

Concepts of Sacrifice and Trauma in Australian War Commemoration

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The concept of sacrifice plays a significant role in commemorative ritual because it aids collective amnesia and the forgetting of war trauma. Collective amnesia is the product of several processes, both official and individual, which work to disguise aspects of war trauma represented in war memorial design and in the rituals accompanying war commemoration in memorial landscapes. Although many aspects of remembering and forgetting at war memorials exist in the present age, sacrifice is a concept still invoked to attach meaning to death in war. Although the major conflicts of the twentieth century have become more distant in time, trauma induced by war through the agency of postmemory is still disguised by the notion of sacrifice for the nation. As latter-day war memorials attempt to render different and more difficult aspects of war experience to those of the past, the concept of sacrifice continues to be evoked as a cover for the uncomfortable aspects of war remembrance.

In 2012, I attended the Anzac Day services at Gallipoli in Turkey. It was the mid-morning ceremony at Lone Pine several hours after the end of the Dawn Service at North Beach near Anzac Cove. About 5,000 people attended, many sporting clothing emblazoned with symbols of Australia or wrapped in Australian flags. The atmosphere was festive, with a presenter, in army uniform, telling jokes and stories to the crowd. Next to the Stone of Remembrance, a band played and a woman (also in army uniform) sang songs including *You Raise Me Up* by Josh Groban (Figure 1). There were hearty cheers for the Turkish veterans in grey uniforms as they were seated. Julia Gillard, the Australian Prime Minister at the time, entered in the company of Victoria Cross winner Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith, and both moved among the stands, chatting and shaking hands.

The crowd knew the Anzac service format and solemnly stood to attention and murmured the injunction 'lest we forget' at the appropriate times. Not a hair turned when, with great show, a pair of helmeted Turkish soldiers goose-stepped their way to lay a wreath on the Stone of Remembrance on behalf of the Turkish Government. Speeches contained no reference to 'enemies' or to soldiers fighting for 'freedom', as past ceremonies might have claimed. However, there was abundant allusion to both Turkish and Australian sorrow and pain for what had occurred at Gallipoli, reflecting Ken Inglis's (2001) assertion that the Anzac concept now had more concern for the 'tragic' rather than the 'epic' narrative of earlier years and was more reflective and conciliatory (pp 439–451). The resentment at the loss of life was palpable, but there was never any hint of the deaths being meaningless – for Australia or Turkey. 'Sacrifice' was a word used several times although its meaning had been stripped of jingoistic overtones and

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Figure 1: Anzac Day, Lone Pine, Gallipoli 2012. (Photo: author's own.)

was now tied to a shared sorrow with Turkey. But it still appeared to mean that it was something given for the benefit of others.

In this paper, the term Anzac refers to the Australian and New Zealand mythology and ideology that have arisen from the Anzac military action, described later in this paper. The Anzac narrative informs the national identity of both countries. The perceived brave and resourceful qualities that soldiers demonstrated at Gallipoli were taken as values for citizenship and are commemorated on Anzac Day each year on 25 April.

The form of the ceremony at Gallipoli (and elsewhere for that matter) has not essentially changed since 1929, when the service was established (Seal, 2004, p 109). Seal sees Anzac ceremonies as containing 'competing themes of commemoration and celebration', elements that emerged in the Anzac service described above. He analyses Anzac Day and its ceremonies as a festival where the 'demotic spirit' of the digger is at odds with 'sacred memories', and high spirits and larrikinism compete with the 'official solemn observance' of the actual service (ibid, p 122).

Despite the inclusiveness of the ceremony and the presence of the Prime Minister along with female members of the armed forces, it was overwhelmingly masculine. Perhaps this was an echo of Joy Damousi's (1999, p 36) observation that early ceremonies sidelined women – as passive grieving mothers and lovers – in favour of soldiers and their commemoration. The definition of Anzac 'sacrifice' is still inclined to recognise the military, and not necessarily those who had lost loved ones.

