SHAKESPEARE AS WAR MEMORIAL: REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION IN THE GREAT WAR

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War memorials have long been regarded as the most visible form of Great War commemoration practices.[1] Whether through public memorial or private grave, the First World War has been fixed in collective memory for its numerous dead. The word 'remembrance' is inextricably associated, at least in the collective imagination of many European and Commonwealth countries and the US, with the poppy and 11 November. Commemorating the First World War is often equated with remembering the dead. As public sites of mourning, Sir Edward Lutyens's Monument to the Missing of the Somme at Thiepval and his Cenotaph in Whitehall contrast with the private space of the soldier's regular slab, on which very little room is left for a personalized inscription.[2] The private space of commemoration is reduced to a line or two – while the public rite of enforcing the same gravestone for all soldiers enacts a communal practice of remembrance.[3] War memorials, as Jay Winter has argued, can be read as sites of both memory and mourning, places where collective grief and individualized remembrance are materially located.[4] Whether public, as the Somme memorial at Thiepval, or private, as soldiers' graves, war memorials and war cemeteries together give form to a material culture of Great War commemoration which is literally linked to a fixed, permanent, singular location.

It has not been sufficiently stressed that the materiality of Great War commemoration and its remembrance rites stretches beyond sculpture, architecture, gardens of remembrance and the iconological programmes of communal or private funereal art and that war memorials for the dead of the Great War began to appear in the form

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[1] The seminal study on First World War memorials is Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995). For a very useful survey of the interest aroused by war memorials in both Fine Art and History Studies and its continuing growth in the last thirty years, see Catherine Moriarty, 'The Material Culture of Great War Remembrance', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34 (1999), 653–62, and John Stephens, 'Memory, Commemoration and the Meaning of a Suburban War Memorial', *Journal of Material Culture*, 12 (2007), 241–61. See also John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ, 1994); William Kidd and Brian Murdoch, eds., *Memory and Memorials: The Commemorative Century* (London, 2004); William Logan and Keir Reeves, eds., *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage'* (London, 2009); Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer, eds., *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space* (Durham and London, 2004); and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Places of Commemoration: Search for Identity and Landscape Design* (Washington, DC, 2001).

[2] Tim Skelton and Gerald Gliddon, *Lutyens and War Memorials* (London, 2008) includes useful images of the Somme memorial at Thiepval (p. 137), the Whitehall Cenotaph (p. 44), the Cross of Sacrifice in its central position at Villers-Bretonneux (p. 155) and the standard headstone for Imperial soldiers (p. 110).

[3] The Imperial War Graves Commission (today the Commonweath War Graves Commission) regulated that all officers and soldiers should have the same gravestone to prevent display of differences in wealth or religion in war cemeteries. This official stone allowed some space for the expression of private grief and personal remembrance and it could include a

of printed matter long before the end of the war itself.[5] Unlike architecture, sculpture or gardens, books are movable objects, not anchored to a fixed, permanent 'site' or unique *locus*. In spite of this, books, like crosses, needles and cenotaphs, can become sites of grief and mourning, portable war memorials that mix memory and commemoration into one single material practice, namely the commemorative volume, whose function is primarily but not exclusively to keep collective remembrance alive. In 1916, the celebrations for the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's death provided ample opportunity for transforming books into war memorials and, as I hope to show, Shakespeare the patriot, Shakespeare the soldier, who did his bit for the war effort by helping to collect funds for the Red Cross and the soldiers' huts run by the YMCA, also fuelled the material culture of First World War acts of remembrance. Any attempt at tracing the 'cultural biography' of Shakespeare's works cannot neglect the material practices of commemoration and remembrance triggered by the 1916 Tercentenary and the First World War.[6]

