

4-21-2015

"Too Young to Fall Asleep Forever": Great War Commemoration and National Identity in Interwar England and Germany

Angela Clem

Macalester College, angacle.11@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/history_honors



Part of the [European History Commons](#), and the [Social History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Clem, Angela, ""Too Young to Fall Asleep Forever": Great War Commemoration and National Identity in Interwar England and Germany" (2015). *History Honors Projects*. Paper 20.

http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/history_honors/20

This Honors Project is brought to you for free and open access by the History Department at DigitalCommons@Macalester College. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Macalester College. For more information, please contact scholarpub@macalester.edu.

“Too Young to Fall Asleep Forever”:
Great War Commemoration and National Identity
in Interwar England and Germany

Angela Clem
Project Advisor: Professor Ernesto Capello
History Department
Macalester College

Defended on April 21, 2015

Contents

Acknowledgments	4
Introduction	5
<i>Valiant Hearts: A Present-Day Echo of Postwar Commemoration</i>	5
Questions of National Identity and Commemoration	13
Theoretical Framework	16
Chapter One: Nationalism and the War's Effects on European Society	22
Contrasting Prewar English and German Nationalisms	25
The Great War as a Transnational Experience	32
The Aftershocks of the Great War in Tradition, Society, and Body	34
Chivalry	35
Friendship and Comradeship	37
Corpselessness and Fragmentation	40
The World of the Veteran	47
Chapter Two: Constructing Memory	50
Personal Memorialization	53
Local Memorialization	62
National Memorialization	68
The Unknown Warrior	75

Chapter Three: Literature in Remembrance	82
Wilfred Owen	86
Siegfried Sassoon	93
Erich Maria Remarque	101
Conclusion	111
Bibliography	117

Acknowledgments

I couldn't have completed this thesis without the help and support from several people. There isn't enough space here to put words to how much you've all done for me, but I tried anyway.

To my honors project advisor, Professor Ernesto Capello - thank you for your expertise, constructive criticism, and patience. I can't imagine a better bookend to my four years at Macalester than by working with the professor who had to read my first attempts at college essays.

To my committee members, Professors Rachael Huener and Jamie Monson - thank you both for agreeing to be on my committee, for providing suggestions and support throughout the project, and for asking thought-provoking questions at my defense.

To my capstone advisor, Professor Ryan Edgington - the honors would have been much harder had I not started off with such a solid base in my capstone, so thank you for helping me organize my thoughts and arguments.

To Suzanne Dufault - thank you for being my grounding influence these past four years... especially this last one. I couldn't ask for a better friend, and I'm not just saying that because you helped me format the final draft of my honors thesis. (Thanks for that, though.)

To Catherine Westby - thank you for talking me through the drafting of professional emails, helping me decide on a final title, and reminding me to get enough sleep.

As always, I owe more than I can say to my parents, Jeff and Katie Clem. Thank you for instilling some passions into my life. Thank you for your constant love, support, humor, and patience. And most importantly, thank you for still being willing listen to your over-excited daughter when she calls from St. Paul to tell you what she learned in school that day.

Introduction

Valiant Hearts: A Present-Day Echo of Postwar Commemoration

Even though their bodies have long since returned to dust, their sacrifice still lives on. We must strive to cherish their memory and never forget...
– *Valiant Hearts: The Great War*¹

A melancholy piano softly accompanies a low, mournful voice. A hilly countryside stretches out ahead. The setting sun brings the shadows of hundreds of simple wooden crosses into sharp relief against pale green fields. A family stands with their backs towards the viewer, looking down at a single identified grave upon which lay two roses. A dog in a white collar and a green vest, both marked with red crosses, sits near the mound of earth. The scene fades to white as credits begin to roll.

Delivered after the death of one of the protagonists, the above excerpt is the penultimate line of narration in the video game *Valiant Hearts: The Great War*. The sentiment behind this quotation is reflected in the puzzle adventure game’s role as a commemorative performance in itself; *Valiant Hearts* remembers the Great War in a genre that tends to focus its energies on World War II. The game entertains and educates the player while also emotionally binding them to the protagonists in the voyeuristic but emotionally vulnerable sense inherent in “playing” the lives of fictional characters. Beyond the roles of the video game medium in constructing a window into the lives of others and in turn-

¹“Chapter Four: Wooden Crosses.” *Valiant Hearts: The Great War*. Produced by Bruno Galet, developed by Ubisoft Montpellier. Montpellier, France: Ubisoft, 2014.

ing a profit, these words – “we must strive to cherish their memory and never forget” – speak to a broader desire of today’s society to be active participants in the commemoration of history-shaping conflicts such as the Great War.

Valiant Hearts follows the stories of four people from 1914 to 1917 as the war brings them together and as their lives to become fraught with danger and grief. Simultaneously, the player immerses him-/herself in the world of the trenches on the Western Front and learns about its military and social history. The characters’ stories are told episodically; each chapter includes several points of overlapping plot as the actions of one character influence the story of another, creating a complex narrative while also subtly highlighting the Great War’s infamous lack of communication between powers.² Emile (Figure 1), an elderly French farmer who lives near the German border, is drafted into the *Armée de Terre* just as his German son-in-law Karl (Figure 4) is drafted into the *Wehrmacht*. Both men want nothing more than to return to Marie (Emile’s daughter, Karl’s wife), but the Great War tears them from their idyllic family farm. Emile and Karl experience the bonds of wartime comradeship with two other characters: Freddie (Figure 2), an American volunteer who enlists in the French Army after his wife is killed in a German bombing, and Anna (Figure 3), a Belgian student who runs away from home to become a nurse in the French Army.³ A German medical aid dog named Walt accompanies these characters and frequently serves as the link for the player between different chapters and missions.⁴

The *Valiant Hearts* trailer first screened at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, an annual industry-only video game fair. The trailer begins with simple white text on a black

²For example, one mission requires the player, acting as one character, to bomb an area in which another character is hiding. Both figures are on the side of the Allied Powers.

³For a discussion on comradeship and friendship in the Great War, see Chapter One of this thesis.

⁴Character bios are available on the game’s official website; also available are several opportunities to “click for facts about the war,” emphasizing Ubisoft Montpellier’s attempt to make both an entertaining and educational product. See “*Valiant Hearts: The Great War Game Story*,” *Valiant Hearts*. Ubisoft Entertainment, accessed 11 March 2015, <http://valianthearts.ubi.com/game/en-US/valiant-hearts/>.

background: “1914-1918 / 65 million men were mobilized during the First World War. / These stories are inspired by the letters they sent.”⁵ The trailer transitions to a bird’s-eye-view of a muddy, pockmarked lunar landscape bisected by a string of slowly moving trucks and people. The dog (Walt) runs against the flow of troops. A grave voice narrates the trailer from Walt’s perspective, providing a brief introduction to the game’s protagonists and conflicts:

To my dearest friends: through the evil noise of artillery, tanks, and planes, I remember our adventures, your friendship, and your pain. My closest friend, Emile: in your twilight years, you came to fight, not for glory, but to mend your daughter’s tears. Lucky Freddie: you were always fearless and with intent; I hope you have found peace with your letters that were never sent. Anna, my bravest of warriors across the Western Front, saving the mountain of wounded without firing a shot. And Karl: if only I could light your way home through the fields of war, through treacherous nights, to be with your family once more. Although I cannot write these words and the time has come to part, your stories will always remain – as will your valiant hearts.⁶

The trailer’s tactic of appealing to the viewer’s emotions rather than a desire for violence by proxy, as with many other video games, reveals the true driving force behind the themes and conflicts of *Valiant Hearts*. The game offers several critiques and insights into the Great War. In one mission, for example, the player (as Karl) struggles through an impenetrable cloud of chlorine gas only to find his family close to death. Karl chivalrously straps his own gas mask onto his wife in order to save her. Another mission requires the player (as Emile) to navigate the collapsed mining and tunnel systems of both the Allied and Central powers; Emile meets and saves a German soldier and they connect briefly over the shared traumatic experience of the war, but when Emile reaches the surface he is ordered to explode the tunnels, burying the German alive.

⁵“*Valiant Hearts* E3 Trailer,” *Youtube*, accessed 11 March 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MP8q5F6dFqQ>.

⁶“*Valiant Hearts* E3 Trailer.”



Figure 1: Emile. From “*Valiant Hearts* E3 Trailer.” This image is from Emile’s first and only mission before he is taken as a German prisoner of war. Note the highly patriotic colors of Emile’s uniform (which is the same for all French soldiers in the game) and the old-fashioned flag, as well as the idyllic rural background. Emile was called to arms in August 1914 – before the war completely destroyed the French countryside.



Figure 2: Freddie. From “*Valiant Hearts* E3 Trailer.” Although this scene does not occur within the game, its use in the trailer tells the viewer everything (s)he needs to know about Freddie. Here, Freddie leads a charge of French soldiers in a war in which his country has little stake (reflecting the traditional American-imperialistic interpretation of U.S. involvement in the Great War). Freddie is spurred on by his desire to avenge his wife, whose image can be seen in the smoke on the left side of the picture.



Figure 3: Anna. From “*Valiant Hearts* E3 Trailer.” As a nurse, Anna bridges the gap between the Allied and Central armies. Here, Anna supports a wounded German soldier (identifiable by his green uniform, worn by all German soldiers in the game). A second German sits in the foreground with his arm bandaged, and a third offers his water to a French soldier standing nearby. As a nurse, Anna is respected and valued by both sides. The presence of both French and German soldiers at this first aid station stresses Anna’s role as universal healer.

While the player experiences complicated moral situations such as these by proxy through the game’s protagonists, *Valiant Hearts* also reminds its audience of the effects of modern warfare on volunteers, draftees, nurses, and even dogs. Like many dogs in popular culture, Walt (Figure 5) is a completely loyal and trusting canine companion, and is the only character against which no prejudice is expressed due to national borders (although he originally belongs to the German *Wehrmacht*). Even in the trailer, Walt is portrayed as the game’s most potentially unifying figure as he introduces the audience to *Valiant Hearts* and its characters, leading them through a rainy trench on the Western Front and finally coming to rest in front of an endless stretch of unmarked graves.

As a thoughtful and emotionally provocative video game about the Great War, *Valiant Hearts* could constitute an extended research project on its own. Interestingly, the game combines two common interpretations of the war: first, an emphasis on individual suffering as seen in Emile’s and Karl’s struggles to return to their family, and second, a



Figure 4: Karl. From “*Valiant Hearts* E3 Trailer.” Karl is quite possibly the game’s central protagonist – an interesting choice given his nationality, although this potentially divisive focus on a German soldier as a protagonist is admittedly undercut by the fact that before the war, he lives in France with his wife and Emile. Karl’s story is not just about his love for his family and his longing to return home, but it also speaks to the toxic relationship between the infantryman and his officer, as he is abused and misled by Baron von Dorf throughout the game. Here, the memory of his family reaches Karl through a letter received in a prisoner-of-war camp.



Figure 5: Walt on the battlefield. From “*Valiant Hearts* E3 Trailer.”

more traditional approach to war as a dramatic and incredible adventure, as seen in in Freddie’s attempts to exact revenge upon the stereotypically militaristic and evil Baron



Figure 6: Final shot of the “*Valiant Hearts* E3 Trailer.” The trailer closes on this image of a military cemetery with each grave marked by a simple wooden cross. Using what is arguably one of the most iconic images associated with the Great War, *Valiant Hearts* calls on the player’s own knowledge and on the emotions already associated with a picture such as this one, while connecting the scene to the experience of the game by including Walt in the lower left corner. Death and feelings of loss and mourning are clearly expressed here, but without the inclusion of a single visible body, suggesting a distance between the viewer and the suffering of the battlefield. This is not unlike the corpselessness of the wartime and postwar home front. For a discussion on corpselessness, see Chapter One of this thesis.

von Dorf. By representing both memory-based historical interpretations of the conflict, *Valiant Hearts* is a rare window into how today’s society views the Great War a century after it began.⁷ *Valiant Hearts* is an effective method of commemoration because as a video game, it has greater potential to reach younger generations. Even further, it does so through a genre that very rarely considers the topic of the Great War as worthy of significant attention.

⁷The emotional appeal of *Valiant Hearts* does not end with empathy towards the unfortunate plight of the protagonists; the love story and Karl’s struggle to return home are emphasized strongly (almost to the point of romanticization) even at the level of advertisement in another game trailer (narrative transcribed here): “lives, shattered; love, lost. One day, a farmer; the next, a soldier. Sent far from home and torn from their loved ones, these unexpected heroes are swept away into the Great War that rages on, always hungry for more. War makes men mad... but humanity can shine from even the darkest hours. And those valiant hearts stand up, fighting for love, friendship, and honor – to the point of sacrificing everything, even their own life. Some made it; some did not. These are their stories.” “*Valiant Hearts* Come Back Trailer,” *Youtube*, accessed 11 March 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNmxLje9wes>.

A quick Wikipedia search reveals that the status of the Great War in the video game industry is almost insignificant compared to that of World War II. Wikipedia lists fifty-four video games set in the era of the Great War, twenty-one of which were made between 2010 and 2015.⁸ Meanwhile, the list of World War II games consists of over 320 titles, with sixty-six of them having been made in the past five years (twelve more than the *total* of listed Great War games).⁹ It is common, especially in a European context, to view the Second World War as a continuation of the First (a “new Thirty Years War”), so why is it that communities like the video game industry produce many more products with an emphasis on the conflict of 1939-1945?¹⁰ One possible explanation is that for many, the Second World War provides a distinct scenario with a clear separation between right and wrong, simplifying the video game player’s traditionally violent role in a war game. The lack of representation of the Great War is perhaps partially due to its murky morality especially when compared to World War II. However, it is worth noting that such a comparison directly contradicts the popularized motto that one should “never forget” the sacrifices of one’s countrymen – regardless of what sort of conflict(s) may have followed. Arguably the first historical instance of modern total warfare, the Great War provokes uncomfortable questions, acknowledgments, and revelations that are perhaps all the more distressing because of their continuing relevance to today’s society.

⁸“List of World War I video games,” Wikipedia, accessed 11 March 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_World_War_I_video_games.

⁹“List of World War II video games,” Wikipedia, accessed 11 March 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_World_War_II_video_games.

¹⁰Jay Winter and Antoine Prost discuss the pros and cons of the “new Thirty Years War” approach in the conclusion of *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 207.

Questions of National Identity and Commemoration

Valiant Hearts is just one example of countless attempts to respond to the global trauma of the Great War. Questions of memory and commemoration surrounding the conflict continue to challenge both the broader public as well as academic historians; the extent of the war's impact on the rest of the twentieth century, its demarcation of the "Modern Age" from preceding historical eras, and its effect on how Europe viewed death and mourning are all hotly contested topics. Even the question of how to approach the conflict – whether from a cultural, social, military, or political perspective – remains unanswered. When considering these questions from the specific viewpoints of England and Germany, it becomes clear that if today's society is to have an understanding of the Great War that is at all comprehensive, special attention must be paid to national identity. The conflict shaped both English and German identities culturally, socially, militarily, and politically leading up to the outbreak of World War II and beyond. The question becomes, then, to what extent the commemoration of the Great War strengthened (or fractured) national identities in the process of incorporating the conflict into a nation's history. This thesis approaches the question by examining the similarities and differences in English and German commemoration that affected (or did not affect) their respective national identities.

Ultimately, despite potentially divisive experiences and interpretations of the Great War, English physical and literary commemoration ultimately served to unify the nation at the personal, local, and national levels while also strengthening the burgeoning idea of a "British" national identity. In contrast, because Germany spent almost the entire interwar period struggling with the twin burdens of a relatively "new" nationhood and a crippling defeat in the war, any chance that the war would strengthen German national identity disappeared. It was primarily through the Third Reich's reinterpretation

(and misappropriation) of the memory of the Great War that a strong, unified German national identity was recreated (albeit without coming to terms with the war itself, or with interwar grief). Most physical memorialization that attempted to allude to a pre-1914 unified German identity ultimately failed. Additionally, the example of the internationally renowned German literary work *Im Westen nichts Neues* (*All Quiet on the Western Front*) shows the effect of extreme political paralysis on the ability of a literary work to rally people around a commemorative purpose, as Germans struggled to fully acknowledge a war they had lost, and for which they were still paying.

Although there were patterns of romanticization in both English and German commemoration, the people of each country also confronted some uncomfortable (and at times, horrific) truths about the war. Chapter One of this thesis examines these factors in depth. Starting with a discussion of twentieth-century European nationalism and how it manifested itself in England and Germany, this chapter examines several key theories within the experience of the Great War that were felt across national borders: chivalry, friendship vs. comradeship, corpselessness, and fragmentation. Chapter One concludes with an examination of the veteran experience in both countries and how men who had fought in the trenches brought the war with them back to the home front.

The veteran experience was ultimately incommunicable to those who had not experienced the war firsthand, as expressed by one ex-combatant after the English commemorative ceremonies on Armistice Day: “the ceremony... is essentially a civilian ceremony... for [the soldier], it is far too spectacular and emotional and remote from the real issues of the battlefield.”¹¹ However, that does not mean that English and German societies did nothing to attempt to emotionally relate to the men who had risked their lives for their countries. Whether on an individual, local, or national level, Europeans wanted

¹¹An anonymous veteran in *Oxford Magazine*. Quoted in Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946* (Oxford; Providence: Berg, 1994), 85.

to better understand the Great War veterans, and attempted to do so through constructing a physical representation of memorialization and/or commemoration. Chapter Two discusses physical memorialization from the level of the individual to (in the case of England) the level of the “spiritual,” with the honoring of an Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey. This chapter further explores how each country’s respective national identity was either united or splintered by the interaction between remembrance and interwar politics on the hallowed grounds of physical memorialization practices.

Commemoration was not limited to the construction of a physical memorial by any means. Both England and Germany used other methods as well, including that of literary interpretations of the Great War. Chapter Three examines three authors whose names are still recognized to this day for their creation of some of the most widely-read war literature of all time: the English poets Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, and the German novelist Erich Maria Remarque. The choice of these particular authors is based on the immediate popularity and long-lasting quality of their works, which in turn speaks to their value in constructing and renewing memory. Chapter Three chooses three specific literary examples that coincide with three of the key themes from Chapter One: fragmentation, chivalry, and friendship vs. comradeship. This examination brings the thesis back to its beginning, analyzing the Great War experience through a figurative construction of memory and commemoration through literature. Through creating richly textured and imagined environments, Owen, Sassoon, and Remarque provided an emotive way for their contemporaries to “never forget” the Great War and its effect on both the European continent, and the individual.

Chapter Three transitions into the conclusion with a close study of the notion of the “sleeping dead” in brief excerpts from Owen and Sassoon. The term “sleeping dead” refers to soldiers who died in the war and how the bereaved chose to remember them – not as dead, but simply sleeping. Although this term suggests multiple interpretations,

it is inherently tied to the idea of never forgetting. Survivors of the war felt that if the deaths of their loved ones and comrades were to have any meaning, it would be the responsibility of the next generation to help construct a unified nation that remembered the damage of the Great War as the country moved through the twentieth century. If fallen soldiers slept rather than died, they were not truly gone, and therefore were still members of the eternal nation for which they had sacrificed their lives. The sleeping dead phenomenon is a key component in the conclusion of this thesis; besides its inherent connection to how a community chooses to actively *remember*, the phenomenon also stresses the effect of the Great War on twentieth century memory and national identity.

Theoretical Framework

For historians, the Great War is intrinsically tied to place, from the intimacy of life in a trench, to the French countryside and the battlefields of the Western Front. One way to interpret the war's effect on European understanding of location is through geographical and anthropological theories of place and space. The war catalyzed the transformation of foreign *spaces*, such as the Somme and the Marne, into familiar (but distant) *places* with sentiment for English and German soldiers alike.¹² New emotion attached itself to these places that had not been present before the war: "what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value."¹³ The "semi-sacred space" of war memorials, pilgrimages to battlefields and military cemeteries, the everlasting image of a muddy, rat-infested trench – contemporaries understood all of these places to have been essentially created by the shared experience

¹²David Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia, and Canada, 1919-1939* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 1998), 111-112.

¹³For a deeper examination of place and space, see Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 6.

of the Great War.¹⁴

The definition of place, according to phenomenologist Edward Casey, is a valued point at which “space and time come together.”¹⁵ Locations such as memorials, cemeteries, battlefields, and trenches represented specific places as described in photographs, newspaper articles, and letters to the home front. As long as these places were revisited and remembered (either through physical or cultural commemoration), they preserved a moment in time. Such places embodied the postwar struggle to justify the war while also acknowledging the loss of the fallen soldiers who had died in defense of unfamiliar stretches of earth, creating opposing values at the sites of conflict. From the English perspective, the bravery and selflessness of a soldier who died in France – supposedly for the betterment of his motherland – lent value to previously value-less French soil. Such positively imagined sacrificial significance in turn contradicted the negative value associated with the loss of over one million British soldiers.¹⁶ It is with these concerns in mind, and such specific places of sacred memory, that both England and Germany struggled to interpret and justify the massive loss of life demarcating the Great War from all previous conflicts before it.

The theories of time, place, and memory are inextricably intertwined. Time and place work together to create a unique memory; a specific place often initiates remembrance; memory is the act of preserving places (and times) that often no longer physically exist alive in the minds of the public. One example is that of the familiar image

¹⁴Jay Winter refers to the space of a memorial as “semi-sacred” in *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 175.

¹⁵Edward Casey’s discussion of place, while primarily philosophical and theoretical, is a unique lens through which one can examine place and the Great War. See Edward Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time” in *Senses of Place*, ed. Steven Feld et al. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 36.

¹⁶Allyson Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space Between Modernism and the First World War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 33. For a brief discussion on the disagreement of whether or not British citizens thought the war had been worthwhile, see Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 134.

of a Western Front trench, which has been culturally preserved for one hundred years, outliving the physical and temporal boundaries placed on the experience of trench warfare and eventually becoming the visual epitome of the Great War experience.¹⁷ With reference to Casey's definition of place existing primarily at the intersection of a specific time and space, the trench as a *place* stopped existing after November 11, 1918.¹⁸

So what did postwar European society do to fill in the memory gap that was left behind when the trench could no longer fully represent the experience of the Great War? The process, of course, was far more complicated than simply finding a new outlet for the emotion and grief. French historian Pierre Nora explains this transformation from a specific *lieux*, or site, of memory, into a more broadly understood *milieu*, or environment.¹⁹ Nora's *lieux de mémoire* essentially work to replace the immediacy and reality of an experience such as the Great War by allowing people to direct their memories and emotions towards a visible, physical place. The theories of Nora and Casey complement one another: Casey's "place" relies on time and experience (which, by extension, can refer to memory), while Nora relies on the junction of place and time to assign value: "the moment of *lieux de mémoire* occurs at the same time that an immense and intimate fund of memory disappears."²⁰ In continuation with the example of the Western Front trench, the immediate lived experience of trench warfare must be replaced by a site that recalls the same memory before it dies within the minds of ex-servicemen and the imaginations of civilians. Such sites were limited geographically and financially after 1918; this meant that postwar sites of memory typically developed around physical (or, as will

¹⁷Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), ix.

¹⁸There are, of course, less stringent interpretations of place. In this instance, for example, one might argue that the place, as influenced by mankind and by the passing of time, is still within its original identity despite undergoing massive changes over time. The geographical location of the Western Front trenches still exists – so might the trenches themselves have grown and changed while maintaining some of the same value that they did in 1918?

¹⁹Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7.

²⁰Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," 11-12.

be discussed later, literary) monuments to the war.

The trenches and battlefields of the Great War have left indelible scars in the European psyche that convey memories, values, and deep personal, communal, and national histories – scars that are most frequently recalled through sites of memory. “Remembrance,” as Jay Winter reflects, “is part of the landscape,” and the names of infamous places like Ypres, Verdun, the Somme, and the Marne bring the same respectful and sacred silence to an English audience as they did one hundred years ago.²¹ Similarly, the sites of memory that have been present since the end of the Great War allow a society to reinterpret the events of its past with reference to something that is somehow – either by time, or place, or both – more closely tied to the survivors’ memories of the war.²²

Collective memory frequently centers itself on one or more specific sites of memory: no one would think to construct a *lieux de mémoire*, by Nora’s definition, without a pre-established memory to which the site is connected. While collective memory has attained many different interpretations and qualities over the years, the theory’s historical value with reference to the Great War comes from its role in the continuation of national identity and commemorative practices. Essentially, collective memory is “a sense of the past to which we bear an organic and living relation.”²³ It is not in any way permanent, nor is it completely objective or subjective, because by definition it must reinvent itself as time passes in order to consider the events of the present as well. Collec-

²¹Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1.