The accepting, conciliatory and inclusive nature of the performance I witnessed would have been seen as outrageous in past times. Anzac and its rites are being moulded to suit new generations whose outlook on the world and their nation differs from that of their forebears. But while the story of Anzac and its messages are being reshaped for generations far removed from the original conflict, war trauma lingers.

Today, memorial design has moved from a preference for classically inspired memorials to those that are more abstract and interactive – reflecting a loosening

of the conservative design championed by the Returned and Services League, the traditional keeper of the Anzac message and its rituals. The current preference for non-figurative, abstract and interactive memorial landscapes caters for a population that has begun to lose a direct connection to the experience of war. Despite this apparent disconnection, the distance to war-induced traumas of the past is bridged somewhat by the effect of postmemory – a ‘retrospective witnessing by adoption’ of the trauma of our forebears (Hirsch, 2001, p 10).

The concept of sacrifice is central to Australian war memorials as places of commemorative ritual. I argue that sacrifice is a particular tradition of forgetting that has coloured the practices of commemoration and masked war trauma. While quite different aspects of remembering and forgetting at war memorials have developed over time, sacrifice is a concept still invoked to give meaning to death in war. Although the major conflicts of the twentieth century have become more distant in time, traumas induced by wars are still masked by the notions of sacrifice for the nation. As places at the centre of commemorative rites, new war memorials (whatever their intended rendering of war experience) tend to reify and abstract (and thus mask) unpleasant aspects of war memory.

An age of memory

Since the mid-twentieth century, academic and public interest in memory has grown steadily, as manifest in memorials, anniversaries, nostalgia and documentaries that elevate memory as legitimate history. The genealogy industry is a good example of the growth of the memory business. Many websites are now dedicated to finding ancestors, reinforced by popular television shows such as *Who Do You Think You Are?* and *Finding Your Roots*.

Accompanying this ‘memory boom’ has been a resurgence of Anzac Day and its rites – most evident during the 1990 Anzac Day ceremonies at Gallipoli (Inglis, 2001, p 442). Yet the present heightened interest in war memory has its roots in the emotional conflicts surrounding the repatriation of soldiers’ bodies during and after the First World War that brought into question personal versus official remembrance. Conflicts over the repatriation of bodies and the material forms of remembrance in tombstones and monuments profoundly influenced how the following generations made sense of that war, war in general and its place in the mythology of nationhood (Heffernan, 1995, p 285). By taking control of soldiers’ bodies ‘collective commemoration triumphed over personal and private desires’ (ibid, p 313). Here, the nation controlled mythological narratives, such as Anzac, and induced a duty to remember that still provides opportunities for politically controlled narratives. For example, the Australian War Memorial and the Australian Department of Veterans’ Affairs both govern war narrative through their programmes of information, exhibition and funding for memorial endeavours.

Essential to understanding commemoration practice in Australia is the national narrative of Anzac and the rites it has generated. Australia’s first national engagement in war at Gallipoli in 1915 was (and still is) seen as a rite of passage from colony to nationhood. It has become a core national mythology, with the hero of Anzac – the ‘digger’ – a template of citizenship and behaviour. The Anzac tradition is closely shared with New Zealand, a partner in the Gallipoli

enterprise, although Australia tends to dominate the Anzac myth – an annoyance to New Zealand. New Zealand's equal claim on Anzac is often forgotten in Australian war narratives and commemoration rhetoric.

Australians aspire to 'digger' qualities, which are celebrated on Anzac Day each year. The memory and mythology of Gallipoli still pervade Anzac Day ceremonies and are presented as part of Australia's national collective memory. The persistent retelling of Anzac mythology in the press, in entertainment and in ceremonies reinforces the legitimacy of memorial sites as 'sacred'. This mythology does have its detractors, however, and has been accused of dominating and militarising Australia's history (Lake and Reynolds, 2010) – a view in turn criticised as revisionist or naive (Bendle, 2009; Blainey, 2010).