1. SHAKESPEARE AND THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF GREAT WAR COMMEMORATION

During the Tercentenary year, commemoration of Shakespeare's life and works was often linked to the war effort. Charity and commemoration became inextricable in matinées which were meant both to commemorate the playwright and collect funds for the Red Cross, the YMCA or the YWCA.[7] The celebrations also gave occasion to several volumes of Shakespearian interest. The official commemorative volume, *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare*, edited by Israel Gollancz, the Honorary Secretary of the Shakespeare Tercentenary Committee, is presented in its preface as a replacement memorial, 'a worthy Record of the widespread reverence for Shakespeare as shared with the English-speaking world by our Allies and Neutral States'.[8] For Gollancz, this book would have to do in lieu of a true, real memorial, since the war put an end to plans for building the truly 'fitting memorial' for Shakespeare, the projected National Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in London, which Shaw, Barrie, Jones, Pinero and many other playwrights had actively campaigned for.[9] The proceedings from the sale of the book, Gollancz advanced as he closed the preface, would be devoted to an annual volume of

chosen religious symbol such as a cross. Relatives had to accept that the bodies of soldiers, even after death, belonged to the Army and personal grief could not be displayed through an individual's personalized monument. Any attempt to individualize the dead had to be confined within the standard rectangular slab with rounded top that fills war cemeteries with regular, identical rows of gravestones. See, for instance, Hooge Crater Cemetery in Skelton and Gliddon, *Lutyens*, p. 109.

4 Winter, *Sites of Memory*; Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London, 2006).

5 Samuel Hynes, in his seminal study on the First World War and English culture, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London, 1992, first published 1990), is aware of the existence of a trend of 'monument-making in the publishing world' (p. 277) but is slightly dismissive about its importance or significance. He mostly examines 'monumental' works of history, memoirs by politicians and army leaders but ignores the kind of war memorials discussed here. In 'Personal Narratives and Commemoration' (in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 205–20), he doubts if diaries, journals and letters are also war memorials and concludes that they contribute to the construction of myth rather than history.

6 For the notion of the 'cultural biography' of objects, see Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 64–91.

7 Sir James Barrie was actively involved in two of these charity galas which capitalized on the Tercentenary celebrations. On 14 April 1916, a skit by Barrie, *Shakespeare's Legacy*, was performed at Drury Lane Theatre as part of a 'war matinée' organized by Olga Nethersole for the YWCA. The proceedings were to provide hostels, canteens and restrooms for 'girl shell makers' (*The Daily Mirror*, 14 April 1916, p. 6). A month earlier, on 7 March, Barrie had also contributed to a special matinée in aid of the YMCA held at the Coliseum, in which his *Macbeth* film parody, *The Real Thing at Last*, was premiered.

8 Israel Gollancz, ed., *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare* (London, 1916), p. viii.

9 See Geoffrey Whitworth, *The Making of a National Theatre* (London, 1951).

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Shakespeare studies, thus perpetuating the culture of commemoration and remembrance triggered by the Tercentenary.

The Tercentenary also became an occasion for books of Shakespearian interest that use their preface to remember those at war. Charlotte Carmichael Stopes felt the urge to produce a book that would appear on what she herself calls 'the commemoration year' and, failing to produce the book, she collected several papers, 'new and old,' into a volume entitled *Shakespeare's Industry*.[10] In the Preface, Stopes spares a thought for remembrance, turning her commemorative volume into a site of memory in which First World War soldiers are remembered:

> if this prove my last effort in the *field*, I do it full of the desire to help to keep Shakespeare's *flag flying* during the commemoration year, while so many of my fellow-students are torn away from their studies, to defend 'This blessed spot, this earth, this realm, this England'. In their names and my own I dedicate my work to Shakespeare.[11]