²²Nora discusses the further transition from memory to history as being one that requires deliberate creation “revitalization” so that such sites of memory are not “[swept] away.” See Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” 12, 15.

²³In *The Collective Memory Reader*, the editors introduce Part II with this somewhat understated definition of collective memory. This brief yet summative description is a good starting point for the exploration of collective memory as it pertains to the Great War. For a solid collection of collective memory analysis, see *The Collective Memory Reader* ed. Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, Daniel Levy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 178.

tive memory changes over time. With the shifting of a society, the significance of such memory to the population that constructs it also waxes and wanes.

There is also the question of how “collective” a memory can be when it includes an unspecified number of individual experiences. Strictly speaking, memory is an individual process that can never fully be communicated with the exact perspective of the memory-holder.²⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, widely considered to be the father of collective memory studies, admits that there can be no completely *universal* memory: “every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time... [it] no longer entails restoring them to lifelike reality, but requires relocating them within the frameworks with which history organizes events.”²⁵

In this sense, collective memory is explicitly biased and limited in the history it constructs. Patriotic nationalistic rhetoric that suggested a unified nation (and a clear enemy) colored the English and German collective memories that sprung up around the Great War. It follows that the collective memory of the nation was limited by how one defined the nation - with specific examples being the class, gender, religion, and age of the “typical” Englishman or German.²⁶ Both individual and collective identities (perhaps centered around family, church, or local government) voiced their own interpretations of what the war meant and how it should be remembered. Halbwachs recognizes the task of the individual to create and maintain their own memories separate of the community, commenting that society often “obligates people not just to reproduce in thought previous events of their lives, but also to touch them up, to shorten them,

²⁴Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” 8.

²⁵The editors of *The Collective Memory Reader* refer to Halbwachs as the “founding father of contemporary memory studies,” although they also discuss memory and collective thought as understood before Halbwachs’ influence in the introduction. See *The Collective Memory Reader*, 2. For an excerpted version of Halbwachs’ own discussion on non-individual memory, see the excerpt from Halbwachs’ *The Collective Memory* in Part I of *The Collective Memory Reader*, 145.

²⁶Peter Burke, from “History as Social Memory” in *The Collective Memory Reader*, 189.

or to complete them so that... we give them a prestige that reality did not possess.”²⁷ However, in studying how contemporaries of the postwar era were *told* to remember in England and Germany, the influence of nationalist rhetoric (or the overwhelming lack of it) superseded (or shaped) that of the individual in many ways. The collective memories of postwar England and Germany are often focused on highly specific and emotionally charged sites of memory, whether through the site’s historical role in the war or as a site of retroactive emotion and remembrance. The first “memory boom” (as Jay Winter refers to the period of and surrounding the Great War) suggests that memory and modernism went hand in hand for the war’s contemporaries: that collectively, Europe clung to the past in the hope that the present would “never forget” and would be able to prevent a tragedy like the Great War from ever happening again. Everyday reminders of this phenomenon included ex-combatants, memorials, and other cultural artistic interpretations.²⁸ There are, of course, countless experiences and perspectives from which one might approach the Great War. For the broadest perspective possible, historians must “think in terms of different ‘memory communities’ within a given society,” asking the questions “who wants whom to remember what, and why? Whose version of the past is recorded and preserved?”²⁹ Chapter One explores how, regardless of the answers to these questions, English and German citizens still had to fight against the Great War’s overwhelming effects on society.

²⁷Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 51.

²⁸“It is easy to imagine that we ought to *remember* the past. But we do not remember the past. It is the present that we remember: that is, we ‘remember’ what remains living within our situations *now*.” Allan Megill, “History, Memory, Identity” in *The Collective Memory Reader*, 196.

²⁹Burke, from “History as Social Memory,” 191.

Chapter One: Nationalism and the War's Effects on European Society

The idea of the nation was one of the strongest influences on twentieth-century European politics, culture, and society. With respect to theories of place and collective memory, the nation became almost an independent force before the Great War and further absorbed pre-existing societal notions (such as masculinity) in order to sustain a constructed national identity.³⁰ Before examining the role of masculinity in English and German wartime experiences, however, it is important to construct a working knowledge of what the nation signified for the Great War's contemporaries and how they understood the nation-state almost as an independent actor – both in the lives of individual citizens and on the continental stage. Ernest Renan defined the nation in his 1882 lecture *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation*:

[A nation is]... a great solidarity, constituted by a feeling for the common sacrifices that have been made and for those one is prepared to make again. It presupposes a past; however, it is epitomized in the present by a tangible fact; consent, the clearly expressed desire that the common life should continue... one great aggregate of men, of sound spirit... creates a moral conscience that... proves its strength through the sacrifices demanded by the renunciation of the individual for the good of the community, it is legitimate and has the right to exist.”³¹

³⁰Place and space theory, collective memory, and sites of memory are all defined and discussed in the introduction of this thesis.

³¹Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?” in *Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the Present* ed. Stuart Woolf, (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 58-59.

While a contested response to the search for what it means to be a nation, the title of Benedict Anderson's work *Imagined Communities* reflects the above argument. Renan's nation is constructed as a "great solidarity" with a common "clearly expressed desire," while Anderson demotes the nation to an "imagined political community" that, regardless of its ideological origins, explicitly requires the silencing of certain narratives for the sake of political purposes.³² Both definitions allow for the submission – whether consciously or not – of the individual to the community. Both definitions require that people forego their differences for the sake of their similarities. While a nineteenth-century nation might have shared a race, language, religion, and/or geographical location, it was not required and such qualities were typically whitewashed in the process of creating national identity. Anderson's top-down understanding of nationalism, even with its implicit exclusion of minority voices and experiences, is an appropriate lens through which to examine prewar European nationalism.

In its broadest sense, nationalism can then be understood as the group process of identifying with a national ideal. Early Western European political nationalism was defined through the collective dedication of a people to a "territorial nation state," as evidenced by the political and social rhetoric of the time.³³ Through the last quarter of the nineteenth century, this was replaced by an aggressively exclusionary nationalism that focused on identification of the nation not through self-definition, but rather through the definition of the "other" – a change that partially defines nationalist ideology today.³⁴

³²Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 1991), 6.

³³Stuart Woolf, *Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the Present* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 2. Woolf clarifies between nationalism and its predecessor patriotism, claiming that while the former works on the group level, the latter works on a personal level. Woolf says that both have historically been seen as "primordial instinct[s]... inherently superior to other loyalties, and that the 'nation' is a 'natural' unit that has always existed, albeit for long in a passive and dormant state."

³⁴Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), 173; Woolf, *Nationalism in Europe*, 8; and Rohan McWilliam, *Popular*

This exclusionary form of nationalism unites the theories of place and space, collective memory, and sites of memory as they related to Europe before, during, and after the Great War. The body and spirit of a male soldier became the primary nationalist symbol as well as the point of confluence for these different historical theories. A man fulfilled his destiny to live, fight, and die for the nation in line with the traditional gender roles of the time. The postwar male body, in turn, was a reminder of the distant places he had fought, the things he had experienced and brought back with him from the front, and finally acted as a reminder of a postwar society's past, a past which that society was adamant on remembering.

Before these markers of memory were consolidated into the body of the soldier, they were joined through the idea of the exclusionary nation. First, the new nation was *de facto* tied to the land and to a constructed experience shared by every member of the state. The nation's soil held special significance for those citizens dedicated to their country. The political borders were just as important, if not more so, than the geographical features within them; simply put, the nation was a well-defined "place" defined in opposition to the "space" of the rest of the continent and, by extension, the world. Second, in assuming a single national community, it was implicitly understood that a nation's citizens shared a collective memory of their past, which is also historiographically furthered through the members of Anderson's imagined community, who "will never know most of their fellow-members..., yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."³⁵ Third, and directly related to the role of collective memory in constructing national identity, sites of memory preserved memories as they faded from the community experience. As Europe entered the twentieth century, it became clear that the modern nation and its exclusionary qualities would be a defining factor in the upcoming conflict.

Politics in Nineteenth-Century England (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 81.
³⁵Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

Several of the same ideas and concerns would be represented in the male body of the soldier and eventually of the veteran, who symbolized the effects of modern warfare on the landscape, the memory, and the society of the European nation.

Contrasting Prewar English and German Nationalisms

England and Germany both relied on the male body of the soldier to construct their national identities, which were cut from a very similar cloth. However, the differences between the two began to emerge as early as the nineteenth century with the rising popularity of social Darwinism. Beginning with the Enlightenment, rationalism and optimism led to a widespread belief that societies evolved on a teleological basis, moving from one stage to the next in a continuously progressive line.³⁶ Inspired by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution in the late nineteenth century, social Darwinism united biology and social planning under one umbrella.³⁷ It also further distorted the idea of the nation and defined it as a political entity that not only identified itself as ethnically, linguistically, and culturally different from other countries, but also translated the Darwinian theory of "survival of the fittest" from individual organisms to nations. The barbarity of the Great War forced European thinkers to reconsider this theory and admit the risk of nationalist competition simply for the sake of proving superiority.³⁸

While social Darwinism's acceptance was not limited to Germany, it found extreme popularity there.³⁹ Studying the role of eugenics in twentieth-century German

³⁶Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006), 17.

³⁷With specific reference to Germany, Alfred Kelly writes of this phenomenon in *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981). German social theorists were more than willing to adopt newly-researched biological concepts for the sake of utopian ideology: "[a]pologists for capitalism, for instance, could glorify the struggle for life, while those pressing for radical egalitarianism could point to the common origin of all men or the natural necessity of change... every Darwinist became ipso facto a social theorist," 100.

³⁸Mandler, *The English National Character*, 144.

³⁹Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin*, 101. Additionally, the extremely high literacy rate in Germany (and other nations including England, Darwin's native country) allowed these ideas to be widely published,

history is a slippery slope leading to a chain of cause-and-effect from ethnic German nationalism and eugenics to the tragedy of the Holocaust in World War II. However, it would be illogical to ignore the theory's early mass popularity in the country for the sake of avoiding a reductive historical theory.⁴⁰ Germany's path to nationhood was markedly different than that of France and Great Britain: both of the older empires could call upon their shared histories to unite a people under the belief that they could place themselves within a single national identity. This was not the case for Germany, whose principalities and states were only politically unified in 1871.⁴¹ The "delayed" quality of Germany's nationhood required its ruling elite to more forcibly construct a national identity, which is one reason why German intellectual society so readily embraced social Darwinism.⁴² Therefore, German nationalism had a uniquely intense ethnic, pseudo-scientific biological quality that contributed broadly to the German rationale for war, which was centered on the hope that war would allow the country to prove itself as a continental power that (despite its lack of historical foundation and established nationhood) could hold its own on the European continent.⁴³

distributed, and consumed – especially by the rapidly-growing middle class. For more on this point, see Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin*, 5.

⁴⁰Kelly reminds his readers not to approach pre-1933 history with the intent to connect the Holocaust to the rise of German culture and history (a theory referred to as the German *Sonderweg*). Rather, Kelly emphasizes the need to see social Darwinism for what it was to its contemporaries – an idealistic (and racist) attempt to categorize and rationalize human society by the rules of nature. Thus, this thesis views German nationalism before Adolf Hitler's rise to power as a separate entity that was indeed anti-Semitic, but had not yet adopted a gruesome obsession with the total extermination of the Jews.

⁴¹The German nationalism referred to here is loosely limited to the nationalism present after political unification in 1871; however, there is much to the "myth" of the German nation as it might have existed for hundreds of years beforehand. For an extensive discussion on what historically has and has not qualified as the German nation, see Hagen Schulze, *The Course of German Nationalism: From Frederick the Great to Bismarck, 1763-1867* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁴²Germany's "delayed" nationhood is described as notorious here because the value of the term has been called into question in recent years, although this thesis uses it more broadly in that Germany did indeed lack an established unified history comparable to that of England and/or France. For more, see Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), 64.

⁴³Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 201. This contrasts the more specific wartime goals of England and France: primarily to maintain economic hegemony on the continent, and to present a united front

Along with England and France, prewar German nationalism incorporated social Darwinism, chivalry, and heroism. For young German men in the prewar years, these ideas found footing in relation to the Franco-Prussian War. The sacrifices their fathers had made to prove themselves in 1870 and 1871 loomed over the heads of the younger generation: “in short it was a classic ‘postheroic’ generation of inheritors... vacillating between the duty to preserve their fathers’ achievements and the pressure to produce great deeds of their own.”⁴⁴ The years after unification saw unbelievably rapid demographic and industrial growth in the newly unified Germany, which was potentially in itself reason enough for Germans to be proud of their nation. These successes were, as per Renan’s requirements for a nation, a few of the similarities that Germans could now claim in common.⁴⁵ Traits that are still seen today as stereotypically German began to emerge as “national characteristics” as early as the nineteenth century, and emphasized organization, efficiency, and discipline that far outreached the French and British counterparts.⁴⁶

Another crucial characteristic of prewar German nationalism lay in the overlap between militarization and traditional German *Kultur*, which differs from Anglo-American culture in that it distinguishes between intellectual and spiritual creativity, and politics and social organization. In a prewar context, *Kultur* allowed for an idea of improvement to develop completely separately from the political sphere, which acted as an explanation (or excuse) for Germany’s delayed nationhood.⁴⁷ In the years leading up to the Great War,

with Russia against Germany, respectively. For more on the origins and goals of the Great War, see Chapters Five, Seven, and Eight in *The Origins of World War I* ed. Richard Hamilton and Holger Herwig (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴⁴Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, 194.

⁴⁵David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 351.

⁴⁶Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century*, xiii.

⁴⁷Eva Kolinsky and Wilfried van der Will, “In Search of German Culture: An Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern German Culture*, ed. Kolinsky and van der Will (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2.

Kultur was one of the primary influences on the young German soldier who embodied his country's supposed traditions of order, masculinity, power, and security, while simultaneously negating any and all differentiating characteristics such as class and hometown. He was seen as a product of his nation, and "his body and his uniform... both belonged to the German state."⁴⁸

Kultur became intimately connected to this military tradition and to the social Darwinists' rational, supposedly scientific perspective. Germans saw themselves as threatened and surrounded by the Anglican and French cultural influences; through this assumption, German politicians and theorists could describe the war as "defensive" or "preventative" – a war not based on the dry political world, but rather, on the rich, spiritual realm of German *Kultur*.⁴⁹ In defining what it meant to be *not* German, *Kultur* suggested a vague shape for German national identity, championing "greater German seriousness and 'depth' than could be found in the mere 'civilizations' of the Anglo-Saxons or the frivolous decadence of the French."⁵⁰ Combined with the assumed qualities of military discipline and order, *Kultur* was a key component to exclusionary, ethnic prewar German nationalism.

While postwar England could approach its traditional perspective on masculinity with patience and sensitivity thanks to its position as a victorious nation, German masculinity was under further duress as the country confronted its loss of a war it had been so confident of winning. Additionally, the men who returned home after the signing of the Armistice did not reflect the 1914 interpretation of the war as an honorable, masculine *Stahlbad* ("bath of steel").⁵¹ Germany's official surrender came as somewhat of a sur-

⁴⁸David James Prickett, "The Soldier Figure in Discourses on Masculinity in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany," in *Seminar – A Journal of Germanic Studies* 44:1 (February 2008), 69.

⁴⁹Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 90.

⁵⁰Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century*, 385.

⁵¹Sabine Kienitz, "Body Damage: War Disability and Constructions of Masculinity in Weimar Germany," trans. Monique Sheer, in *Home/front: the Military, War, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany* ed. Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2002), 181.

prise for the soldiers who were still deeply entrenched within enemy territory; the idea that they had lost the war was not only damaging to their belief in the superiority of the German nation, but was also its own form of trauma that needed to be dealt with on top of the resulting physical and psychological damage of the war.⁵² Some historians such as George Mosse have made the argument that the Great War affirmed the traditional aggressive masculinity that had contributed to the outbreak of war in the first place, although this perspective ignores the experiences of disabled veterans and shell shock victims.⁵³ The alternative argument is that the war forced Germany to question its prewar masculinity and bring it to terms with a postwar society.⁵⁴

The men who returned could no longer identify with the German masculine ideal because they had been defeated on the field of battle. Additionally, they were often crippled, impotent, and/or mentally affected by *Kriegsneurosen* (“nervous disorders”) that were the result of the trauma of modern warfare. The war emasculated and infantilized these men, according to Germany’s traditional prewar standard of masculinity.⁵⁵ Because they could not perform their duties as men in war or in German society, ex-servicemen needed to find a way to compensate for the loss of their traditional masculine identities (which had been brought about by the Great War), while also acting as a broader societal reminder of the capability of modern warfare to shape and destroy society’s expectations and ideals.⁵⁶

English nationalism, on the other hand, had the unique experience of developing within the broader British identity as it applied to the Welsh, Scottish, Irish, Canadian, and Australian citizens of the Empire (to say nothing of Britain’s colonial holdings).⁵⁷

⁵²Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, 191.

⁵³This is a brief summary of Sabine Kienitz’s argument. For more, see Kienitz, “Body Damage,” 182.

⁵⁴Kienitz, “Body Damage,” 183.

⁵⁵Prickett, “The Soldier Figure in Discourses on Masculinity in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany,” 84.

⁵⁶Kienitz, “Body Damage,” 183.

⁵⁷While these other experiences are no less valid in their own right, for the sake of comparison to Germany, the best identity on which to focus is that of England because of its imperial leadership

At the same time, the English character of nationalism must also be placed within the development of a broader British identity. Each individual national identity within the British Isles could be (and often were) held concurrently with a broader “British” identity influenced by the empire’s twin practices of colonialism and imperialism in the nineteenth century.⁵⁸

Early English national consciousness emphasized territory, the monarch, and political liberalism.⁵⁹ English politicians invoked the nation in debates and treatises in order to overcome (or emphasize) classist differences, which had potential to exacerbate political opposition.⁶⁰ It was not until the Victorian era that use of an external “other” became the primary support of internal English societal bonds. English identity initially used the strategy of “othering,” or defining itself by what it as not, against the Welsh, Scots, and Irish. Eventually, the similarities between these different British cultures allowed for a gradual shift of mistrust and xenophobia towards the continental European countries – specifically France and Germany.⁶¹ British politics invoked the idea of the nation beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century, and like Germany (although to a lesser extent), adopted the tenets of social Darwinism for the sake of nationalism on the eve of the Great War: “what had begun as a biological process now continued as an ethical and intellectual development.”⁶²

At the outbreak of the war, English national identity was thus in a state of flux. Citizens were pulled in two different directions as their sovereign country expanded its

role in the widespread British Empire. The Irish experience, for example was particularly colored by the question of to what extent the Great War was an “English” and not a “British” war, and led to a politicization of the war for the sake of both separatist and union groups (not for the sake of memory and/or mourning). For more, see James Loughlin, “Mobilising the Sacred Dead: Ulster Unionism, the Great War and the Politics of Remembrance,” in *Ireland and the Great War: A War To Unite Us All?* ed. Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2002).

⁵⁸McWilliam, *Popular Politics in Nineteenth-Century England*, 82.

⁵⁹Mandler, *The English National Character*, 9-11.

⁶⁰McWilliam, *Popular Politics in Nineteenth-Century England*, 84.

⁶¹McWilliam, *Popular Politics in Nineteenth-Century England*, 81.

⁶²Mandler, *The English National Character*, 120.

influence and empire so that the development of an English identity was stunted, while the broader British identity (supposedly) united the populations of all the Empire's sovereign nations.⁶³ Ultimately, wartime propaganda proved more effective when it emphasized what the four states had in common, rather than what distinguished them. Military mobilization and anti-German nationalism brought the Great War to be considered historically as Britain's first "war of the people," uniting them for the duration of the conflict.⁶⁴

Victorious English soldiers returned home with the weight of the war on their shoulders, but also the knowledge that they had successfully defeated the Germans. This allowed warfare to be viewed with a certain amount of positivity while also sequestering it in the distant past: the war had temporarily defined English masculinity, but did not need to do so for generations to come.⁶⁵ Pacifism, while not widely adopted as it had been in France, had at least a fighting chance (so to speak) in postwar England.⁶⁶ Men were not required to completely regress to their prewar position. Rather, they had the opportunity to reflect on their wartime experience and commingle old and new identities: "the British First World War experience was encoded in a language of suffering and sacrifice which validated soldiers' vulnerability."⁶⁷ This is not to say, of course, that returning English soldiers did not also question traditional masculinity after the trauma of the conflict: the soldiers who had gone off to war at what they understood to be the peak of English masculinity, returned home physically and psychologically broken, immediately triggering a re-examination (even on an initially subconscious level) that

⁶³Mandler, *The English National Character*, 141.

⁶⁴Mandler, *The English National Character*, 143-144.

⁶⁵Trudi Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 115.

⁶⁶Sonja Levsen, "Constructing Elite Identities: University Students, Military Masculinity and the Consequences of the Great War in Britain and Germany," in *Past & Present* 198:1 (2008): 168.

⁶⁷Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 158.

questioned how the male mind and body reacted to external suffering.⁶⁸ The crucially unique factor in the English case was that men could do this without fearing a total collapse of gender roles in postwar society.

The Great War as a Transnational Experience

Although both England and Germany had wildly different experiences, both countries felt the shifting of nationalism under their feet. For imperialist and relatively multicultural England, with four sovereign nations in the United Kingdom and several colonial holdings across the globe, a complex prewar nationalism was immediately confronted with the lived experience of English citizens who were aware of cultural differences between the English and the Scots, let alone between the English and continental European nationalities like the Germans. Germany's national identity had first been synthesized later than England's, and therefore was more flexible when it came to adopting the ethnic, racial, and xenophobic tenets inherent in discussions of social Darwinism. The outbreak of war in 1914 "was seen as an opportunity for change and confirmation" that rapidly devolved into "a veritable war of cultures" as the belligerent powers rushed to prove their superiority on the world stage through the first total modern war of the twentieth century.⁶⁹

The violent struggle for superiority and changing attitudes of male intimacy reflect the dichotomy between prewar and postwar masculinity.⁷⁰ Both English and German soldiers were bound to question their understanding of masculinity under the influential combination of modern warfare and nationalist ideology, regardless of their country's status as victorious or defeated. While many historians choose to emphasize the role

⁶⁸Sarah Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 192.

⁶⁹Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, xv.

⁷⁰Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 158.

of women in the geography of the war and postwar periods (and there is, of course, a great deal of validity to choosing to analyze a perspective typically silenced by the Western patriarchal approach to history), it is undeniable that warfare, and subsequently the military, was still heavily gendered.⁷¹ Therefore, the Great War projected a masculine identity and experience onto the societies it affected.

Both England and Germany saw the war not only as a chance to prove themselves on the global stage, but also as a way of assuring that their individual masculine ideals would continue to be exemplified by the younger generation of men fighting in the war. The prospect of war in 1914 polarized gender roles, placing women in the home and men in their traditional positions of family and national defenders; mass conflict was “almost exclusively a young-male experience” that was intended to transform boys into men.⁷² Germany and England also valued the cult of athleticism that had initially developed in the prewar era and extended well into the interwar period.⁷³ Combined with exclusionary nationalism and the competition-based argument of social Darwinism, the willingness to sacrifice for “King and Country” or *Kaiser und Vaterland* defined prewar English and German masculinities.⁷⁴

English and German national identities were reliant in many ways on how their veterans returned from the front, and how the traditional masculine identity was forced into redefinition after the traumatic experience of the war. Both societies glorified the role of men between 1914 and 1918 and ultimately contributed to a broader gendered

⁷¹Sonja Levensen, “Constructing Elite Identities,” 159-160.

⁷²Robert Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War: 1914-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 41.

⁷³Interestingly enough, this “cult of athleticism” was equally popular after the war, albeit for different reasons. The immediate postwar tendency not to require military service for young men, especially in Germany after the military size limitations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, was instead replaced with sport. Athleticism could even be a form of commemoration: “organized games and races were considered appropriate entertainments on days of remembrance.” See Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 217.)

