REMEDIANING THE FIRST WORLD WAR: LITERARY AND VISUAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF ENGLISH-CANADIAN CULTURAL MEMORY

by

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Abstract

“Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts – the book of their deeds, the book of their words and the book of their art.” When Paul Konody, art advisor for the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) First World War artist program, began his introductory essay to the exhibition catalogue *Art & War* (1919) with these words, he was making connections among the disciplines of history (deeds), literature (words), and (visual) art. Konody’s interdisciplinary understanding of representational media provides an appropriate point of entry for this dissertation, which investigates the intersectionalities of English-Canadian First World War art and literature. Building on a theoretical framework rooted in the concept and practice of remediation which, briefly, denotes a material reconfiguration of the original art object when it is later invoked in a literary work, I argue that the revival of Canadian military sculpture and paintings in contemporary First World War literature is evidence of a re-working of cultural memory of the Great War that continues to gain momentum in the immediate present and is indicative of a burgeoning, third phase of the memory boom in which media occupy a central position. Although some of the literary texts I examine apply remediation in its traditional sense, which functions to stabilize the original representation that it invokes, the focus of my study is on reversing this process by examining the ways in which English-Canadian authors have utilized remediation to reconsider official versions of the past through a revisionist lens. I conclude that, at its most effective, remediation operates as an act of intervention by deconstructing the state-sanctioned heroic sacrifice masternarrative that Canada came of age in the Great War and focusing instead on counternarratives that represent the diversity of the war experience. Indeed, my study offers proof that rethinking remediation in terms of deconstruction
can reveal the supplementary nature of memory, precisely that the repeated invocation of a
particular work of art may be indicative, not of the stability of memory, but of an anxiety about
the limitations of memory and representation.
Lay Summary

In this dissertation I investigate a recurring tendency that I have observed in contemporary English-Canadian literature about the First World War in which authors incorporate military paintings and/or sculptures into their exhibition catalogues, plays, and novels. I draw on the concept of “remediation” to explain this phenomenon, which identifies the ways in which visual art undergoes a process of material reconfiguration when it is recalled in a literary text. I explain the ways in which remediation can be used to either endorse or to critique official histories of the First World War that present the conflict as a celebratory, formative event for the Canadian nation. Ultimately, I argue that remediation is most effective when it is deployed for revisionist purposes because it provides an opportunity to represent the war from the perspectives of ordinary individuals whose experiences of the conflict are far from celebratory.
Preface

This dissertation is original, independent work by the author, Alicia Fahey.

A version of Chapter 4 has been published as “Voices from the Edge: De-Centering Master Narratives in Jane Urquhart’s The Stone Carvers” in The Great War in Post-Memory Literature and Film, edited by Martin Löschnigg and Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż. Copyright © 2014 Walter de Gruyter.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.................................................................................................................................................. ii
Lay Summary........................................................................................................................................ iv
Preface...................................................................................................................................................... v
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................................. vi
List of Figures.......................................................................................................................................... viii
Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................................. ix
Dedication ................................................................................................................................................ xi

Chapter 1: Introduction – From Experience to Memory: Remediating English-Canadian Cultural Memory of the Great War .........................................................................................................................1

1.1 A Nation’s “Sacrifice”: Patriotic Responses to the First World War in Canada .................. 3
   1.1.1 First phase: 1919 ....................................................................................................................... 7
   1.1.2 Second Phase: 1977 ................................................................................................................ 11
   1.1.3 Turn of the Century ............................................................................................................... 14

1.2 Visual and Verbal Intersections: A Supplementary Relationship ............................................. 21

1.3 Chapter Breakdown ....................................................................................................................... 26

Chapter 2: “The Medium is the Memory” ...........................................................................................29

2.1 Art Before Theory: Billy Bishop Goes to War ............................................................................. 30

2.2 Remediation .................................................................................................................................... 36

2.3 The “Memory Boom”: The First Two Phases ............................................................................. 44

2.4 Cultural Memory – “Functional” and “Storage” ......................................................................... 53

2.5 What was the Canadian War Memorials Fund? ....................................................................... 55
Chapter 3: Cataloguing the Great War – A Poetics of Exhibition Catalogues

3.1 Heroic Sacrifice and Loss and Recovery: Connecting Memory to Narrative
3.2 Towards a Poetics of the Catalogue
3.3 Case Study 1: “Diversity Kept Under Control” – The Burlington House Souvenir Catalogue *Art & War*, 1919
3.4 Case Study 2: From Storage Memory to Functional Memory – Postmodern Remediation in *A Terrible Beauty*, 1977
3.5 Case Study 3: The “Double Helix” – Recovering the Nationalist Narrative in *Canvas of War*, 2000

Chapter 4: Performing the Archive – Remediating the National Imaginary in *The Lost Boys* and *Mary’s Wedding*

4.1 *The Lost Boys* and *Mary’s Wedding* in Context
4.2 Remediating the Archive
4.3 The Afterlives: *The Lost Boys* and *Mary’s Wedding*

Chapter 5: ‘But a Hero Nonetheless’ – Remediating Commemorative War Art in Timothy Findley’s *The Wars* and Jane Urquhart’s *The Stone Carvers*

5.1 A Wolfe in Sheep’s Clothing: Violence and Obscurity in *The Wars*
5.2 The “Profound Responsibility” of Art in *The Stone Carvers*
5.3 Conclusion: Subaltern Counter-monuments

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Works Cited
List of Figures

Figure 1.1 A.Y. Jackson, A Copse, Evening ................................................................. 21
Figure 2.1. Richard Jack. The Second Battle of Ypres, 22 April - 25 May, 1915, .................... 58
Figure 2.2. Frederick Varley, For What? ........................................................................ 60
Figure 3.1. Augustus John. The Canadians Opposite Lens .................................................. 64
Figure 3.2. Byam Shaw. The Flag ................................................................................... 87
Figure 3.3 A Terrible Beauty ft. C.W. Jeffreys's 85th Battery at Firing Practice (1918). ...... 104
Figure 4.1. Alberta Theatre Project's Mary's Wedding ........................................................... 137
Figure 4.2. Edouard Detaillle. The Dream ....................................................................... 139
Figure 4.3. Alfred Munnings. The Charge of Flowerdew's Squadron ................................. 146
Figure 5.2. Vimy Ridge Memorial from a distance ............................................................ 187
Figure 6.1. Kristan Horton. Drawing a History of the First World War, Disc 1 ................. 215
Figure 6.2. Kristan Horton. Drawing a History of the First World War, Disc 8 ................. 217
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Chapter 1: Introduction – From Experience to Memory: Remediating

English-Canadian Cultural Memory of the Great War

“Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts – the book of their deeds, the book of their words and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others; but of the three the only quite trustworthy one is the last” (5).

When Paul Konody, art advisor for the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) First World War artist program, began his introductory essay to the exhibition catalogue Art and War (1919) with these words, he was making connections among the disciplines of history (deeds), literature (words), and (visual) art.¹ Although Konody’s attempt to establish hierarchical distinctions across these fields is an outdated approach to interdisciplinary study, his cross-disciplinary understanding of representational media provides an appropriate point of entry for a dissertation that aims to investigate the intersectionalities of English-Canadian First World War art and literature.

After making a case for the “trustworthiness” of art (a notion that in itself is problematic), Konody proceeds to locate the almost one thousand works of art produced under the auspices of the CWMF – drawings, paintings, and sculpture – within a macro-history of epic war memorials, ranging from Pharaonic Egypt and Ancient Greece to “the Parthenon and the countless

¹ Konody is quoting English art critic John Ruskin’s St. Mark’s Rest (1877).
² In general terms, art – like history and literature – cannot be considered “truthful” because it is impossible to remove it from the subjective point of view of its creator. In the particular case of the CWMF, the art is additionally subjected to the institutional guidelines imposed on artists employed by the program.
masterpieces of classic art” (5). This hyperbolic attempt to legitimize the CWMF collection by identifying it as a site of memory – what, in Pierre Nora’s terminology would constitute a lieu de memoire – is nevertheless instructive because it makes evident two observations that are central to this study. On the one hand, categorizing the collective artworks of the CWMF as a “war memorial” draws explicit attention to the commemorative function of the CWMF, an aspect of the collection that is crucial to my examination of its oscillating position in English-Canadian cultural memory between remembering and forgetting. On the other hand, Konody’s identification of the centrality of art in the construction of memory indicates a broader theme of this study: to trace the shift from experience to media in English-Canadian cultural memory of the Great War.

The war memorial building that Konody envisioned to house the CWMF collection was not fully realized until the opening of the new Canadian War Museum in 2005, and the formerly peripatetic nature of the collection decidedly impacted its repeated status as a forgotten, “failed” site of memory. But beyond public exhibitions, there is another way in which the war art is increasingly resuming a functional position in English-Canadian cultural memory: in contemporary novels and plays about the First World War. I observe a recurring tendency in English-Canadian literature since 1977 in which authors incorporate war art into their narratives. This practice takes shape in various ways, but in all of the cases I examine, the painting or

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2 In general terms, art – like history and literature – cannot be considered “truthful” because it is impossible to remove it from the subjective point of view of its creator. In the particular case of the CWMF, the art is additionally subjected to the institutional guidelines imposed on artists employed by the program.

3 Places, objects, and concepts that are collectively recognized within a culture because of their historical significance fall under Nora’s definition of “sites of memory.” For more on Nora, see Chapter 2, p. 50.

4 I discuss the dynamics of memory in regards to the CWMF art in Chapter 3.
sculpture undergoes a process I call “remediation” which I discuss at length in Chapter 2. Briefly, it denotes a material reconfiguration of the original art object when it is later invoked in a literary work. Remediation is a pivotal term for my dissertation because it facilitates my discussion of trans-medial representation. Specifically, I focus on the ways in which remediation can be used to either reinforce or to destabilize the original work of art that it re-presents. In this dissertation I examine how remediating representations of English-Canada’s deeds, words, and art are evidence of an emergent phase in the “memory boom” in which media assumes a primary position in the dynamics of cultural memory.

1.1 A Nation’s “Sacrifice”: Patriotic Responses to the First World War in Canada

During the period immediately following the war, in which Konody was writing Art and War, his use of nationalist rhetoric that championed the CWMF program as a “War Memorial to keep before the eyes of future generations a complete pictorial record of the Dominion’s sacrifices and achievements in the great war,” was commonplace (14). So too was Konody’s reference to Canada by its colonial relationship to the British Empire. In fact, the First World War marked an important turning point in Canadian cultural history because the war accelerated the Dominion’s transition to an independent nation-state. For this reason, the First World War remains an integral event in Canadian historical narratives and is widely celebrated in popular histories and commemorative events –including, but not limited to, newspaper articles, the
Veterans Affairs Canada website, and Remembrance Day ceremonies – as the birth of the Canadian nation.⁵

Within this broader history of the First World War, the battle of Vimy Ridge, which took place in April 1917, is acknowledged as the defining event that marked the shift from colony to sovereignty for Canada. As Pierre Berton puts it in his popular history of the battle: “It has become commonplace to say that Canada came of age at Vimy Ridge. For seventy years it has been said so often – in Parliament, at hundreds of Vimy dinners and in thousands of Remembrance Day addresses, in newspaper editorials, school texts, magazine articles, and more than a score of books about Vimy and Canada’s role in the Great War – that it is almost an article of faith” (294-5). These purveyors of the national master-narrative are dominated by the discourse of “heroism” and “sacrifice” to describe the “birth of the nation.” Konody – as well as countless other agents of the CWMF – fervently invoked this discourse in exhibition catalogues published during the 1920s and 1930s in order to promote a unifying narrative of the collection that was grounded in patriotic sentiment. Even though contemporary exhibitions of CWMF art demonstrate a concerted effort to implement more nuanced approaches to the war, these key

⁵ See, for example, Gwynne Dyer’s article in the National Post (08 Aug. 2014): “Canada Comes of Age; In the Aftermath of the First World War, one of Canada’s first acts as a truly sovereign state was ushering in the league of nations” (A.15) and Justin Jin’s Globe and Mail article (13 May 2000): “Battle for Ridge a ‘Sterling Moment’ in Canada’s History: First World War Offensive Helped a Nation Come of Age as an Independent Dominion” (A.23). Yet another example is Brian Bethune’s observation in Macleans (01 July 2005): “Vimy Ridge was hailed by observers then, and by historians ever since, as Canada’s giant step on the road from colony to nation” (30). The fact that all of these articles were written in the twenty-first century demonstrates the persistence of this narrative.
words – what Paul Fussell has referred to as “high diction” – continue to dominate state-centred narratives of the conflict.⁶

There is a degree of “truthfulness” (to borrow Konody’s term) in framing the First World War as a narrative of national independence. For instance, the battle of Vimy Ridge was the first time the four divisions of the Canadian Corps fought together and, by seizing the ridge when French and British forces were unable to do so, Canadians acquired a reputation for ingenuity and perseverance in battle that gained them international recognition and set them apart from other Allied forces. Additionally, a direct outcome of Allied victories in which Canadians played a significant role, including Vimy Ridge, Courcelette, Hill 70, Second Ypres, and Mons – not to mention the devastating defeats at Festubert and Passchendaele – was that Canada was granted permission to sign the 1919 Paris peace treaties as a nation in its own right. Another outcome of Canada’s efforts in the war was that it became a founding member of the League of Nations. These two political acknowledgements of Canadian service in the war were certainly important events in Canada’s passage to sovereignty.

At the same time, skeptics such as Michael Valpy, writer for the Toronto Globe and Mail, have acknowledged that, in the more general context of the war, Canada’s victory at Vimy was relatively insignificant. According to Valpy, “Canadians, and only Canadians, call it the Battle of Vimy Ridge […]. In everyone else’s historical lexicon, it was a limited tactical victory in the First World War’s horrendous Battle of Arras, which the British and their allies lost” (F4).⁷

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⁶ High diction describes a vocabulary of abstracted terms that aim to impose positive connotations on otherwise negative concepts.

⁷ For a full-length study that complicates the heroic and celebratory narrative that has become the dominant cultural discourse for narratives about Canada’s efforts at Vimy, see Vimy Ridge: A Canadian Reassessment ed. Geoffrey Hayes, Andrew Iarocci, and Mike Bechthold (2007).
Valpy’s skepticism is warranted. Ultimately, independence from Britain was not fully accomplished as a result of the First World War. It was not until 1926 that the Balfour Report declared Canada’s autonomy from Britain and it was not until 1931 that the Statute of Westminster granted Canada full legal freedoms. Subsequent developments on the road to independence include the Canadian Citizenship Act in 1946, which was instituted so that a Canadian citizen did not first have to be classified as a British subject, and, later still, the creation of a Canadian national flag in 1965 (until this point, the Canadian Red Ensign was used as the unofficial national flag).

Other approaches to Canada’s colony-to-nation narrative have been posited by Luke Flanagan who argues that despite evidence that the First World War increased “a sense of attachment to Canada, this was not at the expense of an attachment to the Empire” (131). Instead, Flanagan contends that there was a scope for “parallel identities” in the aftermath of the war (131). From an opposing viewpoint, Ronald Hatch considers the numerous early Canadian novels written about the war as evidence that “Canadian authors not only felt the changes at work in the making of their history and culture, but saw the need to free the country of its colonial identity” (80). According to Hatch, the Canadian literary market was the source of this liberation. Also writing in the mid-1980s, but from the perspective of the visual arts, Maria Tippett argued that the First World War was pivotal in laying the groundwork for Canadian cultural production. Focusing on the CWMF program, Tippett’s Art at the Service of War (1984) describes the ways in which the war provided economic prosperity, cultural significance, and international exposition for Canadian artists, all on an unprecedented scale. Inarguably, Flanagan is correct from a legislative point of view; British affiliations and legal attachments to Empire
did continue long after the First World War.\textsuperscript{8} Be that as it may, the literary and artistic output propagated by the First World War, as described by Hatch and Tippett, is evidence that the war had a considerable impact on Canadian culture. Despite contesting accounts of the war’s legacy, the masternarrative that the First World War was a formative event for the nation persists in Canadian cultural memory.

1.1.1 First phase: 1919

Canada was not the only country to draw formative cultural templates from the First World War. Paul Fussell’s \textit{The Great War and Modern Memory} (1975) and Modris Ekstein’s \textit{Rites of Spring: The Birth of the Modern Age} (1989) argue, in the cases of Britain and Europe respectively, that the First World War created not only new political paradigms, but also precipitated cultural changes that both authors identify as the beginnings of modernism. In Australia, the Allied campaign at Gallipoli has achieved similar recognition in official historiographies as a narrative of independence as Vimy has for Canada. Writing from a more global scope, Scottish military historian Hugh Strachan argues that in addition to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa also became nations in the First World War. Combined, these cultural assessments of the war’s impact in Canada and abroad demonstrate historian Jonathan Vance’s argument that the war needed to be remembered and reconstructed in such a way as to find a “use value” in the tragic and large scale loss of the conflict (\textit{Death so Noble} 9).

\textsuperscript{8} In fact, media coverage and public attendance to the 2016 Royal Tour of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to Canada suggests that, for many Canadians, imperial ties remain steadfast in the present.
However, the “use value” of the “myth of the war experience” (to borrow Vance’s terminology) has changed significantly in Canada from 1918 to the present. Exhibition catalogues of CWMF art from 1919 to the early 1930s imitated Konody’s precedent set by Art and War. Their authors promoted the collection as documentary evidence of Canada’s great sacrifice and heroism; they urged their readers to cherish the “[r]everent memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice in the cause of justice and freedom” and to remember the “duty and value to those who gave their lives or their energies to the defense of the right.”9 This is not to say that all CWMF exhibitions were the same; in Canada there was a greater focus on Canadian artists and representations of home front activity than in the inaugural exhibition at Burlington House, London, or the New York exhibition at Anderson Galleries (both of which took place in 1919 before the art travelled to Toronto, where it was first exhibited on Canadian soil at the Canadian National Exhibition later in 1919). But in all cases, the large-scale paintings executed in the style of traditional history painting received the most popular response from the public, especially paintings such as Byam Shaw’s The Flag (1918) and Charles Sims’s Sacrifice (c.a. 1918), both of which used Christian iconography to depict the fallen heroes of war. 1919 thus marks the first phase of the cultural legacy of the CWMF; public reception of the war art was extremely high in the years immediately following the war; however, as the decade of the 1920s came to an end, so too did extensive public attendance at CWMF events.

Although early English-Canadian war novels are beyond the scope of this study, a brief history of their literary production following the conflict provides further context for changing attitudes to the war during the inter-war period. For the most part, war novels published immediately following the war were as sentimental as the exhibition catalogues. Consequently, this body of literature has received limited critical attention in the academy. Among the few scholars who have studied these novels, there is a tendency to organize them into two categories: the romantic, patriotic narratives published during the war and continuing into the mid-late 1920s and the anti-war novels of the 1930s. The first category echoes the sentiments of sacrifice, coming of age, and heroism described in popular media accounts of the war and CWMF catalogues. Novels that adopt this approach include Ralph Connor’s (a.k.a Charles Gordon’s) *The Major* (1917) and *The Sky Pilot in No Man’s Land* (1919), Gertrude Arnold’s *Sister Anne!* *Sister Anne!* (1919), and L.M Montgomery’s *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921). As Dagmar Novak explains in her comprehensive study *Dubious Glory: The Two World Wars and the Canadian Novel* (2000), prevailing narratives during this period are those that describe the war as an ethical conflict. To die in the war was a sacrifice made for Christ and, as such, was considered a heroic deed (Novak 22-3). Novak’s observation that the war was characterized in epic terms – as a

10 In other words, the period between the end of the First World War (1918) and the beginning of the Second World War (1939).

moral struggle between good and evil – further explains the popularity of Christian iconography in war art during this time.

Peter Webb’s assessment of novels by Mongomery and Gordon, as well as Harry Wodson’s *Private Warwick: Musings of a Canuck in Khaki* (1915), Stephen Leacock’s *The Hohenzollerns in America* (1919), Jean Blewett’s *Heart Stories* (1919), and Peregrine Acland’s *All Else is Folly: A Tale of War and Passion* (1929) as “ideologically complacent, aesthetically dated and perhaps morally troubling” (48) further elucidates the lack of academic interest in war literature of this period. Nevertheless, Webb maintains that this corpus of texts provides context for the anti-war novels that developed in response to the romantic conventions of the 1920s. Webb’s argument implies that the anti-war novels possessed greater literary quality than their predecessors, a view that has also been expressed by Eric Thompson. According to Thompson, Acland’s *All Else is Folly*, Charles Harrison’s *Generals Die in Bed* (1930) and Philip Child’s *God’s Sparrows* (1937) were pivotal developments in Canadian war literature because of their anti-war sentiment, as well as their rounded characterization and individualized accounts of the combatant experience.

Other approaches to early war novels reveal complications within the two categories. In “The Soldier as Novelist: Literature, History, and the Great War” (2003), Jonathan Vance examines the ways in which divergent opinions in regards to the function of war literature generated conflict between the writers of anti-war fiction and their reading publics. Whereas the authors considered literary quality to be of the utmost importance, readers – especially fellow veterans – insisted on historical veracity. Colin Hill and Donna Coates have also addressed the easy divisions between pro- and anti-war novels in their respective essays “Generic Experiment and Confusion in Early Canadian Novels of the Great War” (2009) and “The Best Soldiers of
All: Unsung Heroines in Canadian Women’s Great War Fictions” (1996). Hill argues that the novels of Acland, Arnold, and Montgomery should be considered innovative modernist diversions from 19th century romanticism and read instead as “multi-generic literary realism” (58) that constitutes “some of the most important and formative works of their period” (74). Coates performs a gendered reading of these literary works in order to critique Thompson’s neglect of female authors in his essay “Canadian Fiction of the Great War” (1981). Coates characterizes Nellie McClung’s *The Next of Kin: Those Who Wait and Wonder* (1917), Francis Marion Beynon’s *Aleta Dey* (1919), and Montgomery and Acland’s novels as assertions of female power in which women writers view the war as an opportunity to overcome oppressive gender roles. Combined, these studies of early English-Canadian war novels, written by those who directly experienced the war at home and on the front, demonstrate two key moments that elucidate the first rise and fall of the CWMF collection: an initial support of nationalist narratives (many of which were characterized by Christian overtones of heroic sacrifice), followed by a general distaste for celebratory narratives of war in the 1930s, which can, in part, be attributed to the approach of the Second World War and further exacerbated by economic Depression.

1.1.2 Second Phase: 1977

The production of First World War literature dwindled as the Second World War approached. Disillusionment due to the realization that the First World War was not, in fact, “the war to end all wars” brought into question its purpose, especially in regards to narratives that had
previously celebrated and championed its motives. The CWMF collection was also affected by changing attitudes to war, and by the fact that the failure to provide financing and space for a permanent location to house the vast number of works relegated a large part of the art into storage. Attitudes towards war continued to shift following the Second World War. Despite the fact that Canada remained highly militarized in these years, a number of Cold War peacekeeping missions – notable examples include the Suez Crisis from 1956-57 and Lester Pearson’s subsequent receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership role in that conflict, the 1960 mission in Congo and the 1964 mission in Cyprus – shifted the dominant narrative of Canada’s military identity to one of peacekeeping.

Equally important, platforms to disseminate new narratives of Canadian identity proliferated during the 1950s. In particular, the findings of the Massey Commission (1951) led to the development of arts councils and research institutions such as the National Library of Canada (1953), the Canada Council for the Arts (1957), and federal financial assistance for Canadian universities. Small publishing presses, such as the New Canadian Library series (1958), and the journal *Canadian Literature* (1959) are additional examples of literary cultural production during this time. The outcome of these projects marked the 1960s and early 1970s as the pinnacle of Canadian literary nationalism. During this period, Canada also celebrated its centennial in 1967 and, in the same year, hosted Expo 67 in Montreal.

Two notable exceptions to this interim period of limited literary production in the field of war literature are Hugh MacLennan’s *Barometer Rising* (1941) and Earle Birney’s *Turvey: A Military Picaresque* (1949). According to Zachary Abram, between the period 1915 and 1977, eighty Canadian novels were published about the two world wars; however, Abrams also notes that production of these novels increasingly dropped leading up to 1960. After 1960, publication of war novels “dropped dramatically” (18). The majority of the novels listed in Abram’s appendix from the period 1940-1960 are about the Second World War.
As far as Canadian literary production goes, the 1970s saw the rise of the historical novel – a genre that, according to Herb Wyile, remains one of the most popular literary forms in Canada to date (*Speaking* 2). Wyile distinguishes the historical novels of the 1970s (and later novels) from their nineteenth-century romantic predecessors in his observation that contemporary novels seem “less inclined to participate in creating a collective mythology than to question traditional narratives of Canadian history and any notion of a collective, consensual experience of the past” (*Speaking* 6). Neta Gordon echoes Wyile’s comments; she identifies a “double narrative” in recent Canadian war novels and plays that suggests, “war in general is condemned even while Canadian participation in *this* war [the First World War] is commended” (emphasis in original, 6). Above all, the 1970s mark a period in Canadian literary production when authors were invested in constructing revisionist narratives of the nation’s past. This practice was motivated not by ambitions to radically alter national masternarratives but rather to supplement them with the experiences of ordinary individuals who had previously been marginalized in the historical record.

It was from these contexts that two central texts of this dissertation were published in 1977: Timothy Findley’s novel *The Wars* and Heather Robertson’s exhibition catalogue/book *A Terrible Beauty: The Art of Canada at War*. As Sherrill Grace notes in her most recent book *Landscapes of Memory: The Two World Wars in Canadian Literature and the Arts, 1977-2007* (2014), the year 1977 “signals a turning point or breakthrough in a general English-speaking Canadian awareness – or fresh reassessment – of the two world wars” (11). Grace attributes

13 Other scholars who have identified Findley’s *The Wars* as a turning point in the trajectory of Canadian historical literature include Thompson (1981); Hutcheon (1984), (1988); Novak (2000); Wyile (2002); and Gordon (2014).
the revitalization of these events to two of Findley’s publications – his novel *The Wars* and his play *Can You See Me Yet?* – as well as Robertson’s catalogue/book *A Terrible Beauty: The Art of Canada at War* (11). Findley’s novel has received widespread attention and critical acclaim, whereas Robertson’s book is comparatively understudied. Both of these texts are significant to my study because, unlike early war literature in Canada, they resist any easy categorization as pro- or anti-war. Equally important, they both consider the role of media in historical reconstruction. Using postmodern literary techniques – including self-reflexivity, multiple narrative points of view, and a resistance to totalizing masternarratives – both Findley’s and Robertson’s texts are groundbreaking examples of a body of literature written by a generation of writers who revisited Canada’s past through the perspective of cultural memory and the archive, rather than the perspective of lived experience. For this reason, I identify the year 1977 as the beginning of a turn towards memory, media, and the archive as prominent aspects of English-Canadian First World War literature and art.

1.1.3 **Turn of the Century**

The turn of the century marks another point of movement in my study of English-Canadian First World War literature and art. The twenty-first century witnessed an explosion of ______________

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14 *Can You See Me Yet?* is set in the context of the Second World War. *A Terrible Beauty* includes art from both World Wars: the First World War Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) and the Second World War artist program, the Canadian War Records Collection (CWRC).

15 Linda Hutcheon has famously described Findley’s novel as an example of “historiographic metafiction,” a term which denotes self-reflexive writing about the past that challenges traditional narratives and is written from persons and points of view that have previously been excluded from historical narratives. According to Hutcheon, historiographic metafiction is a central characteristic of many Canadian novels. See “Canadian Historiographic Metafiction” (1984) and *The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary Canadian Fiction* (1988).
First World War fictions and dramas, as well as increased attention to Canadian war art, that had begun to pick up momentum in the late 1990s. The discipline of history was also undergoing reconsideration in Canada during the 1990s. Some historians, such as Michael Bliss (1991) and J.L. Granatstein (1998), lamented the “social turn” in the humanities because of its tendency to neglect “political history.” In his polemical indictment of Canadian educational institutions, *Who Killed Canadian History?*, Granatstein argued that political correctness and an emphasis on multiculturalism had produced a generation of “culturally illiterate” Canadians who were ignorant of their nation’s history. The shift in focus from dates, facts, and patriarchal figures to representing “ex-centric” (Hutcheon) figures and events was reflected in Canadian historical fictions of this period.

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16 I take issue with the term “political history” to describe a history that is motivated by patriarchal figures and the memorization of dates and places. What’s at stake here is a terminology that allows one sub-field to claim ownership of what is decidedly political and, by this very act of exclusion, denies a political voice to historians who engage in the study of economics, labour, feminism, gender and sexuality, postcolonialism, and other social fields that represent marginalized points of view. The history that Bliss and Granatstein defend has national imperatives as its driving force and tends to produce totalizing narratives that endorse a unified sense of Canadian identity. This history should more appropriately be termed “official history” since it is constructed for and/or by government officials and often serves the interests of the state. Although official history does maintain an important space in historical discourse, beginning in the 1960s, postmodern methodologies have produced alternative historical discourses that focus on social change and social movements as their point of entry into history and these approaches are both relevant and necessary developments of the field.

17 Several works of literary criticism have been produced in response to the abundance of Canadian historical fictions published from the 1970s to the early twenty-first century that reflect the “social turn” in historical epistemology. Martin Kuester (1992) and Gabrielle Helms (2003) both draw on the theory of Mikhail Bakhtin; the former does so in order to examine historical reconstructions through the lens of parody, postmodernism and feminism; the latter to expand on Bakhtin’s theory of the dialogic in order to argue a “cultural narratology.” Other approaches to the influx of Canadian historical fiction of this period include Manina Jones’s concept of “documentary collage” (1993), Herb Wyile’s *Speculative Fictions* (2002) and Laura Moss’s *Is Canada Postcolonial?* (2003). In the medium of film, the McKenna brothers’ controversial
In terms of Canada’s relationship to war, increased military activity during the twenty-first century proved Canada’s former peacekeeping reputation of the Cold War period to be increasingly unstable. After the New York Trade Centre was attacked on 11 September 2001, Canada launched operation APOLLO the following month, marking the commencement of Canada’s 12-year military presence in Afghanistan. Additionally, the years of Stephen Harper’s Conservative government, 2006-2015, were characterized by efforts to “rebrand” Canada as a “warrior nation” (McKay and Swift) by foregrounding Canada’s military history and activity. These enterprises initiated by the Harper government attempted to place war at the forefront of the Canadian imagination and yet, the closure of eight veterans’ offices across Canada as well as the “modernization” of Library and Archives Canada that restricted public access to materials and services and limited the acquisition of historical and cultural materials rendered suspect the Conservative government’s motivations and suggested that other narratives were being suppressed, silenced, even censored.

Two major developments regarding the public recognition of Canada’s war art also occurred in 2001. First was the commencement of the design and construction to relocate the three-part series *The Valour and the Horror* (1992) is another example of the revisionist approach to history that dominated this period of cultural production in Canada. Examples include the 2007 renovation of Walter Allward’s monument at Vimy, France and the unveiling ceremony of the restored monument on the 90th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge. Additionally, Prime Minister Harper invested considerable effort and finances on the bicentennial anniversary of the War of 1812. The campaign marking this historical event included television commercials, limited edition coins and re-enactments, as well as the commissioning of a War of 1812 monument for Parliament Hill (the location of the new monument would overlook the National War Memorial). Further examples of this rebranding include controversial plans to erect the “Never Forgotten National Memorial” war monument on the Cabot Trail in Cape Breton (the project was cancelled in 2016) and the declaration of March 9 as a “National Day of Honour” to recognize Canada’s military mission in Afghanistan.
Canadian War Museum on Sussex Drive to the LeBreton Flats.\textsuperscript{19} The new war museum would be better suited to accommodate the size and scope of Canada’s war art collection, making it more readily accessible to the public and preserving it for posterity. A second promotion of the war art was Dean Oliver and Laura Brandon’s exhibition of 72 official works from Canada’s First and Second World War collections entitled \textit{Canvas of War: Masterpieces from the Canadian War Museum} that toured Canada from 2000-2001. This was the first major exhibition of the war art since Robertson’s 1977 exhibition and a major incentive of \textit{Canvas of War} was to garner financial and public support for the anticipated $58 million needed to construct the new war museum.\textsuperscript{20}

Not only was Canada’s war art resuming a functional role in Canadian cultural memory during the beginnings of the twenty-first century, but the First World War also persisted as a prevalent subject for Canada’s authors. As living memory of the conflict becomes increasingly scarce, novels and plays that utilize archival media to access the past continue to supplement Canadian cultural memory. The remainder of the primary corpus of texts that inform my dissertation have all been published during the early twenty-first century and reflect this ongoing phenomenon of literary responses to the war. In addition to Oliver and Brandon’s \textit{Canvas of War}, I examine Jane Urquhart’s \textit{The Stone Carvers} (2001), R.H. Thomson’s \textit{The Lost Boys} (2001) and Stephen Massicotte’s \textit{Mary’s Wedding} (2002). My selection of literary texts reflects a prioritizing of catalogues, novels, and plays that engage with state-sponsored iconographic representations of war, with a concentration on CWMF art. I am interested in the ways in which contemporary works of English-Canadian First World War literature recall earlier visual

\textsuperscript{19} The new museum opened to the public in 2005.
representations of war through a process that involves the remediation of the original work of art. Tensions in these works between official history and individual memory, the eyewitness and the archive, and remembering and forgetting are indicative of a larger pattern in Canadian war art and literature and its study. I will situate the contradictions emerging from these tensions within the context of a struggle between competing modes of representation, specifically the verbal and the visual, in order to rethink English-Canadian cultural memory of the First World War in the twenty-first century with a focus on media. In other words, I will consider the ways in which a gallery and its exhibition catalogue differ from a dramatic performance or a published novel in its processes of selection, interpretation, and preservation and the ways in which these differences are informed by the tensions inherent to representational practice.

I have opted to focus on the First World War because artistic output during this war has had a lasting impact on Canadian culture, as is evidenced by the numerous artists and authors who continue to revisit the conflict in their work. In addition, the immense scope and scale of the CWMF program is significant because it set the precedent for future war art programs, such as the Second World War art program, the Canadian War Records Collection (CWRC), and the Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artists Program (CAFCAP), which deployed artists to document conflicts in Vietnam, Korea, Europe, and the Middle East. The initial success of the CWMF not only made these subsequent programs possible, but also influenced their operations (even though CWRC and CAFCAP were granted considerably less funding and participants than the CWMF). Questions that have guided my research include: Why do contemporary authors remediate war art in their novels and plays? What is lost in the process of reconstruction? What new insights are gained by remediation?
What is at stake in these contemporary novels and plays is the way in which state-sanctioned works of visual art remember the 1914-1918 conflict through romantic and celebratory frameworks that are predicated on the erasure of divergent experiences and memories of the war. I am not arguing that the CWMF collection as a whole endorses the masternarratives of heroic sacrifice and the birth of a nation. Rather, I contend that this homogenizing narrative remains the prevailing memory of the war art that, in turn, has overshadowed the diversity of the collection and the valuable counter-memories of the war that it contains. The war art that is invoked in my selection of novels and plays from 1977 and 2001-2002 is evidence of this erasure; in all of my examples, the authors have opted to engage with visual representations that glorify war or, at the very least, do not explicitly contest or question it. In these instances, remediation functions as a critical tool for visual/verbal literacy that is illustrative of W.J.T. Mitchell’s observation that “the tensions between visual and verbal representations” are “inseparable from struggles in cultural politics and political culture” (3). This struggle over representation has broader implications in regards to the dynamic nature of cultural memory. In my selected texts, the cultural and political implications of visual and verbal intersections reflect a desire to supplement the historical record; in cases where visual and verbal representations form a complementary relationship, they have a tendency to reinforce the historical record. Alternatively, contradictions between visual and verbal representations present an opportunity to augment the historical record with counter narratives. Both of these functions – reinforcing official history or subverting official history – are inherently political acts that, in the texts I examine, are inextricably linked to the media in which they are presented.

My focus on official war art excludes discussion of several other post-1977 historical fictions about Canada and the First World War that practice remediation through their
incorporation of art. These include: Alan Cumyn’s *The Sojourn* (2003) and *The Famished Lover* (2006), and Jane Uruqhart’s *The Underpainter* (1998), each of which involves art, but not specifically “war art” or art produced under the authority of state-sponsored programs. In *Underground* (2009) June Hutton provides an intertextual reference to Pablo Picasso’s *Guernica* and an epigraph by CWMF artist Frederick Varley, but the focus of her narrative is Canada’s participation in the Spanish Civil War – a significant and also overlooked event in Canadian history, but one that is beyond the focus of this study. Margaret Atwood’s *The Blind Assassin* (2000) also deserves further attention in the context of remediation; this novel includes fictional war art by a fictional female war artist, who depicts the labour of women factory workers, bringing to mind the real-life work of CWMF artist Henrietta Mabel May. There is also a cameo appearance by the CWMF artist Frances Loring and the construction of a fictional war monument. Unfortunately, an adequate analysis of the role of art in this highly complex novel would require discussion of many other elements that are beyond the scope of this study. Finally, Jack Hodgins’s *Broken Ground* (1996) is an excellent example of remediation in cinema. In the novel, a biographical film about the residents of the community of Portuguese Creek is remediated and raises important questions about representation and cultural memory, but film is not one of the media I examine in my dissertation.

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21 Hutton’s selection of art is also significant because it is the only example I have found in which the author remediates anti-war art.
1.2 Visual and Verbal Intersections: A Supplementary Relationship

A.Y. Jackson painted *A Copse, Evening* while he was employed as a war artist by the CWMF (see fig.1.1). The apparently straightforward title of the painting creates an expectation for the viewer that the image will depict some kind of wooded area and that the temporal setting of this site will be the darkness of night. However, upon regarding the painting, what one sees is the absence of a copse. In place of the woods is a destroyed landscape, littered with broken, naked tree trunks. Mounds of mud dominate the foreground of the painting; to the right of the image, the viewer can see the haphazardly constructed path of duckboards that forge a route through the mud. In the distance, soldiers march towards the horizon, their backs turned to the viewer. The figures are proportionally small in scale compared to the landscape they inhabit and
are discernable only because of the searchlights that illuminate the sky. These lights cast dappled hues of orange, brown, and green across the background of the canvas, creating visual harmony with the colours of the mud below. The landscape is the protagonist of the painting and its devastated state is a visual testament to the violence and tragic aftermath of the war.

I have targeted Jackson’s painting because it is a profound example of the connections between war and erasure that repeatedly arise in the visual and literary texts I examine in my dissertation. By minimizing the presence of human figures in the painting, Jackson not only draws attention to the numerous soldiers who died in combat, but also to the erasure of the physical bodies that would never be recovered from the devastated landscapes. One can imagine such figures concealed below the surface of mud depicted in *A Copse, Evening*. In the painting, one can observe the ways in which the permanently altered topography of the Western Front bears the trace of combat and mechanized warfare. Even after the scarred landscape is healed by new growth, the phenomenon of the Iron Harvest will continue to produce physical reminders of the tragic events that transpired a century ago.

Like Jackson’s painting, the works I consider in my dissertation are interested in the aftermath of war. Specifically, these literary texts focus on the ways in which the war is remembered (and forgotten) through the material artifacts of the archive, including state-sponsored works of art such as Jackson’s painting. In fact, the literary works that engage with the archive do so because of their temporal distance from the actual event. As we have surpassed the outbreak of the First World War by more than a hundred years, access to eyewitness accounts are increasingly rare; the archive becomes a necessity in the sustenance of memory, thus characterizing the shift from experience to media that I trace in the contemporary novels and plays that form the corpus of this study. The act of constructing a painting – in fact, the entire
CWMF program – represents an effort to preserve a memory of the war in order to counteract the erasure of forgetting. However, a painting is only a supplement for memory; it is the artist’s private interpretation of the calamities he or she witnessed firsthand. Jackson utilizes the landscape as a metaphorical substitution for the violent erasure of war so that an audience who has no direct experience with such horrors might be able to comprehend them on a removed, secondary level. Like the literature I examine in subsequent chapters, it is the artist’s private, personal depiction of the war that provides the greatest impact. In contrast to the enormous, conventional war paintings that often document epic battles and war heroes, the modest size of *A Copse, Evening* (86.9cm x 112.2 cm), combined with its emphasis on the devastating effects of war, conveys a more intimate depiction of the individual experiences of a soldier-artist. The literary works I explore in subsequent chapters are also valuable for this reason. Instead of championing significant battles or celebrating national accomplishments and heroes, these literary texts present the war from the perspectives of ordinary individuals and the ways in which the struggles of war – both at home and on the front – profoundly altered their lives.

Studies of *A Copse, Evening* focus on the ways in which Jackson’s war art was influenced by the British painter, Paul Nash. Art historian and retired curator of art at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, Laura Brandon, identifies Nash’s depiction of battlefront landscapes, shattered trees, and searchlights in his paintings *Void* (1918) and *The Menin Road II*

22 Although Jackson originally joined the Canadian army as a soldier and was not hired as a war artist until 1916, after he was injured in combat, not all CWMF-commissioned artists actually served as soldiers (Tippett 13). Interestingly, Jackson was the first Canadian artist to be hired by the CWMF and he produced thirty-five oil paintings in total, “the largest contribution of any artist” to the CWMF program (Tippett 4).

23 In *Modern Art, Britain and the Great War* (2004), Sue Malvern dedicates an entire chapter to the personal interpretations of British soldier-artists.

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(1917-18) as predecessors to Jackson’s painting. (I would add Nash’s *We Are Making a New World* (1918) to Brandon’s list.) Art critic Nancy Baele, who reviewed the painting in *The Ottawa Citizen* (12 April 1997) interprets Jackson’s use of landscape as an attempt to represent the “gentle art of war” because it avoids more gruesome aspects of battle such as artillery, dead soldiers, and battle scenes (E.1). Baele does not mention that war artists were discouraged from painting their dead because of the potential negative impact it might have on public morale. Another reason for this policy was to show respect for the deceased individuals and their families. Brandon has described both of these factors in her essay “Above or Below Ground?” (2012). As an official program of the state, artists employed by the CWMF had to work around the parameters imposed on them and they did so through visual metaphors and symbols that, to my mind, are in no way “gentle.” Brian Osbourne offers yet another reading of the painting; he identifies Jackson’s warscape as influencing his post-war paintings of the Canadian Shield and northern Canada, arguing for a “causative connection” between *First Snow, Algoma* (1920) and *A Copse, Evening* (323). 24 I find Osborne’s observation especially significant because it complicates the national iconography of the Group of Seven: what are the implications of representing a distinctly Canadian wilderness that was inspired by the battlefields of France?

There is, however, another way of reading the painting that has yet to be addressed: the significance of the image-text relationship that is established by the title of the work and its corresponding image. Re-framing the painting through this intersectional lens allows one to rethink its status as an analogue for the supplementary relationship of memory and forgetting. The expectation created by the title is unfulfilled by the painting itself (the title describes a

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24 Brandon would also make this connection in her catalogue to the exhibition *Transformations* (2014) by comparing *A Copse, Evening* to Jackson’s *The Red Maple*. 
copse, but the image interrupts this semiotic exchange); however, this disjunction between visual and verbal modes of representation is productive: the painting represents the limitations of representation in regards to the epistemological and ontological realities of war. By verbally gesturing to what was once present, but is now lost, *A Copse, Evening* illustrates the dialectic of remembering and forgetting – a crucial factor in the dynamics of cultural memory – and comments on the realities of war that produce such erasure. Jackson’s painting thus underscores complex connections between image and text relationships by showing the productive potential of incommensurability. This is also the process that occurs through remediation; subverting expectations and altering the material composition of visual representations of war changes the viewer/reader’s perspective and creates the possibility of new meanings and interpretations.

