



TOURISM, SOCIAL MEMORY AND THE GREAT WAR

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Abstract: After the Great War of 1914–18 social memories were created to assist people to grieve for, honor and remember the dead. Through processes of selection, articulation and rehearsal of information about the war's events, thousands of memorials were created. Increasing numbers of tourists are showing interest in the Great War but may find difficulty in interpreting the memories articulated through the memorials by a previous generation. To accommodate these needs, new memorials have been built which focus on education and new forms of commemoration. This paper uses social memory theory to describe the processes through which tourism can engage in creating and perpetuating the memory of the Great War, and suggests how research can help to better understand tourists' experiences.
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INTRODUCTION

To establish links with the past and make sense of their own lives, each generation creates social memories through complex processes which involve the selection and articulation of information (Fentress and Wickham 1994; Halbwachs 1992). After the Great War of 1914–18 the post-war generation created social memories which served to honor and remember the dead, and provide justification for the war and mass death (Howard 2002; Lloyd 1998; Mosse 1990; Winter 2006). Thousands of memorials were created across the world, in the smallest villages, in cities and on the battlefields to articulate those memories (Fussell 1977; Inglis 2005; Vance 1997). Because most of the dead were buried in the battlefields and not repatriated to their home countries the context within which visitation to the memorials and cemeteries took place was through relatively long journeys by pilgrims and tourists (Lloyd 1998; Walter 1993). Public interest in the Great War and its memorials gradually declined after the Second World War, and by the 70s it was expected that the veterans and commemorations would pass away together. The 90s has seen a renewal of interest,

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demonstrated by increased visitation to memorials and battlefields, and participation in remembrance ceremonies (Scates 2006; Winter 2006).

Despite their interest in the Great War, many people's understanding of these memorials can be challenged by a number of factors which reflect generational and experiential differences in language and technology, and the loss of links with those who directly experienced the war (Fussell 1977; Inglis 2005; Winter 2006). Largely through its capacity to provide access and information, tourism has become increasingly involved in battlefield visitation and the presentation of the traditional and new memorials for the current generation. Indications of change in the nature of the Great War memory have begun to emerge, and the way in which the social memories are articulated is beginning to take new forms (Comité du Tourisme de la Somme 2006; Shrine of Remembrance 2007; Winter and Prost 2005).

Through the inclusion of tourism and tourists in creating social memories of the Great War, this paper extends the historically based research about the memorials (Fussell 1977; Inglis 2005; Laqueur 1994; Lloyd 1998; Mosse 1990; Vance 1997; Winter 1995, 2006; Winter and Prost 2005; Ziino 2007) and contemporary battlefield visitation (Scates 2006; Seaton 2000; Slade 2003; Walter 1993). The paper suggests that contemporary tourists may enact a number of roles during a tour of a memorial or battlefield, each of which is affiliated with a particular group that can influence and inform their interpretation of the sites. Rather than attempting to polarize visitors based on their motivations to visit the memorials (as either pilgrim or tourist), the paper suggests that visitors themselves are creating social memories and they may be better understood within more specific contexts of time and place within which their visits to individual memorials occur.

Social memory, the way in which people remember the past together as a collective experience is one approach for examining the Great War (Fentress and Wickham 1994; Fussell 1977; Lloyd 1998; Winter 1995, 2006). The purpose of this paper is to illustrate how the theory of social memory can be used to analyse the relationship between tourism and the memorials of the Great War. This paper outlines some of the processes through which the Great War was remembered and commemorated through public memorials, as described by Halbwachs (1992) and others (Baddeley 1999; Burke 1989; Connerton 1989; Fentress and Wickham 1994; Olick 1999). By highlighting the involvement of tourism the paper argues that through its participation in the processes of selection, articulation and rehearsal of information about the Great War, tourism and tourists are engaging in the creation of social memory. There are of course many other visitors to the memorials including local people, academics, military and government officials who continue to visit for purposes that are not primarily associated with leisure travel.

This is a conceptual paper which is based upon a review of theories of individual and social memory, analyses of the social memory of the Great War and historical accounts. The ideas were partly informed by

visits to battlefield memorials, particularly those constructed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission on the Western Front in France and Belgium, including some of the larger national monuments and military cemeteries. An Australian perspective has been adopted in the paper and the sites visited were mainly those that were important to the Australian Imperial Force in Europe, and including some of the national and state memorials in Australia. The paper argues that the recognition of tourism's role in the processes of memory-making about the Great War can help provide a better understanding of how we remember the events and people who made such enormous sacrifices almost a century ago.