If Gollancz offers his book of homage as a surrogate memorial for the fitting memorial the war has precluded from being erected, Stopes makes use of the Shakespeare Tercentenary to create a site of remembrance for the scholar turned soldier and – although she conspicuously elides the subject – the glorious dead. The tone of her dedication acquires here military and war-like resonances – 'my last effort in the *field*' 'to keep Shakespeare's *flag flying*' – more redolent of medieval jousting and *Henry V* than evocative of the trenches and the muddy fields of Flanders. Like other war memorials, Stopes's Preface does what Samuel Hynes says that monuments do, i.e. 'to affirm the value and significance of the war's sacrifices'.[12] Stopes's metaphor – 'to keep Shakespeare's flag flying' – evokes both the patriotic gesture of a bystander – waving Shakespeare's flag to see her fellow-students off to the front – and the gallop of the warrior scholar that carries Shakespeare's ensign on the critical battlefield. Shakespearian scholarship joins here the war effort and makes room for propaganda as Stopes helps to glorify the war and contributes to the number of war memorials that appeared at the home front before 1918.[13] Both Gollancz's volume of homage to Shakespeare and Stopes's collection of essays nod gently towards the war in their prefaces, and become what Jay Winter would call 'an act of citizenship' and a form of 'collective affirmation in wartime', but their central aim is to commemorate the Bard rather than to remember and mourn the dead.[14]

There were, however, other Shakespearian books published during or after the war which openly presented themselves as war memorials. Three books of Shakespearian interest that can be read as sites of memory and mourning will be discussed here and in the process I hope to show how Shakespeare was recruited to help in the erection of a war memorial. These books are an edition of the Complete Works, a critical monograph and a collection of letters from the Western Front by a Shakespearian actor. Taken together, these three books – and First World War memorials – show three different ways of conducting a close encounter with Shakespeare, even though they constitute cultural practices far removed from the close reading of the words on the page.

II. SHAKESPEARE AND BOOKS AS SITES OF MEMORY

In 1916, four days after the Battle of Jutland, the death of the Secretary of State for War Lord Kitchener when HMS *Hampshire* struck a mine and sank off the Orkney Islands on 5 June left Britain in a state of shock. The unexpectedness of the news was soon followed by an intense drive to mourn his death. Kitchener's revolutionary scheme of voluntary recruitment – Kitchener's 'New Army' as it was called – was enormously

[10] Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, *Shakespeare's Industry* (London, 1916). Stopes's book was widely reviewed and won the Rose Mary Crawshay award (*The Athenaeum*, May 1916, p. 220).

[11] *Shakespeare's Industry*, p. viii. My italics.

[12] Hynes, *A War Imagined*, p. 275.

[13] For memorials and commemoration before the end of the war see Winter, *Sites of Memory*, pp. 80–2.

[14] Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 80.

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successful. His personal involvement in the scheme is clear from the famous poster bearing his portrait and a finger pointing at the viewer with the slogan 'BRITONS [Kitchener] WANTS YOU. JOIN YOUR COUNTRY'S ARMY! GOD SAVE THE KING.'[15] Although often despised by the regular, professional army men, it was Kitchener's 'Falstaff's Army' that manned the trenches of the Western Front and filled the lists of casualties. Kitchener's death was not only lamented but immediately commemorated – one of the earliest acts of remembrance and public mourning for Lord Kitchener was in fact a book. Kitchener's body was never found, so there could be no official site of mourning for the national hero but, as Moriarty points out, memorials can function as substitute graves.[16] Only a week after the shipwreck of HMS *Hampshire*, the *Illustrated London News* produced a special memorial number dedicated to Lord Kitchener (13 June 1916).[17] The Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund, founded by the Lord Mayor of London a month after his death, was unable to provide a ceremonial burial, but soon produced the *Lord Kitchener Memorial Book*, a life tribute profusely illustrated with photographs, adorned with personal memories of those who knew him well and displaying after the frontispiece a seating plan for the cabinet with the signatures of all the members of the British goverment.[18]