In all of the texts I examine, the act of remediation is invested in the processes of selection, evaluation, and preservation. Combined, these aspects of remediation have the potential to perform acts of erasure by preserving the memory of certain interpretations at the expense of others. The paintings and sculptures selected for photographic reproduction in an exhibition catalogue will reflect the unifying theme of the exhibition and will either emphasize or underplay the diversity of the CWMF collection as a whole. The visual reproduction of a work of art in a dramatic performance that allows the actor to physically interact with the image will have a significantly different impact than an image that is verbally described but not visually reproduced. In both of the novels I discuss, I describe the author’s verbal reconfiguration of a painting or sculpture as a deconstructive act that places the work of art under erasure. In other words, in some cases, an author’s resistance to visual reproduction can be read as challenging the narratives of war that these images endorse. The discord between image and text demonstrated
by Jackson’s painting is therefore integral to the tensions between visual and verbal intersections that I observe in my primary corpus of texts.

1.3 Chapter Breakdown

My investigation of image-text relationships originated with my interest in exhibition catalogues. Although these texts are frequently referenced in academic studies for research purposes, there has, to my knowledge, been no extended study of the catalogue as a literary form and object of critical analysis in its own right. After elucidating my theoretical framework by introducing remediation into the field of cultural memory studies and the history of the CWMF in chapter 2, chapter 3 argues for a poetics of the catalogue by focusing on the composite relationship of image and text in exhibition catalogues of CWMF art. On the spectrum of representation, catalogues perform the most literal reconfigurations of a painting or sculpture by remediating a work of art through photographic reproduction and/or a verbal description of the image and its physical characteristics. By examining three catalogues, *Art and War*, a souvenir catalogue published for the inaugural exhibition of war art at Burlington House in 1919, Robertson’s *A Terrible Beauty* (1977), and Oliver and Brandon’s *Canvas of War* (2000), I argue that the institutional framework of the museum, as a state-sponsored entity, strongly defends the national narrative of the CWMF and, in doing so, minimizes the diversity of the collection. This disservice is further evidenced in the recurring narrative of loss and recovery that is repeatedly invoked in academic studies, exhibition reviews, newspaper articles, and the catalogues themselves. One of the purposes of chapter 3 is to explain why narratives of recovery are so central to the CWMF.
Chapters 4 and 5 continue along the spectrum of representation by considering the ways in which remediation has the potential to operate as an act of intervention. My assumption here is that the cross-fertilization of media reflects what Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone refer to as “contested pasts” – not so much “conflicting accounts of what actually happened in the past so much as the question of who or what is entitled to speak for that past in the present” (1). Moving from the gallery or museum to the theatre, chapter 4 considers the remediation of war art in two plays, R.H. Thomson’s *The Lost Boys* (2001) and Stephen Massicotte’s *Mary’s Wedding* (2002). Although both plays remember the war through the paradigm of mourning – the former through familial frameworks, the latter through romantic frameworks – they diverge significantly in their style. Thomson inundates his audience with the material archive, so much so that the archive becomes a character in the play. Massicotte’s play, by contrast, is abstract and minimalist, allowing the archive to operate latently in the background.

The plays fall in the mid-spectrum of representation; although they resist the celebratory and national narratives of the war, they are not overtly critical of the war itself. The two novels that are the focus of chapter 5 – Timothy Findley’s *The Wars* (1977) and Jane Urquhart’s *The Stone Carvers* (2001) – are more critical of official history. In both novels, the remediation of visual media into verbal form suggests a resistance to the iconicity of the images they invoke. Additionally, both novels pose the monumental works of art they remediate against fictional counter-monuments that demonstrate the possibility of alternative commemorative frameworks.

I conclude my study with an examination of two exhibition catalogues from the Canadian War Museum published in conjunction with the centennial of the outbreak of the First World War: *Transformations* and *Witness*. I read these catalogues in conversation with a series of graphite drawings by artist Kristan Horton. Horton’s *Drawing a History of the First World War*
reverses the direction of remediation that has been the focus of this study; rather than verbally reconstituting a work of art, Horton visually remediates an audiobook (which is itself an aural remediation of a print text) into eight spiral drawings. The fact that artists continue to produce art about the First World War – and that it is being exhibited in the context of more recent conflicts – suggests that cultural memory of the First World War continues to evolve in the present and that media continues to play a central role in remembering the past.

Chapter 2: “The Medium is the Memory”

The relationship between media and memory is a central concern for so many of the contemporary English-Canadian war novels and plays published since 1977 and for the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) program. Connections between media and memory are also the focus of this chapter. In chapter 2, I provide a theoretical foundation for remediation as a conceptual tool and a critical process for examining visual and verbal intersections in my primary corpus of texts. I also consider the implications of remediation as a central concept for examining the centralization of media in a third, emergent phase of the memory boom. However, in the spirit of putting praxis before theory, I begin with an illustration of remediation and memory at work in John Gray and Eric Peterson’s *Billy Bishop Goes to War* (1978). Gray and Peterson do not explicitly refer to “remediation” in their play, nor is there any evidence that they were considering the concepts involved in remediation, but the main ideas of this practice – repetition with difference, traversing generic and medial boundaries, eliciting different interpretations from different contexts – are all readily apparent in *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, therefore demonstrating a tendency for art to precede theory.

*Billy Bishop Goes to War* is one of Canada’s most successful, well-known plays that, to my mind, exemplifies the dynamic relationship of media and memory and its remediated forms in ways that set up the primary concerns of my theoretical framework, which I describe in the rest of this chapter. Positioning my dissertation in the discourses of remediation and memory

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26 In *Memory in Culture* (2011), Astrid Erll alters Marshall McLuhan’s familiar phrase “the medium is the message” to “the medium is the memory” in order to emphasize the primacy of media in recent memory studies (115).
studies, I begin the theoretical section of this chapter by examining the processes and significance of remediation. After elucidating the ways in which remediation is a useful recurring through-line for my dissertation, I proceed by identifying connections between remediation and cultural memory. I narrow my discussion of the vast field of cultural memory studies by concentrating on cultural memory and media, and I argue that recent scholarly attention to the role of media in memory studies is indicative of a “burgeoning third phase” of the memory boom— a phase in which I locate my dissertation (Brunow). I continue to examine the intersections of media and cultural memory by concluding with an overview of the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) that describes the many functions of the program, including a consideration of two famous paintings produced by CWMF artists, ultimately beginning and ending chapter 2 with an emphasis on media arts.

2.1 Art Before Theory: Billy Bishop Goes to War

*Billy Bishop Goes to War* premiered at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in 1978 and was an immediate success; it toured across Canada and internationally and continues to be performed in the twenty-first century.27 Gray was inspired to write the play after reading William Avery Bishop’s autobiography, *Winged Warfare*. Gray and Peterson’s narrative retelling of Billy Bishop’s war experience not only confronts questions about what it means to be a war-hero, but also considers the complexities of Canada’s colonial heritage. Using satire and irony to confront these serious issues, *Billy Bishop* is neither pro- nor anti- war, but instead represents the war experience as highly ambivalent. On the one hand, war is tragic and destructive; comrades are

27 In fact, it is currently being performed at Soulpepper Theatre in Toronto as part of the theatre’s 2017 summer lineup.
killed in combat, soldiers are traumatized, families are divided. On the other hand, war invites glory, recognition, and camaraderie. These complexities are presented in the play through the lens of memory; the character Billy Bishop recalls his experience of the war and tells his story directly to the audience and also to the piano player who accompanies him on stage.

In 2012, a new edition of *Billy Bishop Goes to War* was published. The second edition varies significantly from the first and Gray describes these changes in the introduction to the 2012 version. He explains that revisions to the play became necessary when Toronto’s Soulpepper Theatre asked Gray and Peterson to perform *Billy Bishop Goes to War* as part of the theatre’s 2009 season. If the actors were to accept the offer (and they did), they needed to consider the logistics of “how to make sense (dramatically, thematically, theatrically, and in every other way) of the radical recasting of the principal role, now to be played by a sixty-two-year-old man” (7). The solution to their “geriatric rewrite” was to make changes to the script that would reflect an older Bishop (Gray 8).

Surprisingly, the majority of the changes were minimal, involving minor emendations to the stage directions and a more vocal piano player – re-casted as “an old friend or a memory” (31) – who helps the elderly Bishop to remember the details of his life in instances when memories of the past evade the veteran. The exception to these minor variations is the ending, which required substantive revisions for a performance with an older Bishop. The original play ends with Bishop’s speech to rally the troops who are preparing to fight in the Second World War. However, for a character who, with the benefit of hindsight, would know about the atrocities of this forthcoming conflict (as well as Canada’s involvement in subsequent conflicts),

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28 Although the 2012 edition is the second edition of the play, there have been several re-printings of the first (1981) edition.
such a celebratory and patriotic ending was implausible. Instead, the version for the elderly Bishop concludes with a final letter to Bishop’s love-interest, Margaret. The alternative ending replaces a young man’s naïve boasting about his heroic adventures with a nostalgic remembrance of his long-lost youth. “But really, it is the same play it always was,” Gray concludes, “the difference is in the telling” (12).

All things considered, the story of the ace-fighter war pilot-cum-canonical-national-hero takes on new meanings in its 2012 iteration, demonstrating one of the central tenets of memory studies: although memory concerns itself with past events, the act of remembering occurs in – and is a reflection of – the present (see Huyssen 2003; Bal, Crewe, and Spitzer 1999; Sugars and Ty 2014). More accurately, Andrew Hoskins reminds us that “memories should not be considered as fixed representations of the past in the present but, rather, they exist across a continuum of time” (“New Memory” 335). Hoskins’s observation rightly points to the dynamic nature of memory and also resists any privileging of “original” experience. In terms of Billy Bishop Goes to War, the 2009 Soulpepper Production is neither superior nor subordinate to the 1978 production performed at the East Vancouver Cultural Centre. The different productions of the play that have been performed “across a continuum of time” are productive because each performance reflects our shifting relations to the past.

29 “After all,” states Andreas Huyssen, “the act of remembering is always in and of the present while its referent is of the past and thus absent” (2003: 3-4). In Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present (1999) Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer argue that cultural memory can best be understood as an activity “occurring in the present in which the past is continually modified and redescribed even as it continues to shape the future” (vii). For Cynthia Sugars and Eleanor Ty, a continued interest in the past “has been marked by a concern with the ways the past continues to infuse the present – sometimes through intangible or unconscious means, but also in self-consciously manufactured and consumable forms” (1).
Gray singles out this dynamic dimension of memory in his introduction to the 2012 edition of *Billy Bishop* by providing additional examples of circumstances in which the production and reception of the play have been altered across the continuum of time by their contexts:

When the Afro-American actor Ben Halley Jr. played Bishop in the mid-1980s (you can watch him on YouTube), it became another show entirely, When Lady St. Helier sings, ‘Colonials…/ I’m very tired of your whining / And your infantile maligning / Your own weakness simply won’t be whined away,’ the word ‘colonials’ came across to Halley’s Boston audience not as ‘Canadian’ but ‘black.’ On the other hand, performed by a twenty-eight-year-old Ryan Beil in Vancouver and Saskatoon, the play took on an additional layer of pathos – a constant visual reminder that handsome young men of precisely his age were blown to pieces by the tens of thousands. (An especially poignant thought at a time when Canadian soldiers were being killed and mutilated in Afghanistan.) (8)

Again, these moments in the production history of *Billy Bishop Goes to War* are illustrative of the dynamics of cultural memory; although invested in events that transpired in the past, the play and its performances engage in a continuous process of “re-telling” that offers insight into the concerns and values of the present.

As one of Canada’s most famous plays, *Billy Bishop Goes to War* is remarkable for bringing Bishop’s heroism into question. As I noted in my introduction, both state-sponsored institutions and average Canadian citizens (including some artists and authors) were complicit in
their endorsement of the heroic sacrifice and national-coming-of-age masternarrative that, during the 1920s, functioned to legitimize the loss and devastation of the First World War. By designating the war as a formative event in the *bildung* of Canadian sovereignty, the many tragedies of the conflict were given a national purpose. The real-life flying ace William Avery Bishop was the embodiment of this narrative; Bishop was recognized as a national hero for the numerous kills he scored in aerial combat and was awarded the Victoria Cross – the highest military honour – for his actions. By presenting the “fictional” Bishop as a problematic hero figure – Gray and Peterson’s Bishop is lazy, bloodthirsty, accident-prone, and comical – *Billy Bishop Goes to War* utilizes humour and satire to contest the Canadian values implicated by the protagonist’s heroic status. 

Further controversy surrounding Billy Bishop occurred when the National Film Board of Canada produced their 1983 film *The Kid Who Couldn’t Miss*, which included excerpts from *Billy Bishop Goes to War*. Like Gray and Peterson’s play, the film combined factual evidence with fiction. *The Kid Who Couldn’t Miss* challenged the number of kills Bishop had claimed and expressed skepticism as to whether or not the raid that earned Bishop the Victoria Cross did, in fact, unfold in the way he had described – or if it had even occurred at all. Outrage at the “misrepresentation” of a national war hero prompted a government inquiry into the accuracy of the film in 1985, led by the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, chaired by Senator Jack Marshall. Supporters of the film responded with accusations of censorship and argued for the

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30 In *Catching the Torch* (2014), Neta Gordon identifies Canadians values derived from the war experience as a “sense of duty toward the just cause” and a simultaneous willingness to fight while “remaining morally committed to mediation and peace” (4). Gray and Peterson’s version of Bishop does not uphold these character traits.

31 Namely, the film included “mock” interviews performed by actors.
rights of artistic license; dissenters indicted it as a calamity – an unnecessary defamation of a revered historical figure.\(^{32}\) Those who adopted the latter standpoint maintained that, on the one hand, representations of historical events should be bound to factual accuracy and, on the other hand, that the actions of war heroes should be sanctioned as expressions of loyalty to the state.\(^{33}\) The findings of the inquiry acknowledged that the film did contain several “inaccuracies” and it was recommended that it be identified as a “docu-drama” to more precisely foreground the liberties its directors had taken in regards to the historical record.

It is my belief that the staying power of *Billy Bishop Goes to War* over a period of almost forty years is directly related to its continued adaptability and remediation in this duration of time.\(^{34}\) Cultural memory requires re-presentation and re-membering so that it may remain relevant in the contexts of the present. The reasons, then, that *Billy Bishop Goes to War* is instructive are twofold. First, because it precedes (and perhaps anticipates) the many Canadian works of literature published since 1977 to “perform” the dynamics of cultural memory by revisiting the historical record in order to produce revisionist narratives about Canada’s past. Second, the many remediations of Bishop’s story that have been forged across a variety of media – literature, theatre, television, film – and evoked a range of public response, demonstrate Hoskins’s observation that memory itself is increasingly a contested field (334). *Billy Bishop*:

\(^{32}\) See *Maclean’s* “In Defence of a War Hero” (18 Nov. 1985: 21).
\(^{33}\) A similar example of public debate over the historical record and the representation of “war heroes” occurred over Terence and Brian McKenna’s three-part film series about the Second World War, *The Valour and the Horror*. An inquiry into the film was performed in 1992 (also Chaired by Senator Jack Marshall). For a more detailed account of the inquiry into *The Valour and the Horror*, see Grace *Landscapes of Memory*, 422-436.
\(^{34}\) One of the more notable remediations of *Billy Bishop Goes to War* is the CBC Television film (2010) directed by Barbara Willis Sweetie. The film features a pajama-clad Peterson playing an elderly Bishop who sings and dances in his attic amidst material relics of his past (whilst consuming copious quantities of alcohol).
Goes to War, with its emphasis on memory and media, stages the complexities of these intersections. In the next section, I explain the ways in which remediation functions as a crucial tool for engaging with these debates.

2.2 Remediation

To explicate the ways in which the recollection and continued repetition of a particular media object also involves its manipulation and reconfiguration, I draw on the theory of “remediation.” Remediation facilitates an understanding of the connections I examine between Canadian First World War art – produced as part of a state-sponsored project to document Canada’s efforts during the war and to preserve them as a record for posterity – and English-Canadian First World War literature – texts that focus on the individual and collective efforts of “average citizens” in the context of the war – published between 1977 and 2002. The questions I consider in the following chapters are: How do exhibition catalogues of CWMF art utilize the interplay of visual and verbal representation to promote a unifying narrative of the collection? Why do contemporary English-Canadian novelists and playwrights invoke official war art in their literary texts? In my effort to respond to these questions, I was led to consider remediation as a central concept for my dissertation.

In pursuing this line of questioning I take my cue from W.J.T. Mitchell, who urges scholars of visual and verbal media to ask not, “what is the difference (or similarity) between the words and the images? but what difference do the differences (and similarities) make? That is, why does it matter how words and images are juxtaposed, blended, or separated?” (91). The answer to these questions lies in remediation, a concept that originated with David J. Bolter and Richard Grusin. In their study Remediation: Understanding New Media (1999), the authors
content that media do not “[d]o their cultural work in isolation from other media” (15). Rather, “new media refashion prior media forms” and this process of reconfiguration is what defines remediation (273). Although the focus of Remediation is on new media, Bolter and Grusin make clear that their term does not exclude “traditional” media such as painting, photography, other print technology, and radio.

Further, the authors explain that remediation is composed of the “twin logics” of immediacy and hypermediacy; the former aims for the erasure or transparency of the media used to construct its object, the latter self-reflexively draws attention to its mediated status. For example, when 19th century realist painters erased evidence of brushstrokes in their paintings, they were striving for immediacy by concealing the artist from the final product (25). In contrast, the illuminated letters of medieval manuscripts drew attention to the text-as-art, therefore demonstrating the function of hypermediacy, which draws attention to the work as artistic construction (12). As Astrid Erll has eloquently summarized, immediacy is the “experience of the real” whereas hypermediacy is the “experience of the medium” (Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory 4). Examples of both immediacy and hypermediacy are evident in the literary texts I examine in the following chapters.

Remediation is an essential concept for describing the transformations that take place when war art (painting and sculpture) is translated into exhibition catalogues, plays, and novels. Remediation focuses not on the translation of the real experience into media, but rather on the translation of one representation into a different medium. By focusing on the development and evolution of representations across media, remediation resists the reductive comparative approach that Mitchell derides for its assumption that visual and verbal methodologies are both reducible to a single practice that can be read against each other (Mitchell 87). In addition to
noting the changes that occur in the translation from one medium to another, additional discrepancies emerge when this translation involves the transformation of a non-fictional text into a fictional text. These discrepancies provide opportunities to interrogate the implicit truth claims that are associated with historical discourse and to consider the productive ways in which authors of fictional texts deliberately complicate these assumptions.

Another productive approach to considering the deliberate manipulation of media is Linda Hutcheon’s conceptualization of “adaptation as a form of repetition without replication” (xviii) in A Theory of Adaptation (2006). Hutcheon’s study is also valuable for her consideration of audience reception and narrative strategies as integral to the processes of adaptation. Although useful, Hutcheon’s definition of adaptation does not adequately describe the practice of “repetition without replication” in the examples I have selected for this study because, as she acknowledges herself, “not every adaptation is necessarily a remediation” (170). Whereas Hutcheon’s focus is on adaptation and its many forms, this study is specifically concerned with processes of transformation that occur when visual and verbal media intersect. Hutcheon’s analyses of parodies, spin-offs, and remakes are adaptations of preceding representations, but I do not consider them examples of remediation unless their reconstitution involves a material alteration. In the texts that form the corpus of this study, the work of art always undergoes a material reconfiguration when it is subsequently recalled in a literary text. For example, in an exhibition catalogue, a painting or sculpture can be remediated as a photographic reproduction; in R.H. Thomson’s The Lost Boys, a painting is remediated into an enlarged black-and-white projected image; and in Timothy Findley’s The Wars, a painting is verbally described but not visually reproduced. In the context of my dissertation, remediation can be conceptualized as a re-reading (or, in Gray’s terms, a “re-telling”) of an earlier text; in the process of re-reading, the
perspective of the present is superimposed on the ways in which the work of art is re-presented and re-membered.

In this dissertation, I am interested in how remediation operates in three exhibition catalogues: Paul Konody’s *Art & War* (1919), Heather Robertson’s *A Terrible Beauty* (1977), and Laura Brandon and Dean Oliver’s *Canvas of War* (2000); two dramas: R.H. Thomson’s *The Lost Boys* (2001) and Stephen Massicotte’s *Mary’s Wedding* (2002); and two novels: Timothy Findley’s *The Wars* (1977) and Jane Urquhart’s *The Stone Carvers* (2001). In the dramas and novels that I examine, the severity, implications, and manipulation of the work of art vary; but in every case, the original artifact is defamiliarized by remediation. The effect of this process is that the masternarrative represented by the original work of art is made vulnerable to criticism because it is opened up to alternative readings. Whereas Bolter and Grusin see remediation as media “presenting themselves as refashioned and *improved* versions of other media,” I am more interested in remediation as a tool for imagining alternative commemorative frameworks and narrative possibilities (14-15). In terms of cultural memory, then, the literary texts I examine perform a *potentially* deconstructive act of intervention by remediating an official work of war art into another form. I emphasize “potentially” because, in some cases – notably, some of the exhibition catalogues – remediation can be deployed as a technique to reinforce and stabilize the masternarrative. But, unlike its original application, my focus is on the power of remediation to destabilize, complicate, and multiply its signifying properties by altering the viewer’s/reader’s perspective and thus changing the way in which a text is read. Remediation then, in the context of my dissertation, is understood as a method deployed to perform a critical commentary on the practices of representation.
Two recent studies have also put into practice the connections between cultural memory and remediation: *The Memory Effect: The Remediation of Memory in Literature and Film* (2013) edited by Russell Kilbourn and Eleanor Ty and *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (2009) edited by Ann Rigney and Astrid Erll. Both texts are important precedents for my dissertation because they demonstrate the usefulness of remediation when it is brought into the context of cultural memory and media; each collection applies these connections to different ends, thus demonstrating the versatility of remediation, especially in relation to memory studies. The former demonstrates a possible direction for remediation and cultural memory that diverges significantly from the purposes of this dissertation; the latter provides an approach that more closely resembles the direction of this dissertation, although I expand and adapt Rigney and Erll’s terms in a way that is more suitable for my concentration on visual/verbal relationships.

In *The Memory Effect*, Kilbourn and Ty ask, “How do changing ideas of memory affect how we think about texts, whether literary, filmic, or in some other medium?” (1). The editors of this volume conceive of memory as entirely external, providing the analogy of the USB flash drive to demonstrate its prosthetic and technological aspects. Although the editors fulfill their purpose of presenting a “radical” approach to memory, in my work, I insist on asserting the human dimension of memory. Although media occupy a central position in my investigation, my assumption is that human agents enact the processes of construction, circulation, and preservation – whether at the institutional, civic, or individual levels. It is especially necessary to stress human agency in the context of war and its commemoration; what is ultimately at stake in violent conflicts is humanity itself and so it is my contention that human agency must be fervently defended and asserted at this juncture. Equally important, I believe that individual
subjects are a key component in comprehending the fluidity and plurality of memory. To remove the human element from this process runs the risk of positioning technology at the centre of cultural memory. This repositioning would potentially endanger affective connections to the past, which are forged by empathic engagements that occur between individuals. The relationships that are developed between past and present through a shared recognition in humanity are, I believe, essential to fostering a sense of responsibility in individuals and communities in order to ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes of history in the present and so that we take action to reconcile past injustices that continue to impact oppressed individuals and communities in the twenty-first century.

*Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* is much more consistent with my own thinking on matters of cultural memory and media. In particular, Rigney and Erll retain an emphasis on the human element of memory and consider the ways in which human agents have utilized various media to represent and record the past. The editors of this book perform a conceptual shift from Pierre Nora’s “sites of memory” and its implications of memory as a static, canonical, and relatively stable point of reference, to a more dynamic understanding of how memory operates. This dynamic understanding of the “centrality of media to cultural memory” is based on two assumptions: “as instruments for sense-making, they [mass media] mediate between the individual and the world” and “as agents of networking, they mediate between individuals and groups” (1). I find Erll and Rigney’s description of the formation of networks across media especially compelling for describing the effects of remediation, but for reasons that diverge from the editors’ conceptualizations of this process. For Erll, as with Bolter and Grusin, remediation describes the process of memory events being repeatedly represented in different media to the effect that remediation stabilizes past narratives and, in many cases,
establishes them as *lieux des memoires*. As previously mentioned, although I recognize that the stabilization of memory is a potential outcome of remediation, I am more interested in the opposite result: I see remediation as most potent and poignant when it is deployed as a destabilizing and/or deconstructive technique. The networks that are formed through remediation have the potential to defamiliarize the original representation and, in doing so, to reveal the vulnerability of monolithic masternarratives that claim ownership of the past. From this perspective, remediation is a productive, yet neglected concept for examining the revisionist impulse that has exploded in contemporary Canadian literary practices since the 1970s.

In addition to Ty and Kilbourn’s and Erll and Rigney’s volumes on memory and remediation, other recent studies have demonstrated a shifting attention to mediation and remediation in the construction of memory. These studies are significant because they indicate a third, emergent phase in the memory boom: a phase that concentrates on the role of media in memory studies. I provide a brief overview of these texts as evidence of this current tendency and to provide a context in which I can situate my own work, which asserts the centrality of media in Canadian cultural memory of the First World War.

this emerging focus on the centrality of media, specifically in relation to war. Further, When Hoskins observed in 2001 that “the past must be ‘considered in terms of its mediation and remediation in the global present,’” he was identifying the beginnings of what Erll describes as a “highly media-reflexive stage in the history of memory culture” (qtd. in Erll, Memory in Culture 132). Despite their shared interest in digital media – a focus that sets apart my own study of “traditional” media (Bolter and Grusin) – these recent investigations into the media of memory intersect with my own research in a number of ways: in their understanding of memory as socially mediated, dynamic, and continually re-inventing itself within the contexts of the present; in their movement away from national frameworks and towards alternative social networks; and in their use of remediation to theorize a third, emergent phase in the field of memory studies. Moreover, my focus on “traditional” media allows me to make a case for painting and sculpture, both of which remain understudied and yet highly significant objects in the “media boom” of memory studies. Exhibition catalogues have also received limited scholarly attention as objects of analysis in their own right, and chapter 3 will concentrate on the significance of exhibition catalogues as memory tools, as archival artifacts, and as remediations of the exhibition event.

35 Unlike the other studies in this list, Williams does not use the term remediation; however, the role of media is still pertinent to his study.
2.3 The “Memory Boom”: The First Two Phases

How do we account for the continued influx of Canadian literature that re-presents the First World War as a contested past? The revisionist impulse evidenced by the many Canadian novels and plays published since 1977 should be understood within the broader context of the public and academic turn to memory; what Andreas Huyssen has famously referred to as the “memory boom” (1995). For Huyssen, this period began in the 1970s and has continued to gain momentum for more than forty years. Historian Jay Winter, however, posits that the memory boom occurred from the 1890s to the 1920s. By providing an overview of the two periods of the memory boom, I create a context for the third phase of the memory boom that is currently underway. Whereas the first phase of the memory boom is characterized by tensions and intersections between state and individualized commemorative practices, the second phase is dominated by a deconstruction of traditional views of history and fiction that positions these two practices against each other. Tensions between individual and state, as well as history and fiction, manifest in the third phase of the memory boom through a consideration of the relationship between media and memory.

36 For Katharine Hodgkin and Susanna Radstone, “contested pasts” are “a matter of conflicts over representation” and these debates are less about “what actually happened” than issues of “who or what is entitled to speak for the past in the present” (1). The authors continue, “Implicit in these debates are questions about the social and individual dimensions of memory, and the media through which memory is experienced, produced, or conveyed” (emphasis added 3).
37 For an overview of the plays, see Chapter 4, pp.125-6. For novels, see Chapter 5, footnote 135, pp155-6.
38 Within this broader history of the memory boom, Ashplant, Dawson and Roper focus on a “rekindling of interest” in specifically war-related memory, and identify 1980s as the commencement of this regeneration.
39 In The Collective Memory Reader (2011), editors Jeffrey Olick, et al., also identify a “first” memory boom that occurred in the late-nineteenth century. They contend that the first phase was “tied up in the ascendancy of nationalism” and was “the age of monuments” whereas the second was defined by the decline of nationalism and was the age of memorials (14).
Scholars who study the first phase of the memory boom tend to support the argument that ordinary individuals played the dominant role in commemorative practices during this period. Arguing from the perspective of European history, Winter characterizes this first phase of the memory boom as the “generation of memory.” He proposes that the exercise of memory during this period predominantly adopted the form of commemorative rituals of mourning. Winter characterizes the ordinary citizen – not the nation-state – as the principal purveyor of memory at this time (Remembering War 18). Like Winter, Jonathan Vance also examines commemoration in the years following the war, but he does so from a Canadian perspective. Vance argues that the primary agents of the “myth of the war experience” were “average Canadian citizens” (Death so Noble 7). In order to make his argument, Vance examines the cultural significance of several media, including propaganda posters, monument building, the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF), and newspaper cartoons, as well as soldier poetry, letters, songs, and hymns. As can be seen from this list, Vance acknowledges that state-centred forms of commemoration also contributed to the production of cultural memory, but his focus is on commemorative practices among social groups and individuals.

40 Vance describes the “myth of the war experience” as a combination of invention, truth, and half-truth” (8).
41 Vance positions his emphasis on ordinary citizens as a critical response to Paul Fussell’s focus on the literati in his book The Great War and Modern Memory (1975). For a more recent study that revisits Fussell’s landmark text to see if his argument that the Great War significantly altered all future forms of representation in the Western world still holds true, see Anna Branach-Kallas and Nelly Strehlau’s Re-Imagining The First World War: New Perspectives in Anglophone Literature and Culture (2015).
Although Winter and Vance make a sound argument for the role of the average citizen in commemorating the Great War, one must also consider the state as an active player in the dynamics of cultural memory. This position has been argued in Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm’s *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) and Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983). The authors of these texts claim that agendas of the state are also significant factors in the production and dissemination of cultural memory and that media (especially print media, in the case of Anderson) and commemorative rituals function to repeatedly reinforce these memories. In the context of the First World War, examples of cultural memory within the national framework include the proliferation of monuments in the post-war period, the Canadian War Memorials Fund artist program and its exhibitions, the publication of war-periodicals such as *Canada in Khaki*, and numerous books promoting patriotic myths of the war. Hobsbawm, Ranger, and Anderson explain the ways in which external, mediated representations of the nation – for example, flags, sporting events, newspapers – become internalized and experienced by individuals, thus forging an affective connection to the past. In chapter 3, I argue that the souvenir catalogue performs a similar nostalgic and nationalistic function. Combined, these studies link what T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper have identified as the

43 For a study of post-war monument building in the 1920s and 30s, see Alan Young’s “We Throw the Torch” (1989/90). Important studies of the CWMF include Maria Tippett’s *Art at the Service of War* (1984) and Laura Brandon’s *Monument or Memorial? The Forgotten History of Canada’s War Art* (2006). *Canada in Khaki* was a magazine published in three volumes in Toronto from 1917-1919. Its mandate was to connect Canadians at home to their nation’s efforts overseas through personal stories, illustrations, cartoons, and poetry. A second mandate was to raise money for the CWMF. For recent official histories of the war see: Desmond Morton’s *A Military History of Canada* (2007) and Tim Cook *At the Sharp End* (2007), *Shock Troops* (2008), and *Vimy: The Battle and the Legend* (2017).
state-centred paradigm and the social agency-paradigm as two distinct, yet interrelated dimensions of the politics of commemoration. This dissertation considers the intersections of state and individually motivated forms of commemoration in each chapter, building on Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper by identifying media as the centre of these commemorative frameworks.

If the “generation of memory” is characterized by commemorative practices in response to the First World War, then the second phase of the memory boom is characterized by the destabilization of the boundaries between history and fiction in the contexts of the Second World War in general and of the Holocaust in particular. In the context of this dissertation, the explosion of historical fiction as one of Canada’s most popular genres puts the reconceptualization of these two categories – history and fiction – into practice, drawing connections between methodologies that were traditionally viewed as diametrically opposed. Influences of the second memory boom can thus be seen in Canadian historical fictions post-1977, especially in the war novels that I analyze in this dissertation. Key characteristics of these contemporary English-Canadian historical fictions include a focus on the narratives of ordinary individuals, a concentration on the ways in which trauma affects memory, and increasing attention to the archive.

When survivors of the Holocaust started to come forward in the late 1960s and early 1970s to testify about their individual experiences, the “popular memory” paradigm – a third dimension of Ashplant, Dawson and Roper’s tripartite schemata of memory – emerged. As a kind of living memory, popular memory belongs to the field of oral history. Although popular memory is primarily invested in individual subjectivities, Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper explain

44 There is also an abundance of Canadian plays and novels about the Second World War. For discussion of these texts, see Sherrill Grace’s Landscapes of Memory.
that it cannot be entirely isolated from dominant memories and their “hegemonic process of ideological domination and resistance” (13). That being said, this does not necessarily mean that popular memory is always subordinated by ideologically dominant processes. On the contrary, one of the lasting effects of popular memory as a commemorative paradigm has been a philosophical and methodological reconsideration of the discipline of history.

A notable example of the changing field of history is illustrated in Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub’s *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (1992). In this study, the authors recall the eyewitness testimony of a woman who was present at the Polish uprising at Auschwitz. During her telling of the event, the witness mentioned seeing four chimneys combust in flames. The debate that ensued from this account was whether or not the valuable insights provided by the woman’s memory of the event should be discredited because she had incorrectly identified the number of chimneys. From the perspective of the psychoanalyst, the factual discrepancy had no impact on the significance of the woman’s testimony; from the perspective of the historian, to yield to the error in empirical evidence would jeopardize the disciplinary integrity of his field, which was predicated on the assumption of historical truth (59-63). Felman and Laub’s example is illustrative of the broader implications of the second phase of the memory boom, particularly with regard to the practice of history, but also in respect to the effects of traumatic testimony as commemorative practice. As Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy explain, “This discourse of trauma as a special kind of memory, developing since the late nineteenth century, through the First World war, and with particular vigor in the 1970s and 1980s, has been a major constituent of the contemporary memory boom; but it is clearly one with a long and complex history” (15). By the same token, Jean-François Lyotard’s postmodern “suspicion of masternarratives,” Hayden White’s
explorations of historical construction and narrativity, and Theodor Adorno’s insistence on the epistemological and representational impossibilities of the Holocaust, further reflect developing conceptions of historical discourse during this period. In particular, these scholars’ divergent approaches to documenting the past all participate in a deconstruction of the concept of historical “Truth” and recognize that memory is inflected by the values and concerns of the present. Indeed, historian Dominick LaCapra aptly summarizes the “constructivist” shift in historical study when he asserts that, “Truth claims are neither the only nor always the most important consideration in art and analysis” (Writing History 15). A number of studies that are located in these debates about the construction of history and memory in the contexts of psychoanalysis and the Holocaust have since been published, thus demonstrating the popularity and breadth of changing attitudes to the past during second phase of the memory boom. Combined, these studies locate the individual subject as a viable and valuable transmitter of historical memory.

In addition to the psychoanalytical turn, the memory boom of the 1970s also resulted in the study of social configurations of memory. It is the social aspect of memory that is the focus of this dissertation; more specifically, I am interested in the junctures where individual and group memories converge in cultural contexts. I have intentionally utilized the term “cultural memory” rather than “collective memory” for reasons that I explain below. However, in order to fully

45 See White’s Metahistory (1973), Tropics of Discourse (1978), and The Content of the Form (1987).
46 LaCapra suggests “that narratives in fiction may also involve truth claims on a structural or general level by providing insight into phenomena such as slavery or the Holocaust, by offering a reading of a process or period, or by giving at least a plausible ‘feel’ for experience and emotion which may be difficult to arrive at through restricted documentary methods” (2001:13). For LaCapra, this phenomenon is the basis of his useful term, “empathic unsettlement.” The argument that affective connections that can be forged to past events through literary methods is one of the central assumptions of this study that I develop in subsequent chapters.
understand the term cultural memory, it is necessary to trace its origin back to theories of collective memory.

Even though sociologist Maurice Halbwachs’s landmark study *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925) predated the second phase of memory (it is worth noting that the English translation, *On Collective Memory*, was published in 1980), Halbwachs is widely recognized as the founder of a theoretical approach to memory that would come to be known as collective memory. Halbwachs maintained that memory is largely connected to a group consciousness that exists apart from the individual. Halbwachs recognized that individuals construct their own memories through mental images, but he maintained that social networks inform this process of construction in various ways, including cultural symbols, images, and texts, as well as embodied practices such as commemorative ceremonies and rituals and the construction of monuments. Like Halbwachs, art historian Aby Warburg was also interested in social modalities of memory and the transmission of group memories, but his work is comparatively understudied. Writing at the same time as Halbwachs, Warburg positioned visual images (instead of oral speech and text) as the central media of cultural memory. Warburg studied the ways in which certain visual images were adopted as cultural symbols; he also examined how recognition of particular images could trigger memories (see Erll *Memory in Culture* 19-22). The legacy of both Halbwachs and Warburg is a shift in conceptions of memory from a biological capacity to a cultural practice. Both Halbwachs and Warburg insisted on a recognition of media – images and literary texts – as conduits of memory, and this observation is essential to my dissertation.

48 Although Halbwachs’s theories are prevalent starting points for collective memory studies, in *The Collective Memory Reader* (2011), editors Jeffrey Olick, et al., identify the nineteenth century as the beginnings of memory studies.
French historian Pierre Nora took expanded on the collective understanding of memory in his three-volume series *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, in which he described these externalized aspects of social memory – places, objects, concepts – as “sites of memory.” What constituted a site of memory was any product that was inflected with historical significance in the collective memory of a culture. Nora understood sites of memory as symbolic representations of the past that were created as a reaction to the absence of memory from everyday experience. Nora’s theories are rooted in nationalist frameworks, specifically the study of French culture and history. Although the works that I consider are less interested in creating and maintaining national identities than with the experience of individuals who have been excluded from official representations of the past, Nora’s conception of the conscious production of commemorative rituals and media as substitutions for the lack of living witnesses is a primary consideration of the visual and literary texts I examine. The intentional construction of commemorative media and rituals – reminiscent of what Hobsbawm referred to as the “invention of tradition” – aptly describes the mandate of the CWMF program and its art. Furthermore, the novels and plays respond to cultural memories constructed and disseminated by the state, such as those propagated by the CWMF, by providing supplementary narratives that tell the stories and experiences that have been erased from or marginalized by official histories. Although the nation-state may not be the protagonist of the literary works I examine and it may not be the ultimate vision motivating some of the CWMF artists, the fact that each text in my study is located in the context of the First World War implicates the nation-state as a contributing factor to the memories depicted (as either a point of solidarity or contention) in each of the literary and visual works I examine.

Since these pioneering studies by Halbwachs, Warburg, and Nora, investigations into the collective aspects of memory have proliferated in the academy, each with its own disciplinary
and conceptual biases. Paul Connerton (1989) focuses on the corporeal, habituated, embodiment of memory in his theory of “incorporated” memory; Jan Assmann (1995) distinguishes “cultural memory” – the manifestation of memory in objects and practices that are repeated trans-generationally – from “communicative memory” – everyday lived experience that is circumscribed by a “limited temporal horizon” (127); and Marianne Hirsch (1997, 2008, 2012) has examined the possibilities of the inter- and trans-generational transmission of memory (with a focus on photography and children of Holocaust survivors) through “post-memory.” Increasing attention to the externalized aspects of memory has produced theories of “prosthetic memory” which, according to Alison Landsberg (2004), refers to the ability to empathetically and affectively engage with the past using the technologies of mass culture and Michael Rothberg (2009) argues that traumatic memories can be articulated more effectively by shifting from competitive frameworks (a struggle for recognition) to “multi-directional memory,” a process that brings “multiple traumatic pasts” into a shared and interactive context of struggle (4). Erll has proposed the term “travelling memory” to explain the development of memory studies from “collective memory” to “cultural memory” to “transcultural memory” (“Travelling Memory” 2011).

From this plethora of memory-related terms, “cultural memory” most effectively represents the interests of this dissertation because it is tenable to the diversity of representation and dynamics of memory that form the foundation of my theoretical framework. Conversely, collective memory connotes a kind of memory that is homogenous and inclusive. To my mind, “collective” memory runs the risk of erasing the contributions and experiences of those who do not identify with the dominant social group that is represented by the collective. Since the focus of my dissertation is precisely the groups that have been marginalized or forgotten from official
narratives, cultural memory more adequately accommodates the multiplicity of narratives that I examine.

2.4 Cultural Memory – “Functional” and “Storage”

As Erll aptly points out in Memory in Culture, the numerous and extremely varied applications of “cultural memory” during the second phase of the memory boom have had a detrimental impact on the term by convoluting its meaning. For the purposes of this dissertation, “cultural memory” refers to Aleida Assmann’s definition and application of the term, as described in her book Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives (2011). I have chosen Assmann for my theoretical framework because of her understanding of memory as dynamic and heterogeneous. By dividing “cultural memory” into two complementary subcategories – functional memory and storage memory – Assmann describes the oscillations of material media between the realms of remembering and forgetting in such a way that provides a conceptually productive alternative to approaches that perceive these movements as anxiety-ridden evidence of a developing cultural amnesia (see, for example, Huyssen’s Twilight Memories). For Assmann, movements between remembering and forgetting are a productive and necessary aspect of memory that offers insight into shared cultural values of the present. Whereas, on the one hand, functional memory is active, conscious, constructed, selective, inhabited, and future-oriented, storage memory is latent, inactive, amorphous, passive, and secondhand (123). When linked to official memory, functional memory aims to legitimize; however, in other forms, it can act subversively as counter-memory. Storage memory, on the other hand, operates as an archive for historical knowledge, where it can preserve disembodied relics and abandoned materials of “missed opportunities, alternative options, and unused
material” until they are (or are not) recalled back into functional circulation (126-7). It is important to recognize that the boundaries between storage memory and functional memory are permeable; this Gestalt function of cultural memory – functional in the foreground, storage in the background – is the primary factor for circumventing anxiety about forgotten relics being permanently lost to oblivion.

Assmann’s theory is not without its limitations. Although functional and storage memory are useful descriptions for conceptualizing the dynamics of cultural memory, it is necessary to acknowledge the possibility of the permanent erasure of memory. The intentional destruction of records, censorship, and a failure/ inability to document particular experiences are some examples that demonstrate the possibility of memories being lost to oblivion. Moreover, I am not convinced that storage memory is entirely “amorphous.” The archive – the primary manifestation of storage memory – is explicitly organized and constructed by the archivist in order to support a unifying narrative of the subject being archived. In addition, when the archivist deems certain artifacts to be relevant and others irrelevant, this process of selection significantly impacts the prevailing memory of the past, as well as the availability and/or access to certain material evidence.

Despite these limitations, what sets Assmann’s work apart for me is her emphasis on media as external carriers of memory. As Erll puts it, “[c]ultural memory is unthinkable without media. It would be inconceivable without the role that media play on both levels – the individual and the collective” (Memory in Culture 113). Painting, sculpture, poetry, philosophy, theatre, archives, architecture, writing instruments, and photographs are only some examples of the many media Assmann considers in her study. My own examination of media focuses on exhibition catalogues, paintings, sculpture, novels, plays, and monuments. By locating media at the centre
of cultural memory, I assume a duality in the function of media, an understanding of media both as material objects and as social agents.