THE PROCESS OF CREATING THE SOCIAL MEMORY OF THE GREAT WAR

During and after the Great War many memories were created and recorded by individuals and groups of people, in war diaries, photographs, letters, at burial sites and battlefields, avenues of honor, monuments, poetry and ceremonies. The social memory of the Great War was created and maintained by processes involving the selection, articulation and rehearsal of information from these memories (Connerton 1989; Fentress and Wickham 1994; Halbwachs 1992). Social memory can be conceptualized from two perspectives, each of which influences the research process. Collected memory refers to an aggregation of individuals' memory, and it suggests that social memory can be identified through a study of tourist's experiences (Olick 1999). Collective memory on the other hand relates to the Durkeimian tradition of social consciousness which acknowledges that a social memory is greater than and perhaps different to the sum of individual subjectivities (Fentress and Wickham 1994; Olick 1999). This second perspective requires a wider approach to the examination of touristic interest in memorials and would need to consider the activities of the tourism industry and other organizations. As Olick (1999) argues, both perspectives need to be taken into account in the identification of social memory.

Individual memories can change according to a number of external circumstances, especially emotion, and research has shown that even eye-witness accounts can be inaccurate (Baddeley 1999). Social memory is equally subject to distortion because the processes through which it is formed are inherently political and result from negotiated decisions between interest groups (Baddeley 1999). One of the issues for research is to identify the nature of the constraints which society imposes during the various stages in which social memory is established and perpetuated (Fentress and Wickham 1994). On the Western Front, which was the main theatre of the war, the construction of memorials and cemeteries helped to frame the social memory of the Great War within a context of nations and empire. The Great War was a major global conflict, the First *World War*, but the social memory was formed primarily from the perspective of the victorious nations—France, the

British Empire and her ‘dominions’, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada.

The Need for Social Memory

According to Halbwachs’ theory, social memory is “a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present” (Cosser 1992:34). After the Great War the dominant needs of society were to justify the war and affirm the reasons for mass death, to provide for personal mourning and bereavement and to remember the dead (Howard 2002; Inglis 2005; Lloyd 1998; Mosse 1990; Winter 2006). Winter (1995:94) argues that the memorials’ single purpose was highly personal and designed to help individuals accept the death of their loved ones. Young nations such as Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand eventually framed their wartime experiences within the context of nationhood, and the social memories assisted in developing their unique identities and distinguishing them from the British Empire.

The Articulation of Social Memory

While an individual can transmit a memory merely by talking about it, the articulation of social memory requires a more sophisticated and complex approach, one reason for which is that the memories are relatively disembodied from the original events, and therefore people can only imagine that an image or symbol refers to something real (Cosser 1992; Fentress and Wickham 1994). These difficulties can be overcome by adopting a range of cognitive, behavioural and affective memorials such as monuments, re-enactments, story telling and ritual and ceremonial commemorations (Connerton 1989; Fentress and Wickham 1994). Given the importance of the memories they were designed to represent, the post-war generation took great care in creating thousands of public and private memorials across Europe and in the distant combatant nations such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The memories were articulated on public memorials such as stone monuments, statuary, museum displays, honor rolls, avenues, and ceremonies, located in battlefields, cities and country towns (Fussell 1977; Inglis 2005; Mosse 1990; Vance 1997; Winter 1995). Society promised to remember the citizen-soldiers forever, and in this endeavour the state invested massive resources for the construction of cemeteries and for the individual burial of bodies and remains. The cemeteries are also memorials which articulate the social memory of the Great War in particular ways (Laqueur 1994; Mosse 1990; Seaton 2000). The names of the dead were carved in stone: those whose bodies were recovered were named on headstones in cemeteries, and the names of the missing were listed on massive structures like the Menin Gate in Belgium and the Australian National Memorial and the Franco-British Memorial at Thiepval in France (Inglis 2005; Laqueur 1994; Winter 2006). The inscriptions on the memorials were often brief but

intensely heartfelt by the bereaved, such as Kipling's selection of words from the Book of Ecclesiasticus: "Their name liveth for evermore" (Inglis 2005:179).

These traditional memorials can be conceptualized as a sign, which is created through the relationship between a memory bearer, a memory or meaning and a visitor (Inglis 2005; Noth 1990). MacCannell (1999:110) applied the idea of a sign system to tourism, and he argued that a tourist attraction is a sign comprised of a marker (the signifier) a sight (the signified) and a tourist (an interpretant). The terminology helps to distinguish the way in which different audiences can perceive meaning from the same memorial. Special meanings about the Great War were articulated using symbols that were familiar to people of the time; the red Flanders poppy, angels and the Last Post bugle call for example, signified the resurrection of the dead and a new beginning (Mosse 1990; Vance 1997). In accordance with the tradition and public expectations of the times, many monumental memorials were built from stone and took ancient forms: obelisk, column, arch, temples and statues (Fussell 1977; Inglis 2005; Laqueur 1994; Russell 1980; Vance 1997). Many of these larger memorials continue to provide a focus for commemoration and remembrance, and by virtue of their distinctive architecture, the larger memorials on the battlefields of the Western Front like the Franco-British memorial at Thiepval, Canada's memorial at Vimy Ridge and South Africa's memorial at Delville Wood and those in Australia such as the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, may also provide an attraction for tourists that is independent of their role as war memorials (Inglis 2005; MacCannell 1999; Russell 1980).