⁷⁴Levensen, “Constructing Elite Identities,” 176.

process of commemoration.⁷⁵ War, it was believed, strengthened male intimacy despite the resulting trauma; military conflict was the ultimate chance to prove one's masculinity.⁷⁶ One seventeen-year-old Englishman wrote that he went to war "not in search of the adventure... but in the firm belief and hope that [he] shall become manly and firm, fully-developed, broadminded, full of power and strength, and in readiness for the great life which will be waiting for [him] later on."⁷⁷ This man's words seem to imply an awareness of the medieval chivalric ideology of his time, which also served to shape both English and German national identities. The veteran's identity and his place in society had no comparable explanation through the language of chivalry, so he was forcibly re-configured after the war that had "transformed the male body into a site of collective memory of destructive military power."⁷⁸ This was the exact opposite of what postwar English and German societies wanted as they desperately tried to rebuild their countries both physically and ideologically through channeling similar medieval traditions.

The Aftershocks of the Great War in Tradition, Society, and Body

Just as nations experienced the Great War in similar ways, the conflict also left nations to cope with similar postwar problems. England and Germany shared a similar language of medieval tradition, a shattering of relationships built between soldiers in the trenches, and the resulting fragmentation of the combatant's body, mind, and environment. The rest of this chapter closely examines these three issues in terms of chivalry, friendship, comradeship, and fragmentation.

⁷⁵Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 138.

⁷⁶As will be seen in Chapter One's discussion about the role of chivalry in Great War commemoration and postwar masculinity, both English and German societies believed that "every one of the fallen could be regarded as a courageous, dutiful, honourable, fair and holy knight." See Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 200.

⁷⁷Quoted in Neil Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers: The Story of the Missing of the First World War* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 6.

⁷⁸Kienitz, "Body Damage," 182.

Chivalry

Twentieth-century chivalry is crucial in understanding English and German post-war masculine identities.⁷⁹ For Great War contemporaries, chivalry referred to a medieval notion of discipline, “courage, duty, honour, fairness and faith.”⁸⁰ Worthiness was measured through voluntary bravery and probable self-sacrifice, the modern equivalents to martyrdom.⁸¹ Of course, while chivalry was an appealing ideology with which to enter the trenches, it became clear by the end of 1918 that the idea was “not merely inadequate but obscene” in regards to the experience of modern warfare on the Western Front.⁸²

As a result, chivalry’s tenets of self-sacrifice and the glorification of war underwent significant changes in order to be more applicable to the modern era. In 1916, Great Britain passed conscription laws requiring men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one to enlist.⁸³ The German army also worked under the method of conscription for years leading up to the Great War.⁸⁴ Conscription contradicted the chivalric notions of volunteerism and martyrdom, and therefore had the potential to limit praise given to soldiers for their self-sacrifice. However, the image of the soldier as a modern Christ-like figure making the ultimate sacrifice for his country prevailed, at least in part because it gave citizens the chance to view the war as a necessary struggle, and the deaths of their loved ones as sacrifices for the good of the nation.⁸⁵

Changing ideas of chivalry similarly affected the glorification of battle. Thanks to

⁷⁹For an extensive discussion of medieval and modern chivalry, see Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), and Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*.

⁸⁰Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, 194.

⁸¹Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, 232.

⁸²Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, 194.

⁸³Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, 16.

⁸⁴John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 19.

⁸⁵Although Levensen refers specifically to English sacrifice “for King and Country,” the same could be said for German soldiers and “Kaiser und Vaterland.” See Levensen, “Constructing Elite Identities”, 176.

the relative ease and frequency with which soldiers wrote home as well as the increased role of the written word in newspapers and pamphlets, the “greatness” of the Great War was tempered with the knowledge that it was significantly more horrific than pre-1914 understandings of military conflict.⁸⁶ Thus, citizens no longer glorified battle, but rather, the soldier: “[w]ar is not glorious... but oftentimes in war men are.”⁸⁷ This distinction, however, did not significantly affect the overall attitude towards twentieth-century chivalry, as it combined the honor and discipline of medieval masculinity with the bloodiness and near-inevitability of death in modern warfare.⁸⁸

Through this modern understanding of chivalry that borrowed from some medieval values and twisted others, young soldiers entered the war with the expectation that it would strengthen the bond between themselves and their countrymen. Combatants and non-combatants alike believed that warfare was the primary test “...for the most resilient, cherished, and vulnerable of bonds” of masculinity.⁸⁹ Such broad diction intended to shape public opinion contradicted the reality of the situation. The distinction between the chivalric ideal and the actuality of modern warfare is reflected in the twentieth-century nuance between *friendship* and *comradeship*.⁹⁰ The distinction between

⁸⁶Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 1.

⁸⁷“Kirkcudbright Parish Church: War Memorial Unveiled,” unspecified newspaper cutting, 16 January 1921. Quoted in Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 188. The most significant difference between medieval and modern chivalry was the perspective on gender. Medieval chivalry emphasized the “youthful feminine ideal” as well as the importance of protecting young English women from the violation of enemies (Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, 145). The chivalry of the Great War, on the other hand, idealized young men as the societal apex, with little to no emphasis placed on the corresponding role of women. Wartime propaganda used notions of chivalry to enlist young soldiers who were anxious to prove their masculinity for its own sake. For more on these different gendered experiences, see Janet Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 47. Further, postwar commemorative diction that still chose to emphasize the role of chivalry in war and in national masculinity “ennobled combatants and obscured the act of killing”; see Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 230.

⁸⁸Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, 118. Also, since British and German territory had remained relatively untouched throughout the war, it was easier for chivalry and the glorification of war to continue into the postwar years: “ruins could, therefore, still be seen through rose-colored spectacles.” See Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 177.

⁸⁹Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 6.

⁹⁰Although Cole examines the role of friendship and comradeship in British society and postwar

these two terms reflects a broader disconnect between the language used to describe relationships strengthened through the fires of war, and the reality that the men with which one fought one day, could easily disappear the next. There were two possibilities in the destruction of the bonds that war supposedly strengthened: a comrade could be reassigned, or he could be killed.⁹¹

Friendship and Comradeship

In the context of the Great War, friendship and comradeship were frequently conflated despite significant dissimilarities. The distinction lies with differing levels of loyalty and real, organic development.⁹² Friendship maintained the agency of an individual as well as his ability to choose and influence his relationships with those around him.⁹³ Additionally, friendship was seen as a special relationship between kindred spirits despite societal pressures. Comradeship, on the other hand, was significantly less organic; it focused on loyalty to the regiment that had been brought together with the purpose of fighting for a greater cause.⁹⁴ The assumed interchangeability of friendship and comradeship faded as people (specifically, ex-combatants) realized that the latter had been constructed for the sake of nation-building, in part through its imitation of the former's positive qualities – qualities which were not the reality of the battlefield. Instead, comradeship relied on the idea that the body of a military regiment could take the place of the individual. The division had its own “soul, its own personality,” but was simultaneously “superior to any human individual.”⁹⁵

literature, I posit that her arguments refer more broadly to the experience of men on the Western Front regardless of nationality. Also, German *Kameradschaft* (the “glue of male homosocial bonds”) is a good starting point for investigating homosexual/homoerotic tension in the military. See Prickett's “The Soldier Figure in Discourses on Masculinity,” 71.

⁹¹Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 148.

⁹²Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 194-195.

⁹³Whether this was true or not was another story, as “friendship has its own conventions and institutional affinities” that were equally a presence in twentieth-century Europe. See Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 4.

⁹⁴Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 139.

⁹⁵Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 147.

This discussion of friendship and comradeship reflects anthropologist James C. Scott's discussion of legibility. Legibility comes from the state and benefits the state, as the identity and agency of smaller populations within a larger community are often erased.⁹⁶ Legibility also gives agency to the state as a machine with an assumed duty to monitor and control a given population. In the case of the Great War, legibility describes the actions of participating states that helped them to better organize their people, both at home and on the battlefields.⁹⁷ This was especially evident on the level of the military; the front line was hundreds of miles away from where commanders strategized so the reality of the broken, crooked trenches that were gained or lost on a daily basis was not the reality experienced by high-ranking officials. For them, the space of a battlefield had to be translated simplistically to "the plane of a map."⁹⁸ This process of legibility inherently suggested that the individual soldier was irrelevant for the purposes of the nation, which was conveniently included in the idealization of comradeship as the most pure connection between men in war.

The combined forces of militarization and legibility created an anonymity that transcended any and all individual identities and relationships; the individual body was subsumed by the "body" of the regiment.⁹⁹ Masculinity no longer focused on a male individual, but rather on the bonds formed in military regiments. The loyalty to another individual soldier that might have initially appeared as friendship was more often inspired by the spirit of comradeship. Therefore, the ideas of friendship and comradeship were "antagonists", dichotomously opposed to one another in the experience of the Great

⁹⁶James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2.

⁹⁷Scott refers to the state's "high-modernist ideology," with its "self-confidence about scientific and technical progress..., the mastery of nature..., and, above all, the rational design of social order" in *Seeing Like a State*, 4. On the following page, he specifically references Germany's wartime economy as the "high tide" of this modernism.

⁹⁸Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 88.

⁹⁹Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 18.

War.¹⁰⁰

The comparison of camaraderie to religious duty masked the semi-mutual exclusivity of these two terms. Comradeship and chivalry walked hand in hand through the trenches, emphasizing the transcendence beyond the self that was typically limited to “Christian self-sacrifice and patriotic duty,” both of which were longstanding cultural traditions in English and German history.¹⁰¹ Society placed great value on sacrifice and morality despite the nineteenth-century decline of religion due to the Enlightenment’s emphasis on rational and scientific thought; this in turn permitted chivalry to maintain its primary role in the European cultural development. After the war, many ex-combatants believed that this highly respected comradeship ideal had seen its day in the sun and was beyond comprehension for the generations who were too young to have been enlisted.¹⁰² For these ex-combatants, the value of comradeship was ephemeral and fragile and tied to a specific place in time that, like the trenches on the Western Front, lost some of its value as decades passed.

Similar to the notion of Benedict Anderson’s imagined community on the national level, comradeship was intended to unite the ranks with (often falsified) similarities that glazed over the striking differences in hometown, class, and personal political beliefs. Comradeship was a state attempt at legibility, offering a constructed, simulated friendship among the ranks as soldiers made their way to the Western Front. What the state was not counting on, however, was the possibility that the war might do the exact opposite of strengthening bonds between men: “...the war destroyed friendship... as individual friends were killed in the ordinary course of the day, and as the concept of friendship was treated with contempt by a bureaucracy that endlessly and arbitrarily separated

¹⁰⁰Sarah Cole, “Modernism, Male Intimacy, and the Great War.” *ELH* 68:2 (2001): 477.

¹⁰¹For more on the intersection between Christianity and patriotism, see Cole, “Modernism, Male Intimacy, and the Great War”, 469.

¹⁰²Keegan, *The First World War*, 39.

friends.”¹⁰³ The imagined community of comradeship did not stand a chance if its base (friendship) was destroyed. As the war attacked both the physical and social male bodies, the constructed notion of comradeship collapsed along with its model of friendship. Neither concurrent idea survived the conflict wholly unscathed. The men who survived the war returned home with a markedly different approach to masculinity and comradeship, having experienced firsthand that warfare did not reflect the “spirit of 1914” and the comradeship supposedly inherent to military service.

Corpselessness and Fragmentation

The disparity between comradeship and friendship also contributed to a severe disconnect between ex-combatants and civilians in both England and Germany. The “voice of the permanently scarred friend” emerged from the ranks of surviving soldiers who had witnessed the destruction of not only comradeship, but also any friendships they may have formed.¹⁰⁴ Civilians who had not gone through this widespread destruction of relationships failed to understand the ex-combatant experience. Comradeship’s failure as the prevailing notion within masculine expression meant that on the individual level, soldiers returned home confused, betrayed, and mournful, with a shattered concept of what it meant to be male, and were met with a society that did not know how to handle it. These men were no longer prime specimens of their country; they were no longer, in Darwinian terms, the “fittest” of their nation.

In preparation for the “survival of the fittest” war that was in a sense predestined by social Darwinism, England and Germany organized the most industrialized, modernized, and mobilized mass armies that Europe had ever seen. Unsurprisingly, this significantly devalued individual qualities in favor of national uniformity. The Great War was therefore more than capable of being understood as a ravenous creature that

¹⁰³Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 148.

¹⁰⁴Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 18.

swept across the continent and completely absorbed the individual identity. The post-war era reflected this sense of anonymity through theories of corpselessness in the post-war mourning period. In England, corpselessness was in part directly related to state attempts at legibility – specifically, the 1916 decision against the repatriation of Commonwealth soldiers.¹⁰⁵ Germany had little choice in the matter as the defeated power, and could not exhume and repatriate their fallen soldiers from French territory.¹⁰⁶ The lack of English and German bodies in English and German territory was a harsh truth that forced civilians to comprehend and commemorate their losses without bodies – and often without graves. In both cases, however, memorials were physical efforts to replace these traditional sites of grief, embodying “...a civilian perception of war death, one that includes absence but stands in need of presence.”¹⁰⁷

Beyond the lack of repatriation, corpselessness is also understood theoretically. The two separate experiences, military and civilian, were opposites. On a daily basis, soldiers saw the bodies of comrades and enemies alike in various states of health, life, and decomposition. The corpse defined the notion of place within the trench: the air carried the odor of decaying bodies, the screams of soldiers who had fallen in no-man’s land were heard at all times, and bodies emerged from their graves as the earth around them eroded.¹⁰⁸ Corpses even became a physical part of the structure of the battlefield as the living used them to shore up the walls of the trenches.¹⁰⁹ Combatant corpselessness was a highly visceral concept in that the living, breathing body of one’s comrade-

¹⁰⁵Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 24.

¹⁰⁶Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 27. Also Stefan Goebel, “Re-membered and Re-Mobilized: The ‘Sleeping Dead’ in Interwar Germany and Britain” in *Journal of Contemporary History* 39:4 (2004): 487.

¹⁰⁷Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 41.

¹⁰⁸With a little dramatic flair, this is an expansion on Booth’s description of the front as “...a world of corpses” in *Postcards from the Trenches*, 21.

¹⁰⁹Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 53; also Thomas Laqueur, “Memory and Naming in the Great War” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 159.

in-arms could turn into countless fragments after a violent death. Thus, the term also compares a living soldier with his dismembered body strewn across the earth.¹¹⁰ The civilian experience of corpselessness suggests that while civilians did not have access to the bodies of the fallen, it was simply because the loved one had been buried far away, which (due to the lack of repatriation) was a chronic problem in both England and Germany. Both types of corpselessness have been used in the construction of memory around the war, but disillusioned indescribability still became a primary theme of postwar memorial and literary commemoration. The complete physical obliteration of a body, such that there was literally nothing to be buried, was a staying image in the minds of postwar Europe as they struggled to come to terms with the events of the war.

The Great War left a physical mark even on the men who managed to return home: “...the most enduring image... is of the male body in fragments – an image in which war technology and notions of the human body intersect in horrible new ways.”¹¹¹ Soldiers’ bodies were constantly under attack so to an extent, this was expected – but the surprise came with the “new” mental illness known as shell shock, suggesting that fragmentation of soldiers was not just skin-deep. As a result, the contemporaries of Great War veterans often imagined the average ex-combatant as missing one or more limbs, or as a spasming shell shock victim who trembled when he walked. Wounded soldiers “...who had the war literally written onto their bodies” brought the reality of war to light for those who had not experienced it themselves.¹¹² France referred to these men as *mutilés de guerre* (“mutilated of the war”); however, every combatant country saw similar physical disfigurements on the bodies of their own veterans.¹¹³ The gap between

¹¹⁰Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 21.

¹¹¹Trudi Tate provides a detailed discussion of fragmentation in postwar literature with a focus on the British experience in *Modernism, History and the First World War*, 78.

¹¹²Stefan Goebel, “Beyond Discourse? Bodies and Memories of Two World Wars” in *Journal of Contemporary History* 42:2 (2007): 380.

¹¹³There are many similarities and differences between the French, British, and German experiences of memory and the Great War. For more on *mutilés de guerre*, see Leonard Smith et al., *France and the*

civilian and military life widened with the return of wounded soldiers; physical suffering was just another unattainable part of the war for non-combatants.¹¹⁴ Beyond wounded soldiers, of course, lay the experience of death on the battlefield.¹¹⁵ For one poet, the significance in witnessing a man's death lay not in the fact of his passing, but rather in the way he died.¹¹⁶ Trench deaths were horrific and left little room for a respectful burial, let alone identification of the body. One man gave a record of his search for a man's identity days after his death: "I shuddered as my hands, covered in soft flesh and slime, moved about in search of the disc... I have had to pull bodies to pieces in order that they should not be buried unknown."¹¹⁷ The damage of the Great War transcended the physical, and even widened the gap between religion and modern society. The church itself seemed unable to cope with death; how could one believe in resurrection of the body when all that was left was chunks of rotting flesh?¹¹⁸ In many ways, it proved more difficult for society to deal with scars that were not visible.

Veterans were both physically and "psychically shattered," the latter of which came to be known as shell shock.¹¹⁹ Shell shock was a sign of mental scarring in men who survived the war. Near-constant shelling, overhead planes, and machine guns conditioned soldiers to respond to any similar noises, even when there was no threat to their lives. The disorder was present in both England and Germany but the two countries differed in how they dealt with the diagnosis. English doctors more openly admitted the relationship between the war and the residual psychological trauma evident in afflicted

Great War, 1914-1918 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 172.

¹¹⁴Goebel, "Beyond Discourse", 379.

¹¹⁵For more contextualization, refer to Booth's notion of corpselessness in *Postcards from the Trenches*, 21, also discussed earlier in this chapter.

¹¹⁶For more on the Australian poet Frederic Manning, see Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War*, 64.

¹¹⁷Quoted in Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 123.

¹¹⁸David Cannadine, "War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain" in *Mirrors of Mortality*, ed. Joachim Whaley (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 218.

¹¹⁹Kienitz, "Body Damage," 189.

veterans.¹²⁰ German doctors, on the other hand, preferred to focus more on the scientifically provable handicaps that soldiers were left with; at the time, psychological conditions were almost impossible to diagnose given that the science was still relatively new. German ex-servicemen who exhibited the same symptoms as their English counterparts were simply written off as being victims of “war neuroses”, a diagnosis understood as a physical representation of internal conflict.¹²¹ However, just because war neuroses was looked upon as a pseudo-affliction by the *Kriegsbeschädigtenfürsorge* (“War Disability Welfare Organization”) did not change the fact that this was the first widely documented case of the post-traumatic stress disorder associated with the present-day understanding of modern warfare, and that it became a crucial factor in considering postwar masculinity.

Shell shock was an example of fragmentation beyond the physical and exemplified several tropes of postwar society. Men returned broken and distant, many with some form of amnesia that reduced them to anonymous bodies – “living unknown soldiers” who may or may not have ever been found by their families.¹²² The term *shell shock* – or for the Germans, *Kriegszitterern* (literally “war quiverers”) – suggests that the cause of this mental fragmentation was obvious from the beginning, although society stigmatized mental illness, even if it had been a result of serving one’s nation.¹²³ The fear of mental illness was even worse in the case of veterans; no one wanted to confront the horrific reality of modern warfare that could be seen in men who came home so mentally scarred by their time in the trenches.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, this resulted in the societal inter-

¹²⁰Shell shock was much more frequently diagnosed in Britain than in other countries; see Robert Tombs & Emile Chabal, *Britain and France in Two World Wars: Truth, Myth and Memory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 174-175.

¹²¹Whalen, *Bitter Wounds*, 62.

¹²²For more on living unknown soldiers, see Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 225.

¹²³Kienitz, “Body Damage,” 189.

¹²⁴For more on the stigmatization of shell shock and the illness’ place in the world of mental illness, see Winter, *Remembering War*, 59.

pretation of the war psychotic as “a mental patient who simply happened to have had a military career,” rather than a veteran who was seen as deserving of state compensation and communal respect.¹²⁵

The collective mental disintegration experienced by shell shock victims was also relevant on a symbolic level. Put simply, “shell shock is a condition in which the link between an individual’s memory and his identity is severed.”¹²⁶ The suffering experienced in the trenches was so severe that it followed soldiers home and interrupted the natural process of memory; ex-combatants became fixated on their past traumas as their bodies became living monuments to the effects of modern warfare. It was no coincidence that the rhythm of a machine gun was mirrored in facial tics and walking patterns; memory was no longer in the abstract, but instead was internalized in the minds and bodies of shell shock victims: “...when touched, their bodies respond as if they were sprung coils. Here we can see and feel one kind of embodied memory. It is *written on* the men who fought.”¹²⁷ The experience of trench warfare was translated to non-combatants in many ways, but the most immediate and unsettling by far was the resulting mental fragmentation visible in the men who returned home.¹²⁸

Consistent with many themes of the war, fragmentation was a quality of the *space* in which the war was fought. Society has distilled the experience of the war to the *place* constructed within the Western Front trenches. The imagination of this place tends to follow the same basic guidelines as gathered from pictures and records:

A firing trench was supposed to be six to eight feet deep and four or five feet wide. On the enemy side a parapet of earth or sandbags rose about two or three feet... the floor... was covered with wooden duckboards, beneath which were sumps a few feet deep designed to collect water. The

¹²⁵Goebel, “Beyond Discourse,” 382.

¹²⁶Winter, *Remembering War*, 52.

¹²⁷Winter, *Remembering War*, 56.

¹²⁸Footage of shell shock victims survives to this day; see “Shell Shock,” British Pathé, accessed 8 November 2014, <http://www.britishpathe.com/workspaces/BritishPathe/ww1-shell-shock>.

walls, perpetually crumbling, were supported by sandbags, corrugated iron, or bundles of sticks or rushes.¹²⁹

From a distance these trenches were distinct marks on the landscape that demarcated the position of the combatants. Reality was much messier. One war poet corrected the popular misconception of the conflict as a neatly divided war of attrition, noting that "...the war was mainly a matter of holes and ditches" that extended for over ninety miles.¹³⁰ France's physical geography dissected trenches into even smaller chunks with its hills, rivers, and forests and even within these places, fragmentation destroyed any sense of security that the soldiers may have hoped for in the foxholes. The earth itself was almost as big of a threat as the soldiers shooting at each other across no-man's-land; frequent shelling and irregular digging patterns loosened the soil of the battlefield, characterizing the land as a place that could not be trusted to remain neutral. For the soldiers, dirt "...represented potential drowning, suffocation, immobilization... [it became] a grave that could literally descend upon you at any moment."¹³¹ And, of course, the soil within a trench was sometimes already part of a grave. Soldiers did not have the time, energy, or space to construct a cemetery in the middle of the war. Men were buried in the same soil on which they had lost their lives. There were no great distances of movement on a day-to-day basis in this war of attrition. In the fragmentation of the trench, men often (quite literally) fell into the graves of fellow combatants.¹³² The physical destruction of a place was therefore directly tied to the destruction and decomposition of bodies.

On both a literal and metaphorical level, the war interwove the ideas of life and death:

The earth is where the dead are (or will be) buried, but it is also the place

¹²⁹Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 41-42.

¹³⁰Siegfried Sassoon. Quoted in Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 41.

¹³¹Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 61.

¹³²Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 53. Also Laqueur, "Memory and Naming in the Great War", 159.

in which the living are located – literally in and under the ground – in trench warfare. The spatial distinctions between the living body and the corpse are broken down, and therefore the distinction between the soldier’s foxhole and the victim’s grave.¹³³

As the bodies and minds of the soldiers dissolved into fragments, so did the battlefields. The physical dissolution of a battlefield – which, in a war of attrition, continues to act as a site of conflict for months or even years – blurred the distinction between the landscape and the people, the living and the dead, the past and the present.

The World of the Veteran

The bodies of the veterans that returned home from the war were the ultimate loci of changing chivalric ideals, dichotomy between friendship and comradeship, and finally the war’s resulting physical, mental, and spatial fragmentation. The veteran experience, although different depending on family, community, class, and country, unifies these historiographical terms. The differences between English and German ex-combatants came from how their respective societies interpreted the war from the relative position of safety on the home front.

English soldiers had the relative comfort of victory as they returned to civilian life; unlike the German case, society did not view English ex-combatants as constant reminders of the nation’s failure. It was unspeakably embarrassing to imagine unemployed veterans requiring government welfare support, which led to widespread support for extensive ex-combatant reintegration.¹³⁴ Although this is arguably a positive postwar societal response, it also allowed veterans to express their distaste for the conflict more publicly: many of them returned home with the belief that “Britannia was a poisonous old hag and the society over which she presided was nothing more than ‘a botched civ-

¹³³Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War*, 88.