It is surprising that, until recently, the second memory boom has underplayed the centrality of media to memory. A growing interest in the media of memory suggests, following Dagmar Brunow’s reasoning, that we are entering a third, emergent phase of the memory boom in which media are the protagonist. By focusing primarily on mediated memory, I situate this dissertation within this nascent phase of memory studies and I rely on remediation as a primary concept to further articulate the significance of the transformations and reconfigurations of media as they transition from storage memory to functional memory (or are rearticulated to maintain their functional status). My task is to illustrate particular examples in which the restoration of a particular artifact from storage to functional memory also involves a transformation of the original object. My chief examples perform this transformation by defamiliarizing a visual work of art and, in doing so, prompt a reconsideration of the signifying properties of each artifact.

2.5 What was the Canadian War Memorials Fund?

The majority of the visual works of art I examine in this dissertation are connected to the Canadian War Memorials Fund. All of the visual works of art that I consider are produced by state-sanctioned operations and therefore represent an official version of the past; some endorse the dominant masternarrative of the war and its legitimizing purpose, others bring this narrative into question. In her essay “Art and War: Truth or Fiction?” Sue Malvern draws on Keith Moxey to assert that “Art history is not a closed, definitive enterprise. Rather, writing art history must engage with the ‘radical alterity of the past’ whilst acknowledging that no account of the past gets constructed outside the values and perspectives of the present that we inevitably project onto
it” (311). In order to account for the “radical alterity of the past” in my historiography of the CWMF, I offer three different, yet intersecting, narratives of the program and its legacy for Canadian cultural memory of the First World War.

The first version of the story of the CWMF is the most commonly invoked narrative. It features three patriarchs as its protagonists: Max Aitken (later Lord Beaverbrook), a wealthy expatriate who owned and operated several British newspapers; Sir Edmund Walker, Director of the Canadian Bank of Commerce and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Canada; and Eric Brown, the first director of the National Gallery of Canada. In this version of the story, these three men played crucial roles in the vision and fulfillment of the CWMF program. The war art was intended to create a national identity for Canada by documenting Canadian efforts in the war in order to foster a sense of independence from Britain and to identify characteristics such as perseverance, heroism, and determination as Canadian values through which the dispersed members of the nation-state, at home and abroad, civilian and soldier, could collectively experience a sense of national unity and affinity. In other words, the art participated in realizing the “imagined community” of Canada through its icons and narratives.

Aitken’s vision differed from Brown and Walker’s because of his loyalties to the British Empire. Aitken wanted to commission large-scale painted records of key events in the First World War that involved Canadian participation, but he wanted to do so using British artists who would produce paintings that utilized conventional symbols and styles of war art. Walker and Brown, however, had a vested interest in commissioning Canadian artists for the program in order to promote a Canadian art scene that would continue to thrive after the war was over and would continue to advance Canadian cultural production, which was limited at this time.
Because of their focus on Canadian content, Walker and Brown were also responsible for the inclusion of home front images in the collection (Brandon *Art or Memorial?* xv). Through the combined efforts of these three men, the CWMF commissioned, created, and exhibited over eight hundred paintings, sculptures, and prints by Canadian, British, Belgian, Austrian, Danish, and Serbian artists (Tippett 45). The outcome was “the largest war art program ever undertaken by any country and the first great commission for Canadian artists” (Robertson 14).

A second version of the CWMF and its legacy describes the program as a reconnaissance mission. In March 1915, all photographers on the Western Front were ordered to withdraw from the frontlines. The consequence of this command was an absence of visual documentation of key events in which the Canadians were involved, including St. Julien, Festubert, St. Eloi, Givenchy, and the Second Battle of Ypres.\(^4^9\) The Second Battle of Ypres, which took place in April and May of 1915 was especially significant because it was one of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces’ first major encounters with German troops. It was also the first time the Canadians were exposed to the new German weapon: chlorine gas (Tippett 26). This event,\(^4^9\)

\(^{4^9}\) There were also rumours that photographers had been doctoring their photographs, which created a suspicion of the medium in general and also provided a market for alternative forms of representation. According to Tippett, the use of a soft-focus lens or manipulations in the darkroom such as removing, outlining, and foreshortening images could be used to alter their perspective and content (22). See also Tim Cook’s “Documenting War and Forging Reputations: Sir Max Aitken and the Canadian War Records Office in the First World War,”; Peter Robertson’s *Relentless Verity: Canadian Military Photographers since 1885* and “Canadian Photojournalism during the First World War.” Another perceived limitation of photographic documentation was the belief that photographs possessed a lifespan of only twenty-five years (Tippett 23).
which occurred on 22 April 1915 and again on 24 April 1915, remains prevalent in Canadian historical memory of the war.  

The gap in the historical record (a lamentable erasure) that failed to record Canada’s involvement in this seminal event of the conflict motivated Aitken to commission British artist Richard Jack to produce a painting that would reconstruct the event for posterity (see fig.2.1). The result was an enormous painting that measured 3.7 x 3.6 metres:  

![Figure 2.1. Richard Jack. The Second Battle of Ypres, 22 April - 25 May, 1915. 19710261-0161. 1917, oil on canvas, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum.](image)

Jack’s painting complicates the entire premise of the CWMF program, which was to produce art from eyewitness testimony. Direct frontline experience was essential to CWMF art advisor Paul Konody’s argument that art was the most “truthful” of media; paradoxically, the first real

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50 A centennial exhibition of the outbreak of the war, hosted by the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa entitled Fighting in Flanders – Gas. Mud. Memory. (2015) was dedicated entirely to this memory of the conflict.
commission that marked the inception of the CWMF undermines this claim. Instead, Jack relied on familiar motifs and symbols of earlier war paintings whose size and artistic conventions had been consecrated by the French Academy and whose romantic glorification of battle was an accepted narrative to European publics. In essence, Jack’s *The Second Battle of Ypres* can be read as a remediation of this kind of military war art that preceded the First World War.

Jack’s painting has been widely critiqued by contemporary historians. Jonathan Vance asserts that the painting contains “all of the clichés of battlefield painting: the wounded officer in the centre right who calmly exhorts his men on; the simian-looking enemy soldier at the left; the kilted soldier to the right who moves stalwartly into the line; and the stretcher-bearer [who helps] a wounded soldier to the rear” (*Death so Noble* 104). Lloyd Bennett has rightly remarked that the painting does not even depict chlorine gas, which was the main reason that the event has been marked as significant in the broader history of the war (5). The controversies elicited by Jack’s representation of an event at which he was not present and on which he employed pre-existing iconic templates situate the CWMF in its second narrative more as a producer of propaganda rather than as an artistic enterprise or a documentary program.

A third, but by no means final version of the story of the CWMF is illustrated by Frederick Varley’s painting *For What?* (see fig. 2.2). Like Jackson’s painting *A Copse, Evening*, the title of Varley’s painting provides evidence of a critical approach to the war and a practice

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51 Interestingly, the original title of the painting, *The Second Battle of Ypres, 23 April to 25 May, 1915* documents the period occurring a day after the Germans first used the chlorine gas on April 22. The exhibition catalogue *Art & War* is dates April 23, as is the catalogue documenting the first exhibition of CWMF art in Toronto, “Canadian War Memorials Exhibition,” but in later catalogues, such as *Canvas of War*, the subtitle of the painting is dated April 22. For more on Jack’s painting, see Lloyd Bennett “Richard Jack, Canada’s Battle Painter.” For more on the Second Battle of Ypres, see Irene Gammel’s “The Memory of St-Julien.”
within the CWMF of representing the tragic aftermath of the conflict, rather than celebratory or allegorical narratives that endorse the war as a patriotic sacrifice and a necessary endeavour.

In essence, Varley’s painting – what Sherrill Grace has called a “pictorial protest” – functions as a counter-narrative to the first two versions of the CWMF (Bearing Witness 5). This protest is evident in the artist’s emphasis on the human cost of war, which is represented by the cart of dead bodies that is the focal point of the painting. Slightly behind the cart of corpses are two soldiers, burdened by the task of burying their dead in graves marked by anonymous white crosses. The gravediggers, too, are anonymous; their distance from the viewer obscures any distinguishing features on their faces and this anonymity, combined with the fact that the colour

Figure 2.2. Frederick Varley, For What? 19710261-0770. c.1918, oil on canvas, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum.
scheme of browns, yellows, and greens subsumes the figures into the muddied landscape of the Western Front, speaks to the dehumanizing effects of the war on both the living and the dead.\textsuperscript{52} For What? reminds viewers that the bodies in the cart will soon literally become one with the earth in which they are buried, and the title of the painting asks viewers to consider the human cost of war.

In addition, the perceptual distance between the viewer and the figures in the painting reminds us of the temporal and spatial distance between those who experienced the war directly and those who could access the tragedy only through mediated representations. Varley’s painting therefore subverts the celebratory narrative of heroic sacrifice by reminding us of the 60,000 Canadians who died in the First World War; his version of the story focuses on the futility of conflict and denies it any heroic justice or patriotic redemption.

Not one of these versions of the CWMF is more truthful than the other. In response to Brandon’s question: “Art or Memorial?” or Malvern’s question: “Truth or Fiction?” the answer is: both. Due to the fact that those of us in the present can only access the past through mediated sources – i.e. the material memory of the archive – the narrative of heroic sacrifice and nation-building is just as viable as the narrative of propaganda or the dissenting narrative of loss and destruction. I conclude this chapter with Varley’s version of the war because it represents the complexities and variety within the CWMF program and reminds us that despite its official affiliations, the collection of art produced by the CWMF cannot be viewed as a single, homogenous representation of Canada’s participation in the war.

\textsuperscript{52} Many war novels draw attention to the environmental challenges of mud. Instances of near drowning in mud are depicted in both Timothy Findley’s \textit{The Wars} and Alan Cumyn’s \textit{The Sojourn}. For a detailed analysis of the psychological effects of mud on the battlefront, see Santanu Das’s “Slimescapes” in \textit{Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature} (35-72).
The poignant question Varley poses therefore challenges its viewers not only to question representations of the past, but also demands a response that, realistically, evades any sufficient answer. As Varley himself acknowledges in a letter he wrote to his wife, Maud:

You in Canada…cannot realize at all what war is like. You must see it and live it. You must see the barren deserts war has made of once fertile country…see the turned-up graves, see the dead on the field, freshly mutilated – headless, legless, stomachless, a perfect body and a passive face and a broken empty skull – see your own countrymen unidentified, thrown into a cart, their coats over them, boys digging a grave in a land of yellow slimy mud and green pools of water under a weeping sky.  

[…] until you’ve lived this … you cannot know. (qtd in Brandon Art or Memorial? 19-21)

The remediation of war art in contemporary Canadian literature about the First World War is one way of responding to Varley’s question. Although the literary texts may not provide any concrete answers, the manipulation of military images into verbal representations coerces the viewer/reader to consider alternative perspectives and this, in essence, is what Varley is asking us to do. The continued revision and reconsideration that is signaled by remediation demonstrates one of the primary dimensions of cultural memory: memory and its mediated forms are dynamic, not static. The next chapter investigates the dynamics of memory through an

53 Varley’s verbal description of the epistemological limitations of war is also a verbal remediation of his painting For What? In both verbal and visual media, Varley draws on this image of fellow countrymen in a cart surrounded by a landscape of mud in order to represent the un-representable traumas of war experienced by those who witnessed the conflict firsthand. Remediation, in this example, utilizes repetition to emphasize the limitations of memory and representation.
examination of remediated war art in exhibition catalogues. The various stages of development described in this chapter, each marking significant turning points in the CWMF collection’s history, characterize works of art produced by the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) as apparatuses and agents of cultural memory. These different versions of the war illustrate the ways in which the conflict continues to be re-membered through art.
Chapter 3: Cataloguing the Great War – A Poetics of Exhibition Catalogues

Figure 3.1. Augustus John. *The Canadians Opposite Lens*, 20110067-001. 1918-1921, oil on canvas, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum.

On 1 November 2011, the Canadian War Museum published “War Art Masterpiece Comes Home to Canada,” an online press release that celebrated the museum’s acquisition of Augustus John’s massive unfinished First World War painting *The Canadians Opposite Lens* (see fig. 3.1).54 In the press release, John’s painting is described as “the most significant Canadian-commissioned painting from the conflict” (“War Art Masterpiece”). The cultural import of the painting is further reinforced by the claim that “it had never before been on public view” (“War Art Masterpiece”). The Welsh artist’s painting, measuring twelve metres by 3.7 metres, was commissioned by the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) artist program and was designated to be the centrepiece of the war memorial gallery that creators of the CWMF program – most notably, Sir Max Aitken (a.k.a. Lord Beaverbrook) – had envisioned. Beaverbrook’s gallery was never built, which is one of the reasons the painting was never

54 The unveiling ceremony took place on 2 July 2011.
completed and later disappeared into the obscurity of private ownership. In 2005, the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa opened its new location and one of its many functions was to house the previously displaced CWMF collection. John’s painting, according to the press release, “completes the War Museum’s collection of major artworks commissioned for [Beaverbrook’s] war memorial art gallery” (“War Art Masterpiece”).

Although John’s painting, in the context of CWMF art, is unusual for its monumental size, it is not unusual for its artistic conventions. As state-commissioned works of art, a large majority of the paintings created under the auspices of the CWMF – in particular, those that, like John’s, relied on the conventions of traditional history painting – employed large-scale representations (although The Canadians Opposite Lens is by far the largest) in order to symbolically reinforce the cultural significance of their subjects. What is more remarkable about The Canadians Opposite Lens is that, unlike the other works of art in the CWMF collection, the painting is unfinished. The paradox of John’s unfinished painting “completing” the Canadian War Museum’s First World War art collection underlines a fundamental anxiety about representation that characterizes CWMF art and its exhibition catalogues. Official accounts of the war deploy unifying narratives in order to suppress the reality that the historical record is, in fact, incomplete. Gaps in the historical record render the past vulnerable to contestation and

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55 There are other theories regarding the unfinished status of the painting. Maria Tippett speculates that John was removed from the battlefields after initiating an altercation with a soldier. Apparently John had a reputation for being adversarial. His removal from the front hindered his access to the subject matter he was depicting (Tippett 48). Another theory is that John abandoned the project in order to accept a commission to paint portraits at the Paris Peace Conference (Cork 206).

56 While the painting remained under private ownership in London, England, it was divided into three panels in order to accommodate its massive size. Public restoration of the painting will be part of the war museum’s First World War centennial programming from 2014–2018.
counter-narratives, which undermine the authority of official histories that aim to legitimize the war and its tragic aftermath through the creation and repeated endorsement of state-sponsored programs, such as the CWMF. On a general level, this struggle of representation illustrates the dynamics of cultural memory and gestures to the related discrepancies between official memory and individual memories. More specifically, in consideration of exhibition catalogues, the imposition of a unifying narrative that claims a “complete” account of the past risks the erasure of narratives from Canadian cultural memories of the First World War, particularly those that do not correspond with the official version of the past.

Indeed, the incompletion of the historical record is evident in the fact that the narrative event that inspired *The Canadians Opposite Lens* – the battle of Hill 70 – has been largely erased from Canadian cultural memory of the Great War in lieu of more celebrated masternarratives such as the battle of Vimy Ridge, which took place in April 1917. In August 1917, the Canadian Corps attacked the city of Lens in an effort to draw German troops away from Passchendaele and, in doing so, aimed to alleviate pressure on other Allied troops engaged in combat in that region. The Canadians managed to successfully accomplish their mission by gaining higher ground (Hill 70) and attacking the Germans as they advanced towards the hill. Six Canadians received the Victoria Cross for their contributions to this battle (“Battle of Hill 70”).

57 As I complete this Chapter in early April 2017, television advertisements, newspaper articles, and YouTube videos are only some of the media that have been utilized to reinforce and disseminate the celebratory national independence narrative of Vimy as the centennial anniversary of the battle approaches.

58 For more on the Battle of Hill 70, see *Capturing Hill 70: Canada’s Forgotten Battle of the First World War* (2016), edited by Douglas E. Delaney and Serge M. Durflinger. See also Hobson Elton “The Battle of Hill 70: Canada’s Forgotten Vimy Ridge” *GlobalNews.ca* (8 April 2017). In this recent news coverage of the event, Hobson points out that from a nation-building perspective, Hill 70 is actually more significant than Vimy Ridge because it marked the first time
On the one hand, the unfinished state of John’s painting makes it a failed site of memory; its disappearance from public view for a period of almost a hundred years has inhibited public awareness of this event and marginalized the Battle of Hill 70 in Canadian cultural memory of the war. On the other hand, the incompletion of the painting makes it a compelling visual depiction of the limitations of memory and the inherent struggles of historical representation.

In what follows, I examine the ways in which *The Canadians Opposite Lens* utilizes a variety of visual signifiers that reinforce the First World War masternarrative that the conflict represented a heroic sacrifice for the Canadian nation. I also identify a second masternarrative of recovery and loss that has had an equally significant impact on the reception and memory of the CWMF collection, but has received considerably less scholarly attention. I then propose a poetics of the catalogue that describes the methodological functions (conventions, form, definitions) of the genre and its historical development, with particular focus on the ways in which the struggle of representation implicates memory as a central feature of cataloguing practices. I conceive of catalogues as apparatuses and agents of cultural memory, as well as remediations of the exhibition event, and I examine these fundamental principles of catalogues by expanding on Mieke Bal’s analysis of display as a discursive “gesture of exposition” that connects the objects on display to the exhibition narrative (2).

In order to elaborate on how memory and remediation operate as fundamental principles in a poetics of exhibition catalogues, I consider three case studies of CWMF catalogues – Paul Konody’s *Art & War* (1919), Heather Robertson’s *A Terrible Beauty* (1977), and Dean Oliver and Laura Brandon’s *Canvas of War* (2000) – that mark developmental shifts in the narrative of Canadian troops were led by a Canadian general (Lt.-General Arthur Currie led the battle of Hill 70; British officer Sir Julian Byng led the battle of Vimy Ridge).
the collection and its commemorative function. Each of these case studies features a catalogue
that negotiates the struggle of representation in different ways, resulting in either a stabilizing of
the dominant narratives that have come to characterize the collection or, alternatively, a
presentation of the collection from perspectives that were previously neglected. Not only do the
shifting narratives of CWMF catalogues demonstrate the dynamic nature of cultural memory, but
they also emphasize the centrality of media in constructing Canadian cultural memory of the
First World War.

3.1 Heroic Sacrifice and Loss and Recovery: Connecting Memory to Narrative

As I explain in my introduction (pp.3-6), the predominant masternarrative of the First
World War in general, and of the CWMF collection in particular, is that of heroic sacrifice. This
narrative is represented by a number of CWMF paintings and sculptures and is reinforced in the
exhibition catalogues that document the public displays of these works of art. The narrative of
heroic sacrifice was deployed by the state through a variety of media (including, but not limited
to paintings, literature, newspapers, propaganda posters, journals, magazines, and radio) in an
effort to legitimize the mass trauma and destruction of the First World War and, later, to justify
Canadian involvement in subsequent military endeavours. This narrative continues, to varying
degrees, to dominate the CWMF collection in present-day exhibitions and catalogues.

The Canadians Opposite Lens invokes the narrative of heroic sacrifice through the
painting’s composition and perspective, as well as John’s use of familiar symbols, notably the
crucifixion motif. The foreground of the painting depicts the bustling activity of civilians and
soldiers amidst devastated trees and ruined buildings; the background of the painting depicts a
panoramic view of the war-torn city of Lens. The perceived kinetic energy of the bustling bodies
in the painting prompts several questions: where do the civilians who exit the scene intend to go? Some travel by foot, such as the mother clutching her swaddled infant while young children cling to the skirts of her dress, while others travel by horse-drawn cart or walk alongside it. To the right of the painting, the viewer can see a woman, her head covered by a scarf, holding a basket. A blank spot on the canvas containing a rudimentary drawing suggests that a second woman was to be painted next to the first woman. The women appear to be interacting with the Canadian soldiers. What do these women ask? Are they pleading for assistance? Asking for directions? Are they trying to locate a displaced family member? A seated soldier gestures towards the women, his hand outstretched as though he is presenting them with a material offering. What does he offer them? The lack of expression on the figures’ faces makes the exchange difficult to read, but their body language suggests that the Canadian soldiers offer aid to the refugee women.

The frenetic composition of the foreground also establishes the painting’s focal point. Although the civilians’ bodies are directed towards the peripheries of the painting, many of the figures turn their heads in the opposite direction, directing the viewer’s gaze towards the centre of the image, where the Canadian soldiers are located. The Canadians are the protagonists of the image (they are literally and figuratively the central figures), and they are depicted commiserating with fellow soldiers and engaging in heroic activities, such as assisting refugee women and attending to a wounded soldier lying prostrate on a stretcher.

Another significant compositional aspect of the painting is the artist’s inclusion of ruined landmarks, particularly the “castellated towers of Château de Rollencourt and, in the distance, the slag-heaps of Moeux les Mines” (Cork 206). Ruined buildings, as in the destroyed landscapes painted by A.Y. Jackson (see fig. 1.1), symbolized the destruction and tragedy of war and were therefore another recognizable icon for conveying loss. The destroyed facades of these buildings
further signify the enemy’s barbaric destruction of culture; the desecration of cultural landmarks was considered to be evidence of the savagery of enemy nations (Tippett 63). Although these ruins would not actually be visible from the perspective of the painting, John’s artistic liberties position the narrative of the painting within a reductive “good versus evil” epic framework, through which the Canadian troops can be understood to represent the heroes who have willingly endured the horrors of war – displaced persons, devastated landscapes, casualties of their fellow soldiers – in order to defeat the evil enemy.

The most explicit endorsement of the heroic sacrifice narrative in John’s painting, however, is the inclusion of a crucified soldier. War artists commonly incorporated Christian iconography into their paintings and sculptures as a strategy for likening the soldier to a Christ-like martyr. An especially notable example of an artist’s use of the crucifixion motif in the CWMF collection is Derwent Wood’s sculpture Canada’s Golgotha (c.1918), which depicts the widespread rumour that the Germans crucified a Canadian soldier to a barn door. The sculpture was extremely controversial, inciting public outrage from both Germans and Allies. In response to demands that the Allies either substantiate the rumour or withdraw the sculpture from public display, Canada’s Golgotha was removed from the Burlington House exhibition. A government ban prohibited further display; it remained censored even in 1989 when Maria Tippett was denied permission to include it in her exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Evans 58). Canada’s Golgotha finally reappeared publicly in 1992 in the Canadian War Museum exhibition “Peace is the Dream.” The story of this sculpture is unusual because of efforts among media outlets and CWMF organizers to substantiate the veracity of the atrocity story rather than deploying the image as an allegorical representation, as was the conventional use of the crucifixion motif. As a symbol of heroic sacrifice, the use of Golgotha-as-intertext would have preserved the religious
authority of the biblical allusion and, in doing so, this context would have been less likely to cause offence.

In contrast to Wood’s sculpture, the many other artists who deployed this familiar image (including John) did, in fact, utilize it as an allegorical representation of the dominant narrative of the soldier-as-martyr. According to Alan R. Young, “Nowhere is the mythology of heroic sacrifice more obviously enshrined than […] the crucifixion motif used by some designers of Great Canadian War Memorials” (18). Young is referring to the profusion of war monuments that were erected across Canada in the years following the First World War, but his observations resonate with paintings that commemorate the conflict as well. Other CWMF paintings that utilize this iconography include Charles Sims’s *Sacrifice* (1918) and Byam Shaw’s *The Flag* (1918). In these examples, like *The Canadians Opposite Lens*, Christian symbolism is deployed as a means of justifying the tremendous loss and devastation of the war; the narrative suggests that the heroic soldier will be immortalized through the reverent memories of his fellow Canadians, for whom he willingly sacrificed his own life. By identifying John’s painting as “the most significant Canadian commissioned painting from the conflict,” the Canadian War Museum is complicit in the endorsement and perpetuation of this masternarrative that links Christian symbolism to patriotism through the apotheosis of the fallen soldier.

However, by boasting that John’s painting had “never before been on public view,” the Canadian War Museum’s press release invokes a second masternarrative that has received considerably less attention than the narrative of heroic sacrifice: the narrative of loss and recovery. Evidence of this narrative can be seen in newspaper reviews of CWMF art as early as 1921. These early narratives functioned to garner economic support for Beaverbrook’s gallery, which would provide a permanent home for the monumental works of art. Lamenting the fact
that “Canada has no proper place for war memorials pictures,” one article describes the absence of a “suitable building” to display the collection as “a national loss, and but a poor appreciation of the most outstanding art of this age” (“Great Paintings in Storage”). Other accounts describe the displacement of the collection as “hidden from public view,” suggesting that the artwork was being suppressed or censored (“The War Memorial Paintings”). A rhetorical combination of ethos – “the most outstanding art of this age” and pathos – “a national loss” – are central to this narrative of loss that implies the curatorial management of the collection is the collective responsibility of all Canadian citizens.

As Canadians grew suspicious of the heroic sacrifice narrative by the end of the 1920s and endured the difficulties of economic Depression in the 1930s, followed by the Second World War in the 1940s, public support for the collection increasingly diminished and, demoted to storage, most of the collection rarely saw public display. This history marks the first “disappearance” of the collection and its relegation to storage memory in Canadian cultural memory of the First World War. Subsequent efforts to regenerate the collection, beginning in 1977 with Heather Robertson’s A Terrible Beauty, have capitalized on the forgotten status of the art by “rediscovering” it and restoring its functional position in Canadian cultural memory. Robertson’s efforts to recover the collection correspond with the rise of Canadian cultural production and nationalism during the 1960s and 1970s, a period during which revisionist histories proliferated in the Canadian literary market. In essence, Robertson’s catalogue is also a revisionist history of Canada’s artistic output during the two World Wars. Although curators of
the CWMF collection have contested the narrative of loss and recovery, it endures nonetheless. The CWM’s invocation of this narrative as a promotional agenda for the acquisition of John’s painting – that it had “never before been on public view” – echoes the loss and recovery narrative and its persistence in twenty-first century promotions of Canada’s war art.

Two of the three catalogues examined later in this chapter invoke the story of loss and recovery, thus illustrating the dynamics of cultural memory and its movement between the realms of functional, conscious memory and latent, storage memory, ultimately raising the question: why does the CWMF collection continuously fail to maintain a functional position in Canadian cultural memory of the First World War? The answer, in part, lies in the workings of cultural memory. The collection’s movement between functional memory and storage memory demonstrates the fluidity of cultural memory. Whereas the masternarrative of heroic sacrifice served a viable purpose for the Canadian public immediately following the conflict by offering consolation to grieving survivors of the war by justifying the deaths of more than 60,000 Canadians as a patriotic sacrifice for the greater good, changing attitudes to war diminished the relevance of this narrative for a post-war public, which resulted in the erasure of the collection from cultural memory. As my case studies demonstrate, subsequent attempts to regenerate

59 See, for example, the article in The Ottawa Citizen “War Art Just Keeps on Getting Discovered” in which Hugh Halliday sardonically congratulates Minister of National Defence, Doug Young, for his alleged “discovery” of the collection earlier that month (A13). Young’s “discovery” was promoted by journalist Michael Woloschuk, who claimed that “Mr. Young found these war paintings, and thousands of others, at the Canadian War Museum’s storage warehouse, where they have remained, largely ignored, since 1945” (p. A5.). Halliday proceeds to name a number of other claimants who have “discovered” the CWMF collection since 1977, including “CBC reporters, Charlie Greenwell of CJOH [now CTV Ottawa], the producers of The Valour and the Horror, and Sound/Venture Productions [for their film Canvas of Conflict].” See also Ovenden, Norm “Prisoners of War. Canada’s War Art is Kept Sheltered From View.”
functional memory of the collection required a re-membering of the CWMF art through narratives that reflect the concerns and interests of the present.

Indeed, cultural memory is highly selective and in the case of the CWMF, the predominance of the heroic sacrifice narrative in catalogues and exhibitions preceding the Second World War had the effect of suppressing the diversity of the collection by ignoring paintings such as Jackson’s *A Copse, Evening*, Varley’s *For What?* or Derwent Wood’s sculpture *Canada’s Golgotha* (1918), all of which resist celebratory representations of the conflict. Later exhibitions and catalogues have attempted to compensate for this erasure, which has been facilitated by changing relationships to war and evolving attitudes towards modernist art. By staging the two dominant masternarratives of the CWMF collection as well as the underlying tensions and anxieties that inform these narratives, John’s *The Canadians Opposite Lens* provides a point of entry into an investigation of the role of cultural memory in cataloguing practices, as well as the evolving memory of the CWMF collection.

### 3.2 Towards a Poetics of the Catalogue

In this section I propose a poetics of the catalogue by examining major historical developments of the genre. I then consider the difficulties scholars have faced in defining catalogues, especially in terms of their practical value. Contesting notions of a catalogue’s functions and its effects demonstrate the complexities of these texts, which are rooted in struggles between aesthetics and documentation, unity and diversity, looking and telling. Building on Bal’s cultural analysis of exhibiting practices, I extend the reach of her observations by applying them to cataloguing practices in order to argue that discrepancies between the objects on display and the narrative of the exhibition are exacerbated in catalogues because a
catalogue does not produce the actual art object, it can only provide a remediated version of it. The incommensurability between looking and telling that is integral to cataloguing practices is illustrative of the ways in which memory is a central, yet neglected, component of a poetics of the catalogue.

Two interrelated historical developments significantly impacted the form and function of cataloguing practices: a change in organizational systems from private to public audiences and from genre to artist. Originally, the collection of art was a private practice restricted to wealthy aristocrats. Early eighteenth century collectors commissioned catalogues of their art so they could distribute them to their personal acquaintances (Gaehtgens and Marchesano 48). Early catalogues were “intended to glorify the owners at least as much as the works depicted” (Haskell 8). The works of art in these collections were organized according to decorative and aesthetic principles rather than schools or styles of art (Gaehtgens and Marchesano 4). However, in the late eighteenth century, as art collections were made accessible to the public for educational and entertainment purposes, cataloguing practices adopted a pedagogic function that, through the inclusion of technical data and more extensive commentaries, began to reflect the historical and cultural contexts of the works of art (Gaehtgens and Marchesano 48-9). One of the ways in which these changes became apparent in display practices is that collections were rearranged to represent schools of painting. According to Thomas Gaehtgens and Louis Marchesano, these

60 Both Francis Haskell and Hyatt Mayor identify the mid-seventeenth century catalogue of Austrian Archduke Leopold Wilhelm’s private collection as the first illustrated catalogue of paintings. Haskell makes this assertion based on the fact that Wilhelm’s catalogue was the first to contain reproductions of modern, as opposed to ancient art (8). Mayor bases his argument on the distinction between religious and secular art, citing the 1483 catalogue of relics displayed at the Bamberg Cathedral as the first text to provide lists and illustrations of objects on display (n.p.). For both scholars, the combination of textual apparatus with visual images is a necessary convention of exhibition catalogues.
developments marked a paradigmatic shift from traditional baroque to modern enlightened concepts of art (49).

Changes in technology and the market further contributed to developments in the classification systems of catalogues. According to Francis Haskell, developments in printing press technology shifted the centre for producing catalogues from Rome to Paris, during which a concurrent shift occurred that changed the organizational system of catalogues from classification by subject matter to classification by artist (8). Additional changes in classification systems of catalogues occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century, also in Paris. This shift was related to the collapse of the hegemony of the Academic system in the art world and the emergence of art dealers and art critics as arbiters of the new system. These changes, according to Cynthia White and Harrison White, explain “the changing style and content of painting” during the nineteenth century (vii). Prior to the evolution of the dealer-critic system, the French government-controlled Academy of Painting and Sculpture was the principal means by which artists could establish their careers during the nineteenth century. The Academic system focused on traditional methods of painting that emulated the work of Master artists (White and White 19-20). However, from the mid-nineteenth-century onwards, the proliferation of artists in France flooded the Salons with an abundance of artworks, many of which did not correspond with traditional painting subjects, for example, Impressionist art. Since the Academy was unable (or unwilling) to accommodate the demands of the changing market, art dealers took on the role of

61 The annual and biannual Salon exhibitions, juried and regulated by affiliates of the Academy, were the primary means of making one’s work available to the public at this time. An additional change of supply and demand of the market was that the French middle class began collecting art. Middle-class collectors were interested in smaller paintings that engaged with less-formal subject matter and themes (White and White 35-6).
selling art to interested patrons (White and White 20). Because of the fact that dealers wanted to establish an ongoing relationship with artists and to create a consistent demand for their work, dealers began to market art by an individual artist’s oeuvre rather than selling isolated paintings marketed by subject matter (White and White 35-6).  

These shifting attitudes and practices in the historical development of a poetics of the catalogue – from subject matter to schools of art, to individual artists; from private ownership to public institutions; from the hegemony of the Academy to a more democratized dealer-critic system – locate exhibiting and cataloguing practices in systems of power and control, especially those connected to economic and social hierarchies. All of these changes, which began in Europe, influenced the Canadian art scene, which developed much later and was still in its infancy prior to the First World War. It was not until 1907 that the Canadian government established the Advisory Arts Council, which attended to matters concerning the commissioning of sculptural monuments and maintaining the affairs of the National Gallery of Canada (Mainprize 4). Later still, in 1910 the National Gallery appointed its first director, Eric Brown, and a second Chairman of the Advisory Arts Council, Sir Edmund Walker. Both of these men would play central roles in the development of the CWMF, particularly in advocating for the

62 The focus on artist’s careers and individual styles also prompted art critics to engage more extensively with an artist’s work, which performed the additional function of marketing and publicity.  
63 According to Jonathan Franklin, the first exhibition catalogue to appear in Canada was published in 1890. Entitled “Exhibition of the Angelus,” it contained eight pages illustrating the fifteen works on display and included minimal accompanying text (n.p.). The first catalogue published by the National Gallery of Canada (est. 1880) was published in 1882 and described works of art produced by the newly established Royal Canadian Academy (Mainprize 3).
inclusion and recognition of Canadian artists in the program. Significantly, the First World War and the CWMF program were fundamental in laying the groundwork for Canadian cultural development and the creation of a distinctly Canadian art scene. Canada’s war art, then, is not only significant because it has been relatively neglected in Canadian cultural memory of the Great War, but also because the CWMF program allowed for the creation of jobs and international exposure for burgeoning Canadian artists in ways that had never before been possible.

Combined, these historical developments in the evolution of cataloguing practices provide a framework for a description of the catalogues that form the primary corpus of this chapter. This study limits its analysis to exhibition catalogues; that is, lists of the objects on display in a museum or gallery that are ordered and itemized according to a narrative imposed by the curator (systems of ordering may include chronology, artist, subject matter, medium) and are accompanied by descriptive information such as the dimensions of a work of art, the collection it belongs to, and often additional paratextual materials such as chronologies, artist biographies, and critical essays. Exhibition catalogues range from simple paper pamphlets with minimal (or no) images to elaborate books with several colour reproductions of art.

There are several kinds of catalogues that exist outside the parameters of this study, including: trade catalogues, library catalogues, auction catalogues, and mail-order sales catalogues. Although these cultural objects are also worthy of critical study, they fall beyond the scope and context of this project. Alas, these restrictions preclude any discussion of Roch

64 For a more detailed description of the contributions of Brown and Walker, see Chapter 2, pp. 55-6.
65 This is the central argument of Tippett’s Art at the Service of War (1984).
Carrier’s iconic hockey sweater ordered from “Monsieur Eaton’s” catalogue. The sales catalogue functions to provide items that represent a potentially infinite reproducibility (depending on the availability of materials used to construct the product). In contrast, the exhibition catalogues considered in this study acquire their cultural capital because the items they represent (works of art) are one of a kind. Although both sales catalogues and exhibition catalogues are, to varying degrees, invested in economics and commodities, there is a historically-entrenched vested interest in the art world surrounding the concept of the original that does not translate to the sales catalogue.

What makes the genre of the exhibition catalogue particularly fraught is less the task of physical description than attempts to define its function. There are discrepancies among scholars’ interpretations of the use value of catalogues. In “The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue,” Krzysztof Cieszkowski lists a variety of scholarly definitions of exhibition catalogues that have been proposed over time. All of these definitions describe essential aspects of the fundamental principles by which catalogues are constructed, but their varying approaches demonstrate the complexities of the genre. What these approaches have in common is that they all (implicitly or explicitly) acknowledge that the catalogue as a text should be considered in relation to the exhibition event. Where they diverge is in their emphasis on the multiple functions of catalogues and the motivating factors that govern cataloguing practices. Each definition identifies a relevant and significant aspect of a catalogue’s conventions and symbolic function.

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Oxford Art Online tries to account for these varying functions of the catalogue by dividing exhibitions into four categories that each require their own specific kind of catalogue: international exhibitions, loan exhibitions, academy and association exhibitions, and dealer’s exhibitions. The latter two examples are discussed in detail in this section, but the distinctions between these four categories are not exclusive and, at times, overlap.
(for example, labour, pedagogy, authorial intention, archival, discursive); however, what needs
to be made more explicit in each approach is the way in which catalogues operate as mnemonic
tools and as remediations of the exhibition event. I maintain that these two functions of
catalogues – as agents of cultural memory and as remediations that aim to preserve the
ephemeral exhibition and/or its narrative – are central features of a poetics of the catalogue.

Cieszkowski begins his taxonomy of catalogues with Ernst Gombrich’s (1985) definition
of contemporary catalogues. Gombrich argues that catalogues “have acquired an almost
ritualistic function. Too heavy to carry around, too detailed to be read in their entirety, they serve
to reassure the public of the care and thought that have gone into the arrangement of the show”
(Gombrich in Cieszkowski 1). For Gombrich, the symbolic value of the catalogue is that it
substantiates the physical and creative labours of the curator, whereas Anthony Burton identifies
catalogues “first and foremost as a record of the existence of works of art” (in Cieszkowski 1).67
For Burton, the catalogue functions as an ontological confirmation of the art object. Like
Gombrich, Burton minimizes any notion that the catalogue itself may possess an intrinsic value;
instead, it performs a supplementary function by providing evidence of its referent (for
Gombrich, the referent is the curator, for Burton, it is the art object).68 Even though he
downplays the effects and uses of the catalogue as an object in its own right, Burton’s

67 Other definitions in Cieszkowski’s study include the OED definition of a catalogue as “a list,
register, or complete enumeration” (1), Katherine Haskin’s description of catalogues as
“transient examples of shaped behaviour” (1) and the “traditional definition” (Cieszkowski
doesn’t cite an author) of the exhibition catalogue as “a permanent record of a temporary event”
(1). Interestingly, Cieszkowski discredits the latter definition for its ambiguity, noting that it
could just as easily describe a broken nose or a baby as it could an exhibition (1).
68 Robert Harbison echoes Gombrich’s and Burton’s implication that the catalogue performs a
supplementary function when he argues that the catalogue can only be synecdochic or
metonymic because it only represents the whole or provides the illusion of wholeness but is
never, itself, whole (qtd. in Cardinal 91-92).
acknowledgement of the archival function of the catalogue is crucial to understanding the connections between catalogues and memory. Specifically, in addition to preserving the exhibition event, Burton acknowledges that a catalogue also preserves a memory of the objects on display.

Cieszkowski also provides his own definition, in which he refers to catalogues as “the public statement of the initiating concept which gave rise to the exhibition, and which further imparted its order, shape, coherence, and narrative direction” (1). Cieszkowski’s definition is compelling because he describes the catalogue as a public statement. In doing so, he extends the public act of attending an exhibition to the act of reading a catalogue, which can also be performed in private. In blurring the distinctions between the private act of reading and the public attendance at an event, Cieszkowski’s definition implies that the catalogue preserves some aspect of the collective experience of the exhibition event. Although Cieszkowski’s approach is persuasive, it does contain a significant limitation. If the exhibition is characterized by immediacy – what Erll refers to as the “experience of the real” – then the catalogue is characterized by hypermediacy, or, “the experience of the medium” (Erll and Rigney 4). Cieszkowski elides this distinction between the experience of the event and the secondary experience of the catalogue as a remediation of the exhibition event. Many catalogues also attempt to conceal this shift from experience to media, striving for the impossible in their efforts to replicate the immediacy of the event. Other catalogues embrace the reality of their post-event

69 Immediacy and hypermediacy are to central tenants of Bolter and Grusin’s theory of remediation. See Chapter 2 (p.36). Briefly, immediacy strives for the erasure or transparency of the medium used to construct its object, whereas hypermediacy self-reflexively draws attention to its mediated status.

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By referring to the catalogue as a “statement,” Cieszkowski also rightly acknowledges the ways in which narrative is inextricably linked to the processes of selection and evaluation that control the exhibition and its catalogue. Consequently, another aspect we must consider is the impact of narrative on audience reception. For example, the narrative (or “public statement”) of heroic sacrifice has not only influenced what works of art from the CWMF collection have been prominently displayed, but the masternarrative has also affected the retention of the CWMF’s legacy in Canadian cultural memory. Because narrative plays such a significant role in the construction and lasting impressions of an exhibition and its catalogue, the discursive aspect of the catalogue is especially significant because it facilitates my conception of the catalogue as a remediation of the exhibition event.

In thinking about exhibitions as discursive acts, Bal identifies the primary discourse of the exhibition as exposition. Exposition, according to Bal, is “always also an argument” that is objectified by the works of art on display (2). In other words, the objects on display function as empirical evidence to support the unifying argument of the exhibition. Following this line of logic, Bal bifurcates the expository act into two related components: the “Look!” and the “That’s how it is” (5). The former component of the exchange, according to Bal, depends on the presence of the actual object; the latter component describes the narrative statement that interprets the significance of the object on display by “connect[ing] the object with an epistemology” (5).

In catalogues, the “Look” function of display cannot be fulfilled in accordance with Bal’s terms except by creating the illusion of presence. The catalogue does not produce the physical painting or sculpture it describes. However, the catalogue attempts to substitute the absence of its
referent through remediation, which occurs (in part) through a verbal description of the object (its title, medium, dimensions, author, etc.) and (more explicitly) through photographic reproductions of a selection of objects from the collection. If, as Naomi Schor points out, “a collection is composed of objects wrenched out of their contexts of origins and reconfigured into the self-contained, self-referential context of the collection itself” (56), then the catalogue is doubly removed from this process. The catalogue performs its own gesture of exposition by “reconfiguring” the material of the exhibition “into the self-contained, self-referential context” of the catalogue whereby the “Look!” function is fulfilled by the verbal and/or visual remediation of material objects.

The narrative function of the exhibition’s “argument” is communicated through wall labels, artist statements, subject matter, title, style of the art, the organization of the collection in the space of the museum, and other textual materials such as pamphlets, checklists, and, of course, catalogues. In a catalogue, the narrative function is conveyed through introductory essays, chronologies, biographical information about the artists, the organization of the works of art and their accompanying descriptive text, and any photographic reproductions of the works of art. Mary Kelly asserts that the “narrative organization,” of an exhibition, in particular, “its written (editorial/critical) commentary[,] fixes the floating meaning [and] erodes the apparent polysemy of the exhibition’s imagined discourse” (353). She proceeds to argue that, by “construct[ing] a specific reading” of an exhibition, the catalogue:

- opens the space of a possible reworking or perhaps effects a closure; but it always has definite political consequences. This suggests that the catalogue is also an important site for interventions. Catalogue and exhibition constitute what could be called a *dia-text*, that is, two separate signifying systems which
function together; more precisely, it is at the point of their intersection and
crucially in their difference, that the production of a certain knowledge takes
place. (353)

I quote Kelly at length here because she raises two important distinctions; one I would like to
qualify, the other I would like to expand upon.