Physical places also hold and articulate memory (Burke 1989; Halbwachs 1992). Gough (2004:237) refers to a "semiotics of commemorative spatiality" which suggests that a battlefield can be read as a memory bearer, signifying for example death, honor and in some cases the birthplace of a nation (Slade 2003). Seaton's (1999) analysis of Waterloo, illustrates how a battlefield is a particular kind of landscape which needs to be 'marked' to provide interest and attraction for tourists. Through a process of 'marking' and the subsequent interest by vast numbers of tourists, the battle that later became known as 'Waterloo' was created and sacralized. More importantly, the study illustrates the selective nature of creating a sign and a memory; thus the Battle of Waterloo and not the Battle of Mont St Jean, or Flanders, and Wellington rather than Blucher, are framed in social memory (Seaton 1999).

Spiritual meanings were often associated with the battlefields both during and after the war, and the cemeteries and other memorials were (and still are) regarded as the equivalent of shrines and holy sites (Digance 2003; Inglis 2005; Mosse 1990; Vance, 1997; Walter 1993; Winter 1995, 2006). Tuan's (1976) analysis of geopiety (a term coined by John K. Wright) helps to conceptualize this special relationship between humans and the battlefields. As Tuan (1976:13) observes, "...geopious feelings are still with us as attachment to place, love of country, and patriotism." In some ancient cultures, sacredness was

mediated by gods and goddesses, but in a largely secular society, a peoples' heroes can create holy ground, as Tuan explains:

The spirits of the dead have power, the burial places of heroes and saints are holy ground. A grove is sacred because it belongs to some goddess, a mountain is sacred because it is the dwelling of the gods, and piece of ground is sacred because the bones or ashes of a hero are buried in it (Tuan 1976:23).

Reciprocity is the essence of geopieté, thus the war dead—the heroes—can be seen to have given their own bodies to protect their home lands (Tuan 1976). After the Great War the living felt a sense of obligation to honor and remember their heroes and to visit their burial places. Ninety years after the war ended, numerous tributes are still made at cemeteries and memorials, including wreaths, photographs, silk poppies, field flowers, small flags and notes in the visitor books.

The Australian experience serves as a useful example of the relationship between travel to these sacred places for remembrance of the Great War. After the war, the only means of transport to the battlefields for Australians and New Zealanders was by a costly and time consuming journey by ship that only the rich could afford (Inglis 2005). Inglis (2005) and Ziino (2007) argue that Australian grief and bereavement has had to compensate for a lack of access to the battlefields and cemeteries. For this reason they argue, the memorials built in Australia took on greater importance than those in Europe. In the absence of the dead the site of Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance which opened in 1934, was declared sacred through bronze inscriptions in the pavement: "Let All Men Know That This Is Holy Ground."

It was not until the 60s and the provision of cheap airfares by the mass tourism industry that travel to Europe was made possible for ordinary Australians (Davidson and Spearritt 2000). In recent years, Australian visitation to Gallipoli has increased from 5,000 in 1995 to 20,000 in 2005, and visitors to the Franco-Australian museum in Villers-Bretonneux have risen from only 45 people in 1992 to 3,300 in 2005 (Button 2006; Carlyon 2003; Department of Veterans Affairs 2007; Scates 2002). Almost a century later, Scates (2002) observed that Australian grief has not dissipated and the need to visit the battlefields remains. As Urry (2002) argues that corporeal travel involving the physical and sensory experience of a site, such as seeing a place, meeting people and witnessing events is not substitutable. Recently in Australia, the suggestion by a federal parliamentarian to establish an Anzac theme park on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria was ridiculed (Kerbaj 2005) and the Returned and Services League argued the idea would trivialize a sacred site (ABC online 2005).