¹³⁴Interestingly enough, English citizens also feared the political risk of angering the unemployed ex-combatants that had just risked their lives overseas. See Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 55.

ilization.”¹³⁵ The general lack of distrust or avoidance also lent itself to fragmentation within the ranks of English veteran groups, specifically along rural-urban fault lines. Ex-combatant experiences became highly politicized as differing veteran opinions on how best to commemorate the war either supported or rejected what English civilians expected.¹³⁶ Overall, however, the varying opinions coming from English veteran groups allowed English national commemoration a certain amount of unified (or at least compromised) satisfaction. This contrasted starkly with the role of veterans in postwar German commemoration, as “the memory of the war was not underpinned by... a sense of solidarity.”¹³⁷

The majority of German veterans returned home with some sort of physical or mental trauma that prevented them from immediately rejoining society in the same way they had participated in it before. Nearly 10% of the German nation (approximately six million people) consisted of disabled veterans, their families, and the survivors of deceased soldiers. Even more than ten years after the war, one-third of the government’s available funds went towards pension costs.¹³⁸ Not only were pension funds extremely limited due to the global economic downturn, but the German pension system also proved to be almost impossible to maneuver.¹³⁹ Postwar reparation payments that crippled the Weimar Republic also made war pensions appear as heavy burdens on the national economy. Therefore, it was expected that veterans rejoin society as quickly as possible so as to transform themselves “from needy cripples to taxpayers.”¹⁴⁰ Welcoming ex-servicemen back into society was not the priority of the German government, however, as it dealt with reparations and political disintegration. Veterans who were

¹³⁵Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 264.

¹³⁶Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 40.

¹³⁷Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 226.

¹³⁸Whalen, *Bitter Wounds*, 100.

¹³⁹Whalen, *Bitter Wounds*, 16.

¹⁴⁰Josef Ray, “Grenzgebiete ärztlicher Kunst,” *Zeitschrift für Krüppelfürsorge* 16 (1923), 42. Quoted in Kienitz, “Body Damage,” 191.

able and willing to completely acclimate themselves to postwar Germany, “[to] melt into the mass of the people as if nothing had happened,” were the ones valued most by society.¹⁴¹ Beyond complete reintegration, however, ex-soldiers found it difficult to get the respect and gratitude they felt they had earned. They were assigned what was seen as women’s work, especially those who were missing one or more limbs and could not return to the demanding physical labor that traditionally belonged to men.¹⁴²

The impoverished, disabled war veteran was an all-too-common blemish on the face of postwar societies. He dealt with all of the problematic social theories discussed earlier: corpselessness, shifting of national and masculine identities, loss of comrades-in-arms, and fragmentation of both the body and mind.¹⁴³ And as an added insult, the society that had encouraged him to go to war had no place for him if he did not fit their expectation of what a veteran should look and act like. This separation of veterans and civilians found a partial outlet as both English and German societies strove to commemorate the Great War and their losses. The next two chapters of this thesis engage two different strategies of commemoration: physical memorialization at the individual, local, national, and spiritual levels, as well as literary memorialization through English war poetry and the German war novel *Im Westen nichts Neues* (*All Quiet on the Western Front*). Both types of remembrance served to at least partially bridge the gap between civilians and the experience of the Great War.

¹⁴¹Konrad Biesalski, key shaper of German war disability welfare. Quoted in Kienitz, “Body Damage,” 189-190. Also from Kienitz’s chapter, Hans Würtz said, “Germany does not wish to see war-disabled ex-soldiers begging in the streets of the city or on the highways!”

¹⁴²Kienitz, “Body Damage,” 195.

¹⁴³In addition to Chapter One of this thesis, see Kienitz, “Body Damage,” 188-189.

Chapter Two: Constructing Memory

The homecoming of both English and German soldiers disrupted the fragile relationship between combatants and civilians. For one, civilians no longer imagined the war as an unstoppable yet unseen force that threatened their relatives and their homeland; the two groups' separate notions of place clashed as soldiers returned with remnants of the war clinging to their bodies in the form of injuries and missing limbs, or to their minds in the form of shell shock, trauma, and resentment towards their nation and the reality of modern warfare. Civilians were forced to confront what the war had done to their surviving countrymen and to interact with it on a daily basis. They were, however, able to avoid confrontation with the actual corpses of the fallen that ex-combatants had experienced. Postwar communities of remembrance took shape around the veterans' experiences and the losses felt at home for those men listed as missing or killed in action.

Because neither England nor Germany repatriated the bodies of their soldiers, they had no need to build domestic military cemeteries as had been the case in the United States and France.¹⁴⁴ Gravesites, traditionally locations of mourning and remembrance, could no longer act as sites of memory for English and German bereaved citizens. Because the war was such a collective experience that affected every family in some way, the developing collective memory of these "circles of grief" demanded some-

¹⁴⁴Ken Inglis, "War Memorials: Ten Questions for Historians" in *Guermondoconfcont Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains* 167 (1992): 9.

thing close and accessible for those who needed a way to justify their loss.¹⁴⁵ Such sites were not readily available; citizens therefore constructed them on whatever level possible. Collective memorialization of the Great War occurred on personal, local, and national levels. In the English case, an even higher spiritual level of nationality transcended politics in the shape of the Unknown Warrior.

The term “spiritual” carries with it certain religious qualities but in this chapter, the Unknown Warrior’s spirituality is only partially representative of the national religion. The Church of England’s role in the ceremony, along with the choice of burial location in Westminster Abbey, lent a certain level of religious gravitas to the phenomenon. However, the Unknown Warrior was not just a symbol around which Christian British citizens gathered. The sacrifice of the British men who died for their country on French soil became sacrosanct; postwar England strove to connect its Christian heritage with something that seemed inherently beyond religious explanation. In so doing, English society created the Unknown Warrior through a consciously spiritual strategy. By assigning value for thousands of lives lost and bodies unidentified to a single corpse, the spirits of these men were represented even though they had no physical gravesite. Thus, “spiritual” refers to the transcendence of the idea of the nation, which, given the still potent presence of nationalism in Western Europe, suggested that the Great War was indeed a serious break with tradition.

The distinct experiences of loss and victory (and of “new” and traditional nationalism) strongly influenced memorialization in Germany and England respectively. The Weimar Republic’s attempt at national memorialization, along with the lack of a German Unknown Warrior for almost a decade after the conflict, marks a distinct departure from the English track. German state memory remained too fragmented and competitive to simply unite for the sake of offering German citizens a new language of loss.

¹⁴⁵Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, 233.

The *Neue Wache*, Germany's national memorial to the Great War, was not dedicated until 1931 (compared to the English Cenotaph in London, originally constructed in 1919). There was, therefore, no national or spiritual German equivalent to the London Cenotaph and the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey for the first several years of the interwar period.

Especially in Germany, traditional religious iconography gave value to what originally seemed to have been a valueless war on the levels of personal and local memorialization.¹⁴⁶ Specifically religious memorials were built in both religious and non-religious spaces in Germany, a decision that expanded conventional German Lutheran values outside of spaces such as churches and Christian cemeteries.¹⁴⁷ Although some of these examples were subtler than others, Germany's semi-religious imagery harkens to prewar religious emphasis in an attempt to disregard rather than incorporate the war's effect on society – markedly different from the decidedly non-religious and purely spiritual construction of the Cenotaph in London.

This chapter studies the processes of English and German physical memorialization telescopically: first on the level of personal and household memorialization, then with two specific cases from local communities, and finally with a comparison of each country's national monument. In concluding with an examination of the English Unknown Warrior, a significant distinction is drawn between the experiences of the two countries. Germany lacked such spiritual commemoration focused on the burial of an anonymous soldier, pointing to a broader problem within interwar German society as it struggled to come to terms with the results of the war and as it met with the very real and immediate problems of reparation payments and hyperinflation.

¹⁴⁶Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 155.

¹⁴⁷Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 90.

Personal Memorialization

English and German societies both had components of personal memorialization on the level of the individual and/or the family that was to some extent “performed.” This thesis hopes to emphasize the difference between the two, however, which ultimately leads to extremely distinctive postwar commemorative practices. Essentially, the difference returns to each country’s individual wartime experiences; English citizens could afford to dedicate the time, funds, and energy to an active form of memorialization through battlefield tourism, while Germans were mostly limited to the designing and printing of personal mementos that required significantly less dedication to commemoration. English citizens’ performance of mourning was public and external - not only from outside the home, but from outside the British Empire itself.

For many English (as well as British) citizens, the opportunity to visit the graves and battlefields of the Great War that dotted the French countryside was a personal, spiritual experience.¹⁴⁸ The names of these places, “Ypres, Loos, Hill 60, Passchendaele, the Somme [sounded]... legendary and timeless.”¹⁴⁹ State organizations such as the Church Army and the Salvation Army often arranged tours for English citizens who could not afford to coordinate their own trips.¹⁵⁰ For visitors, these places, once imagined as far-off, unknown, and unimportant, offered a chance to “experience” the war as best they could.¹⁵¹ Battlefield tourism, as it became known, also furthered the understanding of the Western Front as the primary placial symbol of the Great War by creating a tourist attraction out of former sites of conflict in the west.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 61. An additional note: although this section of the thesis will favor the term “English” when discussing battlefield tourism, it is important to realize that Lloyd’s research is in regard to all of Great Britain more broadly.

¹⁴⁹Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 111-112.

¹⁵⁰Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 35.

¹⁵¹Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 1. Other interpretations of battlefield tourism have suggested that these trips trivialized the war rather than valuing it; people typically travelled in comfort and the battlefields were cleaned up so as not to offend the more sensitive tourists. See Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 7.

¹⁵²Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 100. As time passed, the importance of these physical locations was not lost

Historian David Lloyd distinguishes between the terms “tourist” and “pilgrim” in the phenomenon of battlefield tourism. The experience of British citizens travelling to Great War battlefields and military cemeteries is just one signifier of a period in which one could identify as a “tourist,” escaping the difficulties associated with a life in a post-war modern society while simultaneously identifying as a “pilgrim” with an assumed set of expectations and values tied to the spirituality and symbolism of such a journey. Because both terms evoke such strong associations and assumptions, for the sake of simplicity, this thesis uses the term “visitor” in reference to those who traveled to France and Belgium (although the spiritual potential of this journey also lends itself to broader notions of “national” experience and collective memories).¹⁵³ Although it is true that many British citizens viewed the chance to travel to France to remember and “experience” the Great War, it is equally true that the experience was commodified and capitalized upon in order to make a profit through the recent development of modern tourism as a business model. Lloyd argues that the juxtaposition of tourists and pilgrims on former battlefields of the Great War explains the transition from traditional to modern attitudes regarding travel. Traveling no longer required a higher purpose as the classical idea of a pilgrimage so strongly suggests. Rather, the opportunity for English citizens to travel to France for the sake of *memory* was an act of commemoration as well as “an escape from necessity and purpose.”¹⁵⁴

Former sites of conflict did not need the passage of time and the analysis of historians to become recipients of personal and national value. Visitors to such places

on English citizens: “the more distant in time the war became, the greater the need among travellers to see evidence of the presence of the war.” See Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 120.

¹⁵³Lloyd’s argument on contemporary terminology is also worth noting: “there is no doubt that people from all levels of society were described as and referred to themselves as pilgrims. The visits of poor bereaved relatives to the war cemeteries arranged by organizations such as the Church Army and the Salvation Army were usually called pilgrimages...” and so, for that matter, was King George V’s trip to the Western Front in 1922. See Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 35.

¹⁵⁴Eric Leed. Quoted in Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 14.

were well aware of what it meant to stand on the same soil that had been soaked in the blood of their countrymen. Awareness of the value of sacrifice made these locations “sacred” in the eyes of visitors; in one published guide to the continental tourist sites, people were reminded that the ground was “...holy... [and] consecrated by the heroism and the grief of nations.”¹⁵⁵ Visitors also understood that such a place held a sacred value stretching beyond simple memory, which led to battlefield tourism’s substantial influence on postwar English national identity. Visitors felt united on several levels; the likelihood that most of them had lost a relative or friend in the war was evident in their decision to travel to France and to visit these former sites of conflict. It was also probable that they were looking for emotional closure that they had not found through war memorials and services offered at home. Pilgrimages were inherently public acts of commemoration because in giving up time (and usually money) to see Great War historical sites, visitors revealed the extent to which they wanted to keep the war in their minds and hearts as the century progressed. Their choice displayed their intimate connection to the shared national postwar experience of grief.¹⁵⁶

Battlefield tourism replaced visiting the gravesite for those who could afford it. Despite the state’s best efforts to contribute funds to organizations that planned trips for the working-class bereaved, only so much could be done to make pilgrimages available to all citizens. The cost of transportation, room, and board for the entire length of a visit (often at least a week), combined with the possible work days sacrificed for the sake of the visit, meant that working-class mourners could not always join their middle-class counterparts in exploring the distant places of the Great War. Their replacement grieving process relied on a larger community of mourners that developed around small memorials in local towns or parishes.

¹⁵⁵F. Muirhead, *Belgium and the Western Front, British and American* (London, 1920), p. lxiv. Quoted in Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 41.

¹⁵⁶Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 221.

British veterans represented another minority within the category of visitors to Great War cemeteries and former battlefields.¹⁵⁷ The reconstruction and visitation of former war sites allowed for a certain level of closure that was not available immediately after the war ended, for those few ex-servicemen who chose not to forget their past but rather to relive and/or remember their experience in the trenches and the bonds of comradeship.¹⁵⁸ English soldiers found themselves sympathizing with their German counterparts rather than thinking of them as the barbaric German “Huns” of wartime propaganda.¹⁵⁹ Although battlefield tourism was much more prevalent in England, both English and German ex-combatants viewed the former sites of conflict to be worthy of commemoration and a valuable part of their own mourning processes. One veteran wrote of a chance interaction with a German counterpart at Ypres. Both men realized that the other was also there to mourn and remember, a fact “which drew us close to them in spirit, for we too had come back to pay homage to brave comrades.”¹⁶⁰ As discussed in Chapter One, however, Germans – both ex-combatants and civilians – needed to cope with not only the loss of life, but also with the loss of land and resources that came with defeat in the war. The simple fact that Germans were aware of their defeat led to a volatile combination of German pride, national identity, commemoration, and the reality of reparations and postwar “national” guilt.¹⁶¹

The majority of German citizens did not choose to visit the former battlefields

¹⁵⁷The experience of ex-servicemen is the most significant aberration from the trend of battlefield tourism as discussed in Lloyd’s book. He cites two separate ex-servicemen’s experience in returning to former battlefields: one wrote, “it was as though [he] had never been there,” while another admitted that it was “. . . more and more evident that we are nothing better than strangers on our own ground.” See Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 150-151.

¹⁵⁸Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 38.

¹⁵⁹Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 118.

¹⁶⁰F.J. Lineton, “Kamarad,” *Ypres Times*, January 1932. Quoted in Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 119.

¹⁶¹This is of course in reference the infamous Article 231 in the Treaty of Versailles in which Germany was forced to “admit” full responsibility for the Great War and all of the subsequent damages and losses that it caused. See Jay Winter and Blaine Baggett, *The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1996), 340.

and massive cemeteries that lay across the French border. Losing the war, and being assigned full responsibility for the conflict and its damages in the Treaty of Versailles, led them to have a different historical and commemorative perspective on the war entirely. The war itself did not merit honor and remembrance, but the lives of individual soldiers most certainly did. Losing the war rendered communal grief – even on the level of a personal pilgrimage – feeble and fragile. One of the most common methods of commemorating the fallen came from a long-standing tradition of the *Kriegschronik*.

Literally translating to “war chronicle,” a *Kriegschronik* was a certificate-like document that recorded the wartime account of an individual soldier. They listed the date of his inscription, the date of his call to duty, the locations in which he fought, any serious wounds he received, any prisoner-of-war camps in which he was kept, and finally either the date of his return home or the date of his death. *Kriegschroniks* often hung in the homes of veterans and the bereaved. This mode of commemoration marks a return to tradition, as the form had been popularized during the Franco-Prussian War. They also fit within a broader postwar German tendency to rely on prewar memorial standards, which is emphasized in the design of the average *Kriegschronik* and its use of medieval calligraphic writing, romantically stylized backgrounds, and traditional German symbols (the eagle, the Iron Cross, the German flag, etc.) *Kriegschroniks* of other styles may have included the portraits of famous historical German figures including Kaiser Wilhelm II along with a picture of the veteran or fallen soldier. Both styles were mass-produced and capable of being personalized with a photograph and description of the soldier’s experience of the war.

Kriegschroniks were not limited strictly to commemoration of either living or deceased memory. This suggests a generally understood fluidity of life and death after the war, especially within the broader veteran experience as discussed in Chapter One. Ex-combatants, particularly those who retained serious physical scarring from their war

wounds, lived between prewar notions of a healthy normal life and a broader postwar preoccupation with death. *Kriegschroniks* offered a sugarcoated, single-paragraph summary of up to four years of traumatic fighting by means of generic nationalist mass-produced certificates, which allowed one to remember the experience of individual soldiers within the vague context provided and to ignore, to a certain extent, the reality of the veteran's experience. In looking at *Kriegschroniks* as examples of personal German memorialization, this disregard for distinction between the sacrifices of the veteran and that of the fallen soldier points to an overall less-organized process of commemoration.



Figure 7: Full-color *Kriegschronik* of brothers Johann and Josef Helmburger. Note heavily nationalist iconography (flags, eagles, soldiers, statues, etc.) framing the certificate. “Kriegschronik Zum Gedenken an Die Brüder Johann Und Josef Helmburger.” *Europeana 1914-1918*. Accessed 3 January 2015. <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/2238>.

Figure 7 is a reproduction of a *Kriegschronik* commemorating two brothers, Johann

and Josef Helmberger. Both men died in the early months of 1918; their individual commemorative words are followed by the generic phrase *zum steten Gedenken f/"ur alle Zeiten*, or “for constant remembrance for all time,” uniting them within the same wartime experience. This phrase makes an appearance on other *Kriegschroniks* of the same design. Interestingly, the same phrase is also included on those *Kriegschroniks* intended to commemorate and honor living veterans. The desire to “constantly remember” men who risked (or sacrificed) their lives for the good of their nation, drew the living and the dead together under one broader interpretation of how best to remember the war.



Figure 8: Todesanzeige of Jakob Paul. “ ‘Gefallen Für Das Vaterland’. In Erinnerung an Den Landwehrmann Jakob Paul.” *Europeana 1914-1918*, accessed 3 January 2015. <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/15691>.

Further examples of commemoration on the individual level, although not necessarily limited to the German experience, are the elaborate *Todesanzeigen* and *Sterbebilder*.¹⁶² In a similar vein as the *Kriegschroniks*, *Todesanzeigen* and *Sterbebilder* were explicitly personal methods of remembrance for specific soldiers, emphasizing the value placed on the soldier rather than the conflict itself in postwar Germany. *Todesanzeigen* (even the brief paragraphs printed in the newspapers) were typically outlined in black with a decorative Iron Cross at the top (Figure 8). The name of the fallen soldier was large and bolded, followed by a list of survivors and any information pertaining his memorial service (but not a burial, given that hardly any German bodies were repatriated). Some even included reprints of personal notes or poems written for the soldier. The pomp and circumstance around the death of the individual as seen in the *Todesanzeigen* reflected the value that Germans placed on the individual soldier's sacrifice.

Each *Sterbebild* included a portrait of the soldier, his name and rank, birthday, date of death, and typically also a prayer or brief commemorative verse. The back of the card displayed a miniature Biblical image and quotation that referenced either eternal life through a strong faith in God, or the value of sacrifice for the good of one's brothers or Fatherland. Again, the war did not receive the honor of commemoration: the remembrance focused instead on the role of the individual soldier and his Christ-like sacrifice.¹⁶³ In a *Sterbebild* for Franz Xaver Heimler, a German soldier who died in 1916, the floral embellishment on either side of his portrait and the inclusion of a commemorative verse highlighted the solemnity and tradition with which each individual's death was honored (Figure 9). The back of Heimler's *Sterbebild* reprinted a Biblical picture in which a soldier lies on the ground, holding a bayoneted gun in one hand and pressing his other hand to his chest (Figure 9). The soldier's mouth and eyes hang half-open. It

¹⁶²*Todesanzeige* translates to "obituary" (pl. *Todesanzeigen*). *Sterbebild* translates literally to "death image/card," although a more helpful interpretation might be a comparison to Catholic holy cards.

¹⁶³See Chapter One of this thesis.



Figure 9: *Sterbebild* for Franz Xaver Heimler, front and back. “Sterbebild von Franz Xaver Heimler.” *Europeana 1914-1918*. Accessed 3 January 2015. <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/3132>.

is difficult to tell whether he is dying or has already died, but given the angel standing over him and the Bible verse printed below (*Wer hat eine größere Liebe als der, welcher sein Leben hingibt für seine Freunde*, John 15:13), it is likely that the soldier has passed away and is being honored by God for his sacrifice for his comrades.¹⁶⁴ The background, although not the focus of the picture, reminds the viewer of the picture’s specific setting within the Great War: the sun (or moon) hangs low over the horizon in a smoke-filled sky in front of which thin, bare tree trunks stretch up out of the frame. An old cannon sits alone underneath the copse of trees, and the lack of other soldiers or of any sign of conflict gives the viewer the impression of a quiet evening on the Western Front.

¹⁶⁴English translation: “Greater love hath no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friends.”

The Great War's presence in the scene is undeniable – the artillery, the soldier's attire, his rifle and bayonet – but *Sterbebilder*, like the *Todesanzeigen* and the *Kriegschroniks*, emphasized the suffering of the individual soldier. Each method of remembrance is a small personal reminder for the bereaved; this, in comparison to the primarily public English phenomenon of battlefield tourism, suggests a drastically different interpretation of what should be mourned. The significant similarity between German and English individual memorialization lies in the role of a semi-religious interpretation, closely tied to the importance of chivalry in both societies.¹⁶⁵ Beyond that, however, the distinction between English and German remembrance already existed with respect to whether or not individual commemoration was explicitly public or private. Battlefield tours were typically experienced as a group; they associated the loss of a loved one with the value of the land on which they had died, and also strengthened English national identity in the public sphere. German *Kriegschroniks*, *Todesanzeigen*, and *Sterbebilder* performed the same task for German families, but belonged in the private sphere as mementos of remembrance that could be kept in one's wallet, purse, or pocket, close to one's heart. They did not require the same level of performance (and economic sacrifice, either by the individual or by the state) as did battlefield tourism in English society.

Local Memorialization

Although battlefield tourism and personal print mementos honoring the fallen were popular modes of commemoration for the individual or the family, the impact of the Great War on English and German mourning processes stretched far beyond the walls of a single home and into local surrounding communities. Most German towns were home to at least one monument to the fallen of the Great War, and the Imperial

¹⁶⁵See Chapter One of this thesis for a definition and discussion of twentieth-century chivalry.

War Museum in Great Britain registers over 27,000 memorials in the kingdom.¹⁶⁶ Frequently, parishes organized, funded, and constructed memorials that were intended for the entire local population, which meant that the end result was at least somewhat influenced by religious imagery or symbolism.¹⁶⁷ Despite the ease with which local communities centered themselves on a shared religion or a communal, church-sponsored memorial, religion on the national level in both England and Germany became more contentious and simultaneously less significant in uniting larger communities around war remembrance.

Community politics undoubtedly contributed to the tension surrounding how a small rural English population might commemorate their dead. However, national trends were a major influence as well: “most British memorials were executed in styles so familiar that they could be regarded as inherently part of a British national tradition, and as an affirmation of moral or political values characteristic of British culture.”¹⁶⁸ Especially with reference to the Cenotaph in London, this influence is far from subtle in local memorials built after 1918. The London Cenotaph, although a topic of closer discussion later in this chapter, merits a brief introduction now due to its relationship to local memorials throughout Britain.

Constructed by British architect Edward Lutyens, the simply ornamented London Cenotaph (Figures 12 and 13) casts a long shadow on Whitehall and lacks significant

¹⁶⁶Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, 197. It is also interesting to note that Germany’s remaining Great War memorials do not tend to receive the same care, attention, and amount of visitors as memorials constructed after 1945. One Reuters article argues that today, Germans avoid commemorating the Great War because they historically associate it with a period of extreme militarism that led to a massive loss of territory, resources, money, and lives, as well as a contributing factor to the rise of Nazism in the late 1920s. See Erik Kirschbaum, “As others mark World War One centenary, Germans prefer to forget,” *Reuters* 19 March 2014, accessed 3 January 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/19/us-germany-wwi-remembrance-idUSBREA210FN20140319>.