In the 1960s, both the Anzac narrative and Anzac Day were seen as a failing militaristic ideology and commemoration. Yet since then, through the effect of complex politics, the 'age of memory' and an increasing Australian nationalism, they have been reinvigorated and rehabilitated. The growing numbers of people attending Anzac ceremonies and making pilgrimages to Gallipoli are evidence that Australians are still seeking confirmation of nationhood and identity. The reasons that people attend ceremonies and continue to build memorials are complex and multifaceted. Australian academic analysis of commemoration is currently coloured by arguments about whether there is genuine regard and sorrow for the loss of ancestors or whether more cynical, capitalistic and nationalistic triggers are involved for the resurgence of war commemoration. Debates have also centred on whether current memory work on Anzac is being popularly sentimentalised rather than critically appraised (McKenna and Ward, 2007, p 144; Scates, 2006, pp 100–121).

Forgetting war

Paul Connerton (2009) writes that a mutual relationship exists between memorials and forgetting. Once a memorial is built, there is no obligation to remember, as the memorial must then carry the weight of memory (*ibid*, p 29). In a somewhat similar vein, Rowlands (1999a) asserts that, once the grieving process is completed, memorials are no longer needed and they atrophy into monuments (p 131). However, this is not the experience in Australia where the number of memorials is actually increasing along with the numbers of people attending remembrance ceremonies. And while memorials and observers of Anzac rituals are growing in number, memorials continue to mask certain aspects of war history, memory and trauma.

Memorials are places of political contest and meaning (Winter, 1995, p 82). After the First World War, people often had difficulty in aligning grief and loss with the narrative of nationhood. Joy Damousi (1999, p 27) argues that the 'moral ambiguity of the war' was challenged by grief and loss, which was deflected and 'renamed as glory and honour'. In this context, Anzac mythology and its ideal of national sacrifice emerged as a narrative to make sense of the violent deaths. But, as Nuala Johnson (2012) warns, dangers exist in drawing a single narrative from complex geographies. This may ultimately mask the complexities of memory and loss and hinder healing (*ibid*, p 239). Moreover, despite attempts at manipulation, it cannot be anticipated how people will read the narratives of memorial sites and

designs ‘nor does their establishment indicate a coherent ideological basis among officials of a site or regime’ (Till, 2003, p 297).

For Paul Ricoeur (2004), forgetting is a failure of memory and an attack on its reliability. Forgetting is linked to the distance in time from the original event. Over time, memorials eventually fall victim to forgetting and neglect. The first form of profound forgetting is through the ‘effacement of traces’, which may mean the suppression of memory for political, ideological or emotional reasons (ibid, p 414). Against these concealments, Ricoeur introduces an ‘ethics of memory’, which may help to underpin more positive uses of the exercise of memory – particularly within the ‘construction of personal and broader collective memories’ (Johnson, 2011, p 240). Ricoeur is optimistic that memories may play a more active and didactic role in moral outcomes to remembering violent acts (Ricoeur, 1999, p 10). While this may have been attempted in some memorials, such as the one to the Omagh bombing attack in Ireland in 1998 (Johnson, 2011, p 255), many war memorials will still attempt to disguise aspects of remembrance including by masking the cost of war to participants and survivors, maintaining mythologies, denying particular narratives and events, and veiling corporeal and spiritual corruption.