Forgetting

While there has been an increased interest in the Great War, Winter (1995, 2006) argues that the meanings and memories that were articulated through the memorials by the wartime generation may no longer

be clear to the generation of today. The problem is not that the memories have disappeared, because some people can still read the signs, but for many, access to their meaning has been forgotten. In effect then, the memorial as a sign has ceased to exist (Noth 1990). The Commonwealth War Graves Commission sees one of its main challenges as being the communication of the value and meaning of the memorials to an increasing number of people who have little knowledge of the Great War and the meaning of commemoration (CWGC n.d.). Communication of the messages on the memorials, between the wartime and contemporary generations is hindered not only by time, but by their different experiences of the war. Olick (1999:339) argues that:

a generation exists if and only if a number of birth cohorts share a historical experience that creates a community of perception...generations and memories are mutually constitutive, not because of some objective features of social or cultural structure but because of experiential commonalities and resultant similarities in individual memories of historical events (1999:339).

There are a number of other reasons for the loss of access to the memories. The messages on the memorials are characteristically stated in simple terms with relatively little explicit information being recorded on them. As Inglis (2005:192) notes, “The purpose of inscriptions was to comfort and uplift, not to instruct in the realities of war.” Many groups, particularly women may not have developed strong affiliations with memorials because they were excluded from the remembrance activities in the post war period (Inglis 1997). Mass migration patterns particularly since the Second World War have changed the composition of societies, so that people who live and travel collectively do not necessarily share the same memories (Winter 2006). On the Western Front, and in the absence of ‘marking’ processes in many places, the process of nature and the return of the land to agricultural use, have removed most of the physical evidence of the battles, and making it virtually impossible to imagine the horrors of ninety years before (Carlyon 2006; Scates 2006; Seaton 2000).

For tourists today, it is difficult to imagine the meaning of a place or memorial in the absence of explicit information or visual evidence, and they may mistake the social and historic meaning of a site, or fail to see it at all (MacCannell 1999). One of the implications of this loss of access to the meaning of the memory bearers is that some visitors may interchange the components of the memorials, such that the bearer, rather than its meaning, becomes the focus of interest (MacCannell 1999). At the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, an aperture in the ceiling allows the sunlight to pass through and illuminate the Stone of Remembrance at exactly 11.00 am on the 11th of November (Remembrance Day) each year. Tourists can be attracted to the ancient technology, rather than to the memory (of peace following the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front at 11.00 am in 1918) which it represents.

The Selection of Memory

A social memory results from the activities of certain groups which establish agreement on which version of the past should be remembered; not all memories are remembered equally, and some events are forgotten (Baddeley 1999; Burke 1989; Coser 1992; Fentress and Wickham 1994). This is not to say that social memories are fabrications, but through the processes of selection and exclusion, society can promote the relative importance of a particular memory above others (Fentress and Wickham 1994). The creation of social memory is a political process in which differing memories and forms of articulation are negotiated through social groups. In most nations, the development of war memorials created conflict about which sentiments ought to be affirmed and what form their articulation should take (Inglis 1997:49). Memories about the bravery and endurance of soldiers were widely supported. The experiences of futility, cruelty and the real horror of battle that the soldiers experienced and endured were not developed as part of the social memories of the war. While some of these experiences were articulated in film, writing, letters and poetry, they were less widely viewed and supported (Fussell 1977). One of the common observations of post-war memorialization is that after the battlefields had been cleaned up, cemeteries established and agriculture resumed, the landscape presented a peaceful and sanitized view of the war. While this did not portray the reality of battle, it more ably assisted society's need to grieve and return to normal life (Carlyon 2006; Fussell 1977; Inglis 2005; Lloyd 1998; Mosse 1990; Vance 1997; Winter 2006). In Australia, the memory of the campaigns on the Western Front, including battles at Pozières and Polygon Wood which involved massive casualties and much suffering, has dimmed. The memory of ANZAC has come to be associated with the much smaller but disastrous Gallipoli campaign because it better suited the need for stories that provided a basis for the birth of the new nation (Carlyon 2006). As a result, touristic visitation by Australians to Gallipoli, particularly for the Anzac Day services is rapidly increasing.

In its development and promotion of destinations and attractions, tourism is also highly selective, and in creating products to suit specific market groups, marketers and operators select memorials that will provide the greatest interest and experiences. Tourist brochures in the Somme area tend to give a higher profile to larger monumental, or national sites compared with smaller sites, and those which do not offer a highly visual (or 'marked') experience. For Australians, the town of Villers-Bretonneux was the site of important battles and is the site of the Australian National Memorial, which holds the names of nearly 11,000 missing. One of the major tourist guidebooks dismisses the town as "an ugly bourg that still hasn't completely recovered from the war" (Williams, Fallon, Roddis, Robinson, Knight, Berry, Stone and Hart 2005:226). Since Anzac Day in 2008 the site has been given a higher public profile with the introduction of the first Dawn Service there to commemorate the liberation of the village by the Australians on the night of 24–25 April 1918. Memorials that are more conveniently

located near other attractions may be visited more frequently than those in places that are off the main tourist trail. An examination of Visitor books at cemeteries reveals that those located close to well marketed towns and sites receive more visitors than those which are not so well promoted. The Poppy Trail, for example which is promoted by local tourism organizations on the Somme, directs tourists to key sites but in consideration of the number of memorials and tourists' limited time, it omits many smaller places (Poppy Country 2006).

