining the functions of war commemoration.

Social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis has allowed for the combined elements of the monuments themselves to reveal the meaning potential of the data, without the analyst having to take a fixed 'top-down', social agency or personal memory perspective (Ashplant et al., 2000, 2004) as the starting point of analysis. Further meaning potential has been revealed by the exploration of the historical and socio-political contextual information, which has allowed for a consideration of other narratives that were available to the monument designers, but which were overlooked in the design process. Demonstrating a convergence of semiotic and CDA language related theory, the analysis of the inscriptions using Fairclough's (2003) adaptation of the Pragmatic based theory of presuppositions: 'assumptions', revealed a crucial addition to the meaning potential of the whole text.

As recorded in the contextual literature discussed at the beginning of chapter four and also in the contextual information gained by the search of the monument records, the monuments came into being through the efforts of a variety of 'official', 'elitist' and general members of the community: council officers; church leaders; print journalists; army cadets; kebab shop owners and school children – they have all appeared in the story of the commissioning

processes of the monuments analysed in this thesis. Through the analysis of this highly visible, permanent method of war commemoration, this thesis has demonstrated how 'official' forms of commemoration achieve their subjective hold on viewers, and helps to explain how grieving viewers may get some resolution to their grief (Reynolds 1996, Rowlands 2001) through the images and inscriptions of the monuments. For the viewer who has been traumatised by the loss of loved ones due to war, resolution may be found in the messages of heroism within the monuments, the value of sacrifice for the nation and resurrection; but these will only serve to console their grief if the viewer accepts, without question, the connotations evoked by the images and the assumptions embedded in the inscriptions.

Finally, commemorative war monuments are cultural templates that provide a hegemonic framing which shapes narratives on current and future wars by rewriting previous wars (Ashplant et al., 2004). The methodology adopted by this research has exposed how the monuments achieve their hegemonic role through a combination of semiotic modes and the use of a wide variety of semiotic resources. Due to these consistent banal messages of nationalism within commemorative war discourses, we are unable to have the wider conversations about the negative nature of war and its effects on both a nation's soldiers and its civilians. The ability of the commemorative war monuments to recreate the nation in only positive nationalist discourses

means that future generations will continue to be taught to accept the idea that war, and the sacrifice of life in war on behalf of the nation-state, is a positive, venerated act that transcends mortal experiences of pain and death.

***The value of analysing commemorative war monuments using the theoretical approach adopted in this study and recommendations for future study of the topic***

In this section I discuss the advantages gained from the application of social semiotic multimodal CDA to the subject of war commemoration in the form of commemorative war monuments. I address the strengths and weaknesses of adopting the theoretical approach taken in this study, and make recommendations for future research of the topic taking an interdisciplinary approach.

In this work I set out to take an innovative approach to the analysis of a topic that has been almost exclusively studied by authors working in the disciplines of History, Cultural Studies and Art History. Having selected the utilisation of social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis, my research has been guided by the overarching aim of the theoretical perspective declared by its practitioners; to uncover ways in which discourse works in the

service of power (for example: Fairclough 1995, Fairclough and Wodak 1998). In taking this approach I too declare my analytical position as aiming to uncover ways in which the commemorative war monuments work in the service of power. In doing so my work could be accused by Ashplant et al. (2004) of viewing discourses from a fixed ideological stance, or as they put it: 'the top-down' approach that, in their view, restricts a full exploration of the meanings of commemoration. However, I argue that my work has countered such criticisms by demonstrating two contributing avenues of enquiry during the analysis.