First, although I acknowledge that the unifying argument of the exhibition *endeavours* to
“fix” the meaning of its objects, this is not always the outcome. There are myriad possibilities
when it comes to interpreting an exhibition and the catalogue offers one of them. Kelly gestures
to this possibility later in the passage, when she acknowledges the fruitful possibilities that may
emerge from discrepancies between the exhibition and the catalogue. Bal also points out that
exhibitions raise this possibility in and of themselves; there is always the potential for discord
between the “Look!” function and the “That’s how it is” function (3). In terms of exhibition
catalogues, I would go so far as to assert that there is always a discrepancy in the act of
exposition precisely because the object that is being “observed” is either absent or has been
substituted with a remediated version.

Due to the fact that catalogues vary considerably in size, scope, quality, ratios of image
and text, and a number of other factors, I hesitate to provide a universal definition of the

70 Discrepancies between looking and telling can also occur between the title of the work of art
and its image. I discuss this possibility at length in my Introduction (p.24), where I discuss the
disjunction between image and text in A.Y. Jackson’s painting *A Copse, Evening*. Another
notable example is Eric Kennington’s painting *The Conquerors* (1920). The painting depicts the
Canadian division of the Scottish Highlanders marching across a shattered landscape. The living
and the dead walk side by side, the dead identifiable by their pale skin and black circles that
surround their eyes. Originally entitled *The Victims*, Kennington was made to change the title
and, in doing so, changed the entire message of the painting from one conveying defeat,
hopelessness, and tragedy, to a triumphant celebration of sacrifice.
exhibition catalogue because I do not believe it is possible or productive to define this literary genre in all-encompassing terms. I do, however, think it is productive to conceive of the catalogue as a “site of exchange” (Greenberg, et al. 2) between the remediated object and the narrative of the exhibition. I also think it pertinent to stress that, despite their numerous variations, catalogues are first and foremost agents of cultural memory driven by the impulse to preserve and that they perform the act of preservation through remediation. What is remediated, why, and how offers insight into the biases of the curators and the processes of selection that are inevitable aspects of exhibiting and cataloguing practices; the authority of the curatorial voice influences the reception and interpretation of the art. In the section that follows, I examine the incongruities between looking and telling in three case studies of CWMF catalogues and I position these discrepancies in the contexts of the dynamics of cultural memory and its corresponding struggles between aesthetics and documentation, unity and diversity, and looking and telling.

3.3 Case Study 1: “Diversity Kept Under Control” – The Burlington House Souvenir Catalogue *Art & War, 1919*

The souvenir catalogue *Art & War* was a significant publication in the history of the CWMF collection because it was produced in conjunction with the first official exhibition of CWMF art, which took place at Burlington House in London in January 1919. As the first public display of the collection, the Burlington House exhibition and its catalogue set the precedent for the masternarrative that would dominate the CWMF art collection for more than half a century and would continue to influence exhibition narratives into the twenty-first century. Moreover, *Art & War* aptly fulfills my two criteria of cataloguing practices – by acting as an
agent of cultural memory and by remediating the exhibition event – through methods that aimed to disseminate a state-sanctioned memory of the war and stabilize the diversity of the collection by imposing a unifying narrative that did not adequately represent the range of interpretations of the war depicted by the artists in their respective works. This narrative is clearly identified in CWMF art advisor Paul Konody’s introductory essay to the catalogue, in which he explains that in order to “make the collection of memorial paintings truly representative of the artistic outlook during the momentous period of the great war” purveyors of the collection strived for “diversity rather than uniformity, but diversity kept under control, with a definite end in view” (14). The definite end in view was a unifying narrative of heroic sacrifice that was best represented through the traditional paintings that utilized familiar conventions such as Christian iconography and dramatized battle scenes, including Shaw’s The Flag, Sims’s Sacrifice, Richard Jack’s The Second Battle of Ypres and The Taking of Vimy Ridge, and preliminary drawings for John’s The Canadians Opposite Lens.

In addition to its unifying narrative, the souvenir catalogue further remediates the exhibition at Burlington House in its structure. Each image is afforded its own page on high quality, glossy paper and is enclosed by a drawing of an ornate frame; descriptive captions appear on the facing page. This layout imitates the structure of a traditional exhibition by isolating a painting within a frame and placing explanatory material adjacent to the painting for the viewer’s reference. Like an act of display, the expository action of the catalogue also complements the act of “looking” with the authoritative “telling” of the exhibition’s organizers through a verbal explanation. Finally, the hierarchical organization of images in the exhibition event (i.e. the favouring of conventional, large-scale paintings) is replicated in Art & War by the order in which the images appear in the catalogue.
The first image displayed in *Art & War* is British artist Shaw’s *The Flag* (fig. 3.2), which, according to Tippett, was “[t]he most popular painting and most sought-after reproduction in the exhibition” (79-80). Like John’s painting *The Canadians Opposite Lens*, Shaw’s painting is a romantic image that establishes its authority by its size (198 cm x 366 cm) and invokes several conventional symbols of war art: the national flag, mourning civilians, and the youthful, fallen soldier, who lies at the base of a monument. The fallen soldier clutches the Canadian red ensign in his arms; a patriotic gesture that legitimizes his death “for King and Country.” The fact that the flag is the Canadian ensign (Canada did not acquire its own national flag until 1965)

71 It is worth noting that, although Shaw’s painting is one of the larger works of art in the CWMF collection, it is only a fraction of the size of John’s *The Canadians Opposite Lens*. 
reinforces the nation’s colonial status; thereby identifying Britain, not Canada, as the “country” Canadians are fighting for. The bright red colour of the flag, juxtaposed to the more muted tones of the rest of the composition, establishes it as the focal point of the painting.\textsuperscript{72} The lion, a symbol of Britain, is another dominant presence in the painting; it symbolically represents the power dynamics between the Mother Country and Canada. In essence, the lion’s chiseled feet perform a protective function by cradling the young soldier (i.e. the Dominion) who is subservient to and dependent on the Empire.

The grieving civilians surrounding the base of the monument represent an array of generations of Canadian citizens: the elderly woman donning a black cloak; the middle-aged parents holding hands; the young child standing behind her mother; and the swaddled child cradled by another mourner enrobed in black. The generational “diversity” of the civilians, however, is kept “under control” by their Anglo-centric homogeneity, signifying a limited version of what it means to belong to Canada. Shaw’s painting is therefore an appropriate introduction to the selection of CWMF art in \textit{Art & War} because it reinforces the concept of “diversity kept under control” and memorializes the tragedies of war through the patriotic narrative of heroic sacrifice.

The explanatory caption on the facing page also reflects the dominant memory of the collection. Like most of the descriptions in \textit{Art & War}, the complementary text does not evaluate the artistic merit of the image. Instead, a combination of narrative and didactic discourse is deployed to reinforce the unifying narrative of the exhibition and to situate Canadian

\textsuperscript{72} The flag is also centrally positioned in the composition of the painting with the triangulation of the colour red on the flag, the bearded man’s plaid shirt to the viewer’s left, and the young girl’s beret to the right.
participation in the war within the broader framework of nationhood and heroism. The caption that corresponds with Shaw’s painting tells viewers that the image is “A memorial to those Canadians who willingly gave their most beloved for the honour of the Flag and the upholding of Freedom, Justice, and Right” (n.p.). The capitalization of the words “freedom” and “justice” personifies these abstract concepts, many of which have been represented as allegorical figures in First World War monuments, including Walter Allward’s monument at Vimy Ridge. This use of “high diction” (Fussell) provides an abstract, sanitized version of the war that glorifies the dead and justifies the war by alluding to Christian redemption narratives. The clean lines that form the base of the monument and dominate the middle ground of the painting, combined with the soldier’s pristine uniform, reinforce this tidy, composed representation of death. In the case of Shaw’s painting, image and text operate in Art & War to corroborate and disseminate a dominant patriotic memory of the war.

Art & War is explicitly positioned within the contexts of cultural memory in two ways. First, in the introductory essay to the catalogue, CWMF art advisor Paul Konody emphasizes the commemorative function of the art by describing in detail the memorial building that Beaverbrook envisioned to house the collection for posterity. The art itself was intended to form a public memorial of Canada’s participation in the war, and the memorial building, a “modern

Official war artists demonstrate a recurring tendency to create sanitized representations of war. This tendency becomes a point of contention for contemporary Canadian authors, who critique these visual depictions of war in their revisionist novels. See Chapter 5 for details on the use of remediation as a deconstructive technique for contesting romantic versions of war. The use of the word “willingly” to describe the sacrifice of Canadian soldiers is also problematic because it neglects the government’s imposition of conscription that divided the country and created unresolved hostilities that continue to resonate in the present. Although the divisions are primarily between Anglo- and Francophone Canada, conscription was also resisted by pacifists and by farmers who depended on their sons’ labour to maintain their agricultural livelihood.
Pantheon,” would reinforce its commemorative status (Konody 16). Konody describes this building in detail in his introductory essay to *Art & War* and the Burlington House exhibition also included preliminary drawings of the building by the architect E.A. Rickards (Heninger 37).

The specific memory that Konody had in mind, however, was a unifying narrative of the war that would legitimize its tragedies and offer consolation to the mourning groups and individuals who had survived. As a result, the more diverse works of art that did not subscribe to these conventions – in particular, the modernist paintings – were suppressed by the control of the exhibition narrative. On the one hand, a number of artworks produced for the CWMF were excluded from the Burlington House exhibition and the *Art & War* catalogue because they did not conform to the stabilizing memory of the war.\(^75\) These include the majority of the modernist-style paintings, numerous paintings and sculptures by Canadian artists, sculptural works in general, (with the exception of Derwent Wood’s bronze bust of Captain Herbert D’Olier Kingstone that appears as the final image in *Art & War*), any representations of the Canadian home front, and many of the female artists who were commissioned by the CWMF (only three women artists are represented in the catalogue, all of them are British).\(^76\) In some extreme

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\(^75\) I compiled the list of exclusions that follows by performing a quantitative analysis of the fifty-six works of art included in the *Art & War* catalogue. For a thorough examination of the objects on display at the Burlington House exhibition, see both Tippett’s *Art at the Service of War* and Jessica Lauren Gagnon Heninger’s MA thesis “The Exhibition as Memorial: Canada’s Travelling War Art Display, 1919-1934.”

\(^76\) A large majority of the population were reticent to accept the modernist-style representations of war. See, for example, “More Shocks in Store for Ordinary Folk at ‘Ex’ Art Gallery” (in Baetz191). British artists were the most pronounced nationality of all CWMF artists. Seven Canadian artists are included in *Art & War*: Group of Seven members Frederick Varley, J. W. Beatty, and A.Y. Jackson, as well as Gyrth Russell (Nova Scotia) and Maurice Cullen (Newfoundland), Kenneth Forbes (Toronto) and C.W. Simpson (Montreal). Additional nationalities include Welsh (1), American (1), Scottish (3), Australian (1), Belgian (2), and Irish (1). The remaining twenty-five artists are British-born. Natalie Luckyj’s exhibition catalogue
instances, artists were denied the opportunity to display their controversial images. C.R.W. Nevinson’s *Paths of Glory* (1917) was censored for depicting dead bodies (Malvern 50) and, as previously mentioned, Derwent Wood’s sculpture *Canada’s Golgotha* was removed from the Burlington House exhibition. The subordination and/or omission of alternative narratives thereby sheltered the public from seeing the darker, tragic sides of war, such as images of death and torture. The limited scope of the exhibition also resisted the inclusion of women and domestic spaces in representations of the hero figure in order to maintain a stereotype of the hero as a male combatant who was recognized for his bravery, Anglo-identity, and physical strength. The exclusion of home front scenes, such as Franz Johnston’s *Beamsville* (1918), depicting the activities of aerial training camps in Ontario or Arthur Lismer’s representation of “dazzle ships” in the Halifax harbour in paintings such as ‘*Olympic* with Returned Soldiers’ (1919), also indicate a bias among exhibition organizers that “Canadians” were still first and foremost British subjects. Diversity kept under control thus ensured that only those works of art that endorsed the state-sponsored narrative were displayed in the exhibition in order to disseminate a very specific cultural memory of the Great War for Canada.

In the rare circumstances that one of the more “diverse” works of art was included in the exhibition and/or catalogue, it was positioned in such as way as to assert its secondary status. A selection of the modernist paintings were displayed in a smaller, less conspicuous location at the

*Visions and Victories: 10 Canadian Women Artists 1914-1945* (1983) is an excellent example of some of the important contributions Canadian women artists made to the CWMF program, especially in their representations of women’s work on the home front, such as Florence Wyle’s sculpture *Munitions Worker* (1918-19) and Mabel May’s painting *Women Making Shells* (1919). The work of Mary Riter Hamilton, an unofficial Canadian artist who travelled to France and Belgium to paint the Western front from 1919-1922 is another notable example of the exclusion of women’s work in representing the First World War. For more on Mary Riter Hamilton and the work of women war artists in general, see Conclusion (pp.212-13).
Burlington House venue, described by Konody as fulfilling a “subsidiary” function to the “principal pictures” (15). Likewise, whereas the majority of the images in the catalogue – portraits of powerful figureheads and decorated soldiers, battlefield landscapes that may or may not contain human figures, battlefield artillery, and/or significant landmarks – are situated in relation to the dominant narrative of the war, the textual discourse of the few modernist paintings that were included in *Art & War* represents a perceived need on behalf of the curators to “justify” the inclusion of these works of art in the collection. For example, the caption describing Wyndham Lewis’s *Canadian Gunpit* explains that, “The painting is further more a decoration, essentially, and its treatment subordinates to the great lines of balance and arrangement the Impressionistic truth of modern pictorial art. It is an experiment of the painter’s in a kind of painting that is not his own” (emphasis in original 43). Not only does Konody’s description subordinate the innovative and productive aspects of Lewis’s representation of war, but his assessment of *Canadian Gunpit* does not make sense either: *of course* the painting reflects a style that is distinctly Lewis’s own. It is a depiction of war presented from the artist’s individual perspective and unique experience of combat. A similar explanation is provided for Paul Nash’s *Void*: “It is obvious that it is not an illustration of any particular scene or incident, but a generalization of what modern war really signifies” (25). In both cases, the vague descriptions of these images obscure the fact that the artists’ representations actually contradict any celebratory notion of war. Nor does Konody seem to appreciate the ways in which Lewis and Nash capture the chaotic and violent experience of modern warfare. Instead, in *Art & War*, both images are explicitly removed from their historical contexts and are narrativized as aesthetic experiments that only tangentially relate to the rest of the collection.
Both the organization of the exhibition event and its replicated hierarchies in the exhibition catalogue are illustrative of the kind of “control” Konody and others sought to impose on the collection. The exhibition, well attended by dignitaries and the public alike, was considered a success. As Konody explains in *Art & War*, the exhibition represented a “carefully organised decorative scheme” that “was thus to be supplemented by a comprehensive pictorial record. A balance was to be maintained between the historical and the aesthetic aspects” (14). In this description, Konody identifies one of the underlying struggles of representation faced by early promoters of the collection: the war art had to negotiate the conflicting purposes of aesthetic and documentary methods. By establishing the “pictorial record” as a supplement to the “decorative” canvases, curators of the exhibition implemented a hierarchy that identified aesthetics as a more valuable quality than historical documentation in the organization of the CWMF collection.

The selection and organization of the exhibition minimized public exposure to a variety of works that offered alternative representations of the war, and these curatorial interventions were remediated in the organization of the exhibition catalogue. In *Art & War*, the forty-eight colour plates and eight black-and-white reproductions of a selection of works from the CWMF are introduced by the prefatory note that, together, these works “form a record of Canada’s part in the Great War and a memorial to those Canadians who have made the Great Sacrifice” (*Art & War* n.p.) This inscription, followed by Konody’s 12 page essay, which champions the collection as “a memorial of sacrifice and heroism,” firmly roots the narrative of the catalogue, the

77 Approximately two thousand people attended the opening of the exhibition in January, including the Prince of Wales and Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden (Heninger 3).
exhibition, and its art within a national framework and identifies its cumulative function as a commemorative _lieu de mémoire_ (15).  

A second way in which _Art & War_ is expressly immersed in traditional commemorative practice is by its marketing as a “souvenir” catalogue. According to Susan Stewart, the souvenir functions as the replacement of physical and lived experience with a “nostalgic myth of contact and presence” (133). The myth, as Stewart also points out, is less apparent in the object itself than its narrative. It is for this reason that “[t]he souvenir must remain impoverished and partial so that it can be supplemented by narrative discourse which articulates the play of desire” (136). Stewart’s definition of the souvenir and its function are integral to understanding the rhetorical methods deployed by creators of the CWMF collection and its representations. In particular, _Art & War_, as a souvenir, functions to fulfill the desire to close the gap between distance and proximity to the Western front and it does so through narrative discourse, giving those who did not experience the war directly a window into this world, albeit a window that is translucent rather than transparent and only reveals certain aspects of the war that conform to the biases of the exhibition organizers. As a souvenir, the catalogue might also help people who lost loved ones to remember them and to not see their deaths in vain.

Furthermore, Shaw’s painting, as the introductory image, provides an apposite example of the nostalgic function of the souvenir catalogue _Art & War_. The painting invites individual citizens to recognize themselves in the artist’s representation of grief and, in doing so they are expected to be comforted by the dramatization of grieving in the painting. The private act of individual mourning, therefore, becomes a public performance of grief that forms a bond

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78 As Erll rightly points out, the purpose of a _lieu de mémoire_ is to stabilize a memory (Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory 1).
between the individuals in an emergent Canadian nation and signifies that they are part of an imagined community. Of course, the failure of the painting’s consolatory function is that citizens who are not represented in the painting are excluded from this shared experience.  

By depicting a normative representation of grief – one that invokes Christian frameworks of sacrifice and redemption – *Art & War* participates in a state-sponsored dominant ideology of the war that commemorates Canada’s military engagement in this conflict as a necessary and worthwhile endeavour. The sentimental longing addressed by the catalogue suggests that individuals can assuage their melancholic grief by seeking comfort in the fact that the nation shares in their mourning. In essence, *Art & War* propagates the message that the death of the soldier permits the birth of the nation because the recognition that the Dominion would receive for its contributions to the war effort would lead to national independence. In “Tokens of Fritz,” Tim Cook defines the souvenir as a nostalgic “remembrance object” that, unlike the practice of collecting, constitutes a “singular object that best represented experiences” (212). Reading *Art & War* as characteristic of Cook’s definition reveals how memory is an integral aspect of the CWMF. What, precisely, is being remembered through this souvenir catalogue is not the war itself, but a unifying narrative of the war as a heroic and formative event for the Canadian nation.

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79 In particular, individuals who do not recognize themselves in Shaw’s Anglo-centric representation of Canadian citizens are less likely to feel included in the ideas of community that the image is supposed to evoke. In addition, those who experienced exploitation and persecution at the hands of the Canadian government during the war would be less likely to feel patriotic sentiment towards national symbols such as the flag. For example, Indigenous soldiers who were not compensated materially or commemoratively for their contributions to the war; Canadians from Bulgaria, Ukraine, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey who were victims of racism during the war, as well as those who were interned and forced to work in labour camps; veterans who returned from war wounded, unable to find work or struggled to reintegrate into society and were denied access to social services; pacifists and war dissenters who did not agree that patriotism justified or legitimized the war.
We are not asked to remember that the First World War happened, but rather to remember that the sacrifice was worth it.

3.4 Case Study 2: From Storage Memory to Functional Memory – Postmodern Remediation in *A Terrible Beauty*, 1977

Heather Robertson published her hybrid catalogue-book *A Terrible Beauty: The Art of Canada at War* in 1977 in an effort to recuperate Canada’s memory of its war art. In her proposal for the book, Robertson identifies two primary objectives: (1) “to acquaint the public with this magnificent collection of paintings, many of them by well-known painters, held by the Canadian War Museum” and (2) “through the medium of these paintings and text of first-person accounts, letters, songs, poems and other literary work, to recall for a wide audience the experiences of ordinary Canadians in the First and Second World Wars” (Robertson fonds, Box 9 Folder 1). These objectives reveal significant changes in Robertson’s approach to the war art collection compared to previous iterations of the collection, two in particular. First, by shifting the masternarrative from one of heroic sacrifice to loss and recovery, Robertson disseminated a second myth of the collection on a scale that had never been done before. Public response to the book and exhibition suggests Canadians were highly receptive to this re-narrativizing of the art and its memory. Second, the ways in which Robertson remediated the war art and the accompanying archival documents in her book temporarily revived the collection by contextualizing it as a postmodern narrative that was more relevant to the Canadian public than what had become an outdated, state-sponsored memory of the war, especially in consideration of the socio-historical context of Canadian reactions to the war in Vietnam that polarized the nation in the early-mid 1970s.
Although the narrative of loss and recovery originated in the early 1920s, Robertson’s chronicling of the collection’s confinement to storage spread through media coverage of her book and the exhibition on an unprecedented scale. In numerous interviews, and in her introduction to *A Terrible Beauty*, Robertson describes Canada’s art from the two World Wars as “a great collection of works by Canada’s best known artists” that “has been ignored and neglected, almost censored” (15). The collection’s forgotten status dominated media coverage of *A Terrible Beauty*, both the book and exhibition. Although Robertson is right to acknowledge that Canadians had, for the most part, forgotten their war art, stewards of the war art collection had another story to tell.

In a letter to Robertson dated 2 December 1977, L.F. Murray, the Canadian War Museum’s Chief Curator of the war art collection at the time, wrote to repudiate Robertson’s invocation of the loss and recovery narrative that was published in the Regina Leader Post. “Much of the publicity attending the book and exhibition *A Terrible Beauty* has suggested that the collection has been kept from public viewing and that the current exhibition is the first major show in 30 years,” writes Murray. He continues, “In fact, although it is indeed the largest show in years, it can hardly be said that it has only been ‘discovered’ in 1977” (Murray, “Letter”). Murray proceeds with damning numbers to prove his point: 795 works of art from Canada’s war art collection were removed from storage in the period 1973-77 and:

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The dates 1973-1977 are important because it was not until 1971 that the Canadian War Museum became the primary caretaker of Canada’s war art collection. Prior to 1971, the collection was the responsibility of the National Gallery of Canada, which is likely the reason that Murray does not attempt to defend the obscurity of the collection for fifty years between 1920 and 1970.
Of these, 271 were shown at the Canadian War Museum and 524 were loaned to other institutions. To this latter figure one might add 104 works which, in addition to exposure at this museum, were loaned out. This makes a total of 628 works sent out on loan – a formidable figure when one remembers that this included matting, framing, crating, and administration, all of which was done by a staff which never totalled more than three persons. (Murray, “Letter”)

Indeed, Murray’s version of the collection’s exhibition history complicates the loss and recovery narrative that garnered significant attention for Robertson’s book and touring exhibition.

In her 17 December 1977 response to Murray’s letter, Robertson qualifies her comments by emphasizing the failures of the National Gallery, not the Canadian War Museum. According to Robertson, when she began investigating the status of the war art at the National Gallery, she was told “they had no works from the war art collection apart from the David Milne watercolors” (Robertson, “Letter,” emphasis in original). Robertson describes how, after considerable persistence, she was permitted access to the Gallery’s basement, where she found the works she was looking for “covered with dirt. In the case of the [Maurice] Cullen, No Man’s Land, the dust was so thick the painting looked completely grey” (Robertson, “Letter”). Summarizing her findings, Robertson informs Murray that “[She] was shocked by two things. (a) that the gallery seemed to have no record of their possession of these paintings [and] (b) the condition of the paintings” (Robertson, “Letter”). She continues to explain that although she “fully appreciate[s] the great efforts the War Museum has made to bring the war art collection before the public,” the accessibility of the art remains limited due to the Museum’s lack of adequate viewing space, the obfuscation of paintings by objects and paraphernalia, improper identification of the artworks,
and the fact that the paintings on loan are often sent to officers’ messes and other spaces that are “not widely used by the general public” (Robertson, “Letter”).

Robertson thus provides several explanations for the failure of the collection to retain a functional place in Canadian cultural memory, despite the efforts of the Canadian War Museum to make the art available for public viewing. The issues, therefore, become accessibility and the dynamics of memory. The National Gallery’s neglect of the majority of the collection implies that, with the exception of David Milne’s paintings and some of the British modernists’ works, that “war art” was perceived as distinct from “art” and therefore did not have a place in the gallery setting. The enormous size of many of the paintings posed additional obstacles for display because the Gallery did not have the space to accommodate works of this scale. Most important, I argue that the enshrined narrative discourse of Canada’s war art collection within a romantic, national framework and the absence of a proper viewing space were the primary impediments that relegated these almost 13,000 artifacts that formed Canada’s war collection to the realm of storage memory.

Equally important, I believe that the success of A Terrible Beauty, both the book and the exhibition, lies in Robertson’s postmodern remediation of the art that changed the masternarrative from one of military exploits to a variety of personalized, individualistic (and often conflicting) accounts of the wars. Robertson’s innovative approach to representing Canada’s war art can be seen in the editorial comments made by her publisher, Jim Lorimer, in which he remarks that he “worried about [the inclusion of Charles Harrison’s and Will Bird’s

81 In 1971, the National Gallery of Canada kept the canvases of David Milne and of British modernists Lewis, Nash, Nevinson, and Charles G.D. Roberts on display and left the rest of the collection to be stored at the Canadian War Museum (Brandon Art or Memorial? 43).
descriptions of war], but in the end think that they should be run. They certainly are violent” (“Memo” 25 June 1977). Lorimer also expresses concern regarding the incompatibility of some of Robertson’s combinations of images and texts, providing specific examples that “seem quite out of keeping with the rest of the material on that spread and the previous spread” or that “poses a problem in terms of its tone in relation to all the surrounding material” (“Memo” 25 June 1977). Lorimer’s concerns reflect the unconventional approach of Robertson’s design. Ultimately, the success of Robertson’s book lies in these unexpected combinations and the conversations that arise from their juxtapositioning. The tragic legacy of the First World War, as it is represented in A Terrible Beauty, is less a representation of the immediate grief following the conflict and more a mourning of the literal and figurative loss of Canadian cultural artifacts. A Terrible Beauty marks a significant turn in the development of the collection because Robertson was successful in identifying a need to change the narrative of Canada’s war art and, in doing so, reinstated the memory of the war and its art in the functional realm of Canadian cultural memory.

If the remediation of the exhibition event in Art & War sought to replicate the organizing principles of the Burlington House exhibition and its unifying narrative, then A Terrible Beauty exemplifies a shift from immediacy to hypermediacy. Whereas Art & War aims, through immediacy, to replicate the experience of the event by reproducing both the organizing principles of the exhibition (e.g. a single painting displayed adjacent to an explanatory caption) and visually reproducing a large selection of the paintings that were displayed in the gallery, A Terrible Beauty resists this methodology. Its pages are filled with both image and text that do not appear to endorse a unifying narrative or a hierarchical assessment of the paintings and sculptures that have been remediated as photographic reproductions in the book. Robertson’s catalogue-book
minimizes the authoritative voice of its designers in order to centralize media – paintings, drawings, prints, letters, novels, stories, and poetry – as the primary purveyor of cultural memory of the two World Wars.

This process of drawing attention to the mediated status of memory is, in essence, a postmodern endeavour that performs an act of intervention – what Linda Hutcheon would qualify as “a critical reworking, [not] a nostalgic ‘return’” (*Poetics* 4). Robertson’s critical reworking of the cultural memory of Canada’s war art collection defamiliarizes the masternarrative of heroic sacrifice, not by repudiating its veracity, but by positioning it within the contexts of multiple commemoratory frameworks of the First World War. In addition to heroic sacrifice, these frameworks represent the war as a tragic loss, as a period of technological innovation, as fostering camaraderie amongst soldiers, as a divisive conflict for English and French Canadians, and as the persistent ennui of trench life. In doing so, Robertson decentralizes the masternarrative that, to this point, had dominated the war art collections, and focuses instead on representing the complexities of the war experience as it was depicted by men and women who experienced it directly. She describes this focus in the introductory essay to *A Terrible Beauty*:

> War is a mystery. It is full of ironies, contradictions, secrets. Its consequences are often more profound and unpredictable than the military exercise intended. War has had a traumatic, cataclysmic, revolutionary effect on Canada; its impact remains unstated, unexplored, unconscious, more powerful for its lack

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82 Robertson’s catalogue also covers Canadian war art from the Second World War art program. The catalogue is organized chronologically, and art collections from each war are displayed in separate sections.
of recognition. Canadians are an unmilitary people, yet war can be a violent and bloody experience. War and rebellion are a central fact of Canadian experience.

No generation has escaped. (9)

The discourse of the catalogue, then, is primarily one of multiple voices describing their personal, firsthand experience of war from a selection of both published and unpublished archival sources. Robertson’s book-catalogue is dissimilar to the other catalogues examined in this chapter because the book precedes the exhibition event. Since the catalogue was prompted not by the exhibition event, but by Robertson’s motivations to recover the war art from storage, *A Terrible Beauty* remedies the archive, as opposed to the exhibition. Precisely, *A Terrible Beauty* recovers Canada’s war art collection from the confines of physical storage facilities and the metaphor of storage memory.

The overall effect of placing multiple narratives in relation to each other without an imposed value-structure of “decorative versus documentary,” “high art versus low art,” or any other hierarchically organized system, is a postmodern approach to memory in which the unifying narrative of “History” is destabilized and positioned in relation to narratives that have previously been marginalized from official representations of the war. The voice of the book’s author (Robertson) is constrained to three introductory essays: the preliminary introduction to the book as a whole and the subsequent introductions to the remaining two sections, each of which examines one of the world wars. Aside from her prefatory remarks, Robertson refrains from commentary and resists telling the reader how to interpret the images.\(^83\) The textual materials

\(^{83}\) Of course, the necessity of selection still infuses *A Terrible Beauty* with curatorial bias. Despite efforts to suppress the author’s bias, Robertson cannot completely remove her voice from the text.
that Robertson selects to accompany the images are drawn from both fictional (novels, short stories) and non-fictional (biographical, documentary) sources. By using both of these genres without differentiating between the truth claims of the two, Robertson further practices the postmodern technique of deconstructing the authority of Historical discourse.

Generically, *A Terrible Beauty* is most appropriately described as a kind of hybrid text akin to collage in the sense that it gathers materials from a variety of sources and combines them in unexpected ways in order to create a new composition. The design of *A Terrible Beauty*, therefore, resists the limits of genre by creating juxtapositions that maintain distinctions in order to evoke questions and contemplation, rather than attempting to bring representations into a seamless, compatible, unified version of war. Like *Art & War*, images in the hardcover book *A Terrible Beauty* are usually reproduced in colour on quality paper and are afforded their own page. Unlike *Art & War*, the textual apparatus of *A Terrible Beauty* includes archival material from numerous sources that are brought together by their placement on the page and by the similarities and differences that arise from these conjunctions. By preserving the variances of style and narrative in her combination of visual and verbal texts, Robertson is preserving and foregrounding the very complexities of representation that underlie the struggles involved in representing war.
Figure 3.3 *A Terrible Beauty* ft. C.W. Jeffreys's 85th Battery at Firing Practice (1918).

Image and text are combined in *A Terrible Beauty* in ways that exceed the intentions of the original artists and writers. The discrepancies that emerge between the images and their pairing with other images and verbal texts challenge the viewer to consider alternative points of view. For example, in the First World War section of the book, C.W. Jeffreys’s painting 85th Battery at Firing Practice (1918) appears on the left side of the page. The image depicts soldiers in uniform; a number of them are in the background collectively firing a cannon (see fig.3.3). Another group in the middle ground is moving artillery into position. A third group of soldiers congregate in the foreground, observing the labours of the other men. The painting initially reads as straightforward; it is one of the “documentary” pieces that would have been relegated to a smaller, less conspicuous room in the *Art & War* exhibition (if it were to be displayed at all).

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84 There is no way to know for certain whether or not Jeffreys’s painting was on display at the Burlington House exhibition. It does not appear – either visually or verbally – in the *Art & War* catalogue and it is not mentioned in any major studies of CWMF art.
The title informs the viewer that these men belong to the 85th Battery and they are practicing firing military artillery.

The image becomes more interesting, however, because of the contexts provided by the three textual excerpts that appear on the facing page, each of which has its own title in bold font. The first passage, “Volunteers,” is an excerpt from Scottish physician Herbert Rae’s personal narrative of the war. Rae was attached to the Canadian forces in France. In the passage, Rae describes the process of examining the Canadian volunteers to ensure that they were physically fit for service. The narrator (Rae) adopts a humourous tone whilst he chronicles the many defects these men tried to conceal from their examiners, two extreme examples being “Pete Sornson from Fort Charles [who] was deficient of a hand” and “Andie Mack from Squamish, with a wooden leg, the result of a badly primed dynamite cartridge” (qtd. in Robertson 21). A second excerpt, entitled “Why not?” is from Armine Norris’s Mainly for Mother (1920), an epistolary text containing letters Norris wrote to his mother while deployed overseas. The briefest of the three excerpts on this page, “Why not?” describes Norris’s motivations for enlisting in the war. “I hadn’t the nerve to stay at home,” he explains, “Oh yes, Canada is worth dying for, but that didn’t occur to me until after I had enlisted. Before – I was thinking mostly of my own desire and ambitions and of Mother and Dad and all my friends…” (qtd. in Robertson 21). The third and final excerpt on this page, “God be with you,” is from Ontario politician Leslie Frost’s historical narrative Fighting Men (1967), which documents the exploits of the 35th Regiment of Simcoe Foresters from Orillia, Ontario. In this passage, Frost describes the celebratory ceremonies that were arranged to send off Canada’s volunteer soldiers with “fire brigade and a large number of autos and horses and buggies decorated with flags” (qtd. in Robertson 21). Frost expresses the popular sentiment that “The war, of course, would be over in three months, These men would
probably not see action,” but immediately undermines this naïve optimism when he describes the band beginning to play “God Be With You Till We Meet Again,” and “a hush fell over the crowd. Perhaps, after all, this was serious business” (qtd. in Robertson 21).

Combined, these three textual excerpts – an autobiography, a personal correspondence, and a narrative history – when read in conjunction with Jeffrey’s painting, provide a more rounded characterization of the men depicted in the image. Rae’s text prompts the viewer to consider the enthusiasm that initially surrounded the war (motivated by a variety of causes, ranging from a sense of adventure to a lack of alternative economic opportunities), and the lengths to which men went to enlist. Norris provides another perspective, suggesting that patriotism may not have been a primary motivating factor of the war and that familial responsibility and social expectations may have pressured men who were otherwise ambivalent about enlisting. Frost’s excerpt identifies tensions between romantic expectations of war and the tragic realities that these men would endure. Combined, these textual accompaniments humanize the men in the painting and prompt the viewer to question both their motivations and their fate in ways that the image alone does not.

As Hutcheon explains in her discussion of literature in *A Poetics of Postmodernsim*, “What is important in all of these internalized challenges to humanism is the interrogating of the notion of consensus. Whatever narratives or systems that once allowed us to think we could unproblematically and universally define public agreement have now been questioned by the acknowledgement of differences – in theory and in artistic practice” (7). Applied to a reading of *A Terrible Beauty*, Hutcheon’s ruminations on postmodernism reveal that in Robertson’s dynamic approach to display – which is demonstrated by Jeffreys’s painting and its textual accompaniments and is continuous throughout the book/catalogue – visual and verbal
intersections draw attention to the mediated status of the past and create a conversation between forms of representation that aims for diversity rather than consensus. In fact, the most compelling combinations in the catalogue are those that, like Jeffreys’s painting and its accompanying literary texts, produce contradictions. _A Terrible Beauty_ defies the conventions of traditional cataloguing practices because it resists a single, unifying narrative and because the textual apparatus does not perform a secondary function to the visual material. Instead, the archival documents challenge the viewer to consider the art from multiple points of view, thus demonstrating how a change in perspective has the capacity to restore a previously stored memory to a functional status.

### 3.5 Case Study 3: The “Double Helix” – Recovering the Nationalist Narrative in _Canvas of War_, 2000

Although _A Terrible Beauty_ was met with much success, memory of Canada’s war art collection once again lapsed into the recesses of storage memory and so, when the touring exhibition _Canvas of War_ was announced, the collection was again represented as a recovery narrative by both the media and the exhibition organizers.\(^85\) Whereas the recovery narrative facilitated _A Terrible Beauty’s_ expository argument that one of the tragic losses of the two World

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\(^85\) The national tour visited nine cities across Canada and attracted half a million visitors (Gessell, Paul. “Brandon Bids Adieu.”). For examples of the loss and recovery narrative, see: R.M. Black Rothesay “Beaverbrook Deserves the Credit,” in which Rothesay, after a brief history of the CWMF, states that “they [the artworks] have largely remained in storage ever since” (n.p.). See also Stephen Smith. “The Art of War.” According to Smith, “Thanks to stunted budgets and inadequate spaces, it [history of the CWMF] has also largely been a history of storage” (5). Yet another example occurs in Kirsten Ferguson “Art Captures Canada’s War Story.” Ferguson writes that “most of the pieces in the collection, which encompasses 250 years of Canadian military history, have been in storage since 1971 and many have never been viewed by the public before” (n.p.).
Wars was Canada’s ignorance of the conflicts’ artistic legacies, *Canvas of War* positioned the neglected war art as evidence of Canadians’ general failure to know their military history. What *Canvas of War* aims to recover is not just the nation’s war art, but also a cultural memory of Canada’s military exploits.

The largest display of Canada’s war art since the Second World War, *Canvas of War* marks a third significant development in the historiography of Canada’s collection because it is indicative of the beginnings of a turn towards militarism that characterized the first decade of the twenty-first century in Canada. In their book *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (2012) Ian McKay and Jamie Swift describe the efforts of “right wing elites” to disseminate the narrative that “Canada was created by wars, defended by soldiers, and kept free by patriotic support of military virtues” (ii). Indeed, Canadian military historian Jack Granatstein – to whom McKay and Swift grant the title, “doyen of the new warrior historians” (8) – was the Canadian War Museum’s director and chief executive officer when the exhibition *Canvas of War* first opened in 2000. In the exhibition catalogue by the same title, organizers of the exhibition acknowledge Granatstein for “[making] the project a reality by his faith both in the war art collection and in the authors. He pressed donors for funds, and the Donner Canadian Foundation generously responded” (vi). Granatstein also wrote the foreword to the catalogue *Canvas of War*, in which he echoes the patriotic rhetoric of his polemical book *Who Killed Canadian History?*

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86 The exhibition *Canvas of War* coincided with other military-focussed national events, including the repatriation of the Unknown Soldier in May 2000 (the ceremonial event was televised on 28 May 2000 and the soldier’s remains, that were supposed to represent all unidentified soldiers who died overseas, were buried at the National War Memorial in Ottawa). Another significant event that coincided with the turn of the century was the beginnings of Canada’s military presence in Afghanistan, which first occurred following the event of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001.
(1998). “The good life that I enjoyed [as a Canadian citizen],” writes Granatstein, “has been shaped by the actions of those who fought for Canada” \textit{(Canvas of War x)}. He also laments that “Canadians today, sadly shortchanged by our school systems and left almost totally bereft of any historical understanding, scarcely realize to what they owe their good fortune” \textit{(Canvas of War x)}. \textsuperscript{87} In making these assertions, Granatstein underlines a “crisis of history” as the principal anxiety driving the exhibition \textit{Canvas of War}.

The public that experienced \textit{Canvas of War} was at the greatest distance from the actual conflicts in comparison to any of the other exhibitions examined in this chapter. With this distance comes the absence of living memory, and so the unifying narrative of the exhibition becomes even more instrumental in actively promoting a cultural memory of the two World Wars. The story \textit{Canvas of War} tells its readers/viewers combines Konody’s patriotic sentiment with Robertson’s humanizing impetus. In the exhibition and catalogue, these two contrasting approaches are unified by the authors’ emphasis of historical content. The historical perspective of \textit{Canvas of War}, however, is more nuanced than the propagandistic patriotism of \textit{Art & War} and its imperial-bias. For example, unlike \textit{Art & War}, \textit{Canvas of War} includes First World War art that depicts the Canadian home front and the contributions of women. The selection of works included in the catalogue also demonstrates an effort to promote Canadian artists, even though the CWMF collection is composed of primarily British artists. \textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{87} Granatstein dedicates four of the nine pages of the preface to the second edition of \textit{Who Killed Canadian History?} (1998) to arguing the significance of the Canadian War Museum, the need to recognize its collections, and the even greater need for public and private funding. \textsuperscript{88} CWMF paintings by celebrated British artists Nash, Lewis, Nevinson, and William Rothenstein were not in the \textit{Canvas of War} exhibition or reproduced in the catalogue; however, their absence may be less an indication of curatorial bias and more a result of the fact that these
In an interview, Laura Brandon, curator of the war art, describes the purpose of *Canvas of War* as a “double helix” that is supposed to “[convey] the reality of war through art and [show] how art shaped Canadians’ memory of war” (“Trip to See Canada’s War Art at AGO,” C7). This approach to the collection is reiterated in the epilogue to *Canvas of War*, in which authors Brandon and Dean Oliver, director of research at the Canadian Museum of History, claim that they “have tried to tell both stories here: the history of a people at war and of the artists who painted them” (170). Although *Canvas of War* demonstrates a concerted effort to provide a more inclusive representation of Canada’s involvement in the two World Wars, the story of nation-building still prevails as the dominant narrative framework guiding the catalogue and exhibition. By describing the exhibition as a “double helix” – a term used to describe the structure of DNA – even Brandon’s conceptualization of the exhibition is infused with assumptions that war is a foundational – perhaps even genetic – aspect of Canada as an imagined community.

*Canvas of War* premiered at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec, and ran from February 2000 to January 2001. The exhibition was introduced by Sims’s enormous painting *Sacrifice*, which was hung “directly in line with the door, and placed in such a way that viewers could see it when entering or exiting the exhibition” (Heninger 23). An introductory

works of art belonged to the National Gallery of Canada instead of the Canadian War Museum (Heninger 26).

Brandon retired from her position as curator and head historian of war art in 2005. The significance of her efforts to preserve and promote Canada’s war art throughout her thirty-two year career at the Canadian War Museum cannot be over expressed. In 2016, she received the Order of Canada in recognition of her contributions.

The artworks on display included a selection of less than one hundred pieces from the Canadian War Museum’s 13, 000 war artifacts and these pieces included art from the CWMF and CWRC collections, as well as one painting, William MacDonnell’s *Sappers Clearing a Deadfall* (1994) from the Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artist Program (CAFCAP) depicting Canadian peacekeeping missions in Croatia (Heninger 12-14).
panel, displaying the quotation from John Ruskin that Konody invokes to introduce the *Art & War* catalogue, was placed at the entrance next to Sims’s painting. Following Sims’s painting was a central room called the “Treasures Gallery,” consisting of Richard Jack’s two large paintings *The Second Battle of Ypres* (see fig. 2.1) and *The Taking of Vimy Ridge*, canvases from both World War art programs, the CWMF and the Canadian War Records Collection (CWRC), and a plaster model from Walter Allward’s monument at Vimy Ridge (Heninger 13-14). The remainder of the exhibition was chronologically organized, beginning with the First World War section, which took up approximately two thirds of the display space because of the large size of many of the canvases (Heninger 14). The First World War section separated paintings by British and Canadian artists. The Canadian section was further subdivided into thematic units, including the Group of Seven, women’s contributions, Christianity, and battle scenes (Heninger 15).

By opening the exhibition with Sims’s painting, the curators mobilized the sentimental “sacrifice” masternarrative that originally functioned to “control” the diversity of the CWMF collection. Ruskin’s quotation also locates the exhibition narrative within a national framework, specifically the familiar colony-to-nation narrative, which is reinforced by the prominent display of Jack’s two traditional canvases depicting events central to the nation-building narrative of the

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91 “Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts – the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others; but of the three the only quite trustworthy one is the last” (Ruskin, qtd. in Konody 5).