¹⁶⁷Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 1998), 30.

¹⁶⁸King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, 155.

religious or nationalist ornamentation.¹⁶⁹ Without an explicit nod to the more controversial topics surrounding the Great War, including the conflict's relationship to British identity and Christian sacrifice, the London Cenotaph was understood as a successful attempt to bring people together in mourning. The addition of religious imagery to local memorials springing up across the country was indeed a significant difference, but was generally not seen as straying too far from the highly successful example of the London Cenotaph. One such example is the Birkenhead War Memorial, also appropriately referred to as the Birkenhead Cenotaph, constructed in 1925 in Birkenhead, Merseyside, England (Figure 10).¹⁷⁰



Figure 10: Birkenhead Cenotaph. Accessed 16 March 2015. <http://www.merseyside-at-war.org/memorabilia/cenotaph-in-hamilton-square-birkenhead/>

The committee for the Birkenhead Cenotaph received twenty-one potential designs. All but one of those submissions were in the same vein as the classic Lutyen de-

¹⁶⁹For more on the London Cenotaph, see “National Memorials” in this chapter.

¹⁷⁰English Heritage. “Birkenhead Memorial,” accessed November 14, 2014 <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1218058>.

sign in Whitehall.¹⁷¹ However, the Birkenhead example does differ from the national model in the same way that many local memorials did: over 1,200 names of local men who died in the Great War are listed on the longer sides of the monument. These names were meant to serve as a reminder to posterity of the sacrifice that had been given so that they may live in a safe and secure England. At the unveiling ceremony of the Birkenhead Cenotaph, one person voiced the concern of the Great War generation: "...to the rising generation the war was ancient history, but it was one in which they fought for justice and freedom."¹⁷² This notion of concern for posterity was far from specific to Birkenhead, or even to local memorials, and was seen in great detail on the national level as well.¹⁷³

Initial differences between English and German commemoration is evident even on the local level. While the Birkenhead Cenotaph was built five years after London's national memorial and was an attempt at emulating the "national style," the majority of German local memorials did not follow in the footsteps of a state example.¹⁷⁴ Instead, they tended to emphasize – like the memorialization through *Kriegschroniks*, *Todesanzeigen*, and *Sterbebilder* – the heroism and sacrifice of the individual soldier over any shared national loss. Thus, memorials often either listed the names of local men who had died in the war or portrayed a very non-specific German soldier to which the identity of any missing loved one could be (and was) assigned.

¹⁷¹Edward Morris et al., *Public Sculpture of Cheshire and Merseyside (excluding Liverpool)* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 28. Actually, Lutyen's design was far from original. The architect, in an attempt to avoid touchy topics such as the role of religion and of the nation in the Great War's losses, chose instead to emulate the styles of the Ancient Greeks and Romans in their construction of funerary monuments and mausoleums: "the Cenotaph, literally an 'empty tomb,' recalled Greek commemorative forms, without the slightest hint of Christian symbolism." See Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 98.

¹⁷²"Birkenhead Cenotaph", *The Times*, July 1925, accessed April 16, 2014 through University of Edinburgh Library.

¹⁷³Levsen, "Constructing Elite Identities", 181.

¹⁷⁴The *Neue Wache*, Germany's national memorial to the fallen of the Great War was not built until 1931. For more on this, see the "National Memorials" section of this chapter.



Figure 11: *Kniender Soldat* ("Kneeling Soldier") in Bornheim-Hemmerich, North Rhine-Westphalia. Accessed 16 March 2015. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Linden_Gefallenemal_Hemmerich.jpg

A powerful example of German local memorialization is the *Kniender Soldat* ("Kneeling Soldier") memorial in Bornheim-Hemmerich, North Rhine-Westphalia (Figure 11). The image of the single soldier with little to no distinguishing physical features allowed citizens of Bornheim-Hemmerich to assign the identity of their own lost loved ones to the figure of the statue. The soldier kneels but remains alert, propped up on a rifle (as claimed by the photo description written by the photographer).¹⁷⁵ His eyes focus on a distant point far ahead of him, ignoring the wreath at his feet, as "*er scheint zu beten*"

¹⁷⁵ Although many German memorials include sculptures of standing/alert soldiers such as this one, it is interesting to consider how the guarded quality of this figure compares to the purpose of the memorial – to honor the fallen. Recumbent bodies of soldiers (either sleeping or dead, it is not always clear), while more relevant to the purpose of the memorial, did not necessarily instill the emotion desired by the artist. For more on this, see the conclusion of this thesis and its discussion about the "sleeping dead."

(“he seems to be praying”).¹⁷⁶ The sculptor’s emphasis on an individual rather than a regiment is obvious here, given the centrality and size of the soldier’s figure. Simultaneously, while several names are listed below the sculpture, they are not legible until the viewer approaches the memorial and even then, with the ornamental arch stretching above the soldier, the focus remains on his lone shape. The connection of the viewer to the statue is also much more intimate: a human face looks back out at the audience, in comparison to the Birkenhead Cenotaph, where there is much less emphasis on the possibility of individual self-identification. Finally, the trefoil arch rising above the soldier has obvious Christian connotations; it imitates the style of churches and parishes from the medieval period, and echoes the pattern of German postwar commemoration on the individual level – remembrance was still intimately related to God and to the church. In comparison to the neo-Greco-Roman style of the Birkenhead and London Cenotaphs, for example, *Kniender Soldat* displays a reversion to Christian tradition rather than acceptance of non-Christian mourning approaches.

The Birkenhead Cenotaph and the Bornheim-Hemmerich *Kniender Soldat* share almost no characteristics. The only common trait is the listing of names, and even then, the English memorial emphasizes a *communal* rather than *individual* loss by placing the names more prominently and allowing them to stretch across the entire length of the memorial. Even when taking into consideration the difference in population size (Birkenhead was significantly larger), the style of memorial hints at a broader gap in commemorative practices between the two nations.

The English trend of battlefield tourism was a public act of commemoration, and the Birkenhead Cenotaph was constructed specifically with the *nation’s* memorial in mind. Meanwhile, German personal commemorative attempts did not require a public admission of bereavement or frustration with the loss of a loved one simply because they

¹⁷⁶See photographer’s description on source.

were small physical mementos that did not require an outside influence in any way to be valuable. Additionally, a local German memorial – especially with a small town like Bornheim-Hemmerich – might have had a great deal of potential regarding communal mourning, since such a small population would have undoubtedly been made of overlapping circles of grief. The focus on the individual soldier and the minimization of the list of names of the fallen both point not to a desire for communal grief and commemoration, but rather, to a splintered approach centered on the individual that avoided not only the massive loss of life but also the value behind the war as an entirety.

National Memorialization



Figure 12: The London Cenotaph.
Author's own work, 3 June 2014.



Figure 13: The London Cenotaph.
Author's own work, 3 June 2014.

The Cenotaph in Whitehall expanded the sphere of collective grief to all English

(and British) citizens. It was at the Cenotaph's unveiling in 1920 where local and national mourning were united in the two-minute silence recognized annually throughout the interwar period.¹⁷⁷ Both the unveiling and the silence made a traditionally private experience (mourning the death of a loved one) into a shared public event, in which, as printed in London's *The Times*, "...we were made one people, participants in one act of remembrance."¹⁷⁸ The Cenotaph bridged the gaps in English society with its neutral design and its avoidance of Christian symbols, instead relying on neo-classical interpretations of the Greco-Roman funerary styles. The cenotaphic style originated centuries before the Great War. The word *cenotaph* is Greek and literally translates to "empty tomb".¹⁷⁹ Combined with the felt loss of the individual identity and the permeation of corpselessness into every circle of mourning, the idea of an empty tomb struck a perfect note for English society. Again, the press intervenes in society's understanding of the national memorial through defining the Cenotaph as "simple, grave and beautiful in design... a just and fitting memorial of those who have made the greatest sacrifice."¹⁸⁰ The importance of the Cenotaph lay beyond the fact that it acted as a model for countless local memorials, however; the true (and somewhat surprising) significance came from the fact that it was not even intended to be permanent.

Unveiled on 19 July 1919, the original cenotaph was built of wood and plaster.¹⁸¹ It was meant to imitate the street shrines that had been built throughout the war as civilians worried over and mourned their loved ones across the Channel. These shrines were changeable and extremely temporary, were made of wood, plaster, and other basic materials, and often housed a simple portrait or message to a few specific soldiers.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷Winter, *Remembering War*, 142.

¹⁷⁸*The Times*. Quoted in Cannadine, "War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain," 222, 224.

¹⁷⁹Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 262.

¹⁸⁰Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 275.

¹⁸¹Laqueur, "Memory and Naming in the Great War", 157.

¹⁸²King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, 48.

The Cenotaph, on the other hand, hoped to garner additional recognition on the national level: people could lay wreaths and bouquets at the foot of the monument, perhaps also honoring it with a moment of silence. This intention was completely overwhelmed by the reaction of Londoners, English citizens, and citizens of the broader British Empire. It was estimated that in the last week of July alone, half a million people paid their respects at the temporary monument, evidence enough for the government that a permanent memorial needed to be built.¹⁸³

Architect Edward Lutyens designed the permanent Cenotaph that remains in Whitehall to this day (Figures 12 and 13). The monument avoided significantly alienating parts of the population by excluding any specific Christian imagery.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, it referred to the dead “without images of the Allied victory being invoked, thus appealing to people who did not accept the traditions affirmed by that victory.. when the meaning of the war was questioned in the years following it, therefore, the memorial itself was not doubted.”¹⁸⁵ King George V unveiled the permanent monument on Armistice Day in 1920. In the span of the next three days, over 100,000 wreaths were placed on its steps.¹⁸⁶ Perhaps following the example of the royal family, many of these wreaths were made of red poppies – a symbol which has maintained its association with Armistice Day and with the Great War itself.¹⁸⁷

Described as a “quintessentially British” tradition, the two-minute silence recognized on Armistice Day for several years after the unveiling connected local and national commemorative attempts.¹⁸⁸ The silence was recognized across the empire, creating a

¹⁸³Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 275-276.

¹⁸⁴The Cenotaph is often referred as a “...blank canvas that allowed each individual to project onto it his or her own thoughts, feelings and emotions.” See Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 271. With regard to style that was perhaps spiritual/religious but not specifically Christian, Winter describes the Cenotaph as using “pre-Christian notation.” See Winter, *Remembering War*, 142.

¹⁸⁵As quoted in Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 277.

¹⁸⁶Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 308.

¹⁸⁷Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 103.

¹⁸⁸Winter, *Remembering War*, 141.

commonality for rural and urban communities, "...suggesting a nationwide uniformity of aims and attitudes."¹⁸⁹ In his book *The Silence of Memory*, Adrian Gregory discusses the multitude of voices that made themselves heard in the two-minute silence, explaining that urban locations were most strongly connected to the significance of the silence.¹⁹⁰ This can be attributed to the feeling that would occur when transactions stopped, machines were silenced, and conversations hushed for a full two minutes in what was typically a bustling, moving city.¹⁹¹ The choice to locate the silence on Armistice Day brought participants back to the ceasefire of 1918, "...signaling the end of the slaughter" as well as the possibility for "...communion between the living and the dead."¹⁹² Of course, "...sometimes silence was simply a silence. Some experiences could not be expressed... the silence signified the inexpressible. It signified everything and nothing. This was the worst silence of memory."¹⁹³

Even immediately after the dedication, English citizens imbued the Cenotaph with deep personal and national value in a manner similar to the trenches and battlefields of the Great War.¹⁹⁴ In the time leading up to the construction of the permanent monument as well as years afterwards, passersby paid their respects by removing their hats, bowing their heads, and even saluting.¹⁹⁵ The temporary monument of 1919 was built

¹⁸⁹King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, 20.

¹⁹⁰One of the strongest lines drawn in the experience of the two-minute silence was between genders; women were much more likely to be able to attend a public recognition of the silence, because they were less likely to be confined to a place of employment. For this reason, the public crowds were predominantly female. This gender difference makes an appearance in the headline of the *Daily Mail's* 1927 Armistice Day edition: "the men who won, and the women who lost." See Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 32-33 and 41. A final note on dissenting opinions regarding the silence is that while all of them held unique experiences and interpretations of what it meant to commemorate in silence, While all of these voices are relevant to a comprehensive understanding of the silence, Armistice Day's historical importance with regard to constructing national identity ultimately revolved around how it might have been seen as a positive and motivating factor.

¹⁹¹Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 13.

¹⁹²Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 17-18.

¹⁹³Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 7.

¹⁹⁴Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 90.

¹⁹⁵Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 60, 84.

in the middle of the busy thoroughfare of Whitehall. Upon the building of the permanent memorial, it was suggested that it be removed to a quieter, more sacred location – a move that would also have allowed for the flow of everyday traffic – but the Cenotaph remained where it was, largely due to public outcry.¹⁹⁶ However, this created its own problems. The memorial was intended to be a special place for personal reflection in the eyes of the nation but many felt that its location in the center of the capitol city contradicted this intention. One correspondent of *The Ex-Service Man* complained about the selling of postcards on Whitehall, although they commemorated the monument as well as the Great War, claiming it was “a desecration of a sacred spot.”¹⁹⁷

The massively popular response to the English Cenotaph reflects a widespread desire on behalf of the English citizen to be part of a larger community of bereavement. Despite the fact that the original monument was intended to be temporary, the response of the public proved to the state that the people wanted something permanent that could be a part of their annual remembrance activities surrounding the Great War. The same could not be said for Germany, however, as the state experienced the destructive hyperinflation and political disunity characteristic of the Weimar Republic. Various political powers paid lip service to the possibility that their citizens wanted a similar attempt at a national community of mourning, but ultimately tried to use it to accrue political power in a recently “democratized” society: “our dead are above the petty quarreling and the wretched, empty phrases that we cherish. A deep remembrance of our fallen brethren can only strengthen the will to reconcile differences.”¹⁹⁸ By the time that

¹⁹⁶Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 35. In a memorandum from the Office of Works, someone wrote that “the ground upon which the Cenotaph has been built has been consecrated, and it would be highly undesirable to let the traffic again move over that portion of the road on which the temporary monument stands.” Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 59.

¹⁹⁷*Ex-Service Man*, November 1919. Quoted in Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 59.

¹⁹⁸Ernst Martin of the German National People’s Party (DNVP), *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, 1924. Quoted in Sean A. Forner, “War Commemoration and the Republic in Crisis: Weimar Germany and the Neue Wache” *Central European History* 35 (2002), 513.

the national memorial was dedicated in 1931, it could no longer be historically viewed as a pure attempt at united commemoration and bereavement, but rather simply as a highly politically charged attempt at consolidation.¹⁹⁹



Figure 14: The Neue Wache, 1931. “Die Neue Wache – Symbol und Ort von Zeremoniellen.” http://www.protokoll-inland.de/PI/DE/StaatlicheSymbole/NeueWache/SymboleUndOrte/fotostrecke_node.html?gtp=4255016_Dokumente/%253D3

When the time had finally arrived that the Weimar government could at least partially afford (and agree upon) a national monument, the first question was where it should be located and what it should look like. The monument eventually stood in the *Neue Wache* (“New Guardhouse”) – originally a Prussian building that, with one hundred years of national history in its walls, allowed officials to attempt a seamless introduction of the Great War into the continuous thread of German (and by extension, Prussian) history (Figure 14).²⁰⁰ Memorializing the Great War in the capital city of Berlin preceded (but was unsurprisingly similar to) the approach to a shared national German history as seen

¹⁹⁹Forner, “War Commemoration and the Republic in Crisis,” 516.

²⁰⁰Forner, “War Commemoration and the Republic in Crisis,” 546.

by the official Nazi rhetoric.²⁰¹ Officials decided to use the plans of the architect Heinrich Tessenow and approved the construction of a simplistic open atrium with a black stone in the center and a gold wreath of leaves at its base which, in addition to an air of solemnity and mourning, was consciously very different from that of its mausoleum-esque English counterpart.²⁰²

German public response to the memorial was positive but not nearly as overwhelming and spiritual as the English response to the London Cenotaph - despite the national German radio broadcast of the dedication ceremony and the presence of high-ranking political and military officials including President von Hindenburg.²⁰³ Hindenburg's speech emphasized the sacrifice of German men for the comradeship and strength of both the troops and of the *Vaterland* - to "forge inner unity!" -, rather than the individual loss and bereavement felt in the homes of almost every German citizen.²⁰⁴ After years of suffering under the throes of a new democracy, crippling war reparations, and a global economic crisis, the *Neue Wache* came too late to the aid of the average German civilian who might still have been in deep mourning for those they had lost over ten years before. The political force behind the commemoration denied the same spirituality present in Great Britain, and ultimately did very little to increase a feeling of national unity around the memory of the Great War specifically.

Ultimately, the construction of the London Cenotaph resulted in a relatively unified front against the seemingly impossible feelings of grief and loss after the Great War. By the time the *Neue Wache* joined the ranks of national Great War memorials, however, it could not provide the same relief to German citizens. Its potential lay instead in the

²⁰¹As well as, in Forner's words, "the increasingly antirepublican political Right." See Forner, "War Commemoration and the Republic in Crisis," 546.

²⁰²Forner, "War Commemoration and the Republic in Crisis," 529.

²⁰³Forner, "War Commemoration and the Republic in Crisis," 532.

²⁰⁴President von Hindenburg. Quoted in Forner, "War Commemoration and the Republic in Crisis," 534.

hope that it could help construct a unified national identity in the face of internal political tension between the Nazis and communists, as well as in the face of the global belief that Germany was solely responsible for the horrors of the war – which did not work quite in the way that the moderate Weimar politicians had hoped. Mourning no longer served a purpose for a Germany on the brink of political extremism and remilitarization. The belated commemoration of the fallen in the wide, empty hall of the *Neue Wache* was a reminder to 1931 contemporaries of the debt they owed to the two million German men who had sacrificed themselves for the unity and betterment of the nation.²⁰⁵

The Unknown Warrior

Perhaps one of the broadest and most powerful themes of postwar commemoration in Great Britain (to say nothing of its importance to French commemoration, and the legacy it has left in other conflicts and wars throughout the twentieth century) is that of the Unknown Warrior. Prior to the burial of the Unknown Warrior, the families of 173,000 unidentified deceased British soldiers were left in a sort of grief-limbo without the bodies and/or graves of their loved ones.²⁰⁶ This concern was such a defining part of postwar England that the state attempted a solution in the service dedicated to all unknown Commonwealth combatants. In order to repair the fragmented process of traditional mourning that had been interrupted by modern warfare, the body of an anonymous British soldier was buried in Westminster Abbey on Armistice Day in 1920.²⁰⁷

The process began with the Memorial Service Committee's decision to repatriate an unidentified British soldier who had died in the first year of the war. One body from each of the four main areas of conflict – the Aisne, the Somme, Ypres, and Aras –

²⁰⁵Forner, "War Commemoration and the Republic in Crisis," 519.

²⁰⁶Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 224.

²⁰⁷King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, 7.

was brought home.²⁰⁸ All four were brought to London, where one was chosen at random and was placed in a replica coffin imitating the sixteenth-century style, with an accompanying “Crusader’s sword.” The original stone slab placed over the tomb read “A BRITISH WARRIOR WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR,” although this was replaced in 1921 with a larger, more elaborate stone.²⁰⁹ The coffin was presented for the burial ritual on Armistice Day; four days later, officials from Westminster Abbey announced that due to the traffic of mourners still visiting the site, there was no longer an estimated time or date at which the grave would be filled.²¹⁰

The symbolic details of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior play upon a strongly developed sense of place felt by most, if not all, British nationals regarding both Westminster Abbey and the physical components of the tomb – specifically, the soil. Although located in the Abbey, the Warrior was not buried in English soil. Instead, soil from one hundred of the most significant battlefields was brought to London for the soldier’s interment.²¹¹ Additionally, the inscription on the second tombstone was made of smelted brass cartridge cases recovered from the battlefields of the Great War.²¹² Described as a “common-denominator body”, the Unknown Warrior brought together all experiences of loss in the Great War and united the English experience with the burial of a single body in a historically and emotionally charged location.²¹³ The body united different places important within the experience of the war, and with that, also united the bereaved.

The significance of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior was twofold. First, as pub-

²⁰⁸Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 63, 67.

²⁰⁹Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 44.

²¹⁰Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 68, 73.

²¹¹Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 25.

²¹²Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 317.

²¹³Laqueur, “Memory and Naming in the Great War”, 163. Much has been said about the tension between civic and religious representations of English mourning. See Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 14; also see Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 65.

lished in *The Times*, this was the first time in British history in which the funeral of a soldier was given the same pomp and circumstance as that of royalty, demonstrating (once again) a break in tradition following the Great War. In burying a “common” body in Westminster Abbey, English national identity became intimately connected to the history of the country. The grave lies in front of one of the main entrances to the Abbey “in the pathway of kings, for not a monarch can ever again go up to the altar to be crowned, but he must step over the grave of the man who died that his kingdom might endure.”

The second significant factor in the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior was its relationship to anonymity. The war forced English citizens to reconsider their approach to death and mourning, however, the Unknown Warrior offered the next best thing to tradition – a shared national funeral that essentially took the place of an individual burial for the majority of English citizens who had not been present for the burial of their loved ones. Mourners projected the identity of their loved one onto the body that lay in Westminster Abbey: “[b]y being so intensely a body, it was all bodies.”²¹⁴ This idea has been continued and reflected in various mourning processes throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The body of an anonymous soldier takes the place of thousands, symbolizing the general anonymity experienced in all modern warfare. It is through the Unknown Warrior which society sees a symbol of “. . . the utter destruction of individuality in the name of the nation.”²¹⁵

The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior was popular not only because of significance impressed upon it by the state, but by the value placed upon it by the public.²¹⁶ The

²¹⁴This thesis owes its analysis of the Unknown Warrior to Hanson, *Unknown Soldiers*, 163, 280, 297, 302, 306.

²¹⁵Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 478.

²¹⁶Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 34-35. A dissenting opinion came from ex-servicemen, who “. . . seem to have felt little towards the Unknown Warrior. The sheer quantity of unknown and unknowable dead bodies that littered the battlefields of the war was well known to [them]” in Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 27.

public interpretation of the ceremony was that in it “. . . the social body was made whole and manifest.” With implicit reference to the national identity, the Unknown Warrior allowed mourners to “become members of one body politic and of one immortal soul” – something it had in common with the ceremony surrounding the unveiling of the Cenotaph.²¹⁷ English (and by extension, British) national identity was explicitly referenced in the process of commemoration through both of these events. With a rhetoric centered around sacrifice and mourning, the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior and the Cenotaph became “. . . memorials which symbolized the grief of the nation.”²¹⁸

With all of the importance and spiritual value assigned to the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior for British mourners, it may come as a surprise that Germany did not initially do the same for an anonymous body from its own military. The desire, however, to “bring their dead home and put them to rest, at least symbolically” was definitely there.²¹⁹ Edwin Redslob, the “Reich Art Custodian,” suggested that an unidentified soldier be interred in the River Rhine so as to call back to the nation’s (supposed) shared history surrounding the idea of sunken treasure as fantasized in German composer Richard Wagner’s opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Then-mayor Konrad Adenauer pushed for the inclusion of an unknown warrior in Cologne’s cathedral. Neither of these ideas came to fruition.

The lack of a direct German equivalent is perhaps closely tied to the fact that a German national memorial took over ten years to construct, and had been so politicized and argued over that further memorialization seemed wearisome. The closest that Germany came to honoring an “Unknown Warrior” in the same vein of the British example was the Tannenberg Memorial in East Prussia, constructed in 1927, although it differed

²¹⁷Both the “social body” and the “one body politic” are referred to in the *London Times Armistice Day Supplement I*, November 12, 1920. Quoted in Laqueur, “Memory and Naming in the Great War”, 158.

²¹⁸Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 50-51.

²¹⁹Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 35.