Moriarty (1995) argues that figurative war memorials from the First World War mask the horrendous nature of death on the battlefield. Statues portray the soldier as whole and uninjured, necessary to facilitate the mourning process of those attending ceremonies. Diverting the viewer’s attention away from thoughts of death and injury, the sculpture undergoes a process of amnesia or ‘redescription’, re-presenting the body as classically flawless (ibid, p 19). In many Australian towns after the First World War, the soldier statue – based on classical prototypes – aligned the Australian soldier with the classical warrior hero and was merely a classical figure dressed in modern military uniform. Most were sculpted in non-aggressive poses such as at ease, at attention or in the mourning position of reversed arms. Belligerent poses were avoided as inappropriate and contrary to the (supposedly) peaceful message of the memorial and for those seeking solace. The realities of war were to be neutralised in favour of a model that referred to the ancient Greek and Homeric notion of war as a masculine pursuit and the *kalos thanatos* or beautiful death. Here, the ancient warrior tradition was joined with youthful beauty and noble sacrifice (Figure 2). It should be pointed out that this tradition of representation is not confined to the period after the First World War and, recently, soldier sculptures commemorating the Vietnam War have been erected in Perth (2002) and Adelaide (2006). Similarly, figurative (and overtly masculine) soldier statues comprise the Australian Army Memorial (1989) in Canberra.

Carden-Coyne (2009) advances Moriarty’s argument by claiming that both figurative and non-figurative memorials in classical form stand for an absent body. The First World War memorials had ‘profound social and emotional functions’ and a ‘healing aesthetic’ that masked the horrors of war and worked towards ‘reorienting the memory of war away from the violence and physical damage towards peace and community cohesion’ (ibid, p 316). The body of the memorial stood for the body of the soldier. Memorials established reciprocity between the monument and the bereaved, intertwining ‘death and life’ and



Figure 2: North Fremantle War Memorial soldier statue. (Photo: author’s own.)

emphasising ‘sacrifice and nobility’ (Carden-Coyne, loc cit). This reciprocity also occurs in a commemorative rite where the memorial (standing for the body) acts in mediation between the living and the dead, transforming the body into something that is incorruptible and permanent. Memory traces of the dead, in the form of names, are inscribed into the memorial, further personalising it to individual families. An important part of this reciprocity between a memorial space and the memorial practices of its users is the notion of sacrifice, which effectively masks any notion that the deaths have been needless.

Sacrificial rites

Sacrifice is the concept that helps to give memorial spaces and ceremonies their ‘sacred’ quality. Notions that the fallen soldiers ‘died for us’ reference Christian ideology – that through Christ’s crucifixion we are redeemed and saved. The sacrifice of Christ is aligned with the sacrifice of the fallen, which stands against the argument that lives were wasted in war. Barbara Ehrenreich (2011, p 18) notes the widespread notion of a ‘beautiful sacrificial death’ in war amongst tribal peoples as well as advanced industrialised urban cultures. Mosse (1990) describes commemoration after the First World War as the ‘Cult of the Fallen Soldier’, a civil religion in which Christian imagery was reinforced through rites that symbolised the purification and resurrection of the fallen soldier. The war was compared to the Last Supper and soldiers’ deaths to Christ’s martyrdom (ibid, p 75). Here, war itself becomes a type of sacrificial rite where the young are cleansed of moral stain and their killing is a dedication to the nation (Rowlands, 1999b, p 131).

Through the concept of sacrifice, a memorial space and its accompanying rituals justify the slaughter of its soldiers for the greater good. Anzac rhetoric portraying the Gallipoli expedition as a ‘baptism of fire’ that formed the nation (rather than a profound military failure that achieved little) is an example of this thinking. It is unthinkable that the deaths were worthless and, therefore, the cloak of national sacrifice is evoked to render the deaths as valued. Through the mythologies of the nation, death is elevated and, to some after the First World War, death for the nation became a glorious sacrifice. ‘It was with the blood of the fallen on Anzac Day that the seal was set on the determination to guard our liberties with our lives’ (*Listening Post*, 1928, p 3).