92 The Second World War art program focussed more on documenting the different theatres of war and was less interested in large-scale traditional paintings.
war: the Second Battle of Ypres and the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Furthermore, Jessica Heninger is right to point out that the inclusion of Ruskin’s quotation operates as a “conflation of Canadian nation-building with the formation of a national school of art” (25). Indeed, these two foundation narratives – the birth of a nation and the origin of a distinctly Canadian art scene – are closely connected and both identify the First World War as a formative event for the Canadian nation. Combined, these organizing principles of the exhibition demonstrate that *Canvas of War* was dominated by a state-sponsored version of the conflict.

In the catalogue’s remediation of the exhibition event, the national narrative is made further apparent by the paratextual materials – forewords, acknowledgements, and messages from the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Veterans Affairs – all of which invoke the masternarrative of heroic sacrifice and national coming-of-age to varying degrees. (The colony-to-nation narrative is also explicitly referred to in the opening section of First World War content, “Born in Battle.”) Of the 110 paintings photographically reproduced on high quality paper, three of the images precede the Table of Contents: a detail from Eric Aldwinckle’s Second World War painting *Invasion Pattern Normandy* (1945), Douglas Mackay’s Second

93 The Second Battle of Ypres (22 April 1915 – 24 April 1915) is considered a seminal event in Canada’s contributions to the war effort because it was the Canadian’s first major combative experience and they managed to hold the line under German attack despite being targeted with the newly introduced German weapon: chlorine gas. Similarly, Vimy Ridge has been celebrated as the first time Canadian forces fought as Canadians and managed to capture the ridge when other Allied troops had failed to do so. Both of the events have been depicted in official histories as earning Canadians a reputation as gallant fighters.

94 Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage writes that the exhibition “take[s] us on an emotional journey through history to the fields of battle, where many of our soldiers proved their bravery” (vii) and George Baker, Minister of Veterans Affairs, writes that “Canadians have left this country an invaluable legacy of valour, patriotism and self sacrifice” and he hopes that the exhibition will instill “a renewed sense of pride in [the veterans’] nation-building achievements” (vii).
World War painting *Signal Flag Hoist* (c.1945), and Manly MacDonald’s CWMF painting *Land Girls Hoeing* (c.1919). Representing air, sea, and home front theatres of war, the traditional battlefield painting is noticeably absent from this visual introduction to the wars, demonstrating a discrepancy between the dominant narrative of the exhibition and the visual representations of Canada’s war art collection. Ultimately, the selection of artworks on display is open to alternative histories, even if the exhibition narrative is not. This discrepancy also provides evidence of the diversity of the CWMF collection that was previously obfuscated in the *Art and War* catalogue. MacKay’s painting, which depicts a naval officer in uniform, his gaze skyward whilst he raises the ship’s colourful signal flags, is an interesting point of entry into the catalogue. The colour scheme of the painting consists of mainly primary colours, creating a positive, cheerful atmosphere that is additionally signified by the clear blue sky that forms the background of the painting. The artist’s use of colour creates a general atmosphere of anticipation or perhaps even naïve excitement about the events yet to come. Even more interesting, signal flags are used to send communication between ships; messages are conveyed by individual flags and by their combination with other flags, utilizing a visual language that can only be interpreted by those who are familiar with this particular naval discourse. In essence, MacKay’s painting can be read as a meta-commentary on the gesture of exposition that occurs in display practices; only, in *Canvas of War*, the specialized knowledge required to decipher the meaning of the war art is held by historians and curators of the war art collections, rather than naval officers and the general public.

Like the exhibition, the *Canvas of War* catalogue is organized chronologically and separates the art of the two World Wars into their respective sections. Although the “double helix” of both of the exhibition narratives – the history of Canada’s involvement in the two
World Wars and biographical details of the artists who documented these cataclysmic events – is evident in the exhibition organization and its corresponding catalogue, history and biography are not presented equally. Instead, there is a disjunction between the official version of history and the personal narratives of individual artists. Brandon and Oliver identify these two opposing views in the catalogue: “Politically, the story of Canada’s First World War art program, the Canadian War Memorials, is woven through with tales of power and ambition. The diaries and letters of the artists, however, tell a different story, mainly of personal anguish in the presence of so much death and desecration” (54). Despite acknowledging the discrepancies between the official narrative of the exhibition and individual accounts of the war, the design of *Canvas of War* positions the official version as the exhibition’s governing narrative. Although there are many images included in *Canvas of War*, the dominant visual element of the book is the historical narrative that describes the impact of the war and its cultural significance. Each section of the catalogue contains an essay chronicling the events of the war and is connected chronologically to the section that precedes it, providing a sense of continuity for the reader. Dates, numbers, statistics, locations, place names, and the names of historical figures firmly locate the main essay in the discourse of history. Several images of war art are interspersed in this text as illustrations, but are generally not acknowledged by the text itself. Each painting is afforded its own page and is accompanied by a caption, which provides biographical information about the artist and her/his role in the CWMF program. Some of the captions describe the historical event that is depicted in the painting and many of them contain archival material from the artist’s diaries, personal correspondence, or other historical documents. The brevity and smaller font of these captions visually signifies their secondary status as supplements to the main
essay. Consistent with both *Art & War* and *A Terrible Beauty*, none of the textual material in *Canvas of War* provides extensive (if any) commentary on the aesthetic merit of the images.

What is indicated by a lack of aesthetic consideration of the collection is that Canada’s war art is still largely viewed as a historical artifact that performs a documentary function, a fact that is further reinforced by the transfer of the CWMF and CWRC collections from the National Gallery of Canada to the Canadian War Museum in 1971. Although Canada’s war art does, indeed, provide important insights into the nation’s military history, many of these works of art deserve further consideration of their aesthetic merit, especially because many have been painted by eminent Canadian artists including, from the First World War collection, Arthur Lismer, C.W. Jeffreys, Maurice Cullen, Frederick Varley, A.Y. Jackson, and David Milne, and, from the Second World War collection, Will Ogilvie, Charles Comfort, Lawren Harris, Aba Bayefsky, Jack Shadbolt, Pegi Nichol MacLeod, Paraskeva Clark, and Molly Lamb Bobak. Even Tippett, whose examination of the cultural impact of the CWMF collection on Canada’s developing art scene in the years following the First World War constitutes a major contribution to efforts to bring attention to the CWMF legacy, ends her book by concluding that the “significance [of the CWMF program] lies not so much in what finally happened to the work it inspired as in the process by which that work was created and brought together. It is to the creative act itself, rather than the fate of the particular works resulting from it, that one must look if one wishes to understand the real meaning of the events that have been chronicled here” (112). From a future-oriented perspective, I respectfully disagree with Tippett’s assertion; the diversity of artistic styles and subjects represented by the CWMF collection remains a significant, yet neglected aspect of Canadian cultural memory of the First World War that provides a much-needed alternative to the unifying histories of heroism and sacrifice. The fact that the diversity of the
The collection presents a challenge to the organizational practices of art galleries, which are traditionally ordered by periods, should be seen as a worthwhile opportunity for curators to engage with alternative histories and innovative display practices.

The abundance of archival materials remediated in the *Canvas of War* exhibition and catalogue emphasizes the constructed nature of memory and reminds us that as distance to the past increases, the material archive is our primary site for engaging with these stories. Although *Canvas of War* inarguably endorses the nation-building myth of the two World Wars, its organizers should also be credited for including works of art that express alternative versions of the past. For instance, in the first of two sections on the First World War, the story of Canada’s entry into the war is supplemented with a portrait of Robert Borden on the facing page. To begin the section with a portrait of a Prime Minister is to assert the political authority of nationhood that Granatstein so vehemently defends. Upon turning the page, the reader/viewer encounters a portrait of General Sam Hughes, Canada’s minister of militia, thus cementing the official and military focus of the exhibition narrative from the opening pages of the catalogue.

However, between the two portraits of white, male patriarchs whose confrontational gazes ask viewers to consider the ways in which we are all implicated in Canada’s military history, is a painting that poses another compelling question: Frederick Varley’s *For What?* (fig. 2.2). The inclusion of Varley’s painting prompts the viewer to inquire what narrative, exactly, is being suggested by placing Varley’s indictment of the war and its devastating realities between two men who led Canada into this conflict. Neither Borden’s nor Hughes’s portraits is accompanied by captions that endorse or criticize the actions of these men (each caption identifies the subject of the painting and the artist who painted him), but the caption to Varley’s painting includes an excerpt from a letter to his wife, Maud, in which he describes to her the
futility of war: “We’d be healthier to forget, & that we never can. We are forever tainted with its abortiveness & its cruel drama […] It is foul and smelly – and heartbreaking” (Varley, qtd. in Oliver and Brandon 5). Varley’s painting and letter therefore respond to Borden’s and Hughes’s stern gazes by offering a counter-narrative of the war that is usually absent from official histories. By responding with a question, Varley appropriately redirects the probing looks of these men and demands that they tell us what, in the end, it all was for.

If the patriotic sentiment and imperial attitudes that dominate the exhibition and catalogue narratives of *Art & War* can be defensible as products of their time, we should also remember that public distaste for celebratory narratives of war was one of the major contributing factors to the relegation of the CWMF collection to storage memory for a period of more than fifty years. *Art & War* should thus be read as a cautionary tale of what can happen when the narratives constructing cultural memory become stagnant. Cultural memory is dynamic and, in order to remain functional, needs to evolve in order to reflect the concerns and issues of the present. As agents of cultural memory and remediations that aim to preserve the ephemeral event of the exhibition, catalogues must also reflect changing public attitudes. Heather Robertson successfully produces this kind of dynamism in both the form and content of *A Terrible Beauty*, making it, to my mind, the most successful exhibition of Canada’s war art to date. Rather than trying to control the diversity of the CWMF collection by imposing a unifying narrative, Robertson’s postmodern approach embraces the conflicts that can potentially arise from competing versions of the past when they are put into conversation with one another. *Canvas of War* maintains some of the dynamism and diversity of Robertson’s approach by utilizing an abundance of archival materials and diverging from the imperial bias of *Art & War*; however, the controlling narrative of the exhibition and its catalogue is dominated by nation-building
mythology in an effort to counteract what Granatstein perceived to be a crisis of history infecting Canadian cultural memory in the years leading up to the turn of the century. By returning to and reinforcing the national mythology in *Canvas of War*, the potential to consider alternative histories of Canada’s involvement in the two World Wars is significantly undermined. As will be seen in the next chapter, the national imaginary persists in contemporary English-Canadian plays about the First World War; however, like Robertson, these playwrights will shift attention away from the state-centred narrative of heroism and sacrifice and will instead focus on the experiences of ordinary individuals and the ways in which their lives are forever changed by war.
Chapter 4: Performing the Archive – Remediating the National Imaginary in

*The Lost Boys* and *Mary’s Wedding*

In his study of Canadian theatre, *Performing Canada: The Nation Enacted in the Imagined Theatre* (2002), Alan Filewod identifies a phenomenon in which the nation is imagined through performance as a process of continuous reconstruction or “re-imagining,” as opposed to a stable trajectory from immaturity to independence. The intersections that Filewod describes between the “national imaginary” and the “theatrical imaginary” lie, in part, in the ways the theatre “materially constructs in the audience the community it addresses in its texts” and also in the ways the “nation claims authenticity through the making of spectacle” (xvii). This reciprocal relationship leads Filewod to the conclusion “that Canadian theatre can as a whole be considered as a meta-performance that literally enacts crises of nationhood” (xvii).  

95 Because every

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95 Filewod is not the only theatre scholar to consider the connections between theatre and the national imaginary. In *Theatre and Nation* (2010), Nadine Holdsworth argues that the “vast range of theatre practices that engage with the nation, directly or obliquely, do so to respond to moments of rupture, crisis or conflict” (7). Holdsworth also draws on Benedict Anderson’s concept of the “imagined community” in order to assert that theatre holds the potential to create communities that diverge from mainstream conceptions of national identities and to expose ruptures within the national imaginary (20). E.J. Westlake offers a similar analysis in his discussion of nationalist theatre in Nicaragua and Guatemala, arguing, “How the facts are configured by the writer and the audience of national drama shifts with each historical rupture” (2). From a more critical perspective, Kiki Gounaridou critiques national theatre for reinforcing the concept of nation by providing nostalgic representations of significant cultural moments in the nation’s history, an approach that fails to acknowledge the ways in which new cultures and languages have shaped the nation. Erin Hurley attempts to move beyond the “nationalist-realist paradigm” and consider the ways in which “globalization decouples nation and culture and limits the import of the nation to identity” (161), showing instead how, in the case of Canadian theatre exported to the United States, the “misrecognition” of Canadian actors as Americans has the potential to deconstruct the nation as signifier “by throwing mimetic reading formations into question” (170). I find Filewod’s approach productive because the process of re-imagining that
performance constitutes a re-imagining of the theatrical production, theatre is an especially appropriate medium for illuminating the repeated reinforcement that is necessary to produce and establish particular representations of nationhood.

Filewod’s description of the nation-as-process and the theatre as enacting “crises of nationhood” has significant implications for Canadian plays about the First World War; this conflict was a cataclysmic event that has been widely acknowledged in official histories as the “birth” of the Canadian nation, marking the Dominion’s transition from colony to independence. State-sanctioned versions of the First World War, therefore, endorse the stabilizing trajectory from youth to maturity that Filewod rejects. The recurring narrative of Canadian independence as an outcome of the First World War has acquired the status of what T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper have referred to as “cultural templates” that form “narratives of articulation” regarding war and remembrance. Although narratives of articulation circulate within the public arena (the state-centred paradigm), they are also

he describes can account for both sides of the debate: it can endorse and celebrate a homogenizing version of the nation or it can provide opportunities for revisionist histories that challenge the national imaginary.

96 See, for example, Ted Barris’s Victory at Vimy: Canada Comes of Age, April 9-12, 1917 (2007), Bill Freeman and Richard Nielson’s Far From Home: Canadians in the First World War (1999), and J.L. Granatstein’s Hell’s Corner: An Illustrated History of Canada’s Great War, 1914-1918 (2004), all of which explicitly endorse the birth of a nation mythology.

97 In The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration (2000), Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper identify two dominant, interconnected paradigms for representing memory: the state-centred (“political”) paradigm that concentrates on collective national identity and the (“psychological”) paradigm of mourning through which individuals attempt to come to terms with the incomprehensibility of war (7). Both paradigms are produced and disseminated through “narratives of articulation,” which are “shared formulations within which social actors couch their memories” that range from hegemonic master-narratives to local and individual memories (16). Cultural templates describe the ways in which pre-existing cultural narratives, myths, and tropes of previous wars provide frameworks through which later conflicts can be understood (34).
internalized by individuals and, as a result, influence personal responses to war and the psychological paradigm of mourning. The interplay between state-centred narratives of articulation and the personal paradigm of mourning has the potential to either reinforce the stabilizing narrative of articulation that Canadian independence was gained as a direct outcome of the First World War (and its related cultural template of heroic sacrifice) or to produce alternative narratives that engage with Filewod’s process of re-imagining. The two plays examined in this chapter perform the latter by re-visiting the First World War from the perspective of ordinary individuals whose stories diverge from official versions of the conflict. As Canadian plays about the First World War, tensions between individual and collective responses are further exacerbated by the dualistic dimensions of the theatre audience, which consists of individuals, but also operates “as a whole, in that distinctive configuration that it has assumed for a particular occasion” (Beckermann, qtd. in Bennett 8). Consensus among theatre participants is therefore unlikely because of the audience’s multiple dimensions, which makes the theatrical milieu an all the more appropriate example of the intersections between individual and group dynamics at play in the construction of cultural memory.

Susan Bennett describes a “double consciousness” that exists between the fictional world on the stage and the individual’s experience of the world external to the theatre.\(^98\) Drawing on

\(^98\) Bennett uses the term horizon of expectations, originally coined by reception theorist Hans Robert Jauss, to describe the ways in which a reader’s previous experiences of a certain genre or style predisposes them to certain expectations when reading/viewing a work of art and, as a result, the “reader measures what he or she reads against events of the past and expectations for the future” (46). Interpretive communities, a term originally used by Stanley Fish in his reader-response criticism, refers to the ways in which reading strategies are culturally constructed. It is important to note that “interpretive communities are not stable, holding privileged points of view, but represent different interpreting strategies held by different literary cultures at different times”
Karen Gaylord, Bennett characterizes the audience spectator as a “psychological participant” and “empathic collaborator,” who is located within these two frames and, most significantly, in the liminal space between them (148-9). Thus, the personal histories and cultural backgrounds that each member of the audience brings to the performance will produce certain assumptions and expectations that will inevitably influence their reception of the play. In this way, it is important to acknowledge that, in the context of theatre, the intersections of the collective and of individuals are always in motion.

Keeping in mind the dynamic interplay of individual and collective at work in the theatre and the ways in which this “double consciousness” contributes to the re-imagining potential of the theatrical medium, what should be added to Filewod’s important study is the role of media in this process of imagining and re-imagining. Although theatre is conceived of as a “live” medium, the inclusion of recorded media in performance has increased in Western theatre through the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries (Albacan 29).

What Bennett adds to Fish’s definition is a political acknowledgement of class, race, and gender and the relationship of these factors to the dominant ideology (45). Filewod’s theory clearly builds on Benedict Anderson’s seminal study Imagined Communities (1983). Anderson’s concept of simultaneity is especially productive for emphasizing the role that media play in this process of imagining a national collective. Anderson describes the ways in which a member of a particular community partakes in reading a newspaper and, whilst doing so, imagines other, disparate members of the same community performing this action at the same time. The reader also imagines that the events described in the newspaper refer to a group of people to which the reader belongs. This imagined temporal and geographical coincidence stimulates a sense of collective membership that triggers the affective power of national affiliation (33-36). Theatre takes the concept of simultaneity even further; the physical presence of the audience collectively witnessing the actors in a specific space at a predetermined time actualizes the co-existence that Anderson imagines through the act of private reading.

Two key studies in debates about the “liveness” of performance and its distinction from recorded media are Peggy Phelan’s “The Ontology of Performance” (1993) and Philip Auslander’s Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture (1999). In her essay, Phelan argues that live theatre is socially significant because it cannot be reproduced. “Without a copy,” Phelan
significant because it “raises issues of liveness and presence” that lead us to “question relationships to time and space by placing the ‘there and then’ of recorded performance within the ‘here and now’ of live performance”’ (Allain and Harvie 211). The inclusion of recorded media in live performance can occur on a spectrum of what Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin refer to as the “twin logics of remediation”: immediacy and hypermediacy. Immediacy, in its most extreme application, aims for the erasure of the medium, whereas hypermediacy “acknowledges multiple acts of representation and makes them visible” (Bolter and Grusin 34). Thinking through the complexities of English-Canadian dramatic representations of the First World War and the cultural memory these representations endorse allows us to understand how media, too, are remediated in theatre as an integral part of this process of re-imagining the “there and then” of the past in order to consider its impact on the “here and now” of the present.

In this chapter, I offer two examples of contemporary English-Canadian First World War dramas that illustrate the interplay between personal and state-centred representations of war and in which media play a central role in this dynamic: R.H. Thomson’s The Lost Boys (2001) and Stephen Massicotte’s Mary’s Wedding (2002). I begin by locating these plays in the context of the proliferation of First World War dramas that have continued to be produced in English Canada since the 1970s and by locating The Lost Boys and Mary’s Wedding in the primary contexts that inform this chapter: the competing paradigms of cultural memory, the archive, and revisionist narratives. I do so by examining how both plays re-member the First World War explains, “live performance plunges into visibility – in a maniacally charged present – and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control” (148). Auslander responds to Phelan’s observations by arguing that live theatre incorporates recorded media and thus the two should not be viewed as mutually exclusive, but rather as inextricably linked.
through the private narratives of ordinary individuals whose experiences of war are far from celebratory. My analysis of the ways in which these competing paradigms operate in *The Lost Boys* and *Mary’s Wedding* depends on a close-reading of a military painting in each play: Edouard Detaille’s *Le Rêve* in *The Lost Boys* and Alfred Munnings’s *The Charge of Flowerdew’s Squadron* in *Mary’s Wedding* – and the way in which the work of art is remediated in the performance. Both plays peripheralize the state-centred master-narrative and, instead, emphasize the personal paradigm of mourning – the former through familial frameworks, the latter through romantic frameworks. In doing so, each play proposes a revisionist account of the national coming-of-age narrative by showing how, at the personal level, the traumatic impact of the First World War either denies or delays the developmental process of maturation.

While the two plays lie at opposite ends of the spectrum of immediacy and hypermediacy, both works illuminate the ways in which media in general and the archive in particular play a central role in the construction of individual and cultural memory of the First World War. With this in mind, in the next section of this chapter, I examine how remediation in dramatic performance contributes to representing English-Canadian cultural memory of the First World War as a dynamic process of re-telling. Thomson’s re-telling takes the hypermedia approach; the playwright reanimates the archive, making it an interactive character in the play, thus performing a transition from storage memory to functional memory. Conversely, Massicotte’s play strives for immediacy by camouflaging its use of recorded media, contributing to the overall message of the play that working through trauma requires a “letting go” of the past. Read alongside each other, *Mary’s Wedding* inverts the dynamic of cultural memory at work in *The Lost Boys* by using remediation to displace functional memory into the recesses of storage memory. In my analysis of the remediation of the archive and its implications for individual and
cultural memory, I suggest in particular that each play’s remediation of a war painting destabilizes the authority of official versions of war and metonymically represents Filewod’s process of re-imagining the implications of the First World War as a formative event in Canadian cultural memory.

I conclude chapter 4 by describing the ways in which *The Lost Boys* and *Mary’s Wedding* are especially relevant examples of theatre’s re-imagining potential by providing an overview of the afterlives of both plays – specifically, their continued remediation and evolution as memories of the Great War – in order to demonstrate how this media-centred process of re-telling continues to proliferate in the present as a burgeoning third phase of the memory boom.\(^1\) Thus, despite their contrasting applications of remediation, both plays allow for compatible conclusions about the construction of memory at both the national and individual levels, suggesting that the First World War remains a vital concern in English-Canadian cultural production in the present. The fact that both plays are invested in the archive situates them in the “larger story” of Canadian cultural history and production and reminds us that they are not intended to be read/viewed in isolation.\(^2\) The success of both of these plays, then, lies in the fact that they not only supplement the historical record, but that they have also been invoked as supplementary intertexts in recent artistic initiatives that continue the process of re-imagining the cultural memory of the Great War. Ultimately, both *The Lost Boys* and *Mary’s Wedding* illustrate a

\(^1\) The plays themselves resist a linear trajectory by endorsing a cyclical conception of cultural memory: Thomson through the imagery of the iron harvest and the dance of the skeletons, Massicotté through the structure of his play, which “begins at the end and ends at the beginning” (1).

\(^2\) Throughout *The Lost Boys*, the Man refers to the “greater story” and the “larger story” of his uncles, which has been suppressed by the silences and gaps in the historical record but “will eventually emerge – like the memories of the fields, like the vigil of [the Man’s] youth, [and] like the roundness of the earth” (48).
crucial aspect of the nature of the supplement: it is never resolved or complete and is always in need of supplementation.\textsuperscript{103}

4.1 The Lost Boys and Mary’s Wedding in Context

Beginning in the 1970s, English-Canadian playwrights and novelists (for novelists see chapter 5) turned to the First World War in order to revisit and complicate the historical record that remembered the conflict as a heroic sacrifice and foundation myth for the Canadian nation. What these authors share in their revisionist strategies is a concerted effort to represent the stories of ordinary individuals, both at home and on the battle lines, whose experiences have been marginalized from or ignored by celebratory state-sponsored master narratives of independence and unity. Notable contemporary English-Canadian plays about the First World War that take place primarily on the battle lines of the Western Front include John MacLachlan Gray and Eric Peterson’s Billy Bishop Goes to War (1978), Kevin Major’s No Man’s Land (2005), and Vern Thiessen’s Vimy (2007). However, approximately two thirds of English-Canadian playwrights who write about the First World War have chosen to represent stories that take place on Canadian soil. By situating their plays in specifically Canadian locales, the playwrights draw attention to the ways in which the First World War affected conceptions of Canadian identity and nationhood, but unlike the national narrative, these authors reveal the

\textsuperscript{103} As Derrida explains in Of Grammatology, there are two functions of the supplement. Firstly, because the supplement “harbors within itself two significations whose cohabitation is as strange as it is necessary,” the supplement serves an accretive purpose. “But,” Derrida notes, “the supplement supplements. It adds only to replace […] it represents by the anterior default of presence […] the sign is always the supplement of the thing itself” (144-45). Based on these terms, the supplement is an appropriate concept to illustrate the continuous process of re-imagining that Filewod describes taking place in the theatrical performance because its perpetual state of incompleteness requires repeated reinforcement and/or intervention.
divisive impact of the war. For example, Guy Vanderhaeghe’s *Dancock’s Dance* (1996), Kevin Kerr’s *Unity, 1918* (2002), and MichelMarc Bouchard’s *The Madonna Painter* (2010) each uncover the devastating effects of the 50,000 Canadians who died from the Spanish Influenza epidemic that was brought to Canada primarily by soldiers returning home from the war. Another war-related cause of death on the home front was the 1917 Halifax Explosion, which Trina Davies explores in *Shatter* (2008). Equally significant, David French’s *Soldier’s Heart* (2001) and Maureen Hunter’s *Wild Mouth* (2008) depict the struggles faced by individuals at home in Canada whose families are divided by the war, the former through a father-son relationship that is jeopardized by a veteran who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, the latter through the story of a bereaved mother combating the relentless grief of her son’s death.

Many contemporary playwrights also explore people’s opposing political views as a dividing factor in Canadian society during the First World War, especially in regards to conscription laws that were put into effect when the Canadian government invoked the War Measures Act in 1918. Jean Provencher and Gilles Lachance’s *Quebec, Printemps 1918* (1974) examines the anti-conscription riots in Quebec, Anne Chislett’s *Quiet in the Land* (1985) describes the negative impact of war in general and conscription in particular on Mennonite communities in Southern Ontario, and Wendy Lill’s *The Fighting Days* (1985) reveals the ways in which the Manitoba Women’s Movement was divided by supporters and dissenters of conscription. Combined, these repressed stories about the darker sides of war supplement the

\[104\] In response to the continued production of Canadian plays that examine the relationship of war and national identity, Sherrill Grace and Donna Coates published their two-volume series *Canada and the Theatre of War*. The first volume (2008) contains plays about both World Wars and the second volume (2010) examines subsequent wars.
national narrative by undermining heroic and celebratory official historiographies and by painting a more complex picture of the First World War (46).

Both *The Lost Boys* and *Mary’s Wedding* also explore the destructive aspects of war and its impact on ordinary individuals. Like the majority of contemporary English-Canadian dramas about the First World War, although *The Lost Boys* and *Mary’s Wedding* are not overtly critical of the war itself, they refuse to justify the war.\textsuperscript{105} However, both plays are interesting exceptions to the home front plays because they are the only ones from this group of texts that explicitly participate in transnational border crossing between Canada and the Western Front.\textsuperscript{106} By depicting the Canadian experience of the war as something that transcends national boundaries, *The Lost Boys* and *Mary’s Wedding* move beyond the state-centred approach to commemorating the Great War and re-imagine the nation through alternative frameworks: the familial paradigm

\textsuperscript{105} In *Canada and the Theatre of War* volume 1, Grace identifies this reluctance to overtly critique Canada’s participation in the First World War as a recurring tendency in Canadian First World War literature. She asserts that plays about the First World War focus on “finding meaning, reconciliation, and identity (notably a Canadian identity),” whereas plays about the Second World War are “increasingly guilt-laden confrontation[s] with Canada’s past failures and complicities” (emphasis in original iii-iv). Neta Gordon echoes Grace’s observations by arguing that none of the works examined in her book *Catching the Torch* (2014), “culminates in pessimism or condemnation of Canada’s participation in the First World War” and that “[m]ost of the works in this corpus might even be called optimistic in their intimations that the Canada that is born in the First World War is populated by those seeking love, healing, and a sense of hope and obligation toward community” (21). This phenomenon is also international in scope. According to Jeffrey Olick, writing from a European perspective, “If World War I served as a catalyst for heroic memories, World War II and the atrocities associated with what came to be known as the Holocaust, by contrast, gave rise to more skeptical memories” (15).

\textsuperscript{106} I have only been able to locate two other Canadian plays published since 1970 that explicitly perform this transnational border crossing are Michael Hollingsworth’s *The Great War* (1992) and Don Hannah’s *While We’re Young* (2009). Hannah’s play depicts six generations of Canadian families whose lives have been affected by war. Only the First World War era takes place overseas in Flanders. The other eras take place in Nova Scotia, Toronto, and Edmonton.
in the former and the romantic paradigm in the latter, neither of which is constrained by geographical demarcations.

_The Lost Boys_ is a two-act play with a production time of approximately two and a half hours and one intermission slightly more than halfway through the performance. The play is performed by a single actor whose character, “The Man,” has been played by Thomson in Ottawa, Toronto, and Winnipeg productions.\(^\text{107}\) _The Lost Boys_ is based on a collection of over seven hundred letters written by Thomson’s five great-uncles who fought in the First World War; four of the five uncles died while deployed overseas or later, as a direct result of ailments acquired from combat. The letters are represented in the performance by five folders, each of which contains the story of one of the lost boys. The Man extracts the folders, one at a time, from a trunk that remains on the stage throughout the duration of the performance and proceeds to enact the material contained in the letters (Thomson 4). The play, which is performed as a vigil to the Man’s uncles, includes biographical material about the playwright Thomson and his uncles but is fictionalized through the protagonist (i.e. “the Man”) who uncovers his familial legacy on the stage by engaging with an abundance of archival materials.\(^\text{108}\) The stage directions of the published play indicate that the archival materials appear on the stage in a variety of ways. In addition to the trunk of letters, some artifacts manifest as projected images onto “a series of scrimmed screens” that, together, form the “dreamscape” of the play (4); others are unearthed from a trench that runs the length of the stage (12) or from a box of sand, which contains five

helmets (31), one to represent each uncle. The box of sand also contains a shell casing that the Man originally retrieves from the iron harvest (68).

_The Lost Boys_ begins in darkness, with the Man wandering the stage, carrying a sword (3). He proceeds to light candles that have been scattered on the stage, reenacting the vigil he performed in Belgium at the age of sixteen and describing his inability (at the time) to comprehend the significance of the Great War and its legacy (3). As an adult, the Man has developed a more personal connection to the war through the archive of his uncles’ letters. The archive also contains photographs, a war painting, propaganda posters, film, attestation papers, medical records, and war-related ephemera, all of which make an appearance in the performance as props or as visual projections. Although I have not attended a live performance of the play, I imagine that the abundance of visual stimuli competing for the audience’s attention, combined with the soundscape of gas bells, motors, ambulance sirens, rain, recorded voices, music from a wind-up gramophone, and explosions, confronts the audience member with the similar kind of burden of selection that Thomson must have endured in the process of sorting his uncles’ letters. This conscious process of selection is crucial to the construction of functional, cultural

109 In order to develop a sense of the performance aspect of these plays, I have consulted the stage directions of the published plays, as well as numerous reviews – especially reviews that provide ample descriptions of set design. There is much more material available for _Mary’s Wedding_, so I have been able to watch snippets of performances that have been posted online. Online study guides for _Mary’s Wedding_ such as those published by the National Arts Centre English Theatre in Ottawa and the Actors Theatre of Louisville have also facilitated my research and photographer Trudi Lee has been generous enough to allow me access to her images of the Alberta Theatre’s Project’s 2012 performance of the play. _The Lost Boys_ has not received the same critical acclaim as _Mary’s Wedding_ and so there is considerably less material available. I have consulted reviews of the play in order to comment on set design and other aspects of the performances. Despite my efforts, I have been unable to locate production photographs of _The Lost Boys_.

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Other than the Man, who adopts the personas of ten characters throughout the play (these characters are signaled to the audience through changes in intonation, accent, body language, etc.), the material archive is the only other physical presence on the stage, thus emphasizing the centrality of media to the Man’s commemorative journey.\textsuperscript{111} In the absence of his actual uncles, the Man is able to forge connections to his estranged family members through the material artifacts that collectively document their lives.\textsuperscript{112}

The play as a whole becomes a re-presentation of the original vigil that the Man performed as a teenager, only now it is framed as an epistemological quest to uncover information about the Man’s genealogical history; the archive provides empirical data to reconstruct aspects of the past. By shifting the vigil from a national framework to a personalized act, the Man is able to recognize the connections between the stories of his relatives and his own life story in a personalized way that is unavailable through a national framework. \textit{The Lost Boys}

\textsuperscript{110} The audience member, like Thomson, must filter a wealth of material and each person’s horizon of expectations and membership in certain interpretive communities will influence the ways in which they focalize these items. In this way, the audience member is presented the opportunity to personalize their experience of the play, reinforcing the role of the individual in the construction of cultural memory. On the stage, the material is mainly presented to the audience in the form of black and white projections onto screens. In some performances, the Man also unearths war-related paraphernalia from a box of sand.

\textsuperscript{111} In addition to the ten roles performed by the Man, there are three female characters in the play. None of these characters appear on the stage, but instead enter the play as disembodied voices that are spoken by female actors.

\textsuperscript{112} The convergence of identity and narrative in relation to the construction of memory is, for Aleida Assmann, an essential component of cultural memory in general and functional memory in particular. Functional memory is constructed on the level of “conscious remembrance.” “On this level,” Assmann explains, “memories and experiences are made available by being brought into a particular configuration of meaning. The production of this is very much along the lines suggested by Locke, that is, through the self-interpretation and self-definition of the individual. It reflects how much the individual knows about himself, what value he attaches to himself and others, and how he interprets his own experiences. […] The life story that one ‘inhabits’ ties together memories and experiences in a narrative construction of the self that determines one’s life and provides guidance for future actions” (124).
therefore reveals the limitations to public Remembrance Day ceremonies and state-centred rituals of commemoration and, instead, focuses on personal familial connections as a means of understanding the legacy of Canada’s role in the First World War.

Whereas the national story endorses the First World War as a coming-of-age celebratory narrative, the Man’s uncles are unable to experience this process because their lives are cut short by their untimely demise in the war. (The title of the play, which alludes to the lost boys of Peter Pan who remain in Never-Never Land where children never grow up, underscores this revisionist approach to the national story in The Lost Boys.) The Man, who is born two generations later and thus permitted this privilege of personal development, needs to be able to recognize the “greater story” of the war that is absent from the historical record in order to fulfill his own coming-of-age. From the Man’s point of view, the national story consistently fails him. He describes three levels of deception embedded in the letters from his uncles that reflect the constraints of state-control over personal communication during the war. The first “is the triviality, the off-handedness;” the second “is the [disclosure of the] nature of the deaths.” The third level of deception is the outright lies or silences of the “world unspoken” (44-46). By unpacking the limitations of the uncles’ letters, the Man discovers that George’s hospitalization for a foot injury was, in fact, a case of venereal disease. Similarly, George’s understatement that “[t]his Belgium mud is something fierce” barely begins to describe the terrifying experience of fighting the battle of Passchendaele, during which one of George’s friends drowns in the mud (49). Unfortunately, for some reviewers of the play, the triviality of the letters negatively impacts the audiences’ ability to affectively engage with the performance. Christopher Hoile describes the content as “tedious” and claims that Thomson is unable to make the “blandness of his material” entertaining (n.p.). Similarly, Joel Greenberg admits that the play as a whole is “honest
and rich,” but also “long-winded and, in the last twenty-minutes, too self-absorbed to allow the audience in” (n.p.). Neither Hoile nor Greenberg denies the tragic nature of the uncles’ experiences, but both reviewers express an agreement that the material is not dramatic enough for a live performance.

Nevertheless, I find Thomson’s use of the letters, as examples of the erasure of memory, to be compelling. The play laments these silences of the “world unspoken” as much as it laments the loss of a generation of young men. The dramatic catharsis that Hoile and Greenberg crave is located in the world unspoken that lies beyond the tedium of the uncles’ letters; the Man attempts to literally and symbolically unearth these aspects of memory during the performance. *The Lost Boys* is therefore illustrative of the ways in which tensions between these two paradigms of memory – the state-centred and the personal – converge to construct a cultural memory in which the silences speak as loudly as the words. State censorship directly impacts the content of the letters the boys send home, thereby silencing the traumatic and tragic realities they experienced at the front. The centrality of material memory in *The Lost Boys*, whether sufficiently dramatic or not, illuminates an overlooked aspect of the ways in which the national story can be re-imagined through theatre and sheds light on a reality that is all the more pertinent in the context of the First World War when, a hundred years later, living memory of the conflict is on the verge of erasure.

*Mary’s Wedding* is also a coming-of-age story set against the backdrop of the First World War.\(^\text{113}\) A one-act play performed by two actors over the course of ninety minutes without an intermission, the play follows the story of two young lovers, Charlie Edwards and Mary Chalmers. Charlie is a “dirty old farmboy” (38) and Mary is an English girl who studies ballet.

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\(^{113}\) *Mary’s Wedding*, produced by the Alberta Theatre Project, premiered in 2002 at the Martha Cohen Theatre in Calgary.
and piano (36). Their burgeoning romance is abruptly ended by Charlie’s death in the First World War. Set in July 1920, on the eve of Mary’s wedding to another man, the audience witnesses Mary’s recurring dream that she visits Charlie, both as herself and as Charlie’s military commander Lieutenant Flowerdew (a.k.a. “Flowers”), to work through the grief and guilt she has accumulated as a result of her refusal to meet with Charlie the night before he left to join up. Mary is unable to move on with her life after the war until she puts Charlie’s memory to rest, therefore demonstrating the ways in which the war is directly responsible for suspending Mary’s development from an innocent youth to bereaved fiancé and delaying her progression into adulthood as a married woman. If Mary’s wedding is the ritual that will confirm the protagonist’s ability to finally overcome her grief, then the fact that the wedding does not take place during the play speaks volumes about the continued impact of Mary’s traumatic memory of the war and challenges the celebratory national narrative. Both The Lost Boys and Mary’s Wedding engage in rituals – rites of passage that are supposed to mark a transition from one state to another – but in both instances, these rituals are deeply complicated by the legacy of the First World War.

As with the Man in The Lost Boys, then, the national story fails to resonate with the personal experiences of Mary and Charlie in Mary’s Wedding. Charlie never returns from the war; he dies a naïve soldier who enlisted in part because of the romantic representations of war that he learned through the poetry he was taught in school. Likewise, Mary’s personal

114 The convergence of the state-centred and the personal paradigms are foregrounded in the dedication to the published play: “For Robin. And the soldiers,” which forges connections between the collective loss of a generation of young men and the playwright’s former romantic partner by placing these two narrative paradigms alongside each other. Interestingly, the second edition of the play (2002) omits the second half of the epigraph and is only dedicated “to Robin.” The original dedication has been reinstated in subsequent editions.
development is delayed by her inability to cope with the loss of her first love; the recurrence of her dream and unconscious replaying of this pivotal event in her life story represents her inability to comprehend the tragedy of war, confining her to a state of pathological melancholia.\textsuperscript{115} At the same time, the fact Charlie tells Mary, “You’ll never dream this again. In a little while you are going to wake up and I will have been lying under the grass for nearly two years now. You are going to wake up and you will never have this dream again,” ends the play with a sense of hope that perhaps Mary will be able to move on from the fact that she did not stop Charlie from going off to war, a failure she considers to be “the worst thing [she] ever did” (69). The key difference between Mary’s working-through her grief and the national story, however, is that Mary finds no comfort in immortalizing Charlie for making a “heroic sacrifice” for “King and Country.” Instead, Mary’s ability to move on with her life depends on her ability to let go of some of her memories of Charlie. A degree of mentally purging one’s past becomes part of a process of healing, as is demonstrated by Charlie’s words to Mary: “Don’t forget. Just let go” (68). This is the paradox of Massicotte’s play: it is imperative to know our past in order to avoid repeating it, but the ability to overcome the trauma of past events necessitates consigning some of these difficult memories into the unconscious dream-world of storage memory.

This revisionist take on the celebratory narrative of the war is communicated in \textit{Mary’s Wedding} through the archive of letters, poetry, folklore, songs, and paintings that are evoked in

\textsuperscript{115} An especially remarkable way in which \textit{Mary’s Wedding} undermines the heroic glory of battle and the brave soldier is by casting Mary as Lieutenant Flowerdew. Although critics such as Gordon have read this cross casting as establishing a homoerotic relationship between Charlie and Lieutenant Flowers (43), I read it instead as a feminist manoeuvre that subordinates the historical record and empowers the female protagonist. All of the action in the play is filtered through Mary’s perspective and she is an active agent rather than a passive observer. In other words, Mary is the brave soldier in the play, not Charlie.
the play. As in *The Lost Boys*, personal correspondence is the primary means of accessing the past; Mary reads Charlie’s letters aloud and Charlie responds to them as though he is hearing them for the first time. In the space of the dream world, Charlie is oblivious to his imminent death. It is therefore through the letters and other media (rather than Charlie himself) that Mary seeks answers and, ultimately, closure from her difficult past. At the same time, media such as paintings and poetry offer examples of the ways in which the state disseminates romantic notions of war that are partially responsible for the deaths of so many young men. Media, in *Mary’s Wedding*, play an ambivalent role as perpetrators of state-sponsored lies and also as nostalgic remnants of a life that, because of the war, is deferred indefinitely.

Whereas Thomson inhabits the archive in order to reanimate it, Massicotte represents the process of forgetting by allowing recorded media to operate latently in the background of the play, imitating the amorphous structure of the subconscious dream world. In fact, the realm of storage memory, as it is described by Aleida Assmann, shares similar characteristics with the dream world as it is represented in Massicotte’s play. Both intangible, conceptual realms consist of “heterogeneous elements: partly inert and unproductive, partly latent and so beyond the range of focused illumination, partly too amorphous for any orderly retrieval, partly painful or shameful, and therefore deeply buried” (Assmann 124). Because, from the outset of the play, Charlie breaks the fourth wall in order to invite the audience into the dream world by telling them: “tonight is just a dream. I ask you to remember that. […] Don’t let that stop you from

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116 Although the letters read aloud in the play are fictional, the published play begins with a Historical Note that contains a reproduction of a letter by the real-life Lieutenant Flowerdew written to his mother. The inclusion of this letter lends a degree of authenticity to the play and, like *The Lost Boys*, complicates the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction that adds further critique to the constraints of traditional documentary methods employed by official historiographies.
dreaming it too,” the minimalist *mise en scene* provides an appropriate experience of immediacy that would otherwise be interrupted by a hypermedia performance (1). In the case of *Mary’s Wedding*, the playwright’s remediation of the archive by utilizing the logic of immediacy has the potential to facilitate the audience members’ ability to immerse themselves in the performance as both empathic collaborators and psychological participants by temporarily forgetting the outer frame of production and focusing instead on the inner frame of the dream world on the stage.

![Image of Alberta Theatre Project's *Mary's Wedding*](image)

Figure 4.1. Alberta Theatre Project's *Mary's Wedding*. Photo: Trudie Lee, 2012. Meg Roe as Mary and Alessandro Juliani as Charlie. Dir. by Wendy Wagner.