Figure 15: The Tannenberg Memorial in East Prussia, 1927. "Bundesarchiv Bild 183-2006-0429-502, Tannenberg-Denkmal, Beisetzung Hindenburg." Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 de via Wikimedia Commons, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-2006-0429-502,_Tannenberg-Denkmal,_Beisetzung_Hindenburg.jpg#/media/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-2006-0429-502,_Tannenberg-Denkmal,_Beisetzung_Hindenburg.jpg

in its definition of what an “unknown warrior” was.²²⁰

While this attempt at honoring the anonymous soldiers who died in the conflict followed the same general idea of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey, the burial of not one but *twenty* unidentified German soldiers from the Eastern Front created a comparable connection to the soldier – with the belief that it might a long-lost relative – but rather, “a new, *völkisch* community of the dead.”²²¹ The Tannenberg Memorial (Figure 15) was somewhat ironic given previous German emphasis on the soldier as an *individual* whose loss was felt not necessarily by the nation, but rather, by

²²⁰Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 37.

²²¹Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 38.

his closest friends and relatives. It differed in that it took away the individuality of the soldier while simultaneously shifting from private to public mourning. Tannenberg was an attempt at the creation of a unified German nation that, like its English counterpart, mourned and commemorated its losses as a unit, despite the divisive powers within the state and its society.

For years, German citizens mourned their losses without a unifying national memorial and without the spiritual interpretation of anonymous, modern, mass death in the guise of the Unknown Warrior. By the time the state made attempts at either of these, the need for a “new language of loss” had come and gone, and bereaved German citizens had done their best to recreate the traditional mourning process on the more personal levels of individual and local memorialization. This meant that the German memorials to the fallen of the Great War, and their memory of the war itself, were closely tied to traditional religious and chivalric interpretations of sacrifice and masculinity. The same ideas carried weight in English commemoration, but because of their status as victor and also the lack of any financially crippling reparations, England (and by extension, Great Britain) was able to work together to commemorate their fallen and use the experience to strengthen a flagging national identity.

From the individual to the supranational, from battlefield tourism, *Kriegschroniks*, and *Sterbebilder* to the Unknown Warrior, English and German memorialization revolved around how best to physically represent loss. The English case takes logical steps from each level of commemoration and ultimately concludes that the Great War – and the losses and damages it caused – was to be used as a cohesive for a national identity that had so strongly supported the war in the first place. The splintering within the German case, however, is evident almost from the beginning. Mourning on the smallest scale focused

itself within the private sphere and with minimal performance while local memorials clung to traditional heroism, masculinity, and religious symbolism rather than attempt an explanation that included the drastically new experience of modern warfare. Finally, with the delay of a national monument until 1931 and the harsh reparations enforced upon the German people by the Treaty of Versailles, it comes as no surprise that the German nation experienced a lull in the search for a new way to approach trauma. Political conflict, economic hardship, and weakened national pride and identity all created a sense of frustration and separation of bereavement from the nation-state.²²²

England and Germany, while experiencing the same postwar throes of wordlessness when it came to grief and death, took very different paths in how to interpret the Great War in a historical and national context. Physical memorials make this distinction very clear, but it was also evident in which themes each respective society chose to focus on and what their responses to these themes were. Either through widespread popularity of their interpretations, or positive reception but negative political kickback, English and German literary responses mirrored the same development of national identity as those in the physical world. The memory of the war became more political over time and while this worked as a bonding agent for England, the German state eventually came to view its most famous postwar literature as threatening and anti-German in its pacifist and individualist rhetoric.

²²²“The mass of British memorials was put up during the early 1920s. In many German communities, there was a time-lag of five to ten years...” Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 26.

Chapter Three: Literature in Remembrance

Place theory plays a key role regarding literature in postwar England and Germany.²²³ Along with physical monuments, texts that have garnered widespread popularity among a specific population fall into Pierre Nora's category of *lieux de mémoire*. Nora's *lieux* come into existence "at the same time than an immense and intimate fund of memory disappears;" as such, they are not limited to purely physical representations.²²⁴ Both individual and collective memories of the Great War pervade the *place* of a monument, and, similarly, the imagined world of a text. If a person were to be the original "fund of memory" for an event or an interpretation of an event, then what he/she created or left behind becomes a personal *lieux de mémoire* for anyone who can relate.²²⁵ The works discussed in this thesis qualify as *lieux de mémoire* because of their longstanding value and identification with the postwar experience. Their value has not lessened over time, although it might be added to and reshaped as historians continue to discuss and uncover new aspects of postwar life.²²⁶

The literary theorist Stanley Fish uses the term "community of interpreters" in

²²³See Chapter One's discussion of place and space; within *space*, people create *place* by attributing value to it. In the strictest sense of Edward Casey's definition, place and time rely on one another – if it does not disappear entirely, then place definitely changes once its defining event is over. With this thesis' second interpretation of place changing over time, Nora's *lieux de mémoire* come into play: the place becomes valuable because it is a metaphorical repository for memory that has "lost" its *original* place.

²²⁴Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," 7

²²⁵Nora explores this with specific examples of influential French texts in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*. Vol. 2, *Traditions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-1998). One chapter examines the children's book *Le Tour de la France* by Augustine Fouillée, in which two young brothers explore the French countryside and note the similarities and differences between different regions.

²²⁶Nora, *Realms of Memory*, Vol. 2, xi.

reference to the audience of a text. This chapter extends and compares Fish's term to Maurice Halbwachs' notion of collective memory, in which a similar community of interpreters recalls memories with reference to one another, rather than solely in their individual minds: "it is in this sense that there exists a collective memory and social framework for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection."²²⁷ Like the places of memorials and battlefield sites, these communities of interpreters develop around – and assign value to – postwar texts.²²⁸ This was far from simple, however, as postwar literature was often a "... paradoxical exercise that tried to recall a past experience beyond words."²²⁹ The paradox of a war that was "beyond discourse" was only the tip of the iceberg.²³⁰

The gap between combatants and civilians left a vacuum in the language of mourning and by extension the language of memory. Two problems existed for those looking to share war experiences through literature. First, prospective authors faced only two possible audiences: ex-combatants who had participated in the war (and therefore did not need to have it explained to them), and civilians who had remained at home (and therefore "could never be made to understand").²³¹ The second problem sprung from the sense that if an ex-combatant turned a profit in writing about the war, he had exploited the same tragic event for which he had intended to garner pity in the text itself. If he did *not* publish his work, he appeared indifferent with regards to his fallen friends.²³² As evidenced by the flood of literature and poetry published during and after the war that

²²⁷Halbwachs, "On Collective Memory," 38.

²²⁸This chapter's investigation of the German case reveals that as the community changes, so does the interpretation of the text.

²²⁹Goebel, "Beyond Discourse," 379.

²³⁰The phrase "beyond discourse" is in reference to the title of Goebel's article, "Beyond Discourse? Bodies and Memories of the Two World Wars."

²³¹Evelyn Cobley, *Representing War: Form and Ideology in First World War Narratives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 7.

²³²Cobley, *Representing War*, 7.

dealt with individual and national experiences in the conflict, however, these problems did not stop people from trying to create a new language of loss through creating new literature and literary styles.

Overcoming these issues, along with the perceived “authenticity” in the voice of the veteran, proved central to the work of authors such as Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, and Erich Maria Remarque. The further maturation of literary irony in this time period plays a crucial role in constructing a common ground on which readers connected with authors.²³³ As a coping mechanism for the war, irony made the conflict “comprehensible, palatable, at times laughable.”²³⁴ The voice of irony typically belonged to a male ex-combatant who had lost a friend (or several) in the trenches, and it resides in the works of Owen, Sassoon, and Remarque. The veteran, an embodiment of postwar disillusionment, returned home disenchanted with the glory of war and the nation. Ironically, that cynicism a strong influence on both English and German postwar national identity as “. . . a familiar male voice, characterized not only by its association with irony and disenchantment, but also by its proclamations of solitary struggle and visionary power.”²³⁵ Such literature was crucial “in keeping collective memory alive in a society where the writing of history was a routine operation dedicated to the glorification of the regime.”²³⁶ Literature, to a certain extent, was given more liberty to approach the war emotionally rather than nationalistically. It was a chance for people living in a world now forever altered by modern warfare to come to emotional terms with a loss that the

²³³Winter, *Remembering War*, 118.

²³⁴Tombs & Chabal, *Britain and France in Two World Wars*, 168. Irony was a primary characteristic of modern British literature, and did not catch on in Germany or elsewhere on the continent as it did in the British Isles). It is interesting to note that French literature especially avoided using irony to make the war into something more manageable for those mourning their losses; such insensitivity was considered inappropriate in the French case, as the French had witnessed so much of the fighting and death firsthand. See Winter, *Remembering War*, 133.

²³⁵Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 12.

²³⁶Although originally in reference to the USSR, this quotation works equally well for postwar England and Germany. See Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 7.

nation-state could only do so much to justify.

The texts examined here have been consistently referenced and discussed by those examining what aspects of culture most affected postwar memory, and how they did so. Memory builds a complex web around literature – readers form a memory around their experience of reading the text, and they recall that memory to various extents any time they speak of it or see it in a different context. The text develops a sense of personal value that likely shares similarities with that of other readers across wide swaths of a society.²³⁷ The same can be said for any popular work, but it logically follows that the more popular the text, the larger its community of interpreters and the more memories it inspires.

Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon indisputably wrote the most popular postwar English poetry. Their work served to transform “the figure of the shattered friend into an icon of alienated, suffering masculinity” within their poetry (and, to an extent, in their own friendship).²³⁸ Both men fought on the Western Front, and sustained physical injuries along with severe shell shock.²³⁹ Their experiences contributed to the canon of postwar culture produced and harvested for the purpose of maintaining and adapting national identity. The fictive quality of their war poems did not prevent them from becoming the primary method of postwar English remembrance and discussion surrounding the events of 1914 to 1918, surpassing the role of historians and, at times, even the role of the memorials that were built for that exact purpose.²⁴⁰

Remarque’s masterpiece *Im Westen nichts Neues* (*All Quiet on the Western Front*)

²³⁷This analysis builds on the following: “. . . a poem cannot be understood apart from its results. Its ‘effects’, psychological and otherwise, are essential to any accurate description of its meaning, since that meaning has no effective existence outside of its realization in the mind of a reader.” See Jane Tompkins, *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), ix.

²³⁸Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 154.

²³⁹See Chapter Two for a discussion on a diagnosis of shell shock as evidence of mental fragmentation.

²⁴⁰Winter and Prost, *The Great War in History*, 190.

plays an equally important role in German postwar national memory. Published in 1928, the antiwar book was criticized on both sides of the political spectrum. Despite this, the book sold 600,000 copies in Germany before transcending national boundaries and being translated into other languages including English and French.²⁴¹ Within five years, however, the Nazi Party banned and burned Remarque's book in the *Bücherverbrennung* of May 1933.²⁴² The Third Reich inadvertently recognized the novel's value by rejecting it in their construction of a national socialist identity. Although there is much more to the Nazi political takeover than antiwar literature, these two extreme receptions – being published internationally in over twenty-five languages, and then being banned and burned by the government – demonstrates a dramatic shift in the novel's role regarding German national identity.

Wilfred Owen

It is curious that the most well-known and beloved English war poet wrote almost all of his poems in a little over a year, and had only five of them published during his lifetime. Wilfred Owen's name and experience have become synonymous with the Western Front in the Great War. His work has been published and republished countless times, and is used as reference in both literary and historical analyses. Owen was born in 1893; he spent a few years as a tutor in France and developed an attachment to the nation's history, language, and people, which most likely contributed to his decision to enlist in October 1915 at the age of twenty-two. In December of the following year, Owen left for France.²⁴³ He spent time his time alternately fighting in the trenches and

²⁴¹Nicholas Karolides, *Literature Suppressed on Political Grounds* (New York: Facts on File, 1998), 16.

²⁴²Richard Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 16.

²⁴³For a summative, brief biography of Wilfred Owen, see Margaret McDowell, "Wilfred Owen (18 March 1893 – 4 November 1918)" in *British Poets, 1914-1945*, ed. Donald E. Stanford, vol. 20 (Detroit: Gale Research, 1983), 258-259. More extended biographies include Harold Owen, *Journey From Obscurity: Wilfred Owen, 1893-1918: Memoirs of the Owen Family* (London; New York: Oxford University Press,

recovering from a variety of wounds, including a case of shell shock in 1917 that sent him to Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh where he was to meet his poetic inspiration, Siegfried Sassoon. The two men bonded over their horrific experiences on the Western Front and Owen believed that Sassoon significantly shaped his ability as a poet during their time together.²⁴⁴

The friends separated when Owen returned to the war in the fall of 1917, but his convalescence in Edinburgh had rejuvenated Owen's poetic endeavors to the point where he drafted a preface and table of contents for the poetry collection he intended to publish when he returned home. In it, Owen explains his perspective on the Great War and his aspirations as a poet:

This book is not about heroes. English Poetry is not yet fit to speak of them. Nor is it about deeds or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, dominion or power,

except War.

Above all, this book is not concerned with Poetry.

The subject of it is War, and the pity of War.

The Poetry is in the pity.

Yet these elegies are not to this generation,

This is in no sense consolatory.

They may be to the next.

All a poet can do to-day is warn.

That is why the true Poets must be truthful.

If I thought the letter of this book would last,

I might have used proper names; but if the spirit of it survives Prussia,

– my ambition and those names will be content; for

they will have achieved themselves fresher fields than

Flanders.²⁴⁵

The power and significance of Owen's words are matched by the tragedy of his death. Owen was killed in action while attempting to cross the Sambre & Olse Canal on the morning of 4 November 1918, a week before the signing of the Armistice. His

1963); and Dominic Hibberd, *Owen the Poet* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

²⁴⁴McDowell, "Wilfred Owen," 262.

²⁴⁵Wilfred Owen, "Preface" in *Poems*, ed. Siegfried Sassoon (Edinburgh; New York: Morrison and Gibbs Ltd.; B.W. Huebsch Inc, 1919), vii.

mother received the telegram informing her of her son's death on Armistice Day as the bells tolled victory for the Allied Powers.²⁴⁶ The irony of Owen's untimely death is now itself an object of the pity to which his preface refers; the defining factor of Owen's life was not his poetry, but rather the war and how it cut his life so short. Mrs. Owen approached Siegfried Sassoon about publishing her son's work and the two of them collaborated on the first collection of poetry published under the simple title *Poems* in 1920. Sassoon included Owen's draft of the preface after Sassoon's own introduction. Interestingly, Sassoon writes of his inability to write critically of Owen's work at that time – possibly because of their close friendship, although Sassoon argues a different cause – “[Owen's] conclusions about War are so entirely in accordance with my own that I cannot attempt to judge his work with any critical detachment.”²⁴⁷ The simple language of Owen's preface directs his audience in their approach to his poetry: the themes of glory, honor, and power cannot stand on their own, but rather can only be examined within the context of the futility, tragedy, and pity felt in regards to the Great War.

The majority of Owen's poetry holds at least a certain level of reservation towards the war and its glorification on the home front. While he also dabbled in poetry before joining the army, Owen might possibly be the writer who most deserves the title of “war poet.” His writing deals almost entirely with the war; as his preface shows, he regarded his work as lending voice to his own personal experiences, and also as part of a collection intended to “give the reader a wide perspective on World War I.”²⁴⁸ Owen's intention has arguably been met and overpassed; his work is still widely read in British secondary schools and worldwide, while several buildings that he stayed in or inhabited during the war have become officially recognized sites of tribute.²⁴⁹ Even his contempo-

²⁴⁶McDowell, “Wilfred Owen,” 258.

²⁴⁷Siegfried Sassoon, “Introduction” in *Poems*, vi.

²⁴⁸McDowell, “Wilfred Owen,” 263.

²⁴⁹While Owen's poetry has captured the hearts and imaginations of those studying the Great War for decades now, the question arises as to whether or not his work should play such a key role

raries recognized his talent: Sassoon referred to Owen's "Strange Meeting" as "the finest elegy by a soldier" of the Great War, and T.S. Eliot called it "one of the most moving pieces of verse inspired by the war."²⁵⁰

Owen brings his reader into the exact time and place of his poems by providing specific references to the bodies of his characters. Literary analyses often point to this focus on the physicality of the "boys" and "lads" in Owen's poems to be a signifier of the poet's homosexuality or at the very least, of homoerotic literary tendencies. Whether or not Owen's fixation with the male stemmed from sexual interest, his poems convey a sense of physical presence for the audience by providing easily imagined moments of intimacy, both in life and activity, and death via fragmentation. Physical, mental, and spatial fragmentations as discussed in Chapter One symbolized the postwar destruction of traditional English masculinity. Such dissolution was represented by the image of the "bereaved male friend" propagated by English war poets like Owen.²⁵¹

Owen weaves images of the fragmented male body throughout several of his themes and poems. In "Arms and the Boy," Owen examines "the unnaturalness of weapons" in tandem with the male body.²⁵² Several disjointed flashes of imagery put the body of a "boy" in close contact with the weapons of modern warfare: "Lend him to stroke these blind, blind bullet-heads / Which long to muzzle in the hearts of lads. / Or give him

in the education surrounding the conflict. For a brief example of discussion surrounding this topic, see Ian McMillan, "Has poetry distorted our view of World War One?", BBC, accessed 1 March 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z38rq6f>. Additionally, in 2011, British historians and artists collaborated to renovate a small forester's house in Ors, France, in which Owen and his troops stayed before the fateful charge that took Owen's life on 4 November 1918. See "Wilfred Owen: From humble cottage to dazzling tribute", BBC, last updated 10 November 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15659821>. In honor of the centenary, Owen's former Shrewsbury home was given "Grade II listed status as part of the World War One centenary commemorations." See "WW1 poet Wilfred Owen's Shrewsbury home to get listed status", BBC, last updated 29 December 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-shropshire-30620829>.

²⁵⁰McDowell, "Wilfred Owen," 268.

²⁵¹Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 139.

²⁵²Owen outlined the order in which he wanted to publish his poems; this outline is reprinted in *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, ed. Edward Blunden (London: Chatto & Windus, 1946), 41.

cartridges of fine zinc teeth, / Sharp with the sharpness of grief and death.”²⁵³ Intimacy between weapons and soldiers was a common theme of poetry, but Owen expands this by examining the fragmentation of the landscape itself.

In “The Show,” the reader sees the Western Front from the perspective of a soldier rising above the landscape with Death: “[I] saw a sad land, weak with sweats of dearth, / Gray, cratered like the moon with hollow woe, / And pitted with great pocks and scabs of plagues.” Owen describes the land as one might imagine the face of a soldier, beaten and scarred from the war. Again, the images are intimately physical and fragmented – the reader imagines the Western Front as a face, the barbed wire entanglements as the “beard,” and little hills as “round myriad warts”; from the trenches rises a smell “as out of mouths, or deep wounds deepening.” The final stanza returns to the narrator’s perspective just as he falls toward the earth with Death. Death recovers a fallen soldier (“a manner of worm”) and shows the narrator “. . . its feet, the feet of many men, / And the fresh-severed head of it, my head.”²⁵⁴

Owen’s emphasis on body imagery comes across most dramatically in one of his most famous works, “Dulce Et Decorum Est.” Owen’s primary message relates to the incompatibility of home front nationalist rhetoric with the horrific death that awaited English soldiers on the front. He speaks directly to his audience in detailing panic caused by a chlorine gas attack where one man fails to don his mask in time:

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs
Bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, –
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*

²⁵³“Arms and the Boy” as printed in *Poems*, ed. Sassoon, 10. In C. Day Lewis’ edition, the line is printed as “bullet-leads”; see *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*, ed. C. Day Lewis (New York: New Directions Books, 1963). Both Blunden and Lewis print “muzzle” rather than “muzzle.”

²⁵⁴All of these quotations are from Owen, “The Show” in *Poems*, ed. Sassoon, 59.

*Pro patria mori.*²⁵⁵

Owen's bodily descriptions create an especially harsh contrast to the poem's infamous closing lines. However, with the juxtaposition of the reality of war and the traditional patriotic Latin aphorism, Owen's readers were (not-so-subtly) convinced to associate the latter with the visceral and realistic imagery of the former.

All three of the above examples demonstrate that the image of the male body pervaded Owen's work, even when he wrote on other themes more broadly.²⁵⁶ However, the entirety of his poem "Greater Love" shamelessly rejects the romantic style of describing a lover's feminine body in favor of decaying, fragmented corpses of soldiers:

Red lips are not so red
 As the stained stones kissed by the English dead.
Kindness of wooed and wooer
Seems shame to their love pure.
O Love, your eyes lose lure
 When I behold eyes blinded in my stead!

Your slender attitude
 Trembles not exquisite like limbs knife-skewed,
Rolling and rolling there
Where God seems not to care;
Till the fierce Love they bear
 Cramps them in death's extreme decrepitude.

Your voice sings not so soft, –
 Though even as wind murmuring through rafters loft, –
Your dear voice is not dear,
Gentle, and evening clear,
As theirs whom none now hear,
Now earth has stopped their piteous mouths that coughed.

Heart, you were never hot,

²⁵⁵Roughly translated, "the old Lie" that Owen refers to is, "it is sweet and right to die for one's country."

²⁵⁶Specifically, the close relationship between a soldier and his weapons in "Arms and the Boy", the broken landscape of the war in "The Show," and the disjointedness of patriotism and modern warfare in "Dulce Et Decorum Est."

Nor large, nor full like hearts made great with shot;
And though your hand be pale,
Paler are all which trail
Your cross through flame and hail:
Weep, you may weep, for you may touch them not.

(Wilfred Owen, "Greater Love", drafted October 1917 – January 1918,
revised July 1918)²⁵⁷

"Greater Love" is a conglomeration of techniques in which Owen wants his audience to interpret the war. The poem's three primary themes are the role of the titular biblical reference, the initial choice of subject matter and imagery, and finally how Owen turns tradition on its head by valuing fragmented male soldier bodies over those of a traditional, feminine, romanticized body. The title also plays a subtle yet important role here, recalling John 15:13 in the minds of Owen's (predominantly Christian) audience ("Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.") By referencing the value of Christian sacrifice and comradeship in his title, Owen can then continue the primary thematic contradiction of the work: that of traditional romantic poetry, and the new ideas and images surrounding male fragmentation during the Great War.

In this poem, Owen inverts images traditionally deployed in romantic poetry by completely negating their supposed value. He examines six separate physical characteristics of a (presumably) female lover and with each one, voices his preference for the intimacy present on the broken bodies of his fellow soldiers.²⁵⁸ Lips, eyes, slenderness, voice, heart, and hand – all of them are nothing in comparison with the (male) soldier's sacrifice that Owen witnessed on the front; the image of red lips are barely in the reader's mind when Owen negates their value ("Red lips are *not so* red", emphasis added).²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷Owen, "Greater Love" in *Poems*, ed. Sassoon, 3.

²⁵⁸This chapter owes a great deal to Cole's analysis of the same poem in her book, *Male Friendship, and the First World War* (160-161).

²⁵⁹Emphasis added to the negations of other traditional romantic images in the poem: "O Love, your

In opposition to the kindness between lovers, the love of the soldiers evidenced by their self-sacrifice is simply “pure.”

“Greater Love” suggests that the highest capacity of the human body is not in romance or in its potential for self-sacrifice, but instead “. . . at the moment of dismemberment and death. . . indicat[ing] that the very concept of physical intimacy is shattered by war.”²⁶⁰ Owen constructs this contrast – or rather, this outright refusal of traditional romantic poetry – by disallowing the romanticization of typical body parts. Owen communicates an almost palpable disillusionment with the prewar interpretation of war as a romantic, valiant, invigoratingly masculine experience, and through his posthumously published works, he contributes to the reconstruction of public interpretation of the Great War. “Greater Love” highlights the value and the grotesque physical intimacy of the war; it is hardly surprising that the poem conveys Owen’s pity for the Great War and its combatants.²⁶¹

Siegfried Sassoon

Not all British war poets chose to focus on the fragmentation of the male body specifically as the Great War’s primary effect on English soldiers. Siegfried Sassoon is one such poet; although he also discussed many different themes including male fragmentation, Sassoon’s influence on postwar British memory came primarily from his exploration of changing chivalric ideals. Born in September 1886 to a wealthy family and named after the hero from Richard Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Sassoon is one of England’s most recognizable names of the twentieth century. Sassoon enlisted in the British army on the third of August, the same day that Great Britain declared

eyes lose lure”; “Your slender attitude / Trembles not exquisite. . .”; “Your voice sings *not so soft*”; “Heart, you were never hot, / Nor large, nor full. . .”; “And though your hand be pale, / Paler are all which trail”.