Firstly, that viewing the monuments as motivated signs, which are constructed by sign-makers, necessitates an enquiry and valuation of social contextual information that surrounds their production; this ensures that the analysis is led as much by macro elements of context as it is by micro elements, such as materiality. Secondly, using social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis involves exploring ways that each of the modes work on a micro level to create meaning. The meaning potential of each of these modes, whilst neither fixed nor finite, do have broadly similar meaning potential that will be shared and understood by members of the culture that produced and display the monuments, as Kress and van Leeuwen put it: 'a semiotic 'potential' is defined by the semiotic resources available to a specific individual in a specific social context' (2006:9). From this perspective, it is also the

semiotic modes of communication and the meaning potential realised by the examination of the selected semiotic resources that guide the analysis and conclusion rather than a fixed, 'top-down' or 'bottom up' ideological stance held by the analyst; hopefully, this combined approach helps to eliminate any subjective positions from the analysis.

Turning to the selection of analytical tools taken from Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2001, 2006) social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analytic framework, I would like to add a final comment on the rationale for the selection. In their discussion of the application of their theory to three-dimensional objects, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) point out that the analysis of three-dimensional objects needs to take into account the significance of interactive viewing. I argue that I have selected the tools that best allow the interactive viewer to be taken into consideration in the analysis. As discussed in chapter three, I have avoided aiming to analyse commemorative war monuments in terms of uncovering 'visual grammars' within the representations, but have chosen to take a selection of analytical tools that I consider best suited to a holistic analysis of three-dimensional visuals to suit the commemorative war monument data. The selection has enabled an analysis of the modes of communication, demonstrating their potential, how they interrelate within the text and how they interact with the participant viewer to create meaning potential. The application of

multimodality to the commemorative war monument data aptly illustrates Kress' claim that the theory provides an: 'encompassing theory of *representation and communication...*' (Kress, 2010:105).

The topic of sign-making in war commemoration is much wider than this thesis has been able to cover. Questions over many aspects remain; such as the extent to which a sculptor's gender impacts on the processes of sign-making in commemorative war monument sculpture. The analysis revealed a prominent diversion in the representation of emotion in the one example crafted by a woman sculptor. My discussion touched upon this point only briefly as to do analytical justice to this topic would be beyond the scope of this thesis, although further investigation may be warranted in future research. An ethnographic field study that included detailed interviewing and questioning of students and practitioners of sculpture to evaluate their approaches to representation through sculpture could be useful in determining the impact of gender on war representation through sculpture.

Calder (2004) wonders what impact commemorative war monuments will have on the young individual in the twenty-first century and contemplates how they will make use of 'the values projected in the Great War memorials' (2004:27). Participant viewers' interpretations of the monuments is an area that would yield much valuable research data; especially the question of how

these monuments are perceived and interpreted by both the older and the younger viewer. Interpretations of monuments, the majority of which are almost a hundred years old, by younger viewers with no personal experience of war offers a wide area of investigation that could be explored using rigorous ethnographic interviewing techniques. Indeed, if this topic was explored thoroughly it could provide interesting data that tested the validity of the outcome of my analysis.

Finally, another area that warrants exploration is the possible causal effects the banal war discourses that lie within the commemorative war monuments have on military recruitment of young people. In my work I have referred to Posen's (1993) comment that the sponsorship of cultural and ideological components of nationalism will encourage citizens into participating in war, and that the success of a nation depends upon achieving this goal. The exploration of nationalist discourses using a combination of theoretical approaches could help us to understand more about the motivating factors that persuade young individuals to participate in war and provide an insight into questions regards the individual, nationhood and the 'national conscious'.

In my analysis I refer to the work of Hobsbawm (1983), Mosse (1990) and Rausch (2007) who discussed war commemoration practices in Germany and

France. Their work suggests a difference between representations utilised in commemorative war monuments in France, Germany and Britain. The obvious question of how, or whether, the topic of defeat is dealt with in German monuments is interesting, but also whether cultural communicative differences can be uncovered within the communicative modes of the monuments is an area that should be explored to give greater understanding of the impact of culture on commemorative war discourses.

I suggest these future areas of research would benefit from an interdisciplinary approach that works with social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis to reveal much deeper meanings and causal effects on the impact of commemorative war discourses on individuals and societal groups. In chapter three I referred to the work of McDonagh et al. (2005) and Pink (2011) who explore the potential of an interdisciplinary marriage between social semiotics and other approaches. They took issue with Kress on aspects of multimodality; nevertheless, there is much scope for an integration of social semiotic multimodal critical discourse analysis with other approaches.