Although Thomson’s play is also set as a dreamscape, the distinction between immediacy and hypermediacy approaches have to do with each play’s relationship to memory. Thomson aims to restore memory, thus offering the audience an experience of the media that represent his past. Alternatively, Massicotte aims to “let go” of the past, thus emphasizing the ephemerality of the dream world instead of animating the media that inspire it.
Immediacy is further achieved in *Mary’s Wedding* with the naturalist set design, consisting of a dilapidated wooden structure that represents both the barn and the trenches. Instead of accentuating multi-media technology, *Mary’s Wedding* is set almost entirely in the natural world; the audience is asked to imagine open fields, barns, the ocean, and prairie thunderstorms. Blue filters that create a *“deep blue and green darkness”* are used with the lighting design to represent the dream-like environment in which the play is set (1). The opening stage directions describe *“the sound of a light breeze”* that will either recede or gain momentum throughout the duration of the play, often reflecting the emotional intensity of the scene through liberal uses of pathetic fallacy (1). Instead of several historically accurate props, objects are abstract and multi-functional. Mary’s costume, which consists of a white dress, represents both a nightgown and a wedding dress, and bags of grain that line the stage in scenes depicting rural Saskatchewan become sandbags in battle scenes that take place on the Western Front. Charlie’s horse is an especially challenging element of the play and it has been designed as an abstract metal sculpture in some productions and, in others, as an extension of the wood used to construct the barn that provides the characters shelter from the thunderstorm (see fig.4.1). Many of the auditory elements of the play are also multifunctional; as the stage directions *“A thunder clap or a shell crash”* demonstrate, sounds can simultaneously signify both the weather and the artillery of battle (25). The multifunctional design of the play contributes to the overall minimalist effect

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118 According to many reviews of *Mary’s Wedding*, the minimalist design is one of the biggest challenges of the play. Sharon Eberson describes the dreamscape as “present[ing] challenges galore” for the director and sound designer (14C) and Sylviane Gold describes the overall effect of the play as “an impressive economy of means” that accommodate “a complicated and tricky structure” (W-14). See also Anita Gates and Daniel R. Pearce.
of the performance, which imitates the workings of the dream world in which objects and people
can metamorphosize and assume multiple meanings. Combined, these minimalist aspects of the
play represent Mary’s need to repress the memory of her past so that although Charlie may still
“be in everything” he can be there “a little less” (68). In other words, like Charlie’s presence, the
media that bear his memory recede into the background of the performance where they haunt the
play, but do not explicitly announce themselves.

4.2 Remediating the Archive

Figure 4.2. Edouard Detaille. The Dream. 1888, oil on canvas, 300 x 400cm. RF524. Photo: Hervé Lewandowski. Musée D’Orsay, Paris, France. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

In The Lost Boys and Mary’s Wedding, the national narrative of the First World War is
re-imagined in the theatrical performance by the characters’ encounter with various media in
general and with military paintings in particular. The painting that appears in The Lost Boys is
created by one of France’s official war artists from an earlier period, Edouard Detaille. Le Rêve
(1888), or *The Dream* (fig. 4.2.), is one of Detaille’s most famous paintings. Le Rêve is not a Canadian painting, nor is it a representation of the First World War, but the image and its message reveal a “cultural template” (Ashplant, et al.) that influences later representations of war that inspired young men like Thomson’s uncles to enlist in combat to experience the glory of battle. The invocation of *The Dream* in *The Lost Boys* therefore establishes a lineage of romantic narratives about war that were disrupted by the realities of modern warfare during the First World War.

The painting depicts a line of soldiers sleeping by their fire while, in the sky above them, soldiers from French armies past ride triumphantly through the clouds waving the French national flag. The title of the painting elucidates the nature of the celestial soldiers; they are conjured by the collective reveries of the soldiers who are asleep in the field. Many art critics have read the soldiers in the sky as revenants of Napoleon’s Old Guard (Gildea, Milner); others have interpreted them as “the resume of all France’s glories” (Richard Thomson 212).

Regardless of their specific identities, if we accept the interpretation that the soldiers in the sky

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119 The sleeping soldiers in the painting are combatants in the 1870 Franco-Prussian war.
120 In fact, the disjunction between romantic representations of war and the grim realities of war is signaled at the beginning of the published play by the two epigraphs. The first, from Thucydides, states, “There were a great number of young men who had never been in a war and were consequently far from unwilling to join this one” (n.p.). The second epigraph, by Rudyard Kipling, provides a counter-narrative to the celebratory version of war: “If any question why we died/ Tell them because our fathers lied” (n.p.). By juxtaposing Thucydides’s and Kiplings’s versions of war at the beginning of the play, Thomson gestures to the cultural influences that encouraged young men to enlist in the war (including Kipling’s poetry!) as well as the ways in which modern warfare disrupted the durability of glorified mythologies purporting the value of war.
121 *Le Rêve* was first exhibited in 1888 at the Salon in Paris; Detaille was part of a group of French artists (others include Ernest Meissonier and Alphonse de Neuville) who established military genre painting in the Salon in the nineteenth century (Ong 103). After being exhibited at the Salon, *Le Rêve* was displayed at the World Fair in 1889 where it received an award and was purchased by the French state (Ong 103).
are deceased, then the message the painting conveys is that familiar “nation[al] political theology” that those willing to die for the nation will be immortalized by the collective memories of subsequent generations (Assmann 71).122 Le Rêve can therefore be read as war propaganda, not unlike some of the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) paintings, such as Charles Sims’s Sacrifice, which utilizes Christian iconography of the resurrection to draw parallels between Christ’s immortality and sacrifice and the soldiers who fought and died for Canada. In fact, Le Rêve sets a precedent in the academic painting world that operates as a cultural template for these later iterations of war that many CWMF artists evoked in their works as a means of glorifying the war effort, enticing young men to enlist, and justifying the dramatic losses endured by the conflict.

Le Rêve appears in The Lost Boys when the Man recalls a reproduction of the painting that hung in the hallway of his grandmother’s house. The Man describes for the audience the ways in which his relationship to this painting continued to change as he aged. As a young boy, the painting fascinated the Man; he recognized a similarity between the soldiers in the painting and his own toy soldiers (8). At this stage in his youth, the Man is unable to recognize the significance of painting; he describes, “sounds coming from the picture, shouts and cries, but everything is far away” (8). The distance of the action in the painting symbolizes the psychic distance between the young Man and the realities of war; the toy soldiers exemplify yet another method through which romantic notions of war are disseminated as a means of grooming young men to one day become soldiers. Later, as a teenager, the Man interprets the painting as an image “about battle and death, glory and victory” (8). At this stage, the man is close in age to his uncles

122 Anderson also draws connections between death and the nation in his discussion of cenotaphs (9-10).
who fought in the First World War. The fact that his interpretation of the painting at this stage in his life reflects the romantic attitudes that were likely shared by his uncles demonstrates the persistence of cultural templates that glorify war. Later still, the Man offers his adult perspective of the painting:

And now that I am even older, I know it is about eternity, an eternity which is very close. I know now the dream soldiers marching in the clouds are dead, which is why their cries always came from somewhere far away. I know now that this picture hung in the house of a woman who had lost four brothers because of the war. Her brothers were my great uncles. Now that I think back on it, I know there were some might [sic] goings on in that house though I never realized it then. (8)

The Man’s repetition of the phrase “I know now” represents a gap between perception and understanding that is bridged with age, hindsight, and material research. The painting now represents youthful ignorance and the Man understands the image through the paradigm of mourning rather than glory. The iteration of his evolving relationship to the painting performs the process of re-imagining that, on a larger scale, takes places through the continued cultural production of representations of war, (such as the play in which this painting has been invoked and remediated). It is significant that Thomson’s play is also described in the stage directions as a dream, but the Man’s contemporary version of this dream paints a dramatically different picture than Detaille’s version of war. By incorporating Le Rêve into his own dream, the Man is able to see beyond the limitations of the national narrative and to recognize the trans-generational impact that war has had on his family and on himself.
Equally important to the Man’s interpretation of the painting is the physical remediation of the image as it appears in the play. The stage directions of the published play indicate that in performance, *Le Rêve* is projected onto one of the many scrims on the stage, along with the other archival materials (8). The painting is thus remediated from a static, colour painting in a frame to a transparent black and white projection that is larger than the original and is essentially rendered as light. By reproducing the painting in black and white, Thomson is creating a visual unity between the painting and the rest of the archival documents, which are also black and white reproductions. The remediation of *Le Rêve* into light is an important maneuver with symbolic implications. As a transparent projection, the painting becomes permeable, allowing the Man to “walk into the picture” (8). The actor’s body is thus used to interrupt and interfere with the image; the result of this interaction is that the Man is able to go back in time through the painting, thus deconstructing the polarizing “here and now” of performance and “there and then” of recorded media. More importantly, the image is displaced from the screen onto the Man’s body. By emphasizing his own body, the Man also draws attention to the absence of the dead soldiers. The visual result of this interaction is a corporeal palimpsest of past and present, memory and history, life and death in an embodied re-membering of the archive. Thomson brings the painting to life, superimposing the vitality of his body on the spectral presence (or absence) of the dead soldiers. The body becomes the meeting place in a figure/ground relationship where these binaries collide in what Thomson calls a “friction of contradictions” (30). By emphasizing his own vitality in contradistinction to the dead soldiers – a distinction that is intensified by the vitality of the audience in the theatre – Thomson draws attention to the tragic and futile side of war, thus using remediation to deconstruct the celebratory message of Detaille’s original painting.
In his essay “Never Not Narrative” in *Theatre and Autobiography*, Thomson interprets darkness and light as a metaphor for life. Beginning with the creation myth of the Big Bang (in the beginning there was only darkness), Thomson identifies the creation of the stars (light) as the beginning of narrative: “Light is the narrative by which we fathom existence” (“Never Not Narrative” 325). If, as Thomson contends, “we are not human without narrative,” then light in *The Lost Boys* represents the life force of all things (“Never Not Narrative” 327). In contrast, darkness represents death and the absence of life. According to Thomson, “Dead men, like dark matter and black holes, tell no tales” (“Never Not Narrative” 325). The character’s changing view of *Le Rêve* in *The Lost Boys*, as well as the remediation of the image into light, thus likens the painting to a story of life and death; the Man’s evolving relationship to the image shows the dynamics of memory rather than endorsing the painting as a stabilizing *lieu de mémoire*. The root of this distinction lies in the shift of perspective from the state-centered paradigm to the personal paradigm. The soldiers in *Le Rêve* remain anonymous archetypes of the valiant soldier who is a homogenous entity of the army; in contrast, the Man’s uncles are not remembered for their gallantry or heroism, but as diverse individuals who died senseless deaths because they believed “the lies” their fathers told them. The Man does not see his uncles charging triumphantly through the clouds; rather, he sees them as victims of these very endorsements of war.

123 In *Media, Memory and the First World War* (2009), David Williams argues that darkness and light function in *The Lost Boys* as visual representations of time that allow Thomson to bridge the temporal gap between the present tense of the narrator and the past tense of the lost boys (189). Although Williams takes this argument in the direction of Einstein’s theory of relativity (an argument that relies heavily on specialized scientific jargon), his observations about the bifurcation of temporal dimensions resulting from the use of photographs in the play are also useful for considering the productive tensions that arise from the incorporation of recorded media in live performance.
Mary’s Wedding also involves the remediation of a painting that deploys romantic cultural templates of war. Massicotte invokes CWMF artist Alfred Munnings’s painting The Charge of Flowerdew’s Squadron (fig. 4.3), which depicts the Battle of Moreuil Wood, the last major cavalry battle to date, which has been credited as a determining event in the Allies winning the First World War. Unlike the Battle of Vimy Ridge, the Battle of Moreuil Wood remains relatively unknown in Canadian cultural memory of the war. Like the Battle itself, Munnings’s painting of the event is also relatively unknown. In Munnings’s version of the event, the Lord Strathcona’s Horse Regiment, led by Gordon Muriel Flowerdew, charges the Germans, whose presence is located outside of the frame of the painting (Fig. 3). Flowerdew later died from wounds acquired in battle and was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his innovation and leadership in this particular charge. The event ended in mass slaughter (horses were no match for German machine guns), but, like his predecessor Detaille, Munnings depicts the glory of the charge instead of its tragic aftermath.

124 Munnings was hired by the CWMF to record the activities of the Canadian Cavalry Corps and the Canadian Forestry Corps. He produced a significant body of work and was granted his own section in the preliminary exhibition at Burlington House in 1919.
The Charge of Flowerdew’s Squadron is remediated in Mary’s Wedding through ekphrasis from its original form as a visual representation (a painting) into verbal form as a linguistic description that is evocative of the painting.\(^{125}\) The material contexts of live theatre further impact this process of remediation because of the ephemerality of performance. The description of Munnings’s painting unfolds amidst the action of the play – indeed, at a climactic moment that culminates in Charlie’s death – and the audience does not have the opportunity to study the painting. Similar to Charlie and Mary’s relationship, the painting’s presence in the play is too brief to be substantially developed. The visual absence of the painting therefore renders the image as a spectral presence that operates latently in the background of the play, likely to be

\(^{125}\) Although there are many definitions and applications of “ekphrasis,” I am using the term in its general sense to describe “the verbal representation of visual representation” (Mitchell 152).
missed by members of the audience who are not familiar with the painting. Although I am familiar with this painting and I recognized its presence in my reading of the play, I am not confident that I would make this connection during a live performance. Nonetheless, Charlie and Mary’s description of the battle of Moreuil Wood, which can be read closely in the published play, bears an uncanny resemblance to Munnings’s canvas:

CHARLIE: We round the back of Moreuil Wood, out in the open. Fields of blue and green, waves like the ocean. And men in the waves. Flowers stands up tall in the saddle to see. Enemy troops set two lines, fixed bayonets, a canon. Machine guns on the flanks. An ambush.

MARY: Oh, God, they’re waiting for you.

CHARLIE: They open fire. There are hits among us. My mare’s ears flick. The canon fires and dirt spits up, a horse screams, things fly through the air. We can’t turn back. Flowers rings out his sabre.

MARY: It’s a charge, Charlie, it’s a charge!

CHARLIE: We flash all our sabres bare and our horses race to catch up with him. The long blades of grass blend together and blur with speed. I crouch low with my head beside her. She breathes.

MARY: Shh ha, shh ha, shh ha.

CHARLIE: Flowers is flying, his sabre rolling over and over in forward circles, waving the charge on. He is shouting. I can hear it through my stirrups into my spurs and boots. I am catching up to you Flowerdew!

BOTH: CHARGE! CHARGE! CHARGE! (59)
The verbal description of the charge contains several similarities to *The Charge of Flowerdew’s Squadron*, including the use of blue and green colours, the “two fixed lines” of men moving forward in “waves,” blending with the grass and “blurring with speed,” Flowers at the lead, “bar[ing] his sabre.” Despite the fact that the CWMF collection has increasingly gained attention in recent years, as evidenced by several contemporary exhibitions and the opening of the new Canadian War Museum in 2005, public awareness of the paintings in the collection is not fully cemented in public consciousness. The discursive reconstruction of *The Charge of Flowerdew’s Squadron* therefore creates a trace of the painting – a mark of its absence rather than its presence – aligning it with the spectral presence of Charlie, who is accessible to Mary only in the world of her dream, but absent from her daily life. The significance of the remediation of *The Charge of Flowerdew’s Squadron*, then, is a failure to conjure or to make present in the same way that ekphrasis represents the impossibility of linguistically reproducing an image.\(^{126}\) No degree of memory or language will physically produce Charlie or the painting and with this in mind, *Mary’s Wedding* emphasizes the limitations of memory and the permanent erasures of war to underline the paradigm of mourning as the primary mode of memory operating in the play.

\(^{126}\) *The Charge of Flowerdew’s Squadron* is not the only painting to be discursively remediated in *Mary’s Wedding*. The scene in which Mary and Charlie first kiss is a dramatized reconstruction of Frank Dicksee’s painting *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* (c.1901), which is based on John Keats’s poem of the same title (1819). In the published play, the stage directions indicate that “MARY is mounted up on CHARLIE’S HORSE” (35) and moments later, Charlie “reaches up and touches her face. They kiss. Silence” (37). The moment just before the two characters kiss creates a tableau that is evocative of Dicksee’s painting, suggesting that Mary is “the beautiful lady without mercy,” an epithet that perhaps she bestows upon herself for refusing to meet Charlie the night before he joins up.
The immediacy of *Mary’s Wedding* and its related repression of the material archive does not make the role of media any less complex in this play.\(^{127}\) Just as Detaille’s painting provides a cultural template for representing the First World War in *The Lost Boys, The Charge of Flowerdew’s Squadron* is connected to a historical lineage of romantic representations of war that, in *Mary’s Wedding*, are derived from Alfred Tennyson’s poetry, specifically, his poem “The Charge of the Light Brigade.” In many instances in the play, Charlie attempts to recite parts of the poem from memory, but he cannot remember the words correctly. Both verbal and visual romantic depictions of war are therefore presented as limited in the play. Charlie also fails to recognize the cautionary message of the poem. When he tells Mary that he “love[s] the charging on horseback parts, fast with your heart all pounding, with your voice just getting ready to shout, all on its own” (28) (a description that is evocative of Munnings’s painting), Mary implores Charlie to see the bigger picture. She recites the cautionary message of the poem to Charlie: “Not tho’ the soldier knew someone had blundered? Into the jaws of Death? Into the mouth of hell?” but for Charlie, the glory of the charge masks the reality of battle (55).

What Charlie fails to see is that “The Charge of the Light Brigade” was written as a tribute to British cavalrymen who, during the Crimean War, were involved in an ill-advised charge on 25 October 1854 that resulted in the deaths of the majority of the six-hundred soldiers

\(^{127}\) I consider the minimalist set design to be an essential aspect of the play and its method of signification. Some productions, however, have interpreted the set design more literally. In the Taproot Theatre production (2007), set designer Mark Lund created a scrimmed background upon which he projected historical images from the First World War. In another example, designer Deeter Schurig of the Prairie Theatre Exchange production (2003) split the stage with a trench upon which lines from Tennyson’s “Charge of the Light Brigade” were lit into the surface (Prokosh C6). Unlike *The Lost Boys*, which attempts to restore the forgotten memories of the lost boys and their archival legacy, withholding the archival artifacts that inform *Mary’s Wedding* in order to maintain the play’s metaphorical integrity is, in my opinion, essential to the immediacy of the play and its emphasis on letting go of functional memory in order to move forward.
involved. Tennyson’s role as poet laureate colours the poem with a patriotic and celebratory tone, but the reality of the event was the unnecessary loss of hundreds of young men. Like the soldiers in Tennyson’s poem, Charlie will also encounter a tactical blunder that results in the unnecessary deaths of several cavalrymen at the Battle of Moreuil Wood.128 History thus repeats itself in a Canadian context in Munnings’s representation of the Battle of Moreuil Wood. In doing so, the play advances its own cautionary tale: ignorance of the past runs the risk of repeating it.

A second poem by Tennyson that figures prominently in Mary’s Wedding is “The Lady of Shalott,” a poem that tells the Arthurian tale of a woman who, under the duress of a curse, is confined to the tower of her castle where she indirectly observes the townspeople of Camelot through a mirror.129 One day, she is enthralled by the reflection of a knight named Lancelot; she leaves her tower to pursue him, but having activated the curse by disobeying its terms, the lady dies before she reaches him. “The Lady of Shalott” and its representation of forbidden love is therefore alluded to in Mary’s Wedding to draw parallels to Charlie and Mary’s romantic

128 The casualty rate of the Battle of Moreuil Wood was approximately seventy percent with a death toll of 488 soldiers from the Canadian Cavalry Brigade (McNorgan).
129 Notably, both of Tennyson’s poems that appear in Mary’s Wedding have been remediated as paintings. The most famous version of “The Lady of Shalott” is John William Waterhouse’s painting by the same title (1888). Waterhouse also created two other paintings based on this poem: “The Lady of Shalott looking at Lancelot” (1894) and “I am Half-Sick of Shadows (1915). Other visual depictions of the poem include Dante Gabriel Rosetti’s wood-block illustration (c.1857), William Maw Egley’s “The Lady of Shalott” (1858) and William Holman Hunt’s “The Lady of Shalott” (1905). Three well-known versions of “The Charge of the Light Brigade” are by the painters Richard Caton Woodville Jr. (1854), William Simpson (1855), and Thomas Jones Barker (1877). Both poems have also been remediated in other forms, including films and songs. Although none of these works are directly alluded to in the play, they may bear significance for audience members who belong to interpretive communities that are aware of these representations.
relationship: Mary is unable to be with the man she loves because a premature death inhibits any further progression of their relationship.

Other parallels between *Mary’s Wedding* and “The Lady of Shalott” include the naturalistic imagery of open fields, a young woman who wears a long white dress, and a young man on horseback who wins the attention of the female protagonist. When Charlie happens upon Mary whilst she is reading Tennyson’s poem, she tells Charlie that the poem is about “A maiden who falls in love with a knight […] He can’t love her so she dies of heartbreak floating down the river” (43). Like the young Thomson who fails to understand the significance of Detaille’s painting, Charlie does not recognize the significance of the lady’s death. He asks Mary how the lady dies: “Does she drown or go over the falls or something?” and Mary replies, “Her unfulfilled love for him is enough to make her die of heartbreak” (43–44). Just as the prominence of heroic narratives influenced many young men to enlist in war, Mary contextualizes the trauma of losing Charlie in an archetypal narrative of a tragic love story. However, Mary is not the Lady of Shalott. She does not die of heartbreak and it is Charlie’s death, instead of her own, that leaves their love unfulfilled. In contrast to the Lady of Shalott, for whom looking is dangerous (even fatal), looking in *Mary’s Wedding* is about survival. Almost every page of the published script includes the phrase “I see” or a variation that involves looking, eyes, and/or watching. Charlie and Mary are created as foils to the Romantic sentiments that these poems and Munnings’s painting promote; through the tragedy of war, the characters draw a line between poetry and

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130 When Charlie is in danger, Mary yells, “open your eyes, do you see? Look, just for an instant?” (26). Also, when Mary first enters the play, she is *looking* for flowers for her wedding bouquet, she *sees* someone walking through the grass and then *sees* that she knows him (3). This moment of recognition is important; throughout the play the characters will continually struggle to recognize each other, this struggle is complicated for Charlie by Mary’s cross casting with Flowers.
reality and the realization of this distinction represents an end of innocence. The remediation of the art participates in this critique by deconstructing signifying aspects of the paintings and re-contextualizing these aspects in revisionist narratives of individual mourning. The audience, too, is encouraged to see this darker side of war by attending the play.

4.3 The Afterlives: The Lost Boys and Mary’s Wedding

Thomson has carried forth his interest in vigil, public commemoration, and the contributions of ordinary individuals in the context of the First World War through two projects that have grown out of The Lost Boys. The first, “Vigil 1914-1918” was a project launched in 2008 that projected the names of 68,000 Canadians who died in the First World War onto buildings in six Canadian cities and onto Canada House in London, UK. Each name appeared on its own for a total of eight seconds, a total of ninety-one hours of commemoration that remembered soldiers from the Canadian Expeditionary Force and Newfoundland, merchant mariners, and sixty-seven women (Potter n.p.). The second project, “The World Remembers,” began in October 2014 to commemorate the centennial of the outbreak of the First World War. Like “Vigil,” “The World Remembers” will project the names of individuals who died in the First World War onto public buildings, but the international scope of this second project includes more than nine million people from around the world and will take four years to reach completion. Like The Lost Boys, Thomson’s more recent projects also aim to bring a more personalized approach to public forms of commemoration.

It is clear from these examples that Thomson’s artistic projects continue to grow in size and scope; his inclusion of the Newfoundland regiment as well as non-combatants in his “Vigil” project also reflect changing attitudes to military historiography and conceptions of nationhood.
Thomson’s remembrance projects also rely on the participation of more and more members of the community while, at the same time, they extend the definition of “community” to global levels. The Internet has proven to be an essential tool in facilitating these large-scale representations. And yet, despite the considerable increase in scale, the goal of Thomson’s remembrance projects remains the same as his goal in *The Lost Boys*: to bear witness to individuals who died in the war and to encourage other activity related to the First World War.

The projects that have grown out of *Mary’s Wedding* have also increased in scale and utilized digital environments in order to engage with larger, more diverse audiences. The world premier of *Mary’s Wedding* in the form of an opera took place in 2011 at Pacific Opera in Victoria (POV) and, like Thomson’s “Vigil” projects, was released to correspond with Remembrance Day.\(^{131}\) The effects of remediating the play *Mary’s Wedding* into an opera included the addition of a third primary actor to perform and sing the role of Flowers, as well as adding a chorus of twenty characters who played the roles of townspeople, workmen, mothers and children, tea party guests, and soldiers. Unlike the play, which is a continuous, uninterrupted performance, the opera was divided into two acts and, of course, the entire production was set to music.\(^{132}\)

Two other projects were produced in conjunction with the POV production of *Mary’s Wedding*. “The World of Mary’s Wedding: Reminiscences of World War I” was an exhibition of memorabilia from the two World Wars hosted by the University of Victoria Archives and

\(^{131}\) *Mary’s Wedding* the opera was commissioned by Pacific Opera Vancouver. Andrew P. MacDonald wrote the musical score and Massicotte wrote the libretto.
\(^{132}\) According to Robin Miller’s review of *Mary’s Wedding* the opera, “The first two public presentations were sparsely attended, but the third proved hugely popular even though it conflicted with Game 3 of the Stanley Cup playoffs” (15).
Special Collections that ran from 22 October 2011 to 17 November 2011. A website dedicated to the exhibition features digitized memorabilia from UVic’s archives that have been divided into three sections: “Private Remembrance,” “Collective Remembrance,” and “The Art of Remembrance.” The other component is the “Mary’s Wedding Project,” an online forum accessed through POV’s website that invites visitors to post their own stories about how their families and communities were affected by the First World War. Although the scale of these projects diminishes the intimacy that is, in my opinion, crucial to the affective impact of Charlie and Mary’s story, these projects do build on the incentives of Mary’s Wedding (the play) by encouraging artistic collaboration within the community and by providing venues for ordinary people to share their stories about the ways in which the First World War affected them on a personal level.

Most importantly, The Lost Boys and Mary’s Wedding are significant contributions to Canada’s cultural memory of the First World War because, as these examples of their continued development and influence suggest, both plays are compelling representations of the nation-as-process enacted through media. In addition, by insisting on the personal paradigm as a point of entry into the historical record, both plays facilitate an engagement with what, according to Assmann, are the two central functions of cultural memory: affect and identity (120). The plays examined in this chapter do not offer any easy answers about Canada’s relationship to war; they depict war as “scary” and good, formative and destructive, a beginning and an end, but their ambivalence resists any totalizing or definitive assumptions about national identity and implies

133 I inquired with the Special Collections Library to see if there was a printed catalogue of the exhibition, but was unable to confirm the existence of one.
134 When I tried to locate this website in July 2017, I was unable to find it. It appears as though the forum is no longer available on the Pacific Opera Vancouver website.
that the “greater story” of a nation is always in process and will therefore always be in need of re-telling.
Chapter 5: ‘But a Hero Nonetheless’ – Remediating Commemorative War Art in Timothy Findley’s The Wars and Jane Urquhart’s The Stone Carvers

The idea of “heroic sacrifice” that has consistently dominated state-sponsored versions of the First World War in Canada can be seen today in Remembrance Day addresses, exhibition catalogues, and newspaper coverage of centennial events. In all of these instances, the hero figure is deployed, at least provisionally, to justify the tragedies of war and to cast the fallen soldier as a patriotic martyr who died willingly for the greater good of the nation. Contemporary English-Canadian authors, however, resist the heroic sacrifice masternarrative and focus instead on stories about ordinary individuals, whose experiences of war complicate, supplement, and/or challenge the state-sanctioned version of war. The narrative conflict that emerges between

135 See, for example, Veteran’s Affairs Canada website: “It was this immense sacrifice that lead [sic] to Canada’s separate signature on the Peace Treaty. No longer viewed as just a colony of England, Canada had truly achieved nation status.” CBC coverage of the 2016 Remembrance Day services quotes defence minister Harjit Sajjan expressing a similar sentiment: “Whether it’s been in peacetime or in war, their sacrifice allows us to have the wonderful life that we have in Canada.” See also opening remarks to the Canadian War Museum’s exhibition catalogue, Witness, which commemorates the centennial anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War: “At the end of the war, banks were able to welcome back many employees who had served overseas, but also mourned the loss of those who had made the ultimate sacrifice” (4).
136 Many of these novels recover forgotten histories of individuals and communities who have been excluded from the historical record. Timothy Findley’s The Wars (1977), Daniel Poliquin’s novel A Secret Between Us (2009) and Alan Cumyn’s novels The Sojourn (2003) and The Famished Lover (2006) explore alternative histories of the war through the combatant experience. Kevin Major’s novel No Man’s Land (2001) and play adaptation by the same name (2005), tells the story of the Newfoundland Regiment’s tragic slaughter at the battle of Beaumont Hamel in the First World War. Since Newfoundland did not join confederation until 1949, their cultural memory of the First World War is distinct from the rest of Canada. Indigenous persons are another cultural group that has, until recently, been excluded from historical narratives of the war. Joseph Boyden’s Three Day Road (2005), loosely based on the First Nation’s sniper Francis
official histories and Canadian novels reinforces Daniel Francis’s argument in *National Dreams* (1997) that “more often than not, the attempt to celebrate a hero creates an enemy or opens a wound” (127). According to Francis, the source of this wound “is due, in part, to the fragmentation of the masternarrative. Heroes arise out of stories, but Canada no longer has a story which everyone agrees sums up our national purpose” (127). Francis therefore describes a struggle over representation, which he characterizes as a “history of conflict and compromise,” as a distinctly Canadian characteristic that makes it “difficult to agree on who constitutes a hero” (113).

In the context of the First World War, tensions regarding conceptions of the hero figure and its corresponding masternarratives produce competing versions of the cultural memory of the conflict and its legacy for Canada. It is notable, then, that in his discussion of national heroes, Pegahmagabow, draws attention to the forgotten history of the almost 4,000 Indigenous soldiers who fought in the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Increasing attention to the experiences of women has resulted in novels such as Frances Itani’s *Deafening* (2003), which follows the relationship of a deaf woman’s struggles alongside the struggles of her husband, who is a stretcher-bearer in the First World War. Mary Swan’s *The Deep* (2002) and Michael Poole’s *Rain Before Morning* (2006) feature Canadian women who train as nurses and travel to the Western Front. For the men and women who survived the war, many returned home unable to escape the horrors they encountered overseas, especially those suffering from PTSD. This previously neglected aspect of First World War history is central to Jane Urquhart’s *The Underpainter* (1997). In addition to psychological trauma, many returned soldiers struggled to reintegrate into their respective societies because of physical traumas they brought home from the war. The character Tilman, who loses his leg at the battle of Vimy Ridge in Urquhart’s *The Stone Carvers* (2001) and Donald MacCormack, who returns from war with a face so disfigured that he wears a leather mask to conceal his scars in Jack Hodgins’s *Broken Ground* (1996) are two examples of this tragic reality.

In his essay “Unity as Disunity: A Canadian Strategy,” Robert Kroetsch makes a similar observation: “At the centre of any metanarrative is a traditional hero. Canadians, uncertain of their metanarratives, are more than uncertain of their heroes” (361).

Francis lists struggles between French and English, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, urban and rural, as examples of Canada’s history of conflict and compromise (113). Significantly, all of these examples manifest, to varying degrees, in the First World War. The conscription crisis
Francis identifies “the war hero” as a new sub-category of the national hero that emerged as a direct outcome of the First World War. According to Francis, “The new war hero of World War I was a hero solely because of his bravery, his sacrifice. He represented the ‘best’ of Canadian character” (120). Indeed, it is this particular representation of heroism that has been widely endorsed by state-sponsored versions of the war and that provides a site of contention for contemporary English-Canadian authors.

Francis’s observations about the fragmented status of Canadian masternarratives and their affiliated wounds provide a particularly productive point of entry for reading the role of the hero figure in Timothy Findley’s *The Wars* (1977) and Jane Urquhart’s *The Stone Carvers* (2001). Among the many English-Canadian war novels that repudiate the hero figure, Findley’s and Urquhart’s novels are especially interesting because of their use of remediation to represent the history of conflict and compromise associated with national versions of heroism. Both of these novels problematize the Canadian masternarrative that the young men who died in the First World War did so as a willing heroic sacrifice for King and Country. Moreover, although they diverge in their representation of narrative perspective, gender, and geographical locations, both novels explicitly challenge romantic notions of war, specifically the ways in which these romantic representations strive to sanitize the violence of conflict.

heightened existing tensions between English- and French-speaking Canada. Rural communities were also burdened by conscription; sending young farmhands overseas jeopardized the livelihood of farming communities across the country. The erasure of Indigenous contributions to the war from the historical record, as well as the maltreatment of Indigenous soldiers when they returned from war, is another example of this history of conflict. For mention of other contemporary Canadian novels that engage with art and the artist figure, see Introduction (pp.19-20).
Findley and Urquhart challenge these narratives by invoking state-sanctioned works of military art in their novels and by remediating these visual depictions of war into discursive reconstructions. By refusing to reproduce these images in their novels – thus rendering them (visually) absent from their respective texts – both authors place these works of art and the official narratives that they endorse under erasure and, in doing so, further expose the wounds inflicted by the traumatic experience of war. Notably, the word “trauma” is etymologically connected to the word “wound,” and the ways in which both novels characterize the First World War as a traumatic and tragic event in Canada’s historical development make Francis’s terminology all the more appropriate for my analysis. I consider the remediation of state-sponsored war art in both *The Wars* and *The Stone Carvers* to be a violent act of deconstruction that restores the wounds of war as a central aspect of the conflict and its legacy. In the process of placing the ideologies purported by state-sponsored versions of history under erasure, these authors also de-mythologize official heroes and destabilize the signifying systems of official war art by supplementing the national mythology with narratives about ordinary heroes who are irreversibly wounded by war.

I begin my analysis of *The Wars* and *The Stone Carvers* by briefly considering the representation of the hero figure in these novels. My interpretation depends on reading the researcher-archivist figure in Findley’s novel and the artist figure in Urquhart’s text as connected by their efforts to re-present the past and by the fact that memory is the axis of their respective artistic constructions.¹⁴⁰ Importantly, both novels emphasize, through these figures, the process

¹⁴⁰ My reading of these figures as connected opposes Neta Gordon’s assertion that the archivist figure in Findley’s novel and the artist figure in Urquhart’s text serve entirely different functions. According to Gordon, “In turning away from the figure of the archivist, a figure so important to
of historical commemoration and its constructed status, rather than focusing their efforts on making meaning from war and its aftermath.

Following my discussion of the hero-figure, I proceed with a close-reading of the remediation of war art as a means of further subverting official representations of heroism. My reading of remediation as a deconstructive action is rooted in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s definition of Derridean deconstruction as “A reading that produces rather than protects” with the ultimate task being to “dismantle the metaphysical and rhetorical structures which are at work in the text, not in order to reject or discard them, but to reinscribe them in another way” (lxxv, emphasis in original). The purpose of remediation is not to replace one masternarrative with another, but rather to undermine the authority of the original text in order to allow for multiple versions to coexist.

I conclude by considering the erection of counter-monuments in both Findley’s and Urquhart’s texts as alternatives to official sites of memory. These counter-monuments are more appropriate representations of the dynamic instabilities and competing versions of commemorative practice. On my spectrum of representation, the remediation of war art in The Wars and The Stone Carvers is located at the opposite end of the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) art that I examined in chapters 2 and 3; the creators of the CWMF, through rhetoric, propaganda, and exhibition practices, sought to endow the collection of war art with monumental status and the legitimizing authority of the state. Conversely, Findley’s and Urquhart’s novels examinations of The Wars as a historiographic metafiction, both Alan Cumyn and Jane Urquhart signal their relative disinterest in sorting through the problem of how to confront a historical record. […] Urquhart explores the work of commemorative artists, representing them also not as ‘truth tellers’ but as meddlers in the lives of war insiders” (86). In part, Gordon’s distinction rests on her identification of Walter Allward as the artist in The Stone Carvers whereas I read the protagonist, Klara Becker, as an equally significant artist figure in the novel.
not only undermine the monumental aspirations of these artworks, but also convey the message that history painting and monument building fail as sites of memory because they, in James Young’s terms, “absolve the viewer of the burden of memory” (273).

5.1 A Wolfe in Sheep’s Clothing: Violence and Obscurity in *The Wars*

As the earliest of the contemporary texts studied in this dissertation, *The Wars*, published in 1977, has been the subject of numerous critical studies (see Chapter 5, footnote 144, p. 164). In fact, as Sherrill Grace argues in *Landskapes of Memory* (2014), *The Wars* initiated a continued interest among writers of contemporary Canadian historical fiction in re-visiting the First World War in order to supplement and/or critique the historical record. In the novel, an intra-diegetic narrator immerses himself in the storage memory of archival records and the oral testimony of two witnesses (their interviews are recorded and transcribed; excerpts of the transcriptions are included in the novel) in order to reconstruct the life story of Robert Ross, a Canadian from Toronto, Ontario, who enlists in the First World War after his sister, Rowena, dies in a tragic accident.\textsuperscript{141} The archivist-researcher’s narrative revolves around the central event of the protagonist’s attempt to free one hundred and thirty horses from a burning barn and, in this act of defiance, shooting two superior officers who attempt to circumvent his actions. Ross’s act of emancipating the trapped animals eventually culminates in his own death, but it takes six years

\textsuperscript{141} I draw on Gerard Genette’s terminology from *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* to describe the complicated narrative structure of *The Wars*. The intra-diegetic narrator, who is compiling Robert Ross’s biography, is a character in the text. The novel also contains an extra-diegetic narrator, whose voice is, at times, difficult to distinguish from Ross’s biographer. For a detailed examination of the complex narrative structure of *The Wars*, see Simone Vauthier’s “The Dubious Battle of Story-Telling: Narrative Strategies in Timothy Findley’s *The Wars*” and Evelyn Cobley, *Representing War* (106-109).
for him to succumb to his wounds. Arguably one of the most critical Canadian novels about the First World War, Findley’s novel reinscribes the violence of war back into the national story through the narrative of an ordinary individual who is ultimately undone—physically and emotionally—by the wounds of war.

The two witnesses who share their version of Robert Ross with the researcher are Marian Turner, a nurse who tends to Ross while he convalesces from his burn wounds, and Juliet d’Orsey, the younger sister of Ross’s lover, Barbara d’Orsey. Juliet is only twelve when she first meets Robert, but she falls in love with him and, after he is wounded, stays by his side until his death. In the novel, Ross is depicted as a dubious figure. Some view his defiant undertaking as an act of heroism; others view it as a traitorous betrayal. Most of the witnesses are reluctant to discuss Ross at all: “Ask what happened, they say, ‘I don’t know.’ Mention Robert Ross – they look away” (6). The narrator’s limited access to the events of the past is one of the prevailing “wounds” of The Wars. Epistemological gaps in the historical record cannot be filled by storage memory alone. Early in the novel, the biographer-researcher is depicted performing his archival research:

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142 Robert is brought to hospital on 18 June 1916, where he stays for two months (193). At the end of August, he is returned to England and later, in September is tried in absentia. He is then sent to St. Aubyn’s for treatment and dies in 1922 (196).

143 As the pluralization of “wars” in the title of the novel indicates, there are many conflicts depicted in the novel that can be understood as “wounds” because they create gaps or erasures. The extra-diegetic narrator aptly summarizes these ruptures when he tells readers that, “So far, you have read of the deaths of 557, 017 people – one of whom was killed by a streetcar, one of whom died of bronchitis and one of whom died in a barn with her rabbits” (162). By combining these natural and accidental deaths with the casualties of combat, Findley constructs the First World War as a series of struggles endured by ordinary individuals rather than presenting the war as a unifying national narrative.
Spread over table tops, a whole age lies in fragments underneath
the lamps. [...] As the past moves under your fingertips, part of it
crumbles. Other parts, you know you’ll never find. This is what
you have. (7)

The inability to reconstruct the past in its entirety underscores the ambivalent status of Ross as
hero. Though Ross does make a brave sacrifice by risking his life to save the horses, the fact that
this action involves shooting two superior officers complicates his actions as representative of
the “best of Canadian character,” thereby precluding Ross’s sacrifice from the criteria
constitutive of a conventional war hero. Marian Turner provides an apt description of Robert
Ross’s complicated character:

My opinion was – he was a hero. Not your everyday Sergeant York
or Billy Bishop, mind you! (LAUGHTER) But a hero nonetheless.
You see, he did the thing that no one else would dare to think of
doing. And that to me’s as good a definition of ‘hero’ as you’ll get. (12)

The laughter evoked by what Marian sees as an unlikely comparison between Robert Ross and
traditional war heroes (such as Billy Bishop and Sergeant York, who are celebrated for their
bravery and willing sacrifice for King and Country) highlights the absurdity of Ross-as-war-
hero. Marian’s observations draw attention to an ongoing dialectic established early in the novel
between the “war hero,” who endorses the “national purpose” (Francis), and Robert Ross, the
hero who threatens the solidarity of the masternarrative. “A hero nonetheless,” Nurse Turner’s
definition of Ross’s “brand of heroism” (Vauthier 15) is an integral aspect of The Wars; this
characterization establishes a de-mythologizing of the hero figure as one of the main goals of the
text.
Ross’s oppositional position is confirmed throughout the novel by references to conventional war heroes: Clinton Brown from Harvard, “who died a hero’s death in the battle for Belleau Wood in June of 1918 – worthy of an exclamation point at last” (11); Taffler, who “was a hero” on account of being a “[v]arsity all-round athlete” and “returned to Canada” after being wounded in France (29); and Jamie Villiers who became a “hero” in the summer of 1915 when he “got his first decorations” (100). Whereas these men represent the best of Canadian character, Robert is unable to blindly accept the rationale necessary for conventional war heroes to perform their actions. As Juliet d’Orsey explains, “So what it was we were denied was to be ordinary. All our ordinary credos and expectations vanished. Vanished. There was so much death” (102, emphasis in original). All things considered, Ross and his alternative brand of heroism resist this denial of ordinariness; this resistant aspect of Ross’s character indicates Findley’s efforts to acknowledge the erasure of violence from official accounts of war and to restore this violence to a central position in his version of the conflict.  

A large majority of the criticism surrounding The Wars focuses on the use of photography in the novel as a self-reflexive postmodern strategy for interrogating the construction of history, or, as Eva-Marie Kröller describes it in “The Exploding Frame: Uses of Photography in Timothy Findley’s The Wars”: “Photography appears to be one of the typical metaphors and devices employed by post-modernist writers to expose the restrictions of any

144 The most controversial depiction of violence in The Wars is the scene in which Robert is raped by his fellow officers at the baths at Désolé. As Grace explains, this “violation enacts a betrayal of an especially heinous kind (brother turning on brother) and represents the larger betrayal of an entire generation of young men by their countries, their governments, their churches and their fathers. It also functions psychologically as an explanation for Robert’s revolt against the army with its rigid chain of command” (126).
prefabricated aesthetic order in rendering truth” (68). Equally important, Lorraine York points out that the novel “consist[s] of a series of short scenes which are unified by interlocking patterns of vivid imagery” (Other Side 53). Both Laurie Ricou and David Williams read the abundance of references to photographs in the novel as “narrative interruptions” that emphasize the intra-diegetic narrator’s temporal distance from Robert Ross (54). All of these assertions rightly observe the ways in which tensions between the visual and the verbal function to critique and distort any unifying representation of the past, although the presence of a photographic reproduction of the images Ricou and Williams refer to would arguably cause greater “interruptions” than the verbal description of such images. Even so, Diana Brydon makes the important distinction that both language and visual images in this novel prove to be limited in their narrative abilities and that this limitation functions as commentary on the inevitable erasures that cannot be retrieved and/or reconstructed from the past (64). This, too, is an essential aspect of The Wars: the past will always remain incomplete and it is these gaps that Findley seeks to expose through his novel.