The *Lord Kitchener Memorial Book* was not the only book memorial in honour of this controversial war hero. In January 1917, Sir Sidney Lee, as Chairman of the Kitchener Souvenir Committee of the League of the British Empire, presented Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, with copies of Shakespeare's Complete Works. The princess, in turn, presented the same copies to men who had been blinded at the front – luckily, for the soldiers, the act of presentation included two Shakespeare recitations by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson (*The Times*, 25 January 1917). The presentation took place at St Dunstan's Hostel on 24 January and the event had been previously announced by *The Times* on 22 January. This was not the only occasion on which copies of Shakespeare's works were distributed to disabled veterans, as *The Times* records a similar event taking place at the Royal Star and Garter Home on 26 January (*The Times*, 27 January 1917). Once again, Forbes-Robertson recited to the men and Sidney Lee gave a speech. The book was clearly conceived as a joint memorial to Shakespeare and Lord Kitchener. The copy at the Imperial War Museum has pasted into its inside cover a letter from Buckingham Palace conveying the approval of His Majesty the King for the gift, for the idea of celebrating the memory of Lord Kitchener and for 'the form which it is to take'.[19] The volume opens with a biographical introduction, unsigned, but possibly an abridged version of Sidney Lee's biography of Shakespeare. The introduction is followed not with a critical introduction to the plays, but with an essay on Shakespeare and Bacon by Sir Henry Irving. The plays appear next, followed by the poems. The volume is rounded off with an Index to Characters in Shakespeare's Dramatic Works and a glossary.

Blinded soldiers were not occasional casualties. The use of gas in the Western Front rendered the blind soldier a common war casualty. Sir John Singer Sargent's *Gassed* (1919) shows blinded soldiers in a line staggering to a dressing station while many more lie on the ground with their eyes hidden behind bandages.[20] Sargent's monumental oil painting and Wilfred Owen's 1917 poem, 'Dulce

[15] The poster is Catalogue no. IWM PST 2734 in the Imperial War Museum Art collection. It can be accessed at www.iwmcollections.org.uk/qryArt.php. It can also be viewed at http://vads.ahds.ac.uk.

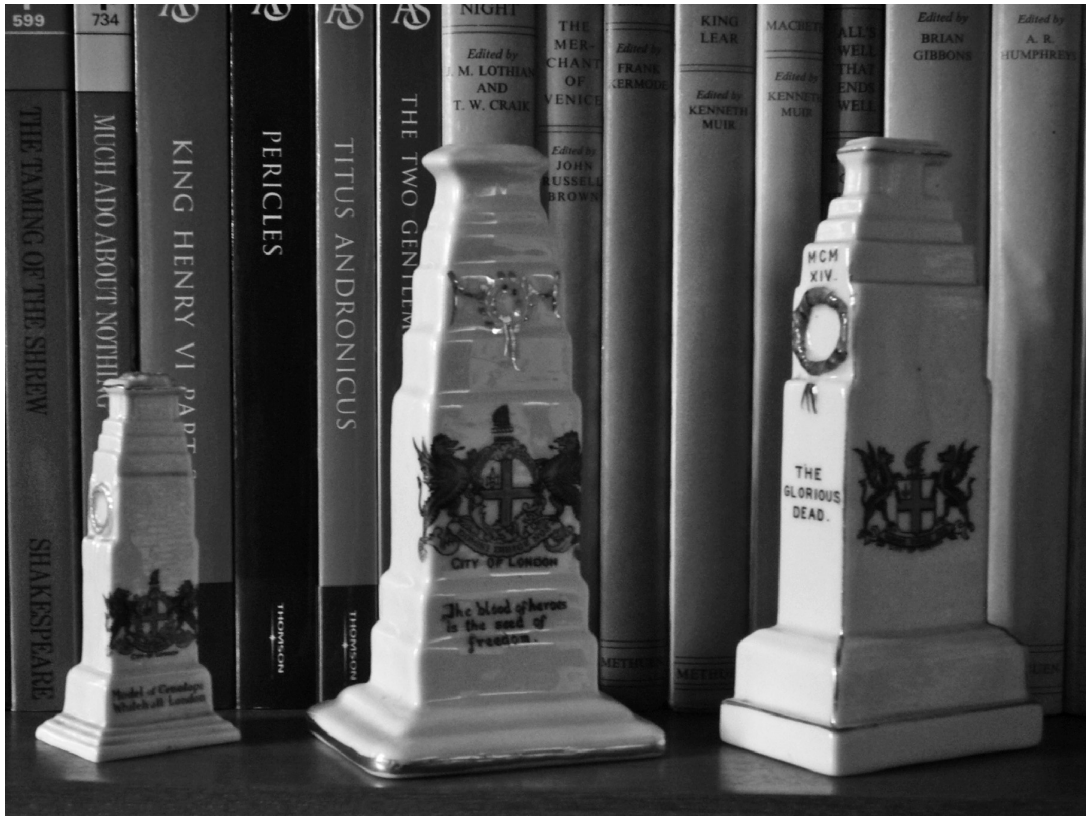
[16] Moriarty, 'Material Culture', p. 653.