Today, the meaning of soldier sacrifice is perhaps not so straightforward. In recent times, Anzac has begun to cut ties with the conservative attitudes of the past and develop a more inclusive ideology. Memorial forms – loosened from the classical – have begun to explore modernist and abstract ways of expressing the loss and distress of war (Stephens, 2012, p 7). Emanating from Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982) in Washington, DC, memorials are being built that tell more complex stories about war experience and its effect on participants and survivors (Figure 3). In these memorials, the soldier is often not a hero – nor a victim. Savage (2009, p 266) calls these memorials ‘therapeutic’ because – like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial – their programme is to heal or instruct rather than glorify. The notion of national sacrifice in these memorials is more difficult to discern. This may be especially true if the memorial attempts to create a blank canvas or ‘creative space’ for people to find their own ways of dealing with trauma (Zittoun, 2004, p 4).



Figure 3: Vietnam Veterans Memorial Washington, DC. (Photo: courtesy of Elizabeth Karol.)

A good example of the new memorial landscape is the Korean War Memorial at Moore Park in Sydney (2010) by Jane Cavanough. Using hard materials, it tells a bitter, complex and emotional story of warfare on the Korean Peninsula through a yin and yang plan symbolising the binaries of chaos and order, which were a feature of the warfare on the peninsula. Abstracted and jagged forms reflect the harsh landscape and climate where battles were fought. Two large granite stones either side of a winding path have been quarried from Kapyong in Korea where a major battle was fought. Stylised bronze flowers – each representing a soldier from New South Wales who died – rise from the bleak landscape of the memorial (Figure 4). This memorial is both a literal and a symbolic ‘creative space’ that introduces a sense of darkness – which is not generally a feature of memorial design. No data is available to indicate the level of public acceptance except that ceremonies are well attended by political figures, families of veterans and the Korean community. Another indication of its acceptance as a major Australian memorial is that the Federal Minister for Veterans’ Affairs declared it a memorial of national significance in 2013.

As the number of people with direct war experience in Australia is diminishing, the ties to that experience are loosening, allowing new generations to interpret war commemoration in their own terms. Nevertheless, the form of commemoration ceremonies (such as for Anzac Day) has changed little since communities came together for ceremonies during the early 1920s. Essential elements comprising these ceremonies are: the retelling of the Gallipoli narrative, Christian prayers, one minute of silence, the Last Post, wreath laying (a form of tribute or perhaps suzerainty), the ode and the national anthem.

In recent times, ‘reflections’ in the form of thoughtful speeches or poetic readings have been added to the programme – usually about sadness or the cost of war. In the 1920s and the 1950s, many people attending Anzac ceremonies would



Figure 4: Korean War Memorial, Moore Park, Sydney. (Photo: author's own.)

have had direct associations to loved ones lost in war, or their own distressing war experience. The concept of national sacrifice was more significant to mediate personal traumas. Nowadays, however, this connection is much less direct and more complex. While the form of Anzac commemoration is similar, its meanings have shifted to suit new generations who have no experience of wartime. This is not to say that the trauma of succeeding generations is necessarily diminished, as argued below. In these ceremonies, narratives that repetitively and persistently retell wartime experience reinforce a sense of national identity and fashion a national story. Former enemies (particularly Turkey) are now worthy participants in this identity through a shared sorrow of loss. Despite a general decline in religion in Australia over the twentieth century, the Christian element remains, and it is this quasi-religious tone to commemorative programmes that helps to lend authority to Anzac ceremonies and the 'sacred' duty not to forget. The notion of sacrifice to the nation is still present and retains the power to mask or forget the waste of war.

Although it is made clear that war is wasteful, present generations have the same psychological need to avoid recognising that ancestors' deaths were meaningless. To dodge this possibility, the concept of sacrifice is invoked as a form of social amnesia. Present generations are still captive to the distress of the past through the postmemory of ancestors' trauma and experiences and, in response, sacrifice is summoned as a form of masking.