Although the predominance of photography in The Wars is a significant aspect of the novel’s form and content, few critical studies have commented on the reference to a painting – Benjamin West’s The Death of General Wolfe – in their discussion of verbal and visual aspects

145 In addition to a focus on photography, some of the other critical approaches to The Wars include an analysis of queer identity in the novel (Davey, Goldie, Hastings, Rhodes); a commentary on the ways in which the war altered conceptions of the public and the private realms (Weiss) and an examination of Findley’s use of plurality in his novels and plays (Hulcoop). Some scholars explore the novel’s postmodern strategies on a general level (Hutcheon, Canadian Postmodern, Cobley, “Postmodern” and Representing War); other consider specific postmodern aesthetics, such as narrative strategies (Vauthier), the use of irony (Brydon), and the use of italics (Wylie “It’s Just a Story”). Brydon, Donna Palmateer Pennee, and Anne Geddes Bailey perform postcolonial readings of The Wars.
of the text. Williams mentions the appearance of West’s painting briefly as an icon of “death without dying” and, read in conjunction with a photograph of Ross, as “another analogue of photographic immortality” (67). Brydon doesn’t directly engage with the painting of Wolfe, but references another allusion to him in the novel (a discursive exchange between Robert and Lady Barbara), which she reads as highlighting divisions within Canada by reminding the reader that the unity of the country relies on a history of conquest (63). Although Williams and Brydon make valuable observations regarding the significance of General Wolfe and West’s depiction of his death, none of the existing studies of The Wars have, to my knowledge, utilized remediation as a framework for understanding the incorporation of visual images. An extended analysis of West’s painting and its remediation in The Wars warrants further consideration because it illustrates the ways media and memory converge in the novel as a critical commentary on conceptions of truth, the construction of history, and the unity of narrative.

The most extended deliberation of the hero figure in the novel occurs when the narrator compares a photograph of Robert Ross wearing his military uniform, still in pristine condition – “Nothing is yet broken down. Every stitch is stiff as starch” (44) – to Benjamin West’s painting of General Wolfe. West painted the original image in 1770 and first exhibited it in 1771, more than ten years after James Wolfe’s death on the Plains of Abraham following the Battle of Quebec on 13 September 1759. West’s painting, the “single most reproduced work of art in

146 Brydon is referring to the fact that the outcome of the Seven Years War (of which the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, where Wolfe was fatally wounded, was a culminating event) was English victory over the French, thus cementing the dominance of British control in Canada.

147 West was not the first to visually depict this event. In addition to the production of numerous monuments, the first painting of the Death of General Wolfe was created by George Romney in 1763 (McNairn 91), followed by Edward Penny’s version in 1764 (McNairn 103). According to Alan McNairn, “In creating a visual death of Wolfe Romney was in effect transforming what had
eighteenth-century England,” depicts the General’s death on the battlefield (McNairn 109).

According to Alan McNairn, “In this era of fervent nationalism, Wolfe and his victory epitomized the undeniable fact of inevitable global Britannic rule and the universal institution of English liberty” (9) and West’s representation of the event depicts General Wolfe as “the flawless incarnation of the ultimate in English virtue” (9). Highly controversial for its many inaccuracies, such as the identities of the people present at the scene of death, the location of Wolfe’s death, the presence of the Indigenous man, the soldier carrying the French flag, and the wound on Wolfe’s leg, West’s painting has been described as “unadulterated fiction” (McNairn 136).

One of the fundamental ways in which the painting glorifies its hero (Wolfe) is through its composition that evokes the Lamentation of Christ – a widely represented theme in art history ranging from the High Middle Ages to the Baroque period. This familiar image depicts mourners cradling Christ’s body after he is removed from the cross. West’s allusion to this highly recognizable iconic pose invites an analogy between Christ-as-martyr and General Wolfe’s death for King and country as a martyrlogical sacrifice. The apotheosis of mortal war heroes was common practice in traditional history painting; the genre’s primary purpose was to “relate a story from ancient Biblical history [to convey] an instructive lesson concerning universal moral

148

heretofore been a successful motif in poetry into one which because of this prior use was a fitting and proper motif in painting” (93). McNairn’s observation is significant here because it suggests that, print being the popular and original mode of representing Wolfe’s death, the paintings that followed can be considered remediations of the poetry.

148 It has been argued that West “likely selected the individuals to be included in The Death of Wolfe according to their willingness to pay a fee” (Ricou “Never Cry Wolfe” 172).

149 There are numerous artistic representations that depict the lamentation of Christ, including those by Ugolino Lorenzetti (c.1350), Albrecht Durer (1498), Abraham Janssen van Nuyssen (c.1600-1604), and Anthony van Dyck (c.1634-1640). A sub-category of the lamentation is the Pieta, which depicts Jesus’s body being cradled by his mother, Mary.
truths” (Abrams 15). West’s painting thus gestures to a lineage of state-sanctioned representations of history that elevated the status of its subjects to sainthood and immortalized them through the universal “moral truths” that they were believed to represent (Toler 92), a practice that is repeated by state-sponsored artists discussed in previous chapters, including Richard Jack, Charles Sims, Augustus John, Derwent Wood, and Byam Shaw in their works of art commissioned for the CWMF collection. The iconic context, combined with the painting’s historical inaccuracies, establishes West’s painting as a sanitized and falsified memory of an event that draws on cultural templates of the military soldier as an immortalized hero to tell its story.

Moreover, the creators of historical art were endowed with cultural capital by the seventeenth-century French Academy who canonized “the history painter as the highest arbiter of culture” (Abrams 16), thereby establishing history painting as a state-sanctioned practice.

In fact, the British government gifted West’s The Death of General Wolfe to Canada as part of the First World War Canadian War Memorials Fund collection, where it now hangs in the Royal Ontario Museum. West also produced copies of the painting (for details regarding differences among each painting, see McNairn 144-46). Vivien Green Fryd (73) claims West made three copies in total, Abrams argues he made four (170). According to McNairn, there are five copies in total (147). There were also minor changes added to the background of different versions. These include more emphasis on the hat-waving soldier and an additional scene of a British ship at anchor (Montagna 80).

Findley is not the only contemporary Canadian author to draw on this painting as a means of critiquing Canadian cultural memory and the construction of history. In Margaret Laurence’s The Diviners (1974), Morag encounters West’s painting in her school and is unable to relate to its romantic sentiments; in a humourous incident of miscommunication, Morag reads Wolfe as a “donkless” (as opposed to a “dauntless”) hero. See Laurie Ricou’s essay “Never Cry Wolfe: Benjamin West’s The Death of Wolfe in Prochain Episode and The Diviners” (1980/81) in which he reads the painting as representative of the “oppressive Britishness of [Morag’s] Prairie public school education” (173). In contrast to Morag’s expression of disconnect with West’s painting, the intra-diegetic narrator in The Wars imagines Robert Ross identifying with the image; unlike Morag, Ross fails (in the narrator’s mind) to recognize the painting’s limitations as a credible historical representation. The narrator’s reading offers insight into Ross’s reason for enlisting in the war: if Ross is seeking redemption for failing to save his sister, Rowena, then perhaps he believes that becoming a war hero (like Wolfe) will absolve him of his guilt.
The Death of General Wolfe has achieved iconic status in Canadian culture, but the reception history of the painting is less than straightforward. From its first exhibition, the painting received competing reviews. Of particular issue was West’s decision to paint his hero, Wolfe, in modern military attire. Equally controversial, West depicted the setting of the painting as the battlefield. Both of these artistic liberties contradicted the conventions of historical painting that dictated the hero be represented in Greek or Roman garb and in the context of a classical setting. These traditional conventions signified the transcendent status of the hero figure and symbolized him as a manifestation of moral values of “courage, loyalty, patriotism, sacrifice – all pillars of the Roman ethos then perceived” (Abrams 180). By painting Wolfe in modern dress, West represented his hero as an ordinary mortal, which contradicted the religious narrative of martyrdom signified by West’s imitation of the Lamentation for the composition of the painting. Ultimately, the controversy evoked by The Death of General Wolfe was that its aesthetic properties endorsed two competing narratives founded on two conflicting forms of representation: classical and modern. The depiction of Wolfe in West’s painting (and the cultural memory it produces) casts the hero as a “wolfe” in sheep’s clothing: playing the role of saintly martyr in order to promote a dangerous lie about the romance of death in battle so that,
even generations later, young men like Robert Ross will volunteer to participate in subsequent conflicts.  

Although, at first, West’s painting was criticized by academics, the general public received it as an “instant sensation” (Francis 55). According to Ann Uhry Abrams, West’s representation of Wolfe is indicative of changing attitudes to collective memory in late eighteenth-century Britain, influenced by cultural and economic changes, which “led to the rise of the middle-class hero who rivaled the bourgeoisie” (105). Abrams maintains that despite the hero’s attire, as a “religious allegory,” “The Death of Wolfe was “extremely orthodox” (172). Others, however, contend that West revolutionized the genre of history painting (McNairn 109). Moreover, as Laurie Ricou points out, West’s depiction of the hero is also problematic. Wolfe’s lifelong struggle with numerous ailments also casts him as a “non-hero, dying at his moment of victory. At six feet, three inches, with long legs and long neck, no chin, and a scrawny stick of red pigtail, Wolfe was thin almost to the point of emaciation, a suitably perverse image of the Canadian hero” (“Never Cry Wolfe” 173). From different angles, these controversies over representation contributed to the mythologizing of the painting and its widespread critical acclaim. However, the lack of consensus regarding the painting makes it an apt example of the dynamics of cultural memory; Wolfe may have resonated as an ordinary, middle-class hero in the eighteenth-century, but in the context of the mechanized warfare of the First World War, West’s depiction of Wolfe’s death is anything but ordinary. The history of West’s painting thus

155 Jack Hodgins presents a similar critique of romantic representations of war in the context of romantic poetry in his First World War novel Broken Ground (1998). In the novel, schoolteacher Matthew Pearson holds himself personally responsible for the death of one of his students. Pearson believes the glorified representations of war in British poetry that he taught in the classroom enticed this young man to enlist.
illustrates that the dynamics of cultural memory allow for multiple versions of the past to evolve over time.

The version of The Death of General Wolfe that appears in The Wars is one example of an alternative reading of the painting that reflects changing attitudes to Canada’s imperial history in the twentieth century. In the novel, the painting is verbally remediated by the extra-diegetic narrator:

Oh – I can tell you, sort of, what it might be like to die. The Death of General Wolfe. Someone will hold my hand and I won’t really suffer pain because I’ve suffered that already and survived. In paintings – and in photographs – there’s never any blood. At most, the hero sighs his way to death while linen handkerchiefs are held against his wounds. His wounds are poems. I’ll faint away in glory hearing music and my name. Someone will close my eyes and I’ll be wrapped around in flags while drums and trumpets-bagpipes march me home through snow. (44-45)

The prevarications of primary significance to Findley’s narrator are the sanitization of death in battle, which is signified in West’s painting by the absence of blood and the hero’s peaceful demeanour. In official history, Wolfe’s demise not only functions to reinforce the solidarity of the nation, but, as previously mentioned, it is also used as propaganda to entice young men to enlist in subsequent conflicts. To visually reproduce The Death of General Wolfe in The Wars would be to endow the painting with historical authenticity and cultural legitimization that, evidenced by the ironic tone of the description, the narrator seeks to undermine. With this in mind, the verbally distilled version of the painting in its remediated discursive form operates to
deconstruct the image and place it under erasure, thus making it vulnerable to criticism and alternative readings.\textsuperscript{156}

That the description of the photograph of Robert Ross preceding West’s remediated painting also portrays its subject as pristine and composed, draws ironic parallels between Wolfe and Ross as war heroes – an analogy that will be undermined by the passage that follows the verbal description of \textit{The Death of General Wolfe}:

Afterwards, my mother will escort her friends across the rugs and parquet floors to see this photograph of me and everyone will weep and walk on tip-toe. Medals – (there are none just yet, as you can see) – will sit beside this frame in little boxes made of leather lined with satin. I will have the Military Cross. \textit{He died for King and Country} – fighting the war to end all wars.

5 x 9 and framed in silver. (45)

In fact, Mrs. Ross does not celebrate her son as a military hero or brag to her friends about his courageous efforts in the war, nor does Robert receive any medals of valour. Quite the opposite. Mrs. Ross turns to alcohol to suppress the grief of losing her son and Robert Ross is court martialed and indicted as a national traitor. In both instances, Findley’s characters subvert the patriotic masternarrative of the “King and Country” refrain. The empty spaces allocated for

\textsuperscript{156} In Derridean deconstruction, to place something “under erasure” (i.e. “sous rature”) does not eradicate it entirely, but instead, always leaves a “trace” or some form of presence. In \textit{Of Grammatology}, Derrida draws on the example of crossing out a word in a written text to demonstrate the act of erasure, an idea that originated as a philosophical premise developed by Martin Heidegger. The line through the word is insufficiency as a signifier, therefore placing it under erasure, but the fact that the word is still legible through the line leaves a trace of its original form.
medals of honour – boxes lined with satin that are strikingly evocative of miniature coffins – reflect the empty promises of sentimental endorsements of war. As history would have it, the “Great War” turned out not to be the “war to end all wars,” but a major cause of the Second World War, as Findley knew, which gives power to the irony of this scene in the novel.

As presented in The Wars, what is at stake in romantic representations of war is the erasure of violence that is suffered by combatants and their loved ones. Simone Vauthier points out that “Neither photography, nor language can do justice to the horrors of gas attacks, mechanized slaughter, or trench life. ‘There is no good picture of this,’ says the narrator at one point, ‘except the one you can make in your mind’” (71). Indeed, Findley’s decision not to reproduce these romantic images in the novel performs a potentially violent act of deconstruction that aims to reinscribe the painting with a more critical narrative. In Marianne Hirsch’s reading of photography (based on Roland Barthes’s Camera Lucida), Hirsch maintains that a photograph is capable of “authenticating the reality of the past and providing a material connection to it” because it is both (in Peircean terms) an icon (it physically resembles the object it represents) and an index (there is a cause and effect relationship between the object and the photograph, which Hirsch describes as “like a trace or a footprint”) (Hirsch 6). In contrast, Hirsch points out that, “[l]inguistic signs […] are arbitrary, and thus symbols” (6). According to Hirsch’s logic, to provide a photographic reproduction of West’s painting in The Wars would, in essence, “authenticate” it and establish a “material connection” to the past. By resisting reproduction, Findley confines The Death of General Wolfe to the symbolic realm through its arbitrariness as a linguistic sign. The affective trace that connects the viewer and the subject is denied in the discursive rendering of the image. Further, if, as Roland Barthes argues, every photograph constitutes “the return of the dead,” then the absence of the visual reproduction of West’s
painting in *The Wars* denies this spectral return (9). Through remediation, Findley “dismantles” the “metaphysical and rhetorical structures” (Spivak) of West’s painting that represent a sanitized, romantic endorsement of imperial triumph and instead produces an alternative reading that re-casts *The Death of General Wolfe* as a narrative construction that fails to represent the traumatic realities of war.

The narrator’s critical reading of *The Death of General Wolfe* is further developed by the positioning of the painting with the photograph of Robert Ross in military uniform. The conversation that the narrator imagines emerging between the painting and the photograph can be identified through the use of italicized text: “*Dead men are serious* – that’s what the photograph is striving to say. Survival is precluded. Death is romantic – got from silent images. I lived – was young – and died” (44). That the narrator feels compelled to speak on behalf of the photograph conveys his perception of the image as unable to effectively communicate its message on its own. The agency in this exchange lies with the viewer (i.e. the narrator) and, as Williams phrases it, reduces Robert to a “silent icon” or, “a ventriloquist’s dummy for an imperial history whose icon is General James Wolfe” (175). According to the same logic used to explain the remediation of West’s painting, the remediation of a visual object (this time a photograph) into a verbal description destabilizes the signifying properties of the image so that it fails to fulfill Williams’s reading of it as a “promise of death without dying” (175). There are many photographs in *The Wars* that do represent Williams’s reading of the photograph as an indicator of immortality, in particular, the final three photographs that are referred to at the end of the novel (196-98). By comparing the descriptions of these three images to *this* particular photograph of Ross in uniform, it becomes apparent that the latter is unique because it undermines any assumption of immortality associated with the photographic medium.
Of the three photographs that are described by the intra-diegetic narrator at the end of the novel, two depict Robert “looking directly at the camera” (196, 197). The final photograph depicts Robert and Rowena “seated astride [Meg], the pony” and the verso of the image contains a caption that reads, “Look! You can see our breath,” an observation that the narrator confirms with his remark “and, you can” (198). In this example, the intra-diegetic narrator’s affective engagement with the subjects in the images suggests a degree of postmemory identification; in the first two, this is achieved through Robert’s gaze, in the latter, through the narrator’s observations of the subject’s breath.\(^{157}\) In contrast, the photograph of Robert Raymond Ross – Second Lieutenant C.F.A. that is presented in conjunction with West’s painting fails to hail its observer. The \textit{studium} of the photograph is Robert Ross in his pristine military uniform, but, for the intra-diegetic narrator, the \textit{punctum} of the photograph is Ross’s tightly clenched fist which “disobeys his will” and, by extension, undermines the artificial composure that the subject is trying to project (44).\(^{158}\) Rolf Tiedemann’s claim that Walter Benjamin’s concept of the aura relies on “the investment of that which is alienated and objectified with the capacity to return the gaze” (qtd. in Duttlinger 93), draws my attention to the significance that it is not Robert Ross’s

\(^{157}\) “Postmemory” is a term coined by Marianne Hirsch in her study of family photography and Holocaust photographs. In Hirsch’s terms, postmemory constitutes a “second-generation memory” that is “indirect and fragmentary” but allows for an identification and connection to the past nonetheless (23). “Postmemory,” explains Hirsch, “is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation” (22).

\(^{158}\) In \textit{Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography} (1980), Roland Barthes defines the \textit{studium} as a kind of conscious, general commentary on various aspects of the photograph, including “the figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the actions” (26). The \textit{punctum}, by comparison, “break[s] (or punctuate[s]) the \textit{studium}” (26). It is an unconscious element that “pierces” the viewer in a similar manner to a “wound” acquired from a “pointed instrument” (26). While the \textit{studium} is relatively constant for all viewers, the \textit{punctum} is an individualized reaction that will vary with each viewer.
gaze that holds the attention of the narrator, but Ross’s corporeal betrayal of the sanitized, romantic representation of the war hero. Rather than breaking down the boundaries between self and other, the photograph of Ross-as-war-hero further entrenches the perceived distance between the narrator and his ability to recognize the war through romantic and unifying frameworks. Instead of evoking the past in the present, the narrator associates Ross’s image with West’s painting – a visual precedent that predates the First World War – reinforcing the biographer’s generational distance from Robert Ross and becoming yet another example of the epistemological rupture that, in Marian Turner’s words, “you people who weren’t born yet can never know” (42). The romantic narrative of war only serves to further situate Ross as one of the many people in the novel whose identities have been “obscured by violence” (7). Photography, too, is presented in the novel as capable of violence. As Eva Marie Kröller argues, Findley presents photography as a weapon that “isolate[s] man from his natural context and turn[s] him into a two-dimensional grid” (72). The novel works in opposition to these limited visual representations of war – the photograph of Ross as military hero and West’s painting of Wolfe as saintly martyr – both of which rely on an erasure of violence to communicate their messages. By remediating these images into discursive form and, in the process, drawing attention to the constructed nature of truth and history, The Wars exposes the First World War as one of many wounds of Canadian history that inflicts violence at both the national and local levels of society.

5.2 The “Profound Responsibility” of Art in The Stone Carvers

Another novel that explores the traumatic wounds inflicted on individual Canadians by the First World War is Jane Urquhart’s The Stone Carvers (2001). Although considerably less self-reflexive about the processes of historical (re)construction than Findley’s The Wars, The
Stone Carvers re-visits the First World War in order to supplement the historical record with a multi-generational narrative about the transmission of memory through oral history and art.\textsuperscript{159} Much like The Wars, it is the process of commemorating the past that propels the narrative of The Stone Carvers; because of this common interest, the archivist-researcher figure in The Wars and the artist figure in The Stone Carvers can both be read as fulfilling a similar function of constructing cultural memory with an emphasis on media.\textsuperscript{160} Described by Grace as one of Urquhart’s “ghost stories” (110) and by Anna Branach-Kallas as one of Urquhart’s signature stories involving the Gothic “haunting of past lovers,” (37), The Stone Carvers aims to recover a forgotten history (the story of the real-life Toronto sculptor Walter Allward and his Vimy Memorial) that has been relegated to storage memory in Canadian cultural memory.\textsuperscript{161} Focalized primarily through the protagonist Klara Becker, the omniscient narrator of The Stone Carvers tells the story of a young woman’s romantic affair that is interrupted by the First World War and permanently ended when she receives word that her lover, Eamon O’Sullivan, is missing in action. Whereas The Wars focuses on the combatant experience and provides a secondary narrative of the home front through Robert’s mother, Mrs. Ross, The Stone Carvers is primarily concerned with the bereaved Klara’s experience on the home front, but offers some insight into

\textsuperscript{159} Urquhart was originally going to name the novel “The Monument” (Filipczak 16). By changing the title to The Stone Carvers, the purpose of the novel shifts, importantly, from a focus on a historical object to a focus on the people who created that object.

\textsuperscript{160} There are numerous artist figures in the novel; the primary ones include Klara, Tilman, Giorgio, and Walter Allward.

\textsuperscript{161} Although Walter Allward inspired the novel, the main characters of the story are ordinary Canadians. Urquhart describes this initial interest in historical figures as a recurring tendency in her writing: “It’s almost as if I need a historic figure to act as a hook to draw me into the texture of the time, and then gradually the person in question will withdraw to the outskirts of the story” (Wyile Speaking 82).
the combatant experience through her brother, Tilman, who returns home from war having lost his leg at the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Although critics are divided on the overall message of the novel, the version of the war presented in *The Stone Carvers* does not, in my opinion, endorse the unifying impetus of the national narrative of heroic sacrifice or coming of age. Quite the contrary, the description of young men’s voluntary enlistment in the war as a “massive reverse migration” demanded by Europe as “an act of revenge” is one of the many instances in which the novel undermines the solidarity of Canadian national identity and instead draws attention to the diversity of individuals who settled in Canada, ironically, for the purpose of avoiding the violent conflicts of their homelands (152-3). Europe, however, is not the only antagonist in this narrative critique; divisions in Canada are also gestured to in the novel, such as the political dominance of Irish Protestants and the Orange Lodge that continued to impose a powerful force in the New World well into the twentieth century. This history is briefly invoked to establish Eamon’s otherness in the community of Shoneval, which is based on his Irish-Catholic identity that he self-consciously wears in the “trace” of accent in his voice (155). Eamon believes that he is unworthy of Klara’s love because of what he perceives as his subordinate cultural status and that by becoming a war

162 Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż maintains that *The Stone Carvers* affirms the national purpose of Vimy Ridge and its “mythopoeic” status, the “construction [of the memorial] constituting an allegorical representation of the nation-building process” (123). Gordon, too, reads the novel as “post”-historiographic metafiction in that it “seeks out a sense of stability rather than ambivalence and flux” (91). In contrast to Paryż and Gordon’s reading of *The Stone Carvers* as endorsing a unifying national narrative, Brigitte Johanna Glaser argues that “[b]y emphasising the diverse ethnic backgrounds of those involved in the war on behalf of Canada as well as those contributing to the memorial after the war, Urquhart positions Canada as a heterogeneous country in which pre-war Old World distinctions between friends and foes are no longer upheld” (438). Branach-Kallas also offers a multicultural interpretation of the text, suggesting that Urquhart “highlights the perils of imposing an imported homogenising cultural mythology in the Canadian context and attempts to reformulate cultural legacy” (38).
hero he will prove himself worthy of her affections (155). Enticed into combat by the romantic
notion of flying aeroplanes, Eamon, like Robert Ross, never acquires national recognition or a
glorified death for his contributions to the war. Instead, he is presumed dead, his body never
recovered.

If the function of the war hero is to promote the national agenda, then Klara’s character
can be read as a “hero nonetheless” who, like Robert Ross, stands in opposition to the war hero
for “doing the thing no one else would think of doing” (Findley 12). She travels with her brother
Tilman to Vimy, France, disguised as a man, and acquires employment working on the national
memorial. Klara’s desire to participate in the construction of Allward’s monument is not
motivated by a patriotic agenda; rather, Klara intervenes with the sculptor’s version of the
conflict in order to assert her own story of grief. Even before the war, Klara’s aptitude for male-
associated forms of labour demonstrates her repudiation of Victorian gender ideals of passive
femininity, casting her as an oppositional figure. Also, her self-identified role as spinster sets her
apart from the community of Shoneval by her resistance to the socially accepted feminine roles
permitted as futures for single women – pious nun or maternal wife (10). According to the nuns
with whom Klara keeps company, Klara is “unsuitable” for convent life “because of her
fondness for men’s work – carving, farming, tailoring – her fondness, and her skill” (10).
Equally significant, like the protagonist Mary in Stephen Massicotte’s play Mary’s Wedding,
Klara’s ultimate act of defiance lies in her transgression of the boundaries that separate the home
front and the battlefront; this crossing of boundaries cements her status as an alternative hero in
the context of the war. It is necessary to note, however, that Klara has to disguise herself as a
man in order to access Allward’s monument and that she is only able to follow through with her
intervention because of Allward’s permission – she thanks him for “giving her voice back” –
revealing that her heroism lies in her act of resistance, not her ability to overcome the hegemonic power of the state or of oppressive gender norms (340). This fact reinforces the violence of war and its aftermath; like The Wars, The Stone Carvers refuses to endorse a celebratory narrative, not even for the heroes of these novels.163

By combining the fictional Klara’s story with the construction of the Vimy memorial, Urquhart integrates real-life characters, events, and artifacts into her fictional narrative as a postmodern strategy for contesting the historical record and for interrogating the construction of cultural memory. This critical approach to the past is chiefly exemplified in the novel by the remediation of Allward’s monument from a massive stone structure into a verbal reconstruction. Remediation in The Stone Carvers performs a similar function as it does in The Wars: it places the work of art under erasure in order to supplement its sanitized representation of war with the violent realities of wounded veterans and bereaved survivors whose experiences of war do not subscribe to romantic frameworks.

The monument that the fictional Klara travels overseas to work on is the real Vimy memorial designed by the Canadian sculptor Walter Allward. Allward’s design was selected in 1921 from more than one hundred entries submitted to the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission competition for a national monument (Hucker 281). Located on a ridge overlooking the Douai Plain, the site identified by official Canadian historians as the birthplace of Canadian national independence, Allward’s monument measures 61 square metres and stands almost forty

163 Although, arguably, Klara’s ability to find love with Giorgio at the end of the novel may constitute a happy ending, the novel’s emphasis on the paradigm of mourning and on Klara’s wasted youth complicates, in my opinion, such a straightforward reading of the ending and the novel’s message as a whole.
metres high (Brandon Art or Memorial? 10). Consisting of two twin pillars representing France and Canada and twenty, twice life-size allegorical figures located on top of a base, Allward’s design commemorates the 11,285 Canadians who were designated missing in action during the First World War. The names of these missing Canadians are inscribed on the base of the monument.

The composition of the monument is significant because, like the use of modern clothing and the battlefield setting in West’s The Death of General Wolfe, the Vimy Memorial is represented by competing narratives and stylistic approaches. Rather than trying to resolve these conflicting approaches, they should be understood as valuable indications of the struggle of representation and the dynamics of cultural memory. On the one hand, Allward’s use of allegorical figures and symbols can be seen as what Jay Winter identifies as a “traditional” combination of classical, ancient, and biblical forms that constituted the dominant form of representation in First World War monuments (Sites of Memory 3). On the other hand,

164 For examples of official versions of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, see, the Canadian War Museum website: “Many historians and writers consider the Canadian victory at Vimy a defining moment for Canada, when the country emerged from under the shadow of Britain and felt capable of greatness” (Cook). See also Veteran’s Affairs Canada website: “Regiments from coast to coast saw action together in a distinctly Canadian triumph, helping create a new and stronger sense of Canadian identity in our country” and CTV news: “For many historians, Canada truly came together as a nation in April 1917, when our troops sacrificed lives and limbs to win the Battle of Vimy Ridge in Northern France […] A hundred years later, Vimy Ridge is still a powerful symbol of Canadian identity and an important part of history lessons in schools across the country” (Puzic).

165 Three of the preliminary sculptures created by Allward and used as references for the sculptors of the Vimy monument were on display with the exhibition Canvas of War that travelled across Canada from 2000-2001.

166 Allward’s design includes twenty figures that symbolize various virtues. These include Sacrifice and The Spirit of Sacrifice, located between the two pylons; the figure of Mother Canada occupies a space in front of these figures. Hope, Faith, Justice, and Truth are located on the left side of the monument, representing France, and Charity, Honour, Peace, and Knowledge.
according to Laura Brandon, the base of the monument that bears the names of the missing Canadians indicates a “new era of remembrance” in cultural history because it marked the first time the dead were “commemorated as individuals, or even as a group” (Art or Memorial? 8). Allward’s design was also unique because, as Jacqueline Hucker points out, unlike earlier war memorials, the Vimy Memorial makes no reference to victory (283). Equally interesting, Jonathan Vance argues that the narratives of Christ’s resurrection and the birth of the nation were brought together by the fact that the Battle of Vimy Ridge transpired during Easter, “the holiest day in the Christian calendar,” thus amalgamating “religious” and “nationalist” narrative frameworks (“Battle Verse” 265-66). The Vimy monument therefore reveals a combination of both traditional and religious, as well as modern and secular forms, which allows it to be read as representative of changing attitudes to war during the inter-war period.

Critics have interpreted the competing narratives at work in the Vimy Memorial from a variety of perspectives. Brandon explains that in the ten years it took to construct the monument, public attitudes toward commemoration changed dramatically. Specifically, the general public had come to view Vimy Ridge as a site that represented the birth of the Canadian nation and as symbolic of all Canadians lost in the war, not just those who had been lost in France. Neither of these aspects was portrayed in Allward’s original design, but he made adjustments to incorporate adorn the right side, representing Canada. The winged-figures of Truth and Knowledge perch on top of the pylons. Two groups of sculptural figures, referred to as The Defenders stand to either side of Mother Canada; the group to her right is known as The Breaking of the Sword, the group to the left is known as The Sympathy of Canadians for the Helpless (Brandon 10).

167 See also Jacqueline Hucker: “Prior to the First World War there were few British or Canadian precedents for national war memorials. Monuments celebrated the achievements of particular regiments or notable military leaders, but there were almost none standing as a testament to the accomplishments and sacrifice of all the participants. Nevertheless, as wars grew in scale and were increasingly fought by citizen soldiers rather than professionals, popular concern for the fate of the individual soldier steadily increased” (280).
these ideas (206). One example of these alterations was the addition of the names of the missing on the base of the monument, an idea initiated by the Imperial War Graves Commission (Hucker 283-4). For Dennis Duffy, the names of the missing in action that appear on the base of the monument represent a secular undermining of the allegorical narrative of consolation above it (193) because “the statuary and the names belong to two different artistic and even ontological worlds. The list refers to bodies, the statues to ideas” (196). Although Daniel Sherman confirms that the listing of names on memorials was a commemorative practice that gained popularity during the First World War, he argues that we should not be too quick to read this as a modern, resistant practice insofar as names “represent a supplement, not a rival to historical writing. They construct a bridge between collective tribute and the memory of individuals, claiming to offer a catalog of patriotic virtues and a permanent inspiration or example for future generations” (67-8).

The multiple interpretations of the Vimy memorial demonstrate that even monuments are unable to preserve stabilizing narratives because the dynamics of cultural memory produce different readings that continue to change over time. All of these critics offer valid interpretations of the contesting narratives at work in Allward’s creation, but I believe Sherman’s framing of these opposing forces as supplementary is most productive because, while the supplement acknowledges an accretion of meaning, it also recognizes an absence, and it is, after all, the absence of bodies that the monument strives to commemorate in the first place. The supplementary function of multiple symbolic registers is also indicative of the limitations of memory; no one form of representation is sufficient. Our knowledge of the past will always be incomplete and thus open to alternative versions, which is one of the reasons that contemporary Canadian authors continue to revisit the First World War in their novels and plays.
Despite conflicting interpretations of the meanings behind the Vimy memorial, it was well received by the general public. Its unveiling on 26 July 1936 was accompanied by the usual fanfare and celebratory rituals of remembrance ceremonies and was attended by more than 100,000 people, including 6,000 Canadian veterans who crossed the Atlantic to attend the ceremonies (“Vimy Memorial”). The unveiling was also commemorated with speeches from dignitaries including King Edward VIII and French President Albert Lebrun (Durflinger 291). Despite its celebrated unveiling, as Urquhart reveals in *The Stone Carvers*, the ensuing approach of the Second World War disrupted the romantic commemorative frameworks promoted by monuments such as Allward’s. Even though Allward’s memorial was spared from physical destruction amidst the conflict of the Second World War, it did eventually fall into ruin because of environmental factors – especially water damage – which obscured many of the names carved into the base of the stone. This period in which the monument was slowly eroding and had been relatively forgotten by the public is the context that prompted Urquhart to write *The Stone Carvers*.

Urquhart’s novel, published in 2001, was followed by state-sponsored efforts to restore the memory and physical condition of the Vimy memorial. The Canadian Battlefields Memorials

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168 During the Second World War, rumours that the Germans had destroyed the Vimy Memorial proliferated in Canadian propaganda, “outrag[ing] Canadians, stimulat[ing] war consciousness, and instill[ing] anger towards the enemy” (Durflinger 291). On 2 June 1940, a number of German military dignitaries, including Adolf Hitler, were photographed at the monument as evidence to dispute these claims (Durflinger 294).

169 In an interview with Herb Wylie, Urquhart explains: “I wanted to know what motivated this man to build such an extraordinary monument, because it really is quite a staggering work of art and the best war memorial in Europe, there’s no question in my mind about that. And then there is the size! I knew that, particularly in that war-torn-landscape, the erection of the monument would have been a near impossibility. I was intrigued by the personality of the man who would want to try to do it” (97).
Restoration Project was launched in May 2001 and work began in December 2004 (Hucker 288). The plan allotted thirty million dollars to restore all eight of Canada’s First World War memorials in France and Belgium, with two thirds of the funds being allocated for the Vimy Memorial (Valpy F4). Restoration of the monument was completed in 2007 and was accompanied by Queen Elizabeth II’s rededication of the monument on the 90th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Prime Minister Stephen Harper, representatives of Canadian opposition parties, former governor-general Adrienne Clarkson, and thousands of Canadians, including 5,000 schoolchildren, all attended the celebrations in France (Valpy F4). Ceremonies were also held on Canadian soil at local monuments, including an all-night public vigil at the National War Memorial in Ottawa, an idea initiated by Canadian actor R.H. Thomson (Valpy F4). Urquhart’s reclamation of the monument and its forgotten artist represents the ways in which storage memory can be remediated into functional memory; however, Urquhart’s situating of the monument into a fictional narrative of personal loss diverges significantly from the re-dedication ceremony in which the Battle of Vimy Ridge and Canada’s colonial ties to

170 Interestingly, Jane Urquhart was a member of the restoration project’s advisory panel (Valpy F4).
171 In April 2017, yet another ceremony was held at the Vimy Memorial to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Attended by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Prince Charles, and his sons William and Henry, the two hour ceremony was also broadcast to the Canadian public (Valpy F4).
172 In addition to extensive media coverage of the event, the restoration and rededication of the Vimy monument also produced the documentary film Vimy Ridge: Heaven to Hell, the re-release of the War-Amps film A Vimy Veteran Remembers and the publication of a children’s book At Vimy Ridge: Canada’s Greatest World War 1 Victory by Hugh Brewster. Other ways in which the restoration was celebrated include the production of a commemorative coin by the Canadian mint, the display of medals of commanding officers at the Battle of Vimy Ridge at the Canadian War Museum, and the declaration of April 9th as Vimy Day in Canada (Valpy F4).
Britain were foregrounded. The rededication ceremony received the largest crowd on its site since the original unveiling of the monument in 1936 suggests that state-centred approaches to cultural memory have yet to move beyond the frameworks that Urquhart’s novel and other Canadian historical fictions attempt to undermine.

Nevertheless, *The Stone Carvers* begins by critiquing the totalizing tendencies of masternarratives. The monument first appears in the novel’s prologue, set in the interwar period of June 1934, where “two men stand talking in the shadow of the great unfinished monument” (1). In this introductory scene, the Vimy memorial, which is under construction, is remediated into discourse and is presented from a distant and panoramic point of view (fig.5.2). This perspective imitates the discourse of masternarratives in the sense that it lacks intimacy and favours generality over detail and specificity. In this vague opening description, the identities of the two men – who readers may infer are Allward and his assistant – are obscured by the shadow

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173 In Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s speech at the rededication ceremony, he stated that, “Every nation needs a creation story to tell, and the First World War and Vimy are central to that story” (Atherton A4).

174 Other contexts in which state-sponsored forms of commemoration have proliferated in recent years include the Conservative government’s announcement in 2013 to construct the “Never Forgotten National Memorial” in Cape Breton on the Cabot Trail. The monument design was based on *The Spirit of Canada* from Allward’s monument; a twenty-four metre statue of Mother Canada would stand with outstretched arms reaching towards Europe and the Vimy monument (*The Never Forgotten National Memorial* website). Two additional monuments were proposed in 2014; a Canadian National Memorial to Canada’s Mission in Afghanistan, as well as a separate memorial for Canadians who were recipients of the Victoria Cross (the highest *British Commonwealth* military honour). These projects, in conjunction with the restoration of the Vimy monument on its 90th anniversary, illustrate what many cultural and literary critics came to see as a strategically implemented program on behalf of the Conservative government to re-narrativize Canada’s national identity from peacekeepers to a militarized or “warrior nation” (McKay and Swift).
cast by the monument, thus drawing parallels to the ways in which the unifying symbolism of the monument subsumes the identities of the individuals it is supposed to commemorate.\textsuperscript{175}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Vimy_Ridge_Memorial_from_a_distance.jpg}
\caption{Vimy Ridge Memorial from a distance. Photo: Dennis Fahey.}
\end{figure}

Another way in which Urquhart critiques the state-sponsored narrative of the Vimy memorial in \emph{The Stone Carvers} is through the stone in which the monument is constructed. The white stone Allward finally selects after years of searching is described in the novel as “flawless” and containing “no previous history of organic life” (269).\textsuperscript{176} In the novel, Allward interprets this

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{175} According to Alana M. Vincent, the base of the monument also subsumes the identities of individual soldiers. “The absolute uniformity of the inscriptions,” she argues, “obscures and contradicts what we might know, should we pause to consider, about the individuality of the lives there represented” (78).

\textsuperscript{176} After spending thirty months clearing and preparing the land and building up the ridge, it took Allward another year to find the stone to construct his monument. He found it in a quarry in present-day Croatia, “known as Seget, it is a warm limestone with a narrow colour range, a fine
\end{footnotesize}
flawlessness as “innocent since its own birth, of any transient event, so that the touch of the chisel cutting out the names would be its first caress” (269). These remarks confirm the masternarrative of Vimy as an origin story for the Canadian nation, which is symbolically reflected in Allward’s description of the unadulterated stone. The artist’s desire for purity in his medium echoes the narrator’s criticism of West’s painting in The Wars; in both instances, the sanitized representations of military conflict erase the violent realities of war.

Designed by Allward to be “a memorial to grief, on the one hand, and a prayer for peace, on the other,” the white stone raises the question: who, specifically, is the monument intended to console? (377). This question prompts one to consider the “profound responsibility” of art that Father Gstir realizes when he finally obtains the bell for his chapel that he waited a lifetime to acquire (146). Hoping, like Allward, that his bell would “make gorgeous proclamations, to make predictions, to celebrate, to mourn,” Father Gstir is overwhelmed by the responsibility of uniform grain and a texture that was sufficiently hard to give joints yet perfect for carving” (Hucker 285-6). The stone proved difficult to quarry and to ship to France; the first shipment arrived at Vimy in 1927 (Hucker 286).

For further discussion of Vimy as “originary crisis,” see Robert Zacharias’s essay “Some Great Crisis: Vimy as Originary Violence” in Shifting the Ground of Canadian Literary Studies (109-128).

Included in these violent realities are the Chinese labourers, “young enough to have but scant knowledge of the European war,” who were employed to clear the land upon which the monument was constructed and “were killed by mines hidden in mud, the noise of the fatal explosion like an insistent reminder from the past” (Urquhart 271).

Allward’s inspiration for the Vimy Memorial came from a dream he had in which he was in a vast battlefield watching thousands of men being “mowed down by the sickles of death.” He turned and saw armies of the dead marching to fight with the living. From this dream, Allward concluded “Without the dead we were helpless. So I have tried to show this in this monument to Canada’s fallen, what we owed them and will forever owe them” (qtd. in Hucker 282). The description Allward provides here is evocative of William Longstaff’s CWMF painting The Ghosts of Vimy Ridge (1930), which depicts the Vimy Monument surrounded by spectral soldiers in uniform.

The church that Father Gstir builds in Canada is based on a real church located in the town of Formosa, Ontario (Wyile Speaking 99).
finally having obtained his obsession; the weight of this burden is ultimately his undoing (146). Allward, too, is undone by his recognition of the profound responsibility of art when the threat of its destruction during the Second World War sends him into emotional turmoil: “He had believed that he was making memory solid, indestructible, that its perfect stone would stand against the sky forever. With this certainty threatened, his world collapsed” (381). As Urquhart herself points out, Allward’s obsession with preservation and the “permanence of form” is ironic, considering “the country that he created the monument for forgot all about him” (Ferri 19). Thus, although the unifying-impetus of Allward’s vision, signaled by the abstract meanings of the sculptural figures and the uniformity of the names on the base of the monument, may appeal to the national vision of the Great War, the forgotten status of the memorial suggests its limited capacity to effectively console the individual Canadians who suffered the traumas of the war.\footnote{One wonders if cultural memory of Allward’s monument would be different had it been erected in Canada. Although I cannot answer this question with certainty, I speculate that it would still be forgotten because the allegorical figures promoted a narrative that failed to resonate with the Canadian public and this failure should not be affected by whether the memorial is located in Canada or abroad. In my own experience, I spent more than a decade living in Peterborough, Ontario, where another of Allward’s sculptures, erected in 1929, is prominently positioned in the park across from city hall. The Peterborough Memorial also utilizes allegorical figures to commemorate Canada-at-war. Although I walked by this sculpture regularly, it was not until I started researching \textit{The Stone Carvers} that I became aware of its significance or its creator.}
the war when tested by the stories of ordinary individuals who experienced its traumas firsthand. Remediation, as it is utilized in *The Stone Carvers*, also demythologizes the monument by presenting it as the work of many people, not just Allward.