Rehearsal of Memory

The acceptance of a memory by society implies that publicly sanctioned processes will be designed to secure its retention (Halbwachs 1992). Once a memory has been selected and articulated it will be slowly forgotten unless the information is regularly rehearsed or recalled (Baddeley 1999; Echabe and Castro 1990; Winter 2006). Remembrance of the Great War has become enshrined in rituals of symbolic, formalized and regular practice, that Connerton (1989:45) argues implies a connection with the past. Social memories of the Great War continue to be rehearsed through a range of ceremonies and ritual practices such as laying wreaths, wearing red Flanders poppies, recitations, marches and pilgrimages. At 8.00 pm each night, up to several hundred tourists and other visitors attend the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium where the Last Post bugle call is played to evoke remembrance and life everlasting, for the dead and missing whose names are written on the walls of the monument. Although there are additions to the service, the central act of the bugle call, played by members of the town's fire brigade has remained unchanged since it began in 1928.

TOURISTS AND PILGRIMS

The perpetuation of the war's social memories is greatly influenced by the activities of people who are linked by an ongoing relationship, and who rehearse the memories from one day to the next. Families for example, play a particularly important role in the transmission of memory (Echabe and Castro 1990; Halbwachs 1992; Winter 2006). Battlefield and war memorial visitors have generally been classified into one or the other of two conceptually distinct groups; pilgrims and tourists (Digance 2004; Lloyd 1998; Mosse 1990; Walter 1993). Pilgrimages were the dominant form of travel in the immediate post war period, and they commonly comprised travel by the bereaved and ex-servicemen to seek the graves of their friends, family and comrades (Lloyd 1998; Walter 1993). In terms of a sign, pilgrims can be thought of as one of the primary audiences for whom the memory bearers were built, and pilgrimages continue to be an important form of battlefield visitation (Seaton 2000; Slade 2003; Walter 1993). According to Scates (2002:20) grieving did not end with the deaths of soldiers and "eighty

years after the end of the Great War, Australians still seek out the graves of their country men, traveling ‘from a brown land far away’ to the killing fields of Gallipoli, France and Belgium.”

Battlefield tourism began as early as 1919, but by virtue of their apparent interest in the sites for reasons other than mourning tourists were regarded by some as inferior to pilgrims. Their presence on the battlefields was a source of unease for pilgrims visiting graves (Lloyd 1998; Mosse 1990). Touristic use of the memorials was acknowledged, but because the primary purposes of the memorials were for remembrance and commemoration, tourists were not the audience for whom they were designed (Russell 1980). Although there has been extensive research to describe and analyse Great War pilgrims, far less attention has been given to Great War tourists, with some notable exceptions. Even so, contemporary research tends to perpetuate a dichotomy of pilgrim/tourist (Lloyd 1998; Seaton 2000; Slade 2003; Walter 1993). The development of various continuums of visitor types has acknowledged and expanded our understanding of different experiences, however they continue to rest upon this dichotomy with a pilgrim at one end and a tourist at the other. While pilgrimage remains an important part of battlefield visitation, some recent research in Flanders indicates that it has declined relative to tourism and in their study of a selection of memorial in Flanders, Vandaele and Monballyu (2008) estimated that many visitors do not have a direct family connection with a soldier.

The pilgrim/tourist dichotomy is problematic for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that in practice, attempts to distinguish one from the other have proven difficult (Badone 2004; Lloyd 1998; Mosse 1990). Digance’s (2003) literature review of contemporary pilgrimage shows that there are a range of pilgrim types, ranging from the religious to the secular, and from a traditional pilgrim to a mass tourist. While these distinctions may have held some relevance in the aftermath of the Great War, current research in tourism has shown that tourist’s commitment and interest in attractions exist on a continuum from the deeply committed to the casual and incidental visitor who desires only a shallow experience (McKercher and du Cros 2002).