²⁶⁰Cole, “Modernism, Male Intimacy, and the Great War,” 483.

²⁶¹Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 160.

war on Germany.²⁶² Although he didn't directly participate in trench warfare until several months later, he dedicated himself to the national cause out of a genuine belief in the righteousness of English morality and patriotism. His years in the war strongly influenced the development of his writing style, and led him to join Wilfred Owen among the ranks of men historically identified as "war poets," despite the fact that Sassoon was a prolific author in topics other than the Great War.

Great War poetry is often split into two categories coming from 1914-1916, and 1916-1918, respectively. These periods are characterized by mood:

In the earlier period the poets, like the mass of non-combatants (on both sides of the fighting lines) believed in a simple, heroic vision of a struggle for the right of noble sacrifice for an ideal of patriotism and country. . . [in the second period] the dreams were shattered, and patriotism became a matter of grim endurance against all odds, of despairing hope almost buried beneath the huge weight of disillusionment. . .²⁶³

Sassoon's style reflects this general trend as his relatively optimistic, patriotic, and religious attitude before 1916 transformed to a disillusioned, cynical, distanced, futile search for an explanation of the war. While his earlier work evokes the style of romantic poets who wrote about idealized medieval themes in flowery language, 1916 marked a distinct shift away from romantic notions of war, sacrifice, and death, to the modernist conventions of disillusionment and irony.²⁶⁴ Some literary analysts specifically reference the last three lines of Sassoon's "Stand-to: Good Friday Morning" as the beginnings of his modernist attitudes: "O Jesus, send me a wound to-day, / And I'll believe in Your bread and wine, / And get my bloody old sins washed white!"²⁶⁵ Making light of the process of communion and the possibility for Christ's forgiveness in the hope that the

²⁶²Siegfried Sassoon, *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), 13.

²⁶³John Lehmann, *The English Poets of the First World War* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1982), 8-9.

²⁶⁴Margaret McDowell. "Siegfried Sassoon (8 September 1886 – 3 September 1967)," in *British Poets, 1914-1945*, ed. Donald E. Stanford, vol. 20 (Detroit: Gale Research, 1983), 325.

²⁶⁵Sassoon, "Stand-to: Good Friday Morning" in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 28.

soldier will be able to go home with a moderately serious injury, these lines present “a cynicism that becomes almost a signature for the remainder of Sassoon’s war poems.”²⁶⁶

Sassoon’s themes range from conveying the atmosphere of the trenches, to lamenting the rupture between soldier and civilian life, to the ignorance and hypocrisy of high-ranking officers, and even to the poet’s personal struggle to cope with postwar physical and mental injuries. The theme that seems to be at least nominally present in a vast majority of his war poetry, however, is that of medieval tradition and chivalric notions of war and religion. While Sassoon’s approach to these themes was initially earnest, he seems to be repulsed by them for the latter half of the war, as chivalry becomes an object of satirical criticism. Sassoon personally rejects the tenets of prewar English chivalry, reflecting the trends of broader societal attitudes towards medieval chivalric tradition.

Medieval religious imagery pervades much of Sassoon’s work, even in poems written before “Stand-to: Good Friday Morning.”²⁶⁷ Such references echo both the optimism with which Europe entered the war and also the use of medieval tradition to garner widespread national support for the conflict. For example, in “The Redeemer” (written in November 1915 and edited for publication in March 1916), the poetic environment is far from idealized: rain and mud gather in the trenches and shells burst overhead throughout the night. However, the tone becomes reverent in the second half of the poem as Sassoon focuses on a single soldier standing in the middle of the storm:

²⁶⁶Patrick Quinn, *The Great War and the Missing Muse: The Early Writings of Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon* (London: Associated University Presses, 1994), 175. However, this shift might not have happened so instantaneously. In “The Prince of Wounds” (written before “Stand-to: Good Friday Morning”), Sassoon asks, “Have we the strength to strive alone / Who can *no longer worship Christ?* / Is he a God of wood and stone, / While those who served him writhe and moan, / On warfare’s altar sacrificed?” (emphasis added). *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 19.

²⁶⁷Of course, Sassoon also relies on other prewar ideology. One example (unsurprisingly missing in post-1916 poems) is the patriotic perspective on conflict as seen in “Absolution”: “War is our scourge; yet war has made us wise, / And, fighting for our freedom, we are free.” See Sassoon, “Absolution” in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 15.

No thorny crown, only a woolen cap
He wore – an English soldier, white and strong
(...)
But to the end, unjudging, he'll endure
Horror and pain, not discontent to die
That Lancaster on Lune may stand secure.²⁶⁸

Sassoon is hardly subtle in drawing the parallel between this English infantryman and Christ. In addition to the comparison of his woolen cap to a crown of thorns, the soldier carries a bundle of wooden planks on his shoulders in imitation of Christ carrying the cross. These descriptions lead up to a blatant admission of Sassoon's: "I say that He was Christ, who wrought to bless / All groping things with freedom bright as air, / And with His mercy washed and made them fair."²⁶⁹

The soldier's sacrifice for his country is a modern interpretation of martyrdom that redefined medieval chivalric ideology.²⁷⁰ In the above example, Sassoon's Christ-figure remains steadfast despite the horrific environment of trench warfare. The soldier's individual sacrifice also reflects Sassoon's preference for the individual rather than the collective; the poem's narrator appears to be another soldier recognizing his comrade's unique sacrificial appearance and quality in a single moment. Many of the poet's other early works call on this same religious tradition and remain relatively reverent with regards to the individual soldier. However, the post-1916 transition into disillusionment leaves nothing unaffected for Sassoon. Religious imagery and ideas become tainted with the reality of war. He reimagines soldiers' deaths as inexplicable losses rather than Christ-like sacrifices for the greater good. As previously discussed, the closing lines of "Stand-to: Good Friday Morning" describe a soldier's attempt to bargain his faith for a "blighty" (a mild wound that would be bad enough to send him home to recover). Although the narrator suggests the transaction in a relatively playful manner, in his notes

²⁶⁸Sassoon, "The Redeemer" in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 16.

²⁶⁹Sassoon, "The Redeemer" in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 17.

²⁷⁰See Chapter One of this thesis.

Sassoon admits to not having shown the poem to a clergyman – possibly because the sentiment behind the work was less deferential than the church might have appreciated.²⁷¹ A similar pattern occurred with “In the Pink,” which Sassoon refers to as the first of his “outspoken” works. “In the Pink” focuses on a single soldier who writes a cheery letter home to his sweetheart, only to spend his evening dwelling on memories of home and comparing them to the Western Front. Like “Stand-to: Good Friday Morning,” “In the Pink” concludes rather cynically: “To-night he’s in the pink; but soon he’ll die. / And still the war goes on – *he* don’t know why.” Sassoon’s postscript notes also admit that the *Westminster* had refused “In the Pink” for its potential to “prejudice recruiting.”²⁷²

By the time he penned “The Poet as Hero” in 1916, Sassoon attempted to recognize and confront the obvious change in his tone through verse.²⁷³ The poem is reproduced in its entirety below:

²⁷¹Sassoon, “Stand-to: Good Friday Morning” in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 28.

²⁷²Sassoon, “In the Pink” in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 22.

²⁷³Sassoon was invalided home on 2 August 1916 with “trench fever” and spent some time at his home in Weirleigh. See *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 13.

You've heard me, scornful, harsh, and discontented,
Mocking and loathing War: you've asked me why
Of my old, silly sweetness I've repented –
My ecstasies changed to an ugly cry.

You are aware that once I sought the Grail,
Riding in armour bright, serene and strong;
And it was told that through my infant wail
There rose immortal semblances of song.

But now I've said good-bye to Galahad,
And am no more the knight of dreams and show:
For lust and senseless hatred make me glad,
And my killed friends are with me where I go.
Wound for red wound I burn to smite their wrongs;
And there is absolution in my songs.²⁷⁴
(Siegfried Sassoon, "The Poet as Hero", 2 December 1916)

Strangely enough, the 1983 collection publishes no explanation or comment from Sassoon to accompany this bold, tragic, and cynical break from his generally romantic style. Perhaps he felt as though the poem speaks for itself; every individual line contributes to his acknowledgment of the change in his perspective. Sassoon begins by directly addressing his reader, confessing that his more recent works have been less than respectful to the current conflict and referring to his previous style as "old, silly sweetness." He capitalizes the word *war* and in doing so, places it on the same level as only two other nouns in the poem – the Holy Grail and Sir Galahad. This first verse also lacks the same flowery, image-laden introduction with which he adorned his earlier poems; Sassoon wastes no time in arriving at his point.²⁷⁵ From a historical perspective, this

²⁷⁴"The Poet as Hero" was first published in the *Cambridge Magazine*, 2 December 1916. Reprinted in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 61.

²⁷⁵For comparison, here are the introductory lines to the other poems referenced in this chapter: "The anguish of the earth absolves our eyes / Till beauty shines in all that we can see" ("Absolution"); "Darkness: the rain sluiced down; the mire was deep; / It was past twelve on a mid-winter night, / When peaceful folk in beds lay snug asleep" ("The Redeemer"); "The Prince of wounds is with us here; / Wearing his crown he gazes down. . ." ("The Prince of Wounds"); "So Davies wrote: 'This leaves me in the pink.' / Then scrawled his name: 'Your loving sweetheart, Willie.' / With crosses for a hug. . ." ("In the Pink"); "I'd been on duty from two till four. / I went and stared at the dug-out door." ("Stand-to: Good Friday Morning"). See *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 15, 16, 19, 22, 28.

first stanza gives voice to the sense of disillusionment and frustration with the Great War that both ex-combatants and civilians felt as their expectations were shattered and their romantic ideologies were proven to be incompatible with the world around them.²⁷⁶

The second stanza takes a step back in order to explain the transformation Sassoon references in the first stanza. The poet connects with the reader via familiar imagery and diction regarding the British myth of the Holy Grail and the chivalric knights who gave their lives in search of it. In referring to his past work as an attempt to seek the Grail, Sassoon takes advantage of a common trope in which a hero undertakes a supposedly impossible task in the name of Christ. However, the third and fourth lines mark the beginning of the turn away from a reverent tone towards romanticism. While an unspecified perspective in the poem describes Sassoon's pre-1916 work as "immortal semblances of song," the Sassoon writing "The Poet as Hero" describes the same work as an "infant wail." This works in Sassoon's favor as he begins to share his new attitude with his readers. To a certain extent, he devalues the work that he has done up until this point by placing it in the metaphorical category of an underdeveloped, childish voice and in doing so, he prepares the reader for the power of the final stanza.

In calling upon the shared national myth of Galahad, Sassoon communicates to his countrymen the weight of the message in his final verse. He abandons the association with religious medieval imagery and its inherent idealization of the moral world, because the emotions and experiences he now associates with modern warfare leave no room for such naiveté. The final four lines of the poem are in the present tense, connecting the reader to the poet's lived experience as a soldier in 1916. The memories of his deceased friends haunt him and require him to exact vengeance – on their common enemies, or on the system that allowed them to die seemingly without cause, it remains

²⁷⁶See Chapter One of this thesis.

unclear. The absolution Sassoon refers to in the final line is also vague; does he speak of absolution for his crimes, for those of his fallen comrades, for his enemies, or even for the misguided dreams of medieval romantic chivalry?

Regardless, "The Poet as Hero" clearly demonstrates that Sassoon saw his role as a poetic voice of reason and experience of the war, and that he believed his words could have great strength and influence over his nation's understanding of the conflict. In three stanzas, "The Poet as Hero" gives voice to Sassoon's changing attitudes towards the morality of the conflict, discounts the romantic medieval chivalry he had previously held in high regard, and informs the reader what war means for the men fighting it. Death in war, he argues, should not be seen as an honorable and spiritual experience. Death haunts the survivors and bestows upon them a desire for violent retribution. This new interpretation drastically changes how Sassoon, at the very least, builds his memories of war. In his decision to publish this poetry he suggests that he believes that his fellow English citizens should share his understanding.

Owen and Sassoon undoubtedly influenced one another during the time they spent together at Craiglockhart in Edinburgh. Owen waited two weeks to introduce himself to his poetic idol but once he did, the two were almost inseparable. Their accounts of the friendship differ; Owen claims that Sassoon was the primary influence on his poetic ability, while Sassoon believed his guidance had simply come at the right time for the younger man who spoke with a stutter and claimed he wasn't "worthy to light [Sassoon's] pipe."²⁷⁷ The connection between the two men went beyond their passion for poetry; they also shared the conviction that the Great War needed to end before it completely destroyed English – and European – society.²⁷⁸ Their shared experience and opinion bound them together in friendship, emphasizing the difference between the gen-

²⁷⁷Quoted in "Wilfred Owen," Gale Literary Biography, 262.

²⁷⁸McDowell, "Wilfred Owen," 261.

uine connection they shared, and the fabricated ideal of comradeship that permeated the propaganda on the home front and the ranks of soldiers in the trenches. Owen and Sassoon returned to France to rejoin their comrades-in-arms despite their misgivings about the war. In so doing, they lost the much more intimate and organic friendship they had built together when Owen was killed in action in November 1918. The war had destroyed yet another friendship – a friendship which saw the two men part for the sake of their comrades to whom they felt they owed their service and in Owen’s case, his life.

Erich Maria Remarque

Born in June 1898 to parents of Franco-German heritage, Erich Maria Remarque spent two years fighting in the Great War in the German Army before working as an elementary school teacher and then an advertising editor in the postwar period.²⁷⁹ He went to Berlin in 1925 to continue his work in the editing and publishing industry and first published *Im Westen nichts Neues* (*All Quiet on the Western Front*) in serial format in 1928 in the Berlin intellectual newspaper, the *Vossische Zeitung*.²⁸⁰

Immediately upon publication in book format in 1929, *Im Westen nichts Neues* fell under the critical gaze of a Germany fragmented by its politics. Unfortunately for Remarque, his book received strong criticism from both the extreme left and the extreme right (the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*, or the Communist Party of Germany, and the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, or the National Socialist German Worker’s Party), which led to a lack of support for his pacifist-style novel in the political sphere. The book received very little intellectual critical attention from those who were staunch supporters of either the KPD or the NSPAD for this reason.²⁸¹ The gen-

²⁷⁹Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*, 3-5.

²⁸⁰Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*, 14.

²⁸¹Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*, 12.

eral public, however, greatly appreciated Remarque's "unadorned language [that] struck a nerve among the German working class and rendered familiar a complex experience (war and suffering)," but also to Remarque's withdrawal from the public after publishing his book and the political debates that ensued.²⁸² *Im Westen nichts Neues* sold 600,000 copies before being published in the United States. The Weimar government banned the book in 1930, and it joined the list of works to be burned in the Nazi *Bücherverbrennung* of 1933.²⁸³

As a full-length novel rather than poem or collection of poems, *Im Westen nichts Neues* explores a broad variety of themes that cannot all be examined and contextualized here. However, the notion of friendship and comradeship play a particularly important role in the final two chapters leading up to the anonymously narrated death of the protagonist, Paul Bäumer (a sensitive young man remarkably similar in character to the English poets Owen and Sassoon). Paul and his fellow soldiers develop varying levels of friendship and/or comradeship with one another, but overall Remarque emphasizes the roles that trust and solidarity play in the continued cohesion of their group.

The last two chapters reflect Remarque's – and by extension, Paul's – growing disillusionment with the idea of modern warfare: "Bäumer's now loosely structured 1917 military world begins to break down. The images of death and dying increase. The only distinction between men becomes whether they are living or dead, and Bäumer's comrades die more frequently, more variously, and more terribly."²⁸⁴ Paul's frequent use of the collective "we" rather than "I" in this section, however, emphasizes the importance of his relationships to his fellow soldiers.²⁸⁵ As the war transforms these men into dull, struggling survivors, they rely more and more heavily on one another in the pattern

²⁸²Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*, 13.

²⁸³Karolidis, *Literature Suppressed on Political Grounds*, 16.

²⁸⁴Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*, 50.

²⁸⁵Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*, 41.

of Great War comradeship. The fact that they literally trust one another with their lives lends itself to a level of comradeship and understanding that they know will not be shared by civilians or even by soldiers significantly older or younger than they. Paul and his friends are therefore each other's primary source of comfort, even in the final chapters of the book after they have already been through so much: "tröstlich fühlen wir nur den Schlafatem der Kameraden."²⁸⁶

Chapter Eleven opens with a vague summarizing paragraph describing the monotonous passage of time for Paul and his fellow combatants. Paul reflects on the individual and group identities that have developed as a result of the war:

Die Unterschiede, die Bildung und Erziehung schufen, sind fast verwischt und kaum noch zu erkennen. . . es ist, als ob wir früher einmal Geldstücke verschiedener Länder gewesen wären; man hat sie eingeschmolzen, und alle haben jetzt denselben Prägestempel... wir sind Soldaten und erst später auf eine sonderbare und verschämte Weise noch Einzelmenschen.²⁸⁷

Despite differences that would have dramatically separated them in any context other than the Great War, Paul and his comrades adapt themselves for the sake of preserving their own lives. The sense of comradeship present in the ranks on both sides of the war pervades even what is broadly considered to be an anti-war novel such as *Im Westen nichts Neues*. If nothing else, Remarque and his narrator admit that the comradeship of the trenches allows the soldiers to "escape the abyss of solitude," or at least, until the façade of wartime attachment begins to crack.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶Erich Maria Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues* (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1929), 269. English translation: "our only comfort is the steady breathing of our comrades asleep..." See Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. A.W. Wheen, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1945), 272.

²⁸⁷Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*, 189. English translation: "distinctions, breeding, education are changed, are almost blotted out and hardly recognizable any longer... it is as though formerly we were coins of different provinces; and now we are melted down, and all bear the same stamp... first we are soldiers and afterwards, in a strange and shamefaced fashion, individual men as well." See Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. Wheen, 268-269.

²⁸⁸Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. Wheen, 270. Original text: "[das Leben] hat in uns den Kameradeschaftssinn geweckt, damit wir dem Abgrund der Verlassenheit entgehen." See Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*, 190.

Paul tells the rest of his story in fragments, primarily focused on the slow but steady diminution of his support network that has developed over the years (“jeder Tag und jede Stunde, jede Granate und jeder Tote wetzen an diesem dünnen Halt, und die Jahre verschleifen ihn rasch. Ich sehe, wie er allmählich schon um mich herum niederbricht”).²⁸⁹ The deaths of his friends Detering, Berger, Müller, Bertinck, and Leer happen in a five-page span; successive death receives less and less description, with Detering’s story being told in three pages, and Leer’s being told in only four lines.²⁹⁰ Paul’s style of narration, already drastically distanced from the rest of the novel, becomes more methodical as he describes these deaths, as well. Müller’s death comes after a section break and simply starts with the plain and simple words, “Müller ist tot. Man hat ihm aus nächster Nähe eine Leuchtkugel in den Magen geschossen. Er lebte noch eine halbe Stunde bei vollem Verstande und furchtbaren Schmerzen.”²⁹¹ However, it is not until the death of his best friend Kat that wartime comradeship and friendship lose all their value to Paul.

Throughout the novel, Kat becomes Paul’s best friend despite their differences. Kat is an older veteran who represents the classic soldier’s “common sense and survival” within the setting of the Great War, and acts as a provider and father figure for the rest of the squad as they try to survive the war.²⁹² Although Kat and Paul differ on their

²⁸⁹Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*, 191. English translation: “every day and every hour, every shell and every death cuts into this thin support, and the years waste it rapidly. I see how it is already gradually breaking down around me.” See Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. Wheen, 272.

²⁹⁰See Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*, 191-193 (or Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. Wheen, 272-274) for Detering’s “dumme Geschichte” (“mad story”). The inclusion of Leer’s demise appears as an afterthought, as it begins in the middle of a sentence that had initially described Bertinck’s passing: “Der gleiche Splitter hat noch die Kraft, Leer die Hüfte aufzureißen. Leer stöhnt und stemmt sich auf die Arme, er verblutet rasch, niemand kann ihm helfen. Wie ein leerlaufender Schlauch sackt er nach ein paar Minuten zusammen. Was nützt es ihm nun, daß er in der Schule ein so guter Mathematiker war.”

²⁹¹Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*, 194. English translation: “Müller is dead. Someone shot him point-blank in the stomach with a Verey light. He lived for half an hour, quite conscious, and in terrible pain.” See Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. Wheen, 276.

²⁹²Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*, 53.

philosophical approaches to the war, Kat's death is the last moment of intense emotion that the reader gets from Paul. He receives his fatal injury while bringing food back for the two of them.²⁹³ The hit seems to have destroyed his shin and while he bleeds profusely, Paul picks him up and begins the long journey to the nearest dressing station. The constant shelling forces the pair to hide in a small hole on the battlefield.

„Ja, Kat,“ sage ich trübsinnig, „nun kommen wir doch noch auseinander.“

Er schwiegt und sieht mich an.

„Weißt du noch, Kat, wie wir die Gans requirierten? Und wie du mich aus dem Schlamassel holtest, als ich noch ein kleiner Rekrut und zum erstenmal verwundet war? Damals habe ich noch geweint. Kat, es sind fast drei Jahre jetzt.“

Er nickt.

Die Angst vor dem Alleinsein steigt in mir auf. Wenn Kat abtransportiert ist, habe ich keinen Freund mehr hier. [...] Ich bin sehr traurig, es ist unmöglich, daß Kat – Kat, mein Freund, Kat mit den Hängeschultern und dem dünnen, weichen Schnurrbart, Kat, den ich kenne auf eine andere Weise als jeden anderen Menschen, Kat, mit dem ich diese Jahre geteilt habe – es ist unmöglich, daß ich Kat vielleicht nicht wiedersehen soll... wie verlassen ich schon bin, obschon er noch neben mir sitzt. Soll ich mir rasch in den Fuß schießen, um bei ihm bleiben zu können?

(Erich Maria Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*, 1928)

“Well, Kat,” I say gloomily, “We are going to be separated at last.”

He is silent and looks at me.

“Do you remember, Kat, how we commandeered the goose? And how you brought me out of the barrage when I was still a young recruit and was wounded for the first time? I cried then. Kat, that is almost three years ago.”

He nods.

The anguish of solitude rises up in me. When Kat is taken away I will not have one friend left. [...] I am very miserable, it is impossible that Kat – Kat my friend, Kat with the drooping shoulders and the poor, thin moustache, Kat, whom I know as I know no other man, Kat with whom I have shared these years – it is impossible that perhaps I shall not see Kat again... how forlorn I am already, though he still sits here beside me. Couldn't I shoot myself quickly in the foot so as to be able to go with him.

(Erich Maria Remarque, trans. by A.W. Wheen, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, 1929)

Paul's fearful, childlike tone gives away his rising panic as he realizes that he and his best friend are about to part, possibly for the last time. Although their relationship may have initially been situational, their bond goes beyond the disciplined, systematic

²⁹³Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. Wheen, 284.

relationship of comradeship as constructed through the experience of war. The two men are connected through friendship, which is far stronger than that of only comrade-in-arms. Paul reminisces about events that happened earlier in the novel, but falls silent as he contemplates how alone he will be after Kat is sent home with his injury. The reader is flooded with his thoughts in a stream-of-consciousness style, emphasizing Paul's emotional distress. He even goes so far as to muse idly about shooting himself so that their friendship does not have to be broken by distance (and possibly Paul's death) while Kat recovers at home.

The tragedy only deepens when they finally arrive at the dressing station, only to have the orderly point out a splinter that had launched itself in Kat's head and killed him before reaching safety. Paul enters a sort of catatonic state in which he attempts to come to terms with the loss of his friend. The orderly, completely desensitized to death, wonders at Paul's traumatized reaction.

Der Sanitäter ist verwundert. „Ihr seid doch nicht verwandt? “

Nein, wir sind nicht verwandt. Nein, wir sind nicht verwandt.

Gehe ich? Habe ich noch Füße? Ich hebe die Augen, ich lasse sie herumgehen und drehe mich mit ihnen, einen Kreis, einen Kreis, bis ich innehalte. Es ist alles wie sonst. Nur der Landwehrmann Stanislaus Katczinsky ist gestorben.

Dann weiß ich nichts mehr.

(Erich Maria Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*, 1928)

The orderly is mystified. “You are not related, are you?”

No, we are not related. No, we are not related.

Do I walk? Have I feet still? I raise my eyes, I let them move around, and turn myself with them, one circle, one circle, and I stand in the midst. All is as usual. Only the Militiaman Stanislaus Katczinsky has died.