Klara, who refuses to sanctify the war effort, in a “heroic feat of originality” disrupts the unifying narrative of the memorial by inscribing her own private experience of grief onto the monument by turning the allegorical figure of the torchbearer into a portrait of Eamon (376). In contrast to the opening scene of the novel, in which the monument is distant and out-of-focus, the scene in which Klara is discovered carving Eamon’s portrait is an emotionally-charged and intimate close-up of a personal act of grieving. To create the image of her lover, Klara must access “the deepest recesses of her memory” in order to recall “[e]ach detail. The two graceful wings of his eyebrows. How his hair fell when he threw his head back, the soft, slightly slanted contour of his eye” (333). The image that emerges from Klara’s labour infuriates Allward who had “wanted the stone youth to remain allegorical, universal, wanted him to represent everyone’s lost friend, everyone’s lost child” but “[e]ven in its unfinished state this face had developed a personal expression, a point of view. This had never been his intention” (337). Indeed, it is the altered point of view that distinguishes this scene and Klara’s version of commemoration from the distanced view of the monument in the opening scene. Allward’s vision of the monument as a universal representation of peace and an “urn to hold grief” is aspirational and future oriented, but Klara is unable to move forward until she works through her past (377). Moreover, the Vimy memorial, as a representation of grief, cannot be divorced from the masternarrative of sacrifice.

182 Urquhart’s decision to have Klara engage with the figure of the torchbearer evokes John McCrae’s famous poem “In Flanders Fields;” specifically the third stanza lines: “Take up our quarrel with the foe: / To you from failing hands we throw / the torch; yours to hold it high.”
that dominated post-war narratives, nor can it be divorced from the originary narrative of national coming of age that is signified by the Battle of Vimy Ridge. What is fundamentally absent from Allward’s monument is the violence endured by both the victims and survivors of the First World War. While Allward refers to Klara’s actions as “vandal[ism]” and “damaging,” Urquhart presents Klara’s heroic intervention as a reassertion of this violence into the national story (336).

In fact, the erasure of memory is the point of Urquhart’s narrative. What is at stake in Allward’s narrative is memory itself; the rendering of the national story into abstract concepts of hope, truth, sacrifice and peace (among others) also renders the memory of the war as abstract, and the result is that “No one knows anymore what the allegorical figures represent. No one cares” (378). The forgotten status of Allward and his work of art is therefore another reason that Urquhart’s remediation of the monument is significant. The visual images of the memorial fail to act as relevant signifiers (as stable lieu des memoires), but The Stone Carvers suggests that oral history is a viable alternative for the transmission of memory. The first chapter of the novel begins with Klara and the local nuns engaged in an act of storytelling about the origins of their village. The women “believed the story connected them, through ancestry, through work and worship, and through vocation to the village’s inception. […] The nuns and the spinster clung to the story, as if by telling the tale they became witnesses, perhaps even participants in the awkward fabrication of matter, the difficult architecture of a new world” (6). Insofar as this form of storytelling (which Klara has listened to and repeated on numerous occasions) functions to preserve the trans-generational transmission of memory and performs the important act of

183 In Art or Memorial?, Brandon points out that no one has taken the time to study the figures and their meanings until she does so herself in 2006.
bearing witness, the remediation of Allward’s monument into story represents an act of recovery in which Urquhart restores the memory of the Vimy memorial in a more nuanced and diversified context of personal loss, violence, and “heroic feats of originality” that operate in opposition to the traditional war hero.

5.3 Conclusion: Subaltern Counter-monuments

In “The Counter-Monument: Memory Against Itself in Germany Today,” (1992) James Young explores contemporary Holocaust memorial work in Germany. In his ruminations on the function of national monuments in this context, he observes: “traditionally, state-sponsored memory of a national past aims to affirm the righteousness of a nation’s birth, even its divine election. The matrix of a nation’s monuments traditionally emplots the story of ennobling events, of triumphs over barbarism, and recalls the martyrdom of those who gave their lives in the struggle for national existence – who, in the martyrlogical refrain, died so that ‘a country might live’” (270). I see Young’s description as aptly summarizing the function of both The Death of Wolfe and the Vimy memorial as reinforcing state-sanctioned narratives of nationhood, even though neither of these commemorative works of art is connected to the cultural memory of the Holocaust. Both the painting and the monument operate as origin stories, the former a declaration of imperial power, the latter representing an effort to move beyond colonial identity while, paradoxically, drawing on European traditions to assert the Dominion’s narrative of independence. In The Wars and The Stone Carvers, these works of art are remediated to ironically subvert the patriotic masternarrative of the “King and Country” refrain. Not only are the discursive reconstructions of these monumental artworks in both novels remediations of their original forms, but The Death of General Wolfe and the Vimy memorial are themselves
remediations of antecedent works of art that include Christian iconography, Classical human forms, and pre-existing sculptural and poetic representations of the events they aim to represent.  

However, Young also provides a description of counter-monuments, which offer a viable alternative to traditional, state-sponsored forms of commemoration. Young identifies (in Germany) a post-war generation’s approach to commemoration as rooted in the project to “jar viewers from complacency and challenge and denaturalize the viewers’ assumptions” (272). Whereas monuments, according to Young, demonstrate a tendency to displace the burden of mourning and remembrance from individual subjects onto the object itself, thus relieving the individual of the responsibility of memory (an observation that echoes Allward’s description of his monument as an “urn to hold grief”), counter-monuments are “brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being” (271). Counter-monuments function as a response to the “memorial conundrum” in Germany between “remembrance and self-indictment” (270-71). Though Young’s observations are strictly limited to the study of German forms of commemoration, the “memorial conundrum” he identifies resonates in the Canadian context of the First World War as well. In particular, the tensions at work between a struggle to present a unified vision of nationhood and, at the same to, to recognize the violence inflicted on individuals and communities who fail to identify with the totalizing vision of state-sanctioned representations of war, is an issue that remains central to

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184 Both the death of Wolfe and the Battle of Vimy Ridge were first commemorated with an outpouring of poetic responses to these events. The visual representations created by West and Allward can thus be conceived of as remediations of the precedents set by poetry as well. For discussion of poetry (and drama) inspired by the death of Wolfe, see Abrams’s *The Valiant Hero*. For discussion of poetry inspired by the Battle of Vimy Ridge, see Vance’s “Battle Verse: Poetry and Nationalism after Vimy Ridge.”
cultural memory and commemorative practice related to this conflict. Because counter-
monuments “[aim] not to console but provoke; not to remain fixed but to change; not to be
everlasting but to disappear; not to be ignored by passersby but to demand interaction; not to
remain pristine but to invite its own violation and desecration; not to accept graciously the
burden of memory but to throw it back at the town’s feet,” this approach to representation offers
an alternative form of representation that has the potential to embody, rather than erase or
suppress, the memorial conundrum of commemorative practice (Young 277).

In this context of a struggle over representation between “remembrance and self-
indictment,” I propose that “The Stained Glass Dugout” (84) in The Wars and the tunnels below
the Vimy monument in The Stone Carvers can be read as counter-monuments that function to re-
member the wounds of war by foregrounding the violence of conflict and resisting the
transference of the burden of memory through their commemorative forms.185

The Stained Glass Dugout contains Devlin’s collection of glass fragments depicting Christian
imagery. These fragmented works of art have been recycled and refashioned into the secular
context of the domestic space of the dugout, one piece in particular functioning as the door to the
residence. In addition to the stained glass, the dugout contains other forms of art and tools for
art-making: Rodwell’s sketchbooks containing illustrations of his animals (88), Poole’s trumpet
(89) and Levitt’s collection of books (86). Located in the trenches, one of the many sites of
violence on the battlefront, the dugout is a subaltern construction that is vulnerable to the

185 I resist characterizing Klara’s portrait of Eamon as a countermonument, even though her act
of resistance does resemble some of the properties of countermonuments as described by Young,
because Allward maintains the agency in this particular exchange by permitting Klara to proceed
with her actions. She begs him to keep the face and thanks him for “giving [her] voice back”
(340). That Allward retains control of the final outcome of the monument complicates, in my
view, Klara’s heroic act as constitutive of a counter-monument.
destruction of war and, in fact, eventually succumbs to its environment when it is severely
damaged by the deployment of a nearby German landmine (106).

The Stained Glass Dugout is aesthetically and conceptually fragmented, representing the
many personalities of its inhabitants. It also evokes equally fragmented responses from its
visitors. When Devlin, the aspiring antique-shop owner, first shows his collection of stained
glass to Levitt, he explains that he finds the image of St. Eloi, “the patron saint of smiths and
metal workers” to be “rather attractive,” not because of its religious symbolism, but because it
represents Devlin’s “[devotion] to fragility” (85). Conversely, Levitt, a newcomer to the dugout,
politely agrees with Devlin’s assessment, yet secretly thinks it is “the ugliest piece of glass he’d
ever seen” (85). The fragility and fragmented nature of the dugout (as well as the diverse
responses it evokes) is a more honest representation of war than the sanitized painting of Wolfe’s
heroic death. The fragile construction embraces its incompleteness, providing a semblance of
civilization and humanity in a world that has been destroyed by violence, yet, at the same time,
remains vulnerable to that very violence. Instead of honouring the abstract, the Stained Glass
Dugout offers comfort to its inhabitants in the ways one engages with the space – sleeping,
cooking, conversation, providing a refuge for small animals, creating art. It aspires not to the
idea of sanctity in the midst of chaos, but creates a sense of comfort through the acts performed
on this site, therefore functioning as a counter-monument to the immaterial concepts of glory and
immortality represented in West’s painting *The Death of General Wolfe*.

Similarly, the tunnels that run underneath Allward’s monument, as described in *The
Stone Carvers*, are heterogeneous constructions that combine high art with low art and detritus
with artifacts, in the form of “graffiti, rock carvings, the handle of a stretcher, helmets, bully tins,
old pipes, and bits of electrical wiring” (354). The tunnels, unlike the monument above them, do
not attempt to conceal the violent context in which they are situated. Like the Stained Glass Dugout, these subaltern constructions represent the experiences of the soldiers who endured the violence of war and offer multiple narratives that preserve the violence of the site and evoke varied responses from characters in the novel. Tilman, who lost his leg at the battle of Vimy Ridge, avoids the tunnels at all costs. He recalls the battle as “the craziest thing […] pure bedlam. And the casualties were huge, overwhelming, though in the end the Canadians had taken the ridge. Afterwards hardly anyone who had participated and survived could remember anything about it, except chaos” (230). Tilman is dismissive of the concept of victory achieved at the Battle of Vimy Ridge because his own experience of the event is disconnected from the celebratory coming-of-age narrative created post-battle by state officials, many of whom were not present at the actual event (230). Alternatively, Klara and Giorgio’s lovemaking in the tunnels characterizes the space as a site of intimacy; it is in the darkness of the tunnels that Klara begins to work through the grief of Eamon’s disappearance. Klara’s description of the tunnels as a “parody of the world above” (358) is complemented by the narrator’s description of Klara walking “down the new road past the scrubbed, sanitary reconstructed trenches” of the Vimy monument in order to access the tunnels (354). The contrast between these two sites of memory emphasizes the distinction between the signifying properties of the monument and the world below it.

Whereas the Vimy memorial promotes a universalized memory of the conflict, the tunnels evoke speculation about the identities of the soldiers who occupied these spaces. Klara wonders, “What had these men carried in their minds? Had these references to the pleasure of the life they had left behind console them in the fact of the damp and the lice and the certainty of death?” (359). Rather than consoling Klara, the tunnels provoke further reflection about the
individuals who occupied these spaces and the traumas that they endured. An alternative reading of the tunnels is proposed by Gordon Bölling, who interprets the tunnels as an inversion of the narrative of imperial conquest:

it is not Europeans who explore, name, map, and thereby take hold of Canada [in the tunnels]. At Vimy Ridge it is rather Canadians who investigate and record Canadian history. In a gesture similar to Walter Allward’s memorial, Jane Urquhart’s historical novel *The Stone Carvers* bears witness to the traces of Canadian history in Europe. The novel thereby reminds its readers of the great extent to which Canadians actively influenced the history of the Old World. (316)

The idea that traces of Canada remain active in the Old World through the legacy of Canadian soldiers left behind in the tunnels is compelling, especially when reading the tunnels as counter-monuments to the European-influence of Allward’s design. As relics of the destruction of war, the counter-monuments in both *The Stone Carvers* and *The Wars* offer a kind of authenticity, “or at least remnants of it” that is absent from state-sponsored representations of the past (Urquhart 359). Moreover, like the Stained Glass Dugout, the tunnels encourage engagement from the viewer, thus resisting what Young describes as “the authoritarian propensity in all art that reduces viewers to passive spectators” (274). The counter-monuments in *The Wars* and *The Stone Carvers* encourage exploration, reflection, and even contain an element of danger, refusing to neutralize the violent contexts that they preserve. In essence, the ways in which the Stained Glass Dugout and the Vimy tunnels resist completion and sanitization characterizes them as memorials to the gaps or erasures that are absent from the historical record. Their forms also reinforce their preservation of gaps because their construction requires subtractive rather than
accretive action (to dig a trench or a tunnel one must remove, rather than add material). If these structures celebrate anything, they celebrate the wounds of history, the fragmentation of the masternarrative, and the demythologization of the hero figure.

“Always remember the bones,” Klara’s grandfather tells her, “They last the longest and explain the life history of people, monuments, sculpture” (54). It is possible to read *The Wars* and *The Stone Carvers* – in their remediations of official commemorative forms and their inclusion of counter-monuments that reverse the totalizing point of view of state-sponsored narratives – as novels that seek to recover the “bones” of the historical record that have been relegated to storage memory. Remediation in this sense represents a return to functional memory through frameworks that are relevant to the present-day contexts in which the novels are written. These narrative retellings of the negation of violence from the historical record confront the wounds that narratives of national solidarity inflict on the ordinary heroes of the war and then ignore. The attention these novels pay to people who are “heroes nonetheless” also expands traditional definitions of the war hero to include all theatres of war, and to include different kinds of personal and collective struggles. In *The Wars* and *The Stone Carvers*, it is not only soldiers who constitute “the fallen.” Falling and falls are stressed throughout these novels. In *The Wars*, we see Rowena’s fatal fall (16), the horse that falls on the boat while crossing the Atlantic (58), Robert’s fall on the same boat (62), and Mrs. Ross’s alcohol-induced fall at the church (47), and at the train station (64) as examples of such heroes. In *The Stone Carvers*, Klara’s fall from the ladder while carving Eamon’s portrait (322), Eamon’s fall from the sky (159), the moment Klara and Eamon fall in love when they fall on the ice “as if killed in combat” (35), the fallen chestnut tree on Klara’s property (159), and Allward’s monument that “falls from grace” when it is
forgotten by the very public it was created for (378) are equally significant deconstructions of the war hero.

The high diction of “the Fallen” traditionally used to represent the soldiers who died in combat is expanded in these novels to consider other casualties of war and struggles that occur beyond the traditionally recognized boundaries of the battlefield. Though many falls are endured in these novels, Findley and Urquhart also provide opportunities for ordinary heroes to rise into the realm of functional memory. Like the iron harvest that is still alive, burning and churning remnants of the past that resurface as material memory, the continued resurfacing of memory from new perspectives can act as a “shout of recognition” for readers of contemporary Canadian fictions about the First World War (Findley 197). Ultimately, then, these novels impose the burden of memory on the reader and remind us of our responsibility to “pay attention” (Urquhart 49, Findley 7).
Chapter 6: Conclusion

“Remembrance is more than honouring the dead. Remembrance is joining them – being one with them in memory. Memory is survival.”

Timothy Findley, Inside Memory 7

Timothy Findley asserts that, “more than honouring the dead,” memory functions as a form of communion between the past and the present through which the past lives on, or “survives.” The distinction Findley makes between honouring and remembering is paramount to understanding the production of literature, visual art, and scholarly work in Canada that has been produced in response to the First World War and that continues to proliferate in the present as I write this conclusion. To honour the dead is to displace living memory of the war onto inanimate objects such as monuments or souvenirs, or to render personal experiences of war into abstract concepts, allegorical symbols, and high diction. To remember, in contrast, is to bear witness to the tragedies endured by those who, as artist Frederick Varley puts it, were there to “see it and live it” (qtd. in Brandon Art or Memorial 19-20). In the case of the First World War in particular, to honour the dead is to invoke masternarratives about heroism, sacrifice, patriotic duty, and national independence whilst downplaying – or, in extreme cases, censoring – the darker realities of war.

In this dissertation, I set out to illustrate some of the dynamics at work in English-Canadian cultural memory of the Great War. I examine conflicting approaches to remembering and honouring this cataclysmic event in each chapter, identifying tensions between state-sponsored versions of war and personalized approaches to remembrance. These two paradigms
of memory – the state-centred paradigm and the paradigm of mourning – do not exist in isolation, but rather overlap in many ways, and it is these points of intersection that I analyze through my primary corpus of texts, consisting of exhibition catalogues, plays, and novels, in order to argue that memory requires repeated reinforcement and re-presentation in order to remain functional and vital within the contexts of the present. Findley’s quotation that I use as a point of entry into this conclusion aptly summarizes the struggles of representation and the dynamics of cultural memory that I expand upon in this study.

Contemporary English-Canadian authors engage in the process of remembering (as opposed to honouring) the Great War by constructing narratives that shift the focus from patriotic masternarratives to the unique experiences of ordinary individuals. In Mary’s Wedding and The Stone Carvers, epic poetry and enormous monuments fail to console the protagonists who mourn their romantic partners who died in the war. Nor can Robert Ross’s mother find comfort in the religious or jingoistic rhetoric disseminated in church, in high society circles of Rosedale, Toronto, or in iconic paintings honouring the fallen soldier for his martyrological sacrifice. Similarly, the Man in R.H. Thomson’s The Lost Boys must find his own way of remembering his uncles who died in the war because public vigils and traditional military paintings fail to resonate with his own experience of loss. To remember, according to contemporary English-Canadian authors, is to acknowledge the diversity of experience.

These distinctions between honouring and remembering are not contained to current reconsiderations of the First World War. During the conflict and in the years that immediately followed, a portion of the literary and artistic output in Canada demonstrated awareness of the contradictions between state-centred approaches to honouring the dead and the tragic realities
and aftermath of the conflict. The Canadian First World War poem, “The Monument” (1918), for example, clearly identifies the distinction that Findley would reiterate in his memoir more than seventy years later:

She stood in a city square;
Haggard she was, and worn and pale,
A thing of pity who once was fair;
Weeping about her, her children stood,
Voicing their wants in mournful wail –
Fatherless, homeless, starveling brood!

Above her an image of stone,
Stolid and chill, with rayless eyes
Looked down on the woman wan and lone –
Symbol of honour and vaunted deed
Such as a king triumphant buys,
Paying his price in hearts that bleed!

A poet who saw the two from afar
Looked and passed and wondered alone
Which was the symbol of savage war –
Woman and brood, or image of stone! (Anonymous, qtd. in Bates 30)

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186 See Introduction (pp.8-11) for early Canadian literary approaches to the First World War.
There are two ways in which “The Monument” is illustrative of the dynamic nature of memory. First, the poet juxtaposes the mourning mother in the first stanza with the “stolid” monument in the second stanza, positioning the individual reality of the woman in opposition to a public glorification of war that, as a “symbol of honour,” erases the mother’s personal experiences of loss, displacement, and economic hardship that are direct outcomes of the war. The empty, “rayless” eyes of the statue contrast the emotional impact of the “worn and pale” woman, reinforcing the disparity between state-sponsored forms of commemoration (bought by “triumphant king[s]”) and the personal paradigm of mourning.

A second aspect of the poem that strikes me as a significant commentary on the workings of cultural memory is that it is the poet who ruminates the contradiction between honouring and remembering. The poet also documents these observations through her/his artistic practice. Indeed, artists – poets, playwrights, painters, sculptors – play a vital role in sustaining cultural memory of the Great War in Canada; they “join” the dead by rethinking the legacy of the war through representational practices that facilitate affective connections to the past through methods that are motivated by empathy and responsibility.

This process of rethinking, retelling, and revisiting is the foundation upon which the main points of my dissertation – the dynamics of cultural memory, visual and verbal intersections, remediation, and the First World War – rest. Moreover, my examination of this process reveals that it is not a nostalgic return to the past, but rather a future-oriented revisionist impulse that is taking place in the immediate present. In her conclusion to Catching the Torch: Contemporary Canadian Literary Responses to World War I (2014), Neta Gordon suggests that perhaps the limited public acclaim Paul Gross’s film Passchendaele (2008) received was indicative of a developing “premise fatigue” in which Canadians had become overrun with revisionist histories.
of the First World War in a period of approximately ten years, so that new artistic endeavours failed “to produce anything more than a sense of déjà vu” (162). In the closing sentence to her book, Gordon predicts: “Paradoxically, as the centenary of the First World War approaches, those events themselves may have become a closed book” (171). Despite the numerous compelling observations that Gordon makes in *Catching the Torch*, this final prediction has proven to be inaccurate. Quite the contrary, the centennial of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014 has been met with a deluge of visual and literary texts that aim to revisit the past; this phenomenon has relentlessly gained momentum as centennial anniversaries continue to arise and, I suspect, will further continue to proliferate, (at the very least), for the next year as centennial anniversaries of the war draw to a close. In this conclusion, I focus on literary and artistic output that has been produced in the years 2014 and following. If Ian McKay and Jamie Swift’s *The Vimy Trap: Or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Great War* (2016) and Tim Cook’s *Vimy: The Battle and the Legend* (2017) are any indication of the multiple directions in which scholars are continuing to take histories of the First World War and its legacy—the former aiming to debunk the myth of what the authors refer to as “Vimyism”, the latter, as one critic describes it, “cautiously celebratory” of the nationalist mythology—then the possibilities for future projects remain plentiful.187 Equally significant, both books explicitly

acknowledge the significance of literary and visual art in the construction of Canadian cultural memory. McKay and Swift begin their reconsideration of Vimy with discussion of the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) collection and the 1919 Burlington House exhibition, accompanied by a photographic reproduction of Varley’s painting For What? Cook, in the second half of his book that focuses on the “legend” of Vimy, considers several artistic representations of Vimy Ridge, including Jane Urquhart’s The Stone Carvers, William Longstaff’s CWMF painting The Ghosts of Vimy Ridge (1931), and Walter Allward’s memorial. The prominence of art in Cook’s analysis leads one critic to assert that, “A large part of this book is a paean to the power of art” (Shaw). The fact that these recent studies draw on war art in general and the CWMF in particular suggests that scholars are beginning to take notice of the diversity of Canada’s war art collection, and I am optimistic that the art and its history will continue to receive further critical attention in the coming years.

Other examples of the timeliness and prominence of the First World War in Canadian cultural memory include productions of John Gray and Eric Peterson’s Billy Bishop Goes to War and Vern Thiessen’s Vimy that are currently being performed as part of the summer lineup at Soulpepper theatre in Toronto. In fact, in his online review of Soulpepper’s production of Vimy, Globe and Mail writer J. Kelly Nestruck acknowledges that Thiessen’s play is “up against a barrage of Canadian literature for the shelf and the stage that’s explored this war and the meaning of it.” A barrage indeed.188 According to Nestruck, Billy Bishop Goes to War is a more

188 The contemporary revisionist impulse is prominent in the visual arts as well. In Canada, recent exhibitions include the University of Calgary’s Forging a Nation: Canada Goes to War (22 Jan. 2014 – 7 April 2014) and Blackwood Gallery’s Signals in the Dark: Art in the Shadow...
successful play than 

*Vimy* because Gray and Peterson challenge the nation-building narrative and raise questions about what it means to be a hero in the context of war. Nestruck’s criticism of *Vimy* for its lack of dramatic conflict, despite expressing admiration for Thiessen’s efforts to represent a diverse Canadian population, identifies a desire among readers and viewers of contemporary Canadian literature and the arts for revisionist narratives.\(^{189}\)

In particular, I have identified the use of remediation as an especially productive concept and practice to describe the ways in which English-Canadian authors have approached official versions of the past through a revisionist lens. Remediation is an essential theoretical component that operates as a through-line for the dissertation as a whole, beginning with my description of exhibition catalogues as remediations of the exhibition event. This observation, which is central to the poetics of exhibition catalogues that I propose in chapter 3, has also allowed me to correct

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*of War* in Toronto (7 Jan. 2008 – 2 Mar. 2008). In the United States, the Getty Institute’s exhibition *World War I: War of Images, Images of War* (18 Nov. 2014 – 19 Apr. 2015) and the publication that accompanied the exhibition *Nothing But the Clouds Unchanged: Artists in World War I* (2014), are North American examples of recent attention to First World War art. Even more recently, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts exhibited *World War I and American Art* (Jan 2017 to 9 April 2017), which was reviewed in the *New York Times* “World War I – The Quick. The Dead. The Artists.” In Europe, the Imperial War Museum established the Centenary Partnership Program, involving thirty-seven countries in the production of over five hundred exhibitions and over seven hundred digital resources to be presented between 2014 and 2018.

\(^{189}\) Some examples of the revisionist contexts that have impacted re-imaginings of the First World War in Canadian art, literature, and scholarship include: a suspicion of masternarratives; an awareness of the fact that Canada’s reputation as a “peaceable kingdom” is complicated by our military endeavours; greater attentiveness to the fact that Canadian history is rife with exploitation, racism, and injustice and that more diverse and inclusive representations of Canada are needed; and a call to think beyond the national framework in ways that more accurately reflect the current age of globalization. Another recent example of an increasingly attention to revisionist histories is public reaction to the “Canada 150” celebrations. See, for example, Ryan McMahon’s “Why I Won’t be Attending Canada’s 150th Birthday,” in which the author asserts, “Celebrating Canada’s 150th birthday without taking a moment to reflect on the fact that it has been an overwhelmingly violent 150 years for Indigenous peoples in Canada isn’t just insensitive, it’s offensive.”
a neglected area of study in the field of book history and print culture by providing an extended
analysis of exhibition catalogues as literary objects worthy of critical analysis in their own right.
Moving forward from the literal, composite relationship of image and text in exhibition
catalogues, I trace remediation along a spectrum of representation towards a more metaphorical
representation of war art in contemporary English-Canadian plays and novels.

Remediation thus facilitates my study across genres by functioning as a conceptual tool
for examining visual and verbal intersections, making it possible to trace patterns,
incommensurabilities, and juxtapositions among media and their competing representations. In
contrast to existing scholarship, which has focused on remediation as “improving” previous
versions (Bolter and Grusin) or “stabilizing” cultural memory (Erll), I conclude that, at its most
effective, remediation operates as an act of intervention by deconstructing the original
representation and transforming it into an alternative counter-narrative. Indeed, my study offers
proof that rethinking remediation in terms of deconstruction can reveal the supplementary nature
of memory, precisely that the repeated invocation of a particular work of art may be indicative,
not of the stability of memory, but of an anxiety about the limitations of memory and
representation.

As previously mentioned, response to the limitations of memory and representation,
especially in the context of the First World War where living memory of the conflict is
diminishing, has been an artistic outpouring across a variety of media, which I argue, in the
broader context of memory studies, is indicative of a burgeoning third phase of the memory
boom. In Canada, the First World War remains a surplus of “missed opportunities, alternative
options, and unused material” residing in the realm of storage memory that is calling to our
authors, playwrights, visual artists, and scholars, demanding to be seen and heard. Two centennial exhibitions commemorating the outbreak of the First World War hosted by the Canadian War Museum provide apposite examples of the ways in which memory is being reconfigured in the present in order to bring the missed opportunities of storage memory to the forefront of the Canadian imagination.

*Transformations: A.Y. Jackson and Otto Dix* traces the careers of Canadian official war artist A.Y. Jackson and German official war artist Otto Dix, identifying key moments and developments in the artists’ styles through the display of over seventy paintings, prints, and drawings. Focusing on both artists’ landscape compositions, the dominant narrative of the exhibition was that Jackson’s and Dix’s experiences as soldier-artists during the First World War impacted the work they would produce for the rest of their careers. The second exhibition, *Witness: Canadian Art of the First World War*, included fifty-four works of art created by both official war artists of the Canadian War Memorials Fund program and by amateur soldier-artists. The artworks on display were organized into four thematic sections that were reproduced in the exhibition catalogue: Canadians at war, tools of war, landscapes of war, and ruins of war (6).

In general, these anniversary exhibitions are significant because they illustrate the relationship between media and memory in Canadian representations of the First World War and mounting public attention to Canada’s war art collection. They also indicate an increasing dependence on the material archive as a point of access to the past. As commemorative events that emphasize the value of cultural memory, the Canadian War Museum’s centennial exhibitions and their corresponding catalogues are notable because (as in the exhibition *Canvas*  

190 Aleida Assmann uses these terms to define her concept of storage memory, which exists in opposition to functional memory.
of War), they demonstrate a concerted effort on behalf of a state-sponsored institution to move beyond the limited scope of Paul Konody’s Art & War catalogue that documented the inaugural exhibition of CWMF work at Burlington House in 1919. This narrative shift represents an essential argument of this dissertation: that memory is dynamic and fluid. By presenting the work of an iconic Canadian artist alongside the work of an illustrious German artist, Transformations transcends the enemy/ally dichotomy that characterized early representations of the war to forge a transnational perspective, an approach that appropriately reflects a twenty-first century attention to globalization. The direction that Laura Brandon, curator of the exhibition, takes in Transformations reveals the possibilities that emerge when the past is revisited in order to produce re-tellings that reflect present-day concerns.

There is also revisionist potential in Witness. By presenting both official and unofficial representations of the war in unison, Brandon and Amber Lloydlangston deflate (although they do not dispel) the hierarchies of high art and low art, as well as professional and amateur forms of labour. The inclusion of unofficial artists in Witness brings to mind Giorgio’s observation in The Stone Carvers that “[t]here are artists everywhere that no one knows about” who, “even with the rats and the blood […] had to record experience” (357). The exhibit also prompts me to recall Rodwell, the soldier-artist in The Wars and his illustrations of hundreds of animals, with a single portrait of a human among them: Robert Ross “modified and mutated” so that he became “one with the others” (138). Like the intimate perspective offered by many of the drawings in Witness, Rodwell’s sketches reveal an effort on behalf of individual soldiers to retain a sense of humanity

191 However, by clearly identifying the artists of the exhibition as either an amateur or professional and by, in the foreword, describing the art in each category (soldier-artist or official artist) to serve different conceptual purposes, the curators, to some degree, maintain these distinctions and their affiliated value judgments.
and culture amidst the dehumanizing, chaotic violence of war. In doing so, these artists record memories of the war that maintain the diversity of experience and transcend the abstractions affiliated with honouring the dead.

Although it is important to acknowledge the strides made by the Canadian War Museum for its innovative approach to official history in the organizing narratives of these two anniversary exhibitions, it is also necessary to note the limitations of Transformations and Witness. In both shows, the emphasis on national identity remains at the forefront of the exhibition narrative; the impetus of Transformations, as described by Brandon, is to “illuminate the role of art in our understanding of war and national identity,” an all-too familiar narrative that brings together the origin stories of Canada’s coming-of-age in the war with the Group of Seven as purveyors of a distinctly Canadian identity, (which is rooted in their representation of “northern” Ontario landscapes) (6). While, at first glance, the exhibition attempts to overcome national affiliations by its transnational scope, closer investigation reveals just the opposite: the war art of A.Y. Jackson is deployed as evidence of an emergent national identity that operates to stabilize, rather than complicate, Canadian master-narratives about the Great War.

The curators of Witness are also unable to resist the Group of Seven and its nationalistic mythology; the exhibition includes works by Group members Jackson, Varley, Frank Johnston, and Arthur Lismer and readers are made aware of the presence of their art in the opening remarks of the catalogue’s introduction, coupled with a description of the exhibition and “its companion publication” as “encourag[ing] Canadians to reflect on the personal and national.

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192 The exhibition narrative even goes so far as to credit the Group of Seven’s depiction of shattered trees in general, and Lawren Harris’s painting North Shore, Lake Superior (1926) in particular, with inspiring the massive twin pylons that frame Allward’s monument at Vimy Ridge (Transformations 88-9).
reach of this epic event” (9). The prominence of the national framework in the controlling narratives of Transformations and Witness thus indicates a persistence of dominant ideas associated with representations of the First World War rather than a movement beyond these limited frameworks.

I am not suggesting that government-sponsored institutions should completely abandon the national narrative; I understand that these institutions exist, in part, to reinforce the imagined community of Canada. However, the insistence on romantic sentiment to represent the First World War a hundred years later is problematic because it is deployed at the expense of alternative narratives that warrant further attention and, to my mind, offer a more affectively engaging and provocative representation of war than the routine tale of heroic sacrifice. In my personal experience of visiting Transformations and Witness, the neglect of women war artists was a tangible absence in both exhibitions. Witness in particular presented many opportunities to incorporate the contributions of women artists into the exhibition and its narrative; however, the exhibition only included one CWMF-commissioned print by Dorothy Stevens. The artworks of other Canadian women artists employed by the CWMF, such as Mabel May, Catherine Armington, and sculptors Elizabeth Wyn Wood, Frances Loring, and Florence Carlyle, are notably absent, as are British artists commissioned by the CWMF, such as Clare Atwood, Anna Airy, and Flora Lion. Surely an exhibition that seeks to provide “unique and often intimate viewpoints [that] can help bring historical events to life” would benefit from representations
made by women artists in addition to the contributions made by their male counterparts (Witness 5).\textsuperscript{193}

The women’s art, such as Mabel May’s painting \textit{Women Making Shells} (1919) and Frances Loring’s sculpture \textit{Rod Turner} (1918-1919) reveal the breaking of important social conventions by depicting women performing what was traditionally seen as men’s work; the images are evocative of the character Klara in \textit{The Stone Carvers}, an alternative figure who demonstrates an aptitude for traditionally male-dominated forms of labour and resists the limitations of Victorian gender ideals. The representation of women’s contributions to the war effort – in the form of manual labour and artistic production – presents an opportunity to expand definitions of heroism – such as courage, strength, and perseverance – that are traditionally attributed to men. The paintings and sculptures depicting women at work in factories and performing agricultural tasks provide a counter-narrative to this stereotype. Focusing on representations of women’s labour in munitions factories, Susan Butlin describes the work of women artists as “concentrated upon expressing the strength, endurance, and dignity of labour itself rather than simply glorifying the war industry, as some other home front war artists did” (46). Indeed, the work of women war artists and their depictions of women’s contributions to the war effort (significantly, representations are often gender-ambiguous and emphasize the physical

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\textsuperscript{193} Natalie Luckyj’s exhibition catalogue \textit{Visions and Victories: 10 Canadian Women Artists 1914-1945} (1983) is an important example of scholarship that adopts a gendered approach to women’s contributions to Canadian culture during the time period of the two World Wars and the Great Depression. Catherine Speck’s \textit{Beyond the Battlefield} (2014) is another notable example. Covering the two world wars, Speck examines the work of sixty-two women artists from Allied countries.
\end{flushright}
strength of the figures) documents an important period in Canada’s socio-cultural and historical development that is in need of greater attention.¹⁹⁴

Not only did *Witness* neglect the contributions of women in general, but the exhibition also missed an opportunity to display the paintings and tell the fascinating story of the largely overlooked Canadian artist Mary Riter Hamilton who, upon being rejected by CWMF organizers, travelled to Europe on her own accord with sponsorship from the publishers of *The Gold Stripe* veteran’s magazine. Hamilton proceeded to spend three years (1919-1922) in France and Belgium, producing more than three hundred images of the aftermath of war.¹⁹⁵ This already impressive number of paintings becomes even more remarkable when one is reminded that A.Y. Jackson’s contribution of forty-five pieces was the largest contribution of war art by any CWMF artist (Brandon *Art or Memorial*? 19).¹⁹⁶ Hamilton is a fascinating figure who challenged the

¹⁹⁴ These erasures from official narratives also provide material for Canadian authors and playwrights to continue producing new narratives of otherwise neglected aspects of the war and its legacy in order to supplement the historical record. For example, recent novels about the First World War by Canadian authors, including Sharon Johnston’s *Matrons and Madams* (2015), Genevieve Graham’s *Tides of Honour* (2015), and P.S. Duffy’s *The Cartographer of No Man’s Land* (2013) are all written by women and all feature a woman as their leading protagonist, suggesting an interest among Canadian authors and reading audiences to know more about the roles women played during this period in Canada’s history.

¹⁹⁵ The publications *No Man’s Land: The Life and Art of Mary Riter Hamilton* (2017) by Kathryn Young and Sarah McKinnon, as well as Irene Gammel’s “Memory of St. Julien: Configuring Gas Warfare in Mary Riter Hamilton’s Battlefield Art” (2015) are examples of recent scholarly attention to Hamilton’s legacy and will hopefully prompt further interest in her contributions to Canadian First World War narratives and art. Dr. Gammel has also produced several exhibitions and given many talks on Hamilton; along with her research team, Dr. Gammel continues to produce new material about Hamilton and her work at the Centre for Modern Literature and Culture (MLC) at Ryerson University that is updated regularly on the MLC website: https://mlc.ryerson.ca/. Hamilton’s paintings are in the collection of Library and Archives Canada and many have recently been made available online at *Mary Riter Hamilton: Traces of War*.

¹⁹⁶ Tippett lists Jackson’s contributions as “thirty-five oil canvases,” which she still cites as the largest contribution of any official artist (4). Brandon does not specify what works of art are
oppressive gender boundaries that inhibited her career and legacy. In addition to Catherine Armington, Hamilton was the only other woman artist to paint the frontlines of the war and the only woman to do so in an unofficial capacity. Like Jackson’s *A Copse, Evening*, Hamilton’s depictions of the tragic aftermath of war, with a focus on landscape, offer a collection of raw images that provide insight into the war through the lens of remembrance rather than honour. Her story would have made a thought-provoking contribution to the *Witness* exhibition.

This is not to suggest that visuals arts or museum/gallery environments are unable to participate in the revisionist impulse that has been demonstrated by Canadian authors. Quite the opposite, Canadian artists have continued to produce compelling and provocative representations of the First World War which, in conjunction with the continued output of literary texts, testifies to the sustained significance of this event from a Canadian cultural perspective. Notable works of art produced during the centennial period that come to mind include Isla Burns’s sculpture *Raw Homage I*, which depicts a forest growing out of a First World War helmet – an image that I find to be an especially moving contemporary example of the regenerative potential of memory and evocative of the combination of human-made materials and the natural environment that form the Iron Harvest. Sarah Hatton’s installation *Detachment* also raises questions about memory and remediation. Hatton repurposes thousands of brass fasteners that were attached to the service records of Canadian First World War soldiers and arranges them to depict the night sky on the days following five battles in which Canadians played a significant role: Vimy Ridge, Ypres 1915, The Somme, Passchendaele and Ypres 1918. Hatton describes her work as creating “an immediate visual record of the human toll of the war” (Helmer). Using sky charts to create her included in her calculation; perhaps she is also including drawings and/or preliminary sketches in addition to oil canvases.
compositions, Hatton explains that she chose to depict the day following the battles because she “wanted the focus to be on the moment the fighting stopped” (Helmer). By remediating helmets into vessels that grow trees and service pins into star charts, Burns’s sculpture and Hatton’s installation underline the repurposing function of remediation that allows the artist to generate new meanings and interpretations of the war by changing the signifying properties and/or use value of the original object.¹⁹⁷

![Figure 6.1](image)

**Figure 6.1. Kristan Horton. *Drawing a History of the First World War*, Disc 1. 2008-2011, graphite on Hahnemühle paper, 92 x 92cm. Private collection of the artist.**

¹⁹⁷ Other recent examples of multi-generic artistic production in Canada include Frank Davey’s *Pte Albert Brown’s Erasure Poems*, which combines postcards, photographs, and drawings sent from France and Belgium during the First World War. Sean Howard’s *The Photographer’s Last Picture* (2016), which includes poems inspired by images from *Collier’s Photographic History of the European War*, is an international example of the increasing tendency of artists and authors to incorporate various media into their texts.
The most poignant example of remediation and memory in contemporary First World War art that I have encountered to date is Kristan Horton’s series of graphite drawings entitled Drawing a History of the First World War (fig. 6.1 and fig. 6.2). Horton’s inspiration for the project came from an audiobook (which is itself a remediation) of British historian John Keegan’s non-fiction text, The First World War (1998), which Horton proceeded to listen to and remediate into eight spiral images. Described by the artist as “[a]n attempt to visually accumulate” Keegan’s text, each drawing begins as a circular disc filled with images and scenes that spiral outwards. The drawings in the series move from tidy, clearly demarcated boundaries in the first image to a final image in which the spiral movement is barely discernable and is extremely chaotic in comparison to the first. In this final disc, boundaries are transgressed, lines and images overlap, spatial divisions are permeated. In essence, Horton’s series of drawings increasingly complicate and transcend boundaries, bringing together form and content as a means of resisting any tidy versions of war. As images blend into one another, they leave the impression of an overwhelming accretion of an intricately rendered inventory of visual text. Bullets, skulls, crosses, corpses, flags, statues, buildings, documents, children, sheet music, boats, lighthouses, and agricultural scenes form a cumulative model that resists both a central focal point and being read as a single, unified whole.

198 This quotation is cited from Horton’s website: http://www.kristanhorton.com/kgh2008ww1.html. Horton also discussed his series Drawing a History of the First World War in an interview recorded by the MacLaren Art Centre in Barrie, Ontario. It can be accessed online at the following address: http://maclarenart.com/podcast.
If the Canadian War Museum’s centennial exhibitions show the potential for state-sponsored institutions to participate in the continued dialogue regarding cultural memory of the First World War from alternative perspectives, then Horton’s series *Drawing a History of the First World War* is one example of what the fulfillment of this potential could look like. I read Horton’s work as a metaphor for storage memory and the archive; the cumulative model of his series demonstrates the necessity of narrative in the construction of memory. “We are not human without narrative,” Thomson reminds us, (“Never Not Narrative” 327). Indeed, the narratives of both Thomson’s and Horton’s works reveal the ways in which the material archive can be visually over-stimulating, but Horton also shows us that it cannot be contained in its entirety. There are always more “missed opportunities” waiting to be discovered. Most significantly,
Horton *reverses* the process of remediation I have been considering in this dissertation by translating a verbal representation of the war into a visual medium. Just as cultural memory can oscillate between the realms of functional memory and storage memory, Horton’s work demonstrates that trans-medial representation is also not unidirectional. Beyond identifying one more direction for future studies of remediation and war, what is striking about Horton’s representation of the First World War is the way in which his use of remediation throws into high relief one of the key arguments I have been posing in this dissertation: that, contrary to popular consensus among scholars of media who view remediation as reinforcing the original work of art, remediation also holds the potential to operate as a critical intervention by reconfiguring the representation it invokes, thereby creating a supplementary relationship between image and text. This relationship is both an accretion of knowledge and a testament to the limitations of media (hence, their need for supplementation). As Robert Grusin argues in his essay “Radical Mediation,” “mediation operates not by neutrally reproducing meaning or information but by actively transforming human and nonhuman actants, as well as their conceptual and affective states” (130). Indeed, there is nothing neutral in any of the remediations discussed in this dissertation; in each case I have provided, the transformation of a visual representation functions as a commentary on the dominant narrative of the war, though some examples are more “radical” than others.

It is by way of remediation that I hope to advance the study of visual and verbal intersections in literary studies by paying more attention to the productive tensions that emerge in the struggle of representation between history and individuals, the eyewitness and the archive, remembering and forgetting, in order to rethink Canadian cultural memory of the Great War in the twenty-first century with a focus on media. My examination of English-Canadian
representations of the First World War in exhibition catalogues, plays, and novels reveals the potentially diverse approaches to constructing cultural memory of this epic event, but recent developments such as Horton’s drawings and the continued production of literary and scholarly texts that have proliferated since the centennial of the outbreak of the conflict indicate one thing for certain: as far as the book of Canada’s words, deeds, and art is concerned, the chapters on the First World War remain wide open.
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