Great War tourism may be more appropriately accommodated within the field of dark tourism or thanatourism, which concerns a desire to experience sites associated with death (Lennon and Foley 2000; Seaton 1996). This interest ranges from actually witnessing death, to seeing sites after death has occurred, visiting sites and memorials to the dead, viewing the material evidence of death and experiencing re-creations of death (Seaton 1996). There may be many other motivations which exist alongside thanatourism, and contemporary visitation to war memorials has been shown to be motivated by a multitude of personal, nationalistic or humanitarian reasons, and relate to educational, entertainment and even anti-war purposes (Cooper 2006; Henderson 2006; Seaton 1996). Slade (2003) argued that at Gallipoli, Australians are more strongly motivated by nationalism and visiting the birthplace of their nation, than in thanatouristic experiences of mass death.

The previous discussion has suggested that the application of labels to different kinds of visitors or to typologies of tourists is complex, and clearly, multiple meanings can be ascribed to the memorials by these different groups (Badone 2004; Burke 1989). While definitions based upon motivations are useful, the experience itself can be transformative and induce changes in a tourist, with the result that they later represent a different ‘type’ (McKercher and du Cros 2002; Walter 1993). As Stone and Sharpley (2008) point out in their analysis of dark tourism, “tourists may implicitly take away meanings of mortality from their visit, rather than explicitly seek to contemplate death and dying as a primary motivation to visit any dark site.” In their research at the Gettysburg battlefield, (which is similar to the Great War, in that individual soldiers are remembered) Gatewood and Cameron (2004) found that many tourists had a deep and emotional experience at the site, even though most had no family involvement, and had initially been motivated by historical interest.

Rather than attempting to definitively classify visitors as either tourist or pilgrim, it would be worthwhile to investigate a range of aspects of visitation to memorials, which may create transformative experiences. In the sense that a social memory can be more than the sum of individual memories, Gestalt psychology acknowledges the complex environment which can inform a tourist’s interpretation of a memorial. Borrett and Kwan (2008:138) state that “In all of our immediate sensory-motor interactions with the world, our environment is composed of discrete objects but there is an omnipresent gestalt background of nonrepresentational cultural practices that confer meaning to these objects based on our experience” (Borrett and Kwan 2008:138). This suggests that if a tourist shifts his/her focus by adopting another group’s perspective, then an alternative interpretation of a memorial may be facilitated. The notion of a gestalt picture indicates that a person cannot perceive different meanings from a memorial *at the same instant*. It is conceivable however that he or she can perceive a different meaning at *another* instant.

There are a number of variables which could trigger perceptual changes in a tourist’s experience and interpretation of a memorial. Many factors, including the enactment of commemorative activities at the time of the visit, significant dates such as the beginning and ending of battles, family or other agency links, nationality and knowledge about the Great War. Characteristics of the site itself such as the extent to which it has been marked, and its capacity to engender experiences of piety, respect and gratitude can impact interpretation. During a battlefield tour, a tourist may adopt multiple roles, including a family member, a national citizen, and a researcher each carrying with it unique group affiliation which influences a particular perception of the memorial. It is also conceivable that for part of their trip a person could be described as a pilgrim and for another part as a tourist (Scates 2006). Some visitors who attend the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate may exhibit the characteristics of a pilgrim, and when the service is over, and he or she walks returns to the chocolate shops and restaurants in the town centre, they may be more appropriately described as a tourist.

TOURISM AND THE CREATION OF NEW MEMORIES AND MEMORIALS

Social memories are dynamic and are updated in response to different generational needs (Halbwachs 1992). In the ninety year period since the Great War memorials were constructed, society's need to remember has changed. The Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne has acknowledged that while remembrance remains its core purpose, education has become an important commitment (Shrine of Remembrance 2007). The Comité du Tourisme de la Somme noted:

In recent years we have moved gradually—yesterday, from a form of pilgrimage (remembrance and honouring)—to a more historically-motivated tourism (to know and understand)—and, tomorrow, we will undoubtedly move towards a form of vocational tourism with ever more strongly ethical and moral foundations (to accept) (2006:7).

Many tourists are not mere passive onlookers at memorials and services, but are actively seeking information to help them understand the part played by their relatives and countrymen and women in the Great War (Scates 2002; Slade 2003). As Walter (1993) notes, more people, not less are finding that they have a distant relative who was killed in the Great War. Winter (2006) refers to the search for historic information as part of a social “memory boom”, which involves not only historians, but a much broader range of people who are exploring the stories of their forebears. The opening of government archives in the 70s, and the development of museums and public history in the 80s and 90s, has assisted historians and ordinary people to find new information about the war, which can update traditional memories or influence the creation of new ones (Winter and Prost 2005).