Masking trauma

Some experiences (such as violence and trauma) can be purposely forgotten, masked or neutralised for political and emotional reasons. Stanley Cohen (2001, pp 10–12) argues there is a 'wider cultural pool of collective forgetting' that may be labelled 'social amnesia'. This is both a protection against reality and a failure

to accept the implications of a grave situation. There is ambiguity in our socially produced amnesias when the situation is too threatening to accept and too difficult to ignore (ibid, p 12). Nevertheless, what is repressed socially can disappear over time through 'cultural slippage' when, through the erosion of time, the knowledge of uncomfortable pasts eventually disappears. Conversely, societies may choose to forget certain things that remain as open secrets or are 'knowingly not known' where 'we know and [do] not know at the same time' (ibid, p 5). It could be argued that the forms of masking in Australian commemorations, as discussed above, are 'chosen amnesias' (Buckley-Zistel, 2006, p 134). Camouflage of the unpleasant aspects of war is not necessarily something that is coerced – rather, these aspects are just not accessed. In the past, remembering may have related to personal loss or experiences of war but, recently, it may be concerned with a 'more totemic and ritualised' remembrance rather than outright remembering (Bollard, 2013, p 10).

Trauma is one form of deep emotional response to wartime experience that is masked in commemoration and can therefore often be 'knowingly not known'. While war memorial spaces and ceremonies are changing to render more complex narratives about war, there are limits to the capacity to sensibly mediate the trauma of the past. Trauma ordinarily refers to a wound inflicted on the body but here it is inflicted on the mind. It is induced when the ordinary systems of life are breached and overwhelmed by a bewildering and catastrophic episode.

What happens just does not make sense. When traumatic events are remembered it is not a question of remembering what we thought happened. We can only remember what we saw: there is nothing else to remember. We did not interpret what we saw at the time. We could not (Edkins, 2003, p 38).

In this sense, trauma-inducing episodes experienced by soldiers cannot be articulated or symbolised, as no language exists to describe the trauma itself. Edkins maintains that we cannot address the trauma directly without risking its gentrification. 'We cannot remember it as something that took place in time, because this would neutralise it.' This means that any attempts to describe the trauma risk trivialising it as it is beyond symbolisation and beyond attempts at finding meaning (ibid, p 15). Fontress and Wickham (1992) argue that memory mediates all consciousness and that our world is given meaning through our memories. Traumatic memory, however, is different in that it struggles to make meaning of a traumatic event, which leads to 'a breakdown of psychological functioning (memory, behaviour, emotion) as a result of an unbearably intense experience that is life threatening to the self or others' (Hunt, 2010, p 7).

Because trauma cannot be symbolised, it is denied resolution. In this context, little is left to describe trauma in commemoration 'save the language of the very social and political order that was responsible [for it] in the first place' (Edkins, 2003, p 8). Building on this argument, Edkins suggests it is outside the capacity of war memorials to articulate trauma because no symbolic language is available. As there is a constant negotiation between memorials and the people who use them, this argument can be extended to commemorative practices in memorial spaces. Here, memorials or commemorative practice can only use an authorised social and political language or concept, such as sacrifice, to cloak the unvoiced trauma. Edkins does offer a way out of this dilemma by suggesting that some memorials

are so devoid of political and ideological statement and become such popular places of reverence they 'encircle' the trauma and allow it to be recognised. They 'mark it in its very impossibility' (ibid, p 15).

Edwin Lutyens's London Cenotaph and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, are offered as examples of memorials that avoid political comment and allow a creative space for people to acknowledge their trauma. There may be some credence in this perspective; a recent study suggests that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has been useful for treating Vietnam War veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (Watkins et al, 2010, p 369). However, I would argue that classical memorials also encircle trauma through the mechanism of cloaking them in the notion of sacrifice. The memorial and the rites in its spaces (whatever their forms) still represent an attempt to repair the rupture of trauma through the notion of sacrifice, whether this healing is successful or not.

While doubts remain as to whether trauma can be articulated in memorial spaces or commemorative rites, it is possible that its effects can be transmitted down generations and that mechanisms such as postmemory may keep alive the notion of sacrifice as its veil – albeit changed by present generational contexts.