My work demonstrates the importance of using the work of historians, the contextual analysis at the beginning of chapter four illustrating how their approach of utilising document searches can add to our understanding of influential factors on the sign-making process in commemorative war

monument design and commissioning. Other approaches could be incorporated into further analysis of monuments and their interpretations, for example, group belief systems in relation to war and soldiery could be more thoroughly examined in commemorative war monuments through an approach that incorporates the sociocognitive approach as practised by van Dijk (see, for example, van Dijk: 1998; 2008a; 2008b and 2009). The application of van Dijk's approach to the analysis of elites' commemorative war discourses and an analysis of participant viewer interview data that focussed on interpretation of the commemorative war monuments as visual communication would provide a wealth of comparative research data on the impact of powerful discourses on our interpretation of commemorative war sculpture.

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the devastating consequences of war on both military participants and civilians, and the prospect of genocide at will (Shaw, 2003) makes this topic a vital area for academic study. Whichever approach is adopted, continued academic study of war discourse is imperative to the future well-being of humanity.

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## **Appendix**

List of photographic data stored on CD:

WWI Aberdare

WWI Abergavenney

WWI Abertillery

WWI Aberystwyth

WWI Almeley

WWI Ashton under Lyne

ATS Woman, National Memorial Arboretum

Australian monument, Hyde Park Corner

Baden Powell, London

WWI Bath

Berlin Air Lift, National Memorial Arboretum

BLESMA, National Memorial Arboretum

WWI Bradford on Avon

WWI Bridgend

WWI Bridgwater

WWI Burnley

WWI Carmarthen

WWI Cardiff, Alexander Park (Welsh National Memorial)

WWI Cardiff, Job Centre

WWI Cardiff, Grangetown Gardens

All national wars, Cardiff Garden of Remembrance

Merchant Seamen (Cardiff Bay)

WWI Cenotaph (London)

WWI Chippenham

Commander in Chief (Whitehall, London)

WWI Cowbridge

WWI Cockermouth

Edith Cavell (London)

WWI Dover

WWI Egremont

WWI Epping

WWI Exeter, Northingay Gardens

WWI Exeter, Cathedral

Falklands War, Cardiff

General Haig, London

WWI Glossop

WWI Hay on Wye

WWI Hereford

WWI Hollingsworth

WWI Leicester

WWI Liverpool

WWI Llandaff

WWI Machen

WWI Maesteg

WWI Merthyr Tydfil

WWII Montgomery, London

WWI Mountain Ash

WWI La Deliverance, London

National War Memorial, National Memorial Arboretum

Nelson's Column, London

Merchant Seamen, Newport

WWI The Response, Newcastle

New Zealand, Hyde Park Corner, London

WWI Newnham on Severn

WWI Oldham

WWI Oxford

WWI Paddington

WWI Paignton

WWI Porthcawl

WWI Portsmouth

WWI Port Sunlight

Reconciliation Stone, National Memorial Arboretum

WWI Retford

WWI Richmond upon Thames

WWI Royal Artillery, London

Royal Signals Memorial, London

Samson Slaying a Philistine, London

The Showmen's Guild, National Memorial Arboretum

WWI Shrewsbury

Shot at Dawn, National Memorial Arboretum

WWI Sidmouth

WWI Somerton

WWI Southampton

WWI Stalybridge

WWI Swindon

Sumatra Rail, National Memorial Arboretum

The Yomper, Portsmouth

TOE, National Memorial Arboretum

WWI Torquay

WWI Tunbridge Wells

Viscount Brooke, London

Viscount Slim, London

WWI Weston Super-Mare

All national wars, Wootton Bassett

Wellington, London

WWI Salisbury

Second World War Soldier, Portsmouth

South African War, Cardiff

South African War, Carmarthen

WWI University of Glamorgan

WWI Winchester

Women of World War II, London