In response to these needs, new memorials are being built, many of which are located in close proximity to the traditional memorials. Visitor information centres at Thiepval memorial and Tyne Cot cemetery on the Western Front, and at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne have been built to cater for the increase in tourists and their need for information (Shrine of Remembrance 2006; The Thiepval Project 2005). The *Historial de la Grande Guerre* which opened in 1992 at Péronne (*historial* is a combination of history and memorial) is unique in its incorporation of the military and cultural histories of Britain, France, and Germany (Winter 2006). Tourist brochures are beginning to incorporate English, French and German translations and promote memorials that are relevant to all three nations, initiating a break from the tradition of the past which focused almost entirely on the victorious nations.

While the purpose of the memorials remains with commemoration and remembrance, the promotion and operationalization of their activities is increasingly assisted through the tourism industry. Some of the traditional memorials are now linked with specialised centres often incorporating a gift shop, cafe, and education and research centre using high tech displays and imagery. In Australia for

example, the Australian War Memorial has a multi-faceted role as a war memorial and tourist attraction. It incorporates cafes, a well stocked shop, it actively encourages tourists, and holds a place in the Australian Tourism Awards *Hall of Fame* (Australian War Memorial 2007). The events to commemorate the ninety year anniversaries of major events of the Great War, such as the First Battle of the Somme, the Third Battle of Passchendaele and the Armistice, were promoted through websites and brochures of tourist boards in France, Belgium and Australia. The web sites also assisted visitors with information about transport, accommodation and other travel advice.

Education

Information and historical accounts of the Great War are important needs of the contemporary generation. Both memory and history are accounts of the past, but each result from a different process, which means they can provide divergent versions of an event (Connerton 1989; Winter 2006). While memory is partly constituted by sensation and emotion, history is not. For this reason, history and factual information, unlike social memory can be independent of people (Baddeley 1990; Fentress and Wickham 1994). History can of course articulate events that have been forgotten and provide a context to help people make sense of events like the Great War (Connerton 1989; Winter 2006). The educational role of visitor centres and museums then, needs to be distinguished from social memory, notwithstanding that there are linkages between the two. The contribution of education and information to social memory is an area that requires further research, particularly with respect to the many schoolchildren who tour Flanders and the Somme. To what extent does information extend tourists' understanding of the war and contribute to its memory?

New Technologies

The use of different media to articulate social memory, such as oral traditions, historical documents and letters, images, ceremonies and monuments, reflect, and are dependent upon levels of technology available to that society (Burke 1989; Fabiansson 2004; Olick and Robbins 1998). Computer technology and the internet are now providing new mediums which can articulate new kinds of social memory (Fabiansson 2004; Nelson and Olin 2003). The internet has extended the general public's knowledge of the Great War beyond that which is accessible through texts and television (Fabiansson 2004; Winter 2006). The *In Flanders Fields* museum to the Great War which opened in 2000 in Ieper (Ypres), Belgium, is also a major tourist attraction. Sophisticated technology including sound effects and "audiovisual evocations of No Man's land" provide interactive displays about the

infamous battles of Passchendaele and the stories of some of the individuals who were involved (In *Flanders Fields Museum 2006*). The Museum uses multiple sensory techniques such as music, poetry, lighting, voice-overs, film, artefacts and individual's stories that can invoke emotion and therefore provide a memory of the war. The Australian War Memorial holds vast amounts of historic information, and in 2005/06 it reported three million visits to its website (*Australian War Memorial 2006*). Recently the National Australian Archive completed a US\$5 million project to digitise the records of over 370,000 soldier's records from the 1914–18 war (*Burke 2007*). The records provide information about soldiers' military service that was not easily accessible for the generations of the past. These digital stores provide not only information and education, but constitute memorials in their own right.

In some places, local groups are creating new memorials which rehearse the war's events, and which are notably less formal than the traditional funereal and military-based ceremonies. These events are more likely to be promoted through tourist organizations and publications, than through official government sources. In the Albert area of France, the activities to commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the First Battle of the Somme in 1916 included a gastronomic walking trail, a number of battlefield walks, poetry readings, choirs, a charity marathon and a remembrance car rally. The Digger-Cote 160, which comprises some of the local people in the small town of Pozières, organises an annual "sound and light" (*Son et Lumière*) show to commemorate the battles in their town during the war (*Digger-Cote 160 2007; Poppy Country 2006*). While a part of these activities involves entertainment, their core functions are remembrance and the promotion of peace. The event also seeks to educate the audience about the war's events within the context of personal stories of soldiers and their families, from the nations who once opposed each other on the battlefields at Pozières. These stories are enacted on the old Tramway Trench, and can be interpreted in terms of geopious acts of gratitude, respect and remembrance to the soldiers who gave their blood for their land.