Then I know nothing more.

(Erich Maria Remarque, trans. by A.W. Wheen, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, 1929)

These lines close Chapter Eleven, essentially ending the entire novel (Chapter Twelve is less than two pages long). The remainder of what Paul shares with the reader is almost entirely hopeless. He remarks that he is the last of the group of young men

from his school that enlisted together, and he confides that while the men around him talk of peace, he himself has little optimism for the years after the war ends. Paul's personal will to live is no longer necessarily what keeps him going; rather, he sees his life as a separate force that he may or may not have "subdued," but will continue to "seek its own way out."²⁹⁴

The epilogue of the novel switches from Paul's first-person narrative to an unknown third-person describing the death of an unnamed soldier, presumably Paul. The title of both the English and German editions comes from this section, reprinted below.

Er fiel im Oktober 1918, an einem Tage, der so ruhig und still war an der ganzen Front, daß der Heeresbericht sich nur auf den Satz beschränkte, im Westen sei nichts Neues zu melden.

Er war vornübergesunken und lag wie schlafend an der Erde. Als man ihn umdrehte, sah man, daß er sich nicht lange gequält haben konnte; – sein Gesicht hatte einen so gefaßten Ausdruck, als wäre er beinahe zufrieden damit, daß es so gekommen war.

(Erich Maria Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*, 1928)

He fell in October 1918, on a day that was so quiet and still on the whole front, that the army report confined itself to the single sentence: All quiet on the Western Front.

He had fallen forward and lay on the earth as though sleeping. Turning him over one saw that he could not have suffered long; his face had an expression of calm, as though almost glad the end had come.

(Erich Maria Remarque, trans. by A.W. Wheen, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, 1929)

The description of Paul's death concludes the book and comes immediately after he has just chronicled the deaths of all of his comrades and his friend Kat. The description is shockingly straightforward and brief after the pages of description for Kat's passing. Its objectivity speaks to the loneliness and solitude that Paul had so feared while trying to save Kat. And, like many other works of postwar literature, poetry,

²⁹⁴Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trans. Wheen, 291. Original text: "Das Leben, das mich durch diese Jahre trug, ist noch in meinen Händen und Augen. Ob ich es überwunden habe, weiß ich nicht. Aber so lange da ist, wird es sich seinen Weg suchen, mag dieses, das in mir „Ich“ sagt, wollen oder nicht." See Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*, 204.

and memorials, the image of the dead soldier is interpreted not as death, but as a deep sleep.

Literature and poetry in postwar memory, at least in the case of Remarque, Sassoon, and Owen, stemmed from a place of disillusionment, frustration, and grief. Their experiences on the Western Front at times felt entirely incommunicable to those who had not participated in the fighting. All three of them wrote about war in such a way that their audiences could not help but question propaganda referring to the conflict as a valid nationalist, patriotic defense. At the same time, however, antiwar narratives become “complicit with war” at any point that the author allows “pacifist sentiments [to] coexist with pride.”²⁹⁵ Similarly, despite the literary authority associated with the authors’ war records, their words did *not* always come from an autobiographical occurrence. The national memories that sprung up around these texts and poems needed to compromise the authors’ ex-combatant status with the possibility that civilians could never fully understand what had happened in France.

The individual narratives and poems of Remarque, Sassoon, and Owen were, in the strictest sense, categorized as war stories.²⁹⁶ Fiction and nonfiction blended together to create a shared literary experience of the war. Remarque’s exploration of comradeship and how modern warfare completely destroyed it struck such a note with the public that it transcended national borders and brought postwar readers together in mourning the loss of their young soldiers. Sassoon’s “The Poet as Hero” is an unabashed confession of his loss of respect for the chivalric ideal and its replacement with “lust and senseless hatred,” which drive him to avenge his fallen comrades. Finally, in Owen’s poem “Greater Love,” he focused on the fragmentation of the male body on the battlefield and how the intimacy inherent in war was, in many ways, deeper than that of

²⁹⁵Cobley, *Representing War*, 5.

²⁹⁶“If reality remains inaccessible or unnamable, then all narrative renderings *produce* rather than *reproduce* the war experience” (emphasis added). Cobley, *Representing War*, 15.

lovers.

With Sassoon and Owen in particular, a broader exploration of chivalry and fragmentation meets the common theme of the “sleeping dead” in postwar Europe. Owen and Sassoon believed they could close the gap between ex-combatant and civilian through their poetry, but they also felt that they could use their understanding of the unique intimacy in the trenches as well as their literary authority to honor their fallen comrades.²⁹⁷ The theme of the sleeping dead was also incorporated in the recumbent figures that adorned many English and German memorials. It embodied society’s attempt to come to terms with the war’s results, which had been disappointing at best and shockingly tragic at worst.²⁹⁸ The sleeping dead combined traditional religious interpretations of martyrdom and resurrection, the postwar interpretation of death and mourning, and the inclusion of the war to the nation’s experience and identity. In the case of the men who had fallen for the cause of their nation, it was easier for mourners to interpret what had happened as not actually death: “[the soldier] sleeps – on the authority of the majestic words of Jesus, the victor over death and the grave... he sleeps until a better awakening. He lives. Those eyes will open again.”²⁹⁹ Both Owen and Sassoon employed this idea, drawing parallels between sleep and death that comforted themselves and their audiences.

Sassoon offers a direct example of the power of the sleeping dead in postwar imagery in his poem “The Dug-Out.” The opening lines speak directly to another person, and when taking into consideration the title, the audience realizes that Sassoon speaks

²⁹⁷Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 18.

²⁹⁸Goebel, “Re-Membered and Re-Mobilized,” 487.

²⁹⁹Staatsarchiv Bremen, “Weihe der Ehrentafeln für die aus der Gemeinde von Unser Lieben Frauen Gefallenen in der Gedächtniskapelle,” 1924. Quoted in Goebel, “Re-Membered and Re-Mobilized”, 490.

to another soldier: “Why do you lie with your legs ungainly huddled, / And one arm bent across your sullen, cold, / Exhausted face? It hurts my heart to watch you. . .”³⁰⁰ The soldier appears awkward and jagged in his pose, but Sassoon refers only to his legs, arm, and face – a fragmented image that juts out at angles and appears to have collapsed to the floor. He is alive, but barely. Sassoon closes the short poem with two italicized lines: “*You are too young to fall asleep for ever; / And when you sleep you remind me of the dead.*” This image of the sleeping dead is far from the peaceful recumbent figure, however. Rather, the reader imagines a soldier who has given up and would rather be dead than alive.

Owen uses similar imagery in “Asleep.” The poem portrays a young soldier who falls into a “deeper sleep” and, although Owen muses on different interpretations of death (the first being religious, the second being physical and environmental), he concludes the poem with a reference to the sleeping dead: “He sleeps. He sleeps less tremulous, less cold / Than we who must awake, and waking, say Alas!”³⁰¹ As with Sassoon’s soldier, death seems preferable to life, although Owen takes a step further and comments on this directly within those closing lines. These examples of the sleeping dead in Owen and Sassoon’s work suggest a general shared awareness of the idea; in referencing sleep as death, or vice versa, the poets call the reader’s attention to a broader issue within postwar mourning that connects the Great War to the emotions and fears of the people.

³⁰⁰Sassoon, “The Dug-Out” in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, 129.

³⁰¹Owen, “Asleep” in *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, ed. Lewis, 69.

Conclusion

Interwar English and German societies relied heavily on the metaphor of the sleeping dead with respect to the mourning and remembrance of the Great War. In England, the war popularized spiritualism (in the non-Christian sense of the term, with séances, etc.) because people *wanted* to communicate with their loved ones, and did *not* want to accept their deaths.³⁰² Additionally, English citizens felt that the war had not given them the “land fit for heroes” they had been promised.³⁰³ For the Germans, the notion of the sleeping dead became more palatable as German citizens grappled with their nation’s defeat, subsequent reparations, and the atmosphere of political evolution in the immediate postwar period. The image of fallen soldiers sleeping rather than defeated offered a chance for German citizens to rally around a dwindling nationalist identity for the sake of *avenging* their loved ones, a task which looked to be especially difficult in congruence with the Treaty of Versailles’ war guilt clause. The promises that had been made to both English and German soldiers before their deaths – promises of a nation that, through the war, would prove its strength and superiority on the global stage – became the promise of revenge for the men they had lost from 1914 to 1918. This idea of the sleeping dead significantly contributed to postwar English and German languages of commemoration and remembrance.

Historian Stefan Goebel views the sleeping dead as a term with clear origins in the Christian notion of resurrection and eternal life, suggesting a kind of existence “in

³⁰²Cannadine, “War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain,” 227.

³⁰³Quoted in Goebel, “Re-membered and Re-Mobilized,” 487.

the no-man's-land between death and life," as "a remarkable indication of the public denial of death and, sometimes, of the refusal to perceive the Great War as totally over."³⁰⁴ By maintaining this connection to the familiar Christian idea of eternal life, England and Germany made individual attempts to "console the bereaved or to remobilize the frustrated," respectively.³⁰⁵ In both cases (consolation and remobilization), mourning societies could once again find purpose: by remembering their loved ones as they moved ahead in the twentieth century, their sacrifices finally seemed to have a reuniting nationalist value. The war's staying power and aftereffects seemed infinite in the postwar period. Through individual, local, national, and literary commemoration, English and German mourners kept the war in the present throughout the years leading up to World War II.

During the years after the Armistice, England and Germany confronted their different Great War experiences with varying levels of similarity, a process that ultimately separated the development of the two nations even further. English commemoration, within the more comfortable experience of victory, could at least rally around a shared loss and belief that there had indeed been value to their sacrifices. German commemoration needed to fight an uphill battle against financial and political setbacks that crippled the nation; commemoration could only contribute so much to maintaining a national identity that had barely withstood the fires of war. Both English and German citizens realized, however, that their respective national identities – and therefore their nations – were neither infallible nor eternal. The interwar obsession with death represents an attempt at a national reinterpretation of death and mourning.³⁰⁶

Although the term "lost generation" is an exaggerated term in reference to the actual English and German death tolls, it does capture a broader European interpreta-

³⁰⁴Goebel, "Re-membered and Re-Mobilized," 488.

³⁰⁵Goebel, "Re-membered and Re-Mobilized," 487.

³⁰⁶Cannadine, "War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain," 189.

tion of what the war had done to the nations and their populations. Death, as Sigmund Freud wrote, no longer seemed to be a “chance event.”³⁰⁷ Rather, the war demonstrated death’s true impartiality and omnipresence. Even in the cases of “victorious” England and France, nationalism could no longer focus solely on the importance of sacrifice for the good of the nation; how could they, when there were simply too many grieving families left wondering if the sacrifices of their loved ones had had any value?³⁰⁸ The Great War experience, as well as the emotional turmoil and widespread hopelessness it inspired, drastically shifted the development of nationalism. Communal bereavement forced nationalist rhetoric into question.³⁰⁹ More importantly, it shone a spotlight on the Great War’s effects on European societies and identities overall.

Communities of mourning constructed physical memorials as symbols of their bereavement and as reminders of their sacrifices.³¹⁰ This process ultimately either contributed to national commemorative trends in the case of England, or struggled to find a national language of loss in the case of Germany. Both countries built memorials on four different levels: the individual or family, the local community, the nation, and in the English case, the level of the spiritual. Although the difference in national experiences is evident even on the level of the individual, it becomes especially clear in the case of local memorialization. Smaller English communities like Birkenhead emulated the national memorial in London with their construction of the Birkenhead Cenotaph. The imitation is an obvious attempt to incorporate the national approach onto a local level. On the other hand, the local German communities had no national example, instead approaching the construction of a new postwar process of mourning from the

³⁰⁷Quoted in Cannadine, “War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain,” 218.

³⁰⁸The word *victory* is used here with a caveat: “at the end of the First World War, virtually everyone agreed that none of the nations that had begun the conflict and bled themselves dry on its battlefields could claim a resounding victory.” See Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, 246.

³⁰⁹Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 6.

³¹⁰See Chapter Two of this thesis.

bottom-up.

Postwar commemoration built upon each nation's respective history, society, and culture. Poems and books could be reread, and were therefore powerful modes of remembrance. As seen in the German case with *Im Westen nichts Neues*, however, this also allowed for reinterpretation and misappropriation.³¹¹ However, it is in the act of reinterpreting a thing that one admits the thing's inherent potential value. By banning and publicly burning Remarque's novel, the Nazis recognized the strength of an anti-war narrative with a country that had barely survived the Great War and its aftermath. Remarque's fictional dead soldiers are "asleep" when one closes the book, but they reawaken upon rereading - and in so doing, they bring back the reader's memories and initial responses to (and interpretations of) the conflict. Rather than allowing for an organic evolution of these feelings, the Nazis' intervention attempted to remove the commemorative value of the book entirely and replace it with a condemnation of the weakness of prewar and interwar Germany.

Chapters Two and Three also examined the relationship between different kinds of memorialization and place; with the Great War's redefinition of place (i.e., the creation of place through a soldier's sacrifice on French soil), the subsequent methods of commemoration used the idea of place in different ways. Chapter Two offers obvious physical examples; regardless of whether the memorial was created on the individual, local, or national level, the site of the memorial became a place imbued with the community's memory of the Great War. This theory of place and memory being intimately intertwined relates equally well to the literary memorialization as discussed in Chapter Three. Although the places constructed by Owen, Sassoon, and Remarque were in their minds and the minds of their readers, both sides were aware of the origins of the imagined place: all three authors spent time in the trenches, and all three called upon

³¹¹See Chapter Three of this thesis.

their own personal experiences to convey the war to the civilian population. Their own personal “language[s] of loss” harkened to a broader national imagination centered on specific places – French towns, battlefields, trenches, and cemeteries.³¹²

Throughout the interwar years, these physical and literary attempts at memorialization represented the attempts of the bereaved to fill in the gaps in the traditional mourning process.³¹³ The opinions of English citizens ultimately contributed more to interwar English identity and the nations’ process of remembrance; the public’s power emphasized an acceptance of the nation’s experience of the Great War and its upheaval of traditional placial understanding and value. The German attempts to do the same were sadly unsuccessful; the state, embroiled first in revolution, then hyperinflation, and finally a decade-long political gridlock, could not play the same crucial role in assisting its citizens through developing a new mourning process. The German bereaved had to rely on individual and local attempts that, unsurprisingly, lacked the national cohesion as strongly exemplified in England by the war poets, the London Cenotaph, and the Unknown Warrior.

On the whole, Europe’s obsession with nationalism and a strong, united national identity did not diminish after H.G. Wells (perhaps optimistically) christened the Great War “the war to end all wars” in 1914. Sadly, in England, Germany, and other countries around the world, the idea of the nation continued to override the idea of the individual. Adrian Gregory speaks of the role of national sentiment in the interwar period: “[w]ars... raise the question of what the nation is and what it stands for. Such heightened ‘national sentiment’ does not disappear when the shooting stops. A language which justifies death in wars will continue to justify those deaths afterwards.”³¹⁴ His words portray commemoration as an attempt at uniting a nation that had been torn apart through

³¹²Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 5.

³¹³Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 26.

³¹⁴Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 5.

the baptism-by-fire experience of trench warfare and a war of attrition. Arguably, it is not just the War but also the idea of the Nation that consumes the past, present, and future of Europe, constructing a shared history and preferred memory for the sake of national identity and unity.

The experience of the Great War shook the foundations of European society, but it was in how it was commemorated, and how it has been remembered since then, that people can best understand the extent to which interwar Europe was thrown into the search for a new “language of loss.”³¹⁵ Europeans used commemorative attempts to remind themselves that they had fought, suffered, died, and mourned together on the same pieces of unfamiliar land miles away from home, thus renewing their ties to their nation and its shared history.

³¹⁵Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 5.

Bibliography

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London; New York: Verso, 1991.

"As Others Mark World War One Centenary, Germans Prefer to Forget." *Reuters*. Last modified 19 March 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/19/>.

"Birkenhead Cenotaph." *The Times* July 1925. Accessed 16 April 2014 via University of Edinburgh Library.

Booth, Allyson. *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space Between Modernism and the First World War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Cannadine, David. "War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain." In *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, edited by Joachim Whaley, 187-242. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982.

Casey, Edward. "How to Get From Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time." In *Senses of Place*, edited by Steven Feld and Keith Basso, Ch. 1. Santa Fe; Seattle: School of American Research Press; University of Washington Press, 1996.

Cobley, Evelyn. *Representing War: Form and Ideology in First World War Narratives*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

Cole, Sarah. *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Cole, Sarah. "Modernism, Male Intimacy, and the Great War." *ELH* 68, no.2 (2001): 469-500.

Eksteins, Modris. *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989.

- Firda, Richard Arthur. *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993.
- Forner, Sean A. "War Commemoration and the Republic in Crisis: Weimar Germany and the Neue Wache." *Central European History* 35, no.4 (2002): 513-49.
- Frantzen, Allen J. *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- “‘Gefallen Für Das Vaterland’. In Erinnerung an Den Landwehrmann Jakob Paul.” *Europeana 1914-1918*. Accessed 3 January 2015. <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/15691>.
- Goebel, Stefan. “Beyond Discourse? Bodies and Memories of Two World Wars.” *Journal of Contemporary History* (London) no. 2 (2007): 377–86.
- Goebel, Stefan. “Re-Membered and Re-Mobilized: The ‘Sleeping Dead’ in Interwar Germany and Britain.” In *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 4 (2004): 487-501.
- Goebel, Stefan. *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Gregory, Adrian. *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1919-1946*. Oxford; Providence: Berg, 1994.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Hamilton, Richard F, and Holger H Herwig. *The Origins of World War I*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Hanson, Neil. *Unknown Soldiers: The Story of the Missing of the First World War*. New York: Knopf, 2006.
- “Has Poetry Distorted Our View of World War One?” *BBC Guides*. Accessed 12 April 2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z38rq6f>.
- Inglis, Ken. “War Memorials: Ten Questions for Historians.” In *Guermondconfcont Guerres*

Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains, no. 167 (1992): 5–21.

- Jotquadrat. *Jakobus Linden: Kniender Soldat, Denkmal Zur Erinnerung an Die Hemmericher Männer, Die Im Ersten Weltkrieg Gefallen Oder an Den Kriegsfolgen Gestorben Sind. Jennerstraße, Bornheim-Hemmerich*. 7 June 2011. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Linden_Gefallenenmal_Hemmerich.jpg.
- Karolides, Nicholas J. *Literature Suppressed on Political Grounds*. New York: Facts on File, 1998.
- Keegan, John. *The First World War*. New York: A. Knopf distributed by Random House, 1999.
- Kelly, Alfred. *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860-1914*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981.
- Kienitz, Sabine. "Body Damage: War Disability and Constructions of Masculinity in Weimar Germany." Translated by Monique Sheer. In *Home/front the Military, War, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany*, edited by Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum. Oxford; New York: Berg, 2002. Accessed online. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10032045>.
- King, Alex. *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance*. Oxford; New York: Berg, 1998.
- Kolinsky, Eva, and Wilfried van der Will. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern German Culture*. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- "Kriegschronik Zum Gedenken an Die Brüder Johann Und Josef Helmberger." *Europeana 1914-1918*. Accessed 3 January 2015. <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/2238>.
- Laqueur, Thomas. "Memory and Naming in the Great War." In *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, edited by John Gillis, Ch. 8. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Lehmann, John. *The English Poets of the First World War*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1982.
- Levsen, Sonja. "Constructing Elite Identities: University Students, Military Masculinity and the Consequences of the Great War in Britain and Germany." *Past and Present* 198, no. 1 (2008): 147–83.

“List of World War I Video Games.” *Wikipedia*, last updated 29 March 2015. http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List_of_World_War_I_video_games&oldid=654031575.

“List of World War II Video Games.” *Wikipedia*, last updated 6 April 2015. http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List_of_World_War_II_video_games&oldid=655187508.

Lloyd, David. *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia, and Canada, 1919-1939*. Oxford; New York: Berg, 1998.

Loughlin, James. “Mobilising the Sacred Dead: Ulster Unionism, the Great War and the Politics of Remembrance.” In *Ireland and the Great War: A War to Unite Us All?*, edited by Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press; Palgrave, 2002.

Mandler, Peter. *The English National Character: The History of an Idea From Edmund Burke to Tony Blair*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006.

McDowell, Margaret. “Siegfried Sassoon (8 September 1886 – 3 September 1967).” In *British Poets, 1914-1945*, edited by Donald E. Stanford, 20:321–35. Vol. 20. Detroit: Gale Research, 1983. Accessed online.

McDowell, Margaret. “Wilfred Owen (18 March 1893 – 4 November 1918).” In *British Poets, 1914-1945*, edited by Donald E. Stanford, 20:258–69. Vol. 20. Detroit: Gale Research, 1983. Accessed online.

McWilliam, Rohan. *Popular Politics in Nineteenth-Century England*. London; New York: Routledge, 1998.

Nora, Pierre. “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire.” *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7–24.

Nora, Pierre, and Lawrence D. Kritzman. *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*. Vol. 2. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Olick, Jeffrey K., Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy. *The Collective Memory Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Owen, Wilfred. *Poems*, edited by Siegfried Sassoon. Edinburgh; New York: Morrison and Gibbs Ltd.; B.W. Huebsch, 1919.

- Owen, Wilfred. *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, edited by Edward Blunden. London: Chatto & Windus, 1946.
- Owen, Wilfred. *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*, edited by C. Day Lewis. New York: New Directions Books, 1963.
- Prickett, David James. "The Soldier Figure in Discourses on Masculinity in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany." *Seminar – A Journal of Germanic Studies* 44, no. 1 (2008): 68–86.
- Quinn, Patrick J. *The Great War and the Missing Muse: The Early Writings of Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon*. Selinsgrove; London; Cranbury: Susquehanna University Press; Associated University Presses, 1994.
- Remarque, Erich Maria. *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Translated by A.W. Wheen. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1945.
- Remarque, Erich Maria. *Im Westen nichts Neues*. Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1929.
- Sassoon, Siegfried. *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1983.
- Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003.
- Schulze, Hagen. *The Course of German Nationalism: From Frederick the Great to Bismarck, 1763-1867*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Sharples, J. "Public Sculpture of Cheshire and Merseyside (excluding Liverpool), E. Morris and E. Roberts." *BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 155, no. 1328 (2013): 782.
- "Shell Shock." *British Pathé*. Accessed 3 January 2015. <http://www.britishpathe.com/workspaces/BritishPathe/ww1-shell-shock>.
- Smith, Leonard V., Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, and Annette Becker. *France and the Great War, 1914-1918*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

- “Sterbebild von Franz Xaver Heimler.” *Europeana 1914-1918*. Accessed 3 January 2015. <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/3132>.
- Tate, Trudi. *Modernism, History and the First World War*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press; St. Martin’s Press, 1998.
- “The Startling Tribute to WWI’s Poignant Poet.” *BBC*, 10 November 2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15659821>.
- Tombs, Robert, and Emile Chabal. *Britain and France in Two World Wars: Truth, Myth and Memory*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Tompkins, Jane P. *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.
- Tuan, Yi-fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
- Valiant Hearts: The Great War*. Produced by Bruno Galet, developed by Ubisoft Montpellier. Montpellier, France: Ubisoft Entertainment, 2014.
- “*Valiant Hearts: The Great War* Game Story.” *Valiant Hearts*. Ubisoft Entertainment. Accessed 11 March 2015, <http://valianthearts.ubi.com/game/en-US/valiant-hearts/>.
- Valiant Hearts E3 Trailer [US]*. *Youtube*. 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MP8q5F6dFqQ&feature=youtube_gdata_player.
- Valiant Hearts: The Great War - Come Back Trailer [US]*. *Youtube*. 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNmxLje9wes&feature=youtube_gdata_player.
- Watson, Janet. *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Whalen, Robert. *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War 1914-1939*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.
- Winter, Jay. *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Winter, Jay. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Winter, Jay, and Blaine Baggett. *The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century*. New York: Penguin Studio, 1996.

Winter, Jay, and Antoine Prost. *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Winter, Jay, and Emmanuel Sivan. *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Woolf, S. J. *Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the Present: A Reader*. London; New York: Routledge, 1996.

“WW1 Poet Wilfred Owen’s Shrewsbury Home to Get Listed Status.” *BBC News*. Accessed 12 April 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-shropshire-30620829>.