Postmemory

Hirsch (2001, p 10) describes the process of postmemory as the 'retrospective witnessing by adoption' where people grow up among dominant family narratives from previous generations. 'It is a question of adopting the traumatic experiences – and thus also the memories – of others as experiences one might oneself have had, and of inscribing them into one's own life story.' She argues that although future generations' experience of the traumas of forbears is mimetic, removed from the actual events themselves, the future generations adopt those past experiences nonetheless and become 'vulnerable to their effects' (ibid, p 8). Repeatedly exposing people to the same images of horrific events can 'produce in themselves the effects of traumatic repetition that plague the victims of trauma' (ibid, p 29).

That words and images can communicate bodily and emotional experience is reinforced by Jill Bennett (1998) who notes that images can be used to convey a certain 'truth', that they can tell a story and they make manifest its impact by articulating sensory memory. In other words, images can communicate an emotional and bodily experience by triggering generic memories in others (ibid, p 10). In these contexts, fragments of the past – narratives and images that stand for what was directly witnessed – are processed into a simulacrum of that memory.

Crownshaw (2007) sees a danger in the theories of postmemory where the adoption of another's memories can lead to its colonisation. Such a takeover may eventually 'annihilate' the original memory, leading to a 'remembrance of self rather than other' (ibid, p 191). Hirsch (2012) acknowledges this risk but positions postmemory as being different from such 're-memory' and re-enactment. Identifications (with past trauma) 'need not be literal or essential' for them to have a similar effect (pp 83 and 87). Postmemory has its sceptics, but there is evidence that a type of trauma, such as that caused by the violence of war, can be transmitted through generations. This is especially evident in families suffering loss in war (Stephens, 2014, pp 14–15).

Families – even removed by several generations – can connect their histories with sympathy for ancestors’ trauma of war and loss. The conditions in which the ancestor experienced war are now constantly replayed in the news and broadcast in films, books and documentaries. Before this present age of media and memory, such images were restricted because they were not available or able to be broadcast in the same way. Also, trauma was not articulated at the time; many people were reluctant or unable to talk about their experiences. The excess of war and atrocity images now available provokes a sense of shock, something like trauma, in people reflecting on an ancestor’s war experience, conflating the image, trauma and ancestor. People who visit memorials or participate in commemorative rites are now infused with images and vicarious experiences not available to previous generations.

The idea of sacrifice in the service of the nation has been regenerated through this age of memory and its ubiquitous war media, which may help explain why there has been such a growing interest in commemoration. Under the barrage of images and information now circulating the internet and other media avenues, ‘cultural slippage’ of war experience and trauma has not occurred. Through advances in technology, the representations of the past are endlessly recycled, providing a sort of ‘prosthetic memory’, ‘a mediated access to a past that individuals have not experienced creating “memories” that transcend space and time’ (Hamilton, 2003, p 86).

Distance in time from the major wars of the twentieth century has not diminished the trauma of death in war as a form of symbolic defeat. Memorial landscapes and their rites must still dissuade that what is being memorialised was *not* meaningless.

Conclusion

In the context of the Anzac narrative, the conception and application of sacrifice helps in forgetting that trauma and death in war may have been meaningless. Such a void in meaning is inconceivable, and the notion of sacrifice is invoked to mask hopelessness. Sacrifice is still used to attach meaning to death in war. Through mechanisms such as postmemory, the trauma of ancestors is transmitted through generations and, with this, the notion of sacrifice, which helps cloak the futility of their deaths. Buried within this argument is part of the reason for the resurgence of Anzac commemoration over the past three decades. The notion of sacrifice needs to be continually reinforced in ceremonial ritual to mask the trauma of the past.

While war memorial design is changing to a more open critique of war and its effects, the realities of war experience are abstracted. Rituals on Anzac Day create and hold meaning for both the nation and individuals, and Australians still do crave meaning for the trauma of their forebears. The employment of the concept of sacrifice is a form of forgetting that screens that trauma.

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