CONCLUSIONS

Through their participation in commemorative rituals, visiting battlefields, reading names on graves and monuments and seeking information, tourists can participate in the selection and rehearsal of the Great War's social memories. Tourism organizations can also, through their role in promoting and providing physical and informational access to these memorials, directly and indirectly influence visitors' behavioural, cognitive and affective experiences at these sites, and as such, contribute to the war's memory. Tourist publicity may promote the rehearsal of information at some sites yet allow others to be forgotten. This could occur for reasons that are unrelated to the sites' war-time significance. One of the critical research questions raised by

Burke (1989:107) is to ask “who wants whom to remember what, and why? Whose version of the past is recorded and preserved?” Understanding the way in which visitors experience and participate in creating the Great War’s memories would benefit from the inclusion of a broader range of tourists, beyond those classified as pilgrims, in research projects. To understand the way in which tourists interpret different memorials requires site specific studies that are designed to identify the types of triggers that may induce changes in their perceptions and interpretation of the memorials within different temporal and spatial contexts.

The traditional and new memorials present different cases in identifying the processes through which tourists and the tourism industry engage with the social memory of the Great War. The traditional memorials include the battlefields, cemeteries and monuments to the missing, while the new memorials consist of interactive museum displays and a wide range of formal, informal and community commemorations. While much research has been undertaken about the traditional memorials, far less has been conducted from a tourism perspective, on contemporary interpretations of the traditional memorials, and even less on new memorials. The articulation and rehearsal of the Great War memories by the traditional and new memorials is interdependent and results from cooperation between a number of groups such as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, military and veterans groups, local people and increasingly, tourists and tourism organizations. To interpret the Thiepval monument many tourists may require information provided by the new visitor centre, which in turn, is reliant upon the monument. Research could also identify the ways through which the traditional and new memorials cooperate in motivating different types of visitors. Is there a relationship for example, between the acquisition of knowledge about the war, and a desire to travel to traditional sites, perhaps to participate in social commemoration? Are some people content with a visit to a website memorial?

Comparisons of visitor experiences at the traditional and the new memorials may identify the contemporary processes and changes through which social memory is created. The social memory created by the previous generation was deceptively simple and related primarily to their need to express grief for the mass death that had occurred over more than four years of war. These memories were set in stone to be remembered forever. The new memorials of today however, provide for interactive experiences for visitors which allow them to select information from a vast range of materials, which provides for the articulation of multiple and complex interpretations and memories. How then are these memories shared with others, or are they collections of separate and individually defined experiences? In what ways can independent tourists share their experiences of the memorials? Does the nature of these new memorials and the involvement of tourists mean that contemporary memory of the Great War may now be the product of an aggregation of individual experiences rather than a collective memory? Perhaps the reinvigoration of attendance

at traditional memorials may be partly explained by needs for shared remembrance and social commemoration that is not fully satisfied by some of the new memorials.

Education is increasingly incorporated within the roles of memorials, but only memory can hold the sense of experience and transmit emotion, feeling and the essence of human endeavor. The memorials for the Great War were designed to transmit such messages and they could do so, partly because the experiences were within the lived experience of the generation. New memorials are therefore developing techniques that can address the contemporary generation who are separated by time and experience from the events of 1914–18.

The involvement of tourism in the creation of social memory means that a broader range of visitors can participate in the memory of the Great War, including those who may have previously been excluded from other rituals and activities. Tourism is most of all, a global undertaking, and in this respect it can perhaps more appropriately represent the people of the many nations who were involved in the Great War. Tourism also provides remembrance activities that are not restricted to particular dates and times, thereby giving long haul tourists greater flexibility for commemoration.

There are some limitations to the issues presented in this paper. The discussion has focused upon the social memory of the Great War which in the past, was constructed primarily by the victorious nations; it may not easily translate to other cultural forms of memory-making. An Australian perspective has been taken, and although the nations of the British Commonwealth have similar traditions, the Australian perspective differs in some respects. Subsequent wars have been fought within different temporal, spatial, technological and linguistic contexts, and this discussion of the Great War may not apply to the conflicts of other times. Memorials like the Imperial War Museum in London and the Australian War Memorial in Canberra which were initially built for Great War now commemorate many conflicts, and it can be difficult to distinguish the memories in the minds of visitors, and the means by which those memories are articulated. Tourism in the Great War battlefields and memorials cooperates with other organizations, not the least of which is the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as well as the governments of several nations and military organizations in the provision of experiences for tourists and other visitors.

The Great War was a tragedy of massive proportions which has influenced and continues to affect many societies around the world. The Great War generation vowed to remember their dead forever, and the increasing interest in the battlefields and memorials indicates that the current generation wishes to uphold that promise. The inclusion of tourism into research about the Great War can help to understand the increasing complexity within which the social memories are created, and ensure that battlefield tourism continues within an environment of remembrance and respect. **A**

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