[17] See www.iln.org.uk/iln_years/year/robinhunt/huntspecialsp72.htm.

[18] Sir Hedley Le Bas, *The Lord Kitchener Memorial Book* (London, New York and Toronto, 1916).

[19] *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare with Biographical Introduction* (London, 1916). IWM Catalogue no. 86/784. As the date on the king's letter is 27 October 1916, it is quite possible that this edition of Shakespeare's Works was amongst the first Kitchener memorials conceived and produced.

[20] This large oil painting was one of several paintings commissioned by the Imperial War Museum and it is now part of its permanent art collection. See Catalogue no: IWM ART 1460 at www.iwmcollections.org.uk/qryArt.php or at http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/. See also Eric Henri Kennington, *Gassed and Wounded* (1918), Catalogue no. IWM ART 4744.



14. Crested china models of Sir Edwyn Lutyens's Cenotaph in Whitehall bearing the arms of the City of London.

et decorum est' ('All lame, all blind') underline the magnitude of the effects of mustard gas. The numbers of gassed men who suffered impaired vision at the front must have been so considerable that charity organizations multiplied not only in Europe but in America – a Franco-American organisation, 'The Committee for Men Blinded in Battle', collected funds through charity peformances in the US and kept a home in Paris, known as 'Le Phare de France', for the instruction of blinded soldiers.[21]

Beyond its surreal, Kafkaesque implications, the gift of Shakespeare's Complete Works to blinded soldiers offers an example of how the plays acquired a new 'social life' in the context of war commemoration.[22] Divested of its use as text, as drama, as literature, the Complete Works could be equated with the 'crested' china souvenirs manufactured in Staffordshire, meant no doubt to rest on the mantelpieces of British homes. If originally these pieces of porcelain bric-à-brac bearing the coat of arms of the town in which they were bought mainly consisted of miniature pots, jugs, mugs, vases, plates, teapots, cats and cottages, the war put them to use as commemorative objects. Minute models of Lutyens's Whitehall Cenotaph (Illustration 14) were soon produced and bought in large quantities.[23] Like a crested model of the

[21] For the activities of the Committee and its home in Paris see the History collection at University of Wisconsin Digital Collections: http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.

[22] Appadurai, *Social Life of Things*.

[23] Lutyens's Cenotaph was a favourite subject for crested china manufacturers. The fashion for crested china during the First World War has been surveyed by Barbara Jones and Bill Howell in their study of popular art, trench art and

Cenotaph bearing the London coat of arms or a crested bust of Kitchener with the arms of Belgium and the Triple Entente, the function of the Kitchener Souvenir Shakespeare is that of an object to be displayed – possibly also on the mantelpiece – rather than a book to be read. As such, Shakespeare's works are divested of their primary, original function and become Baudrillard's 'l'objet pur', an object which has been deprived of its use and *raison d'être* and has become an item in a collection.[24] In *Le Système des objets*, Baudrillard defines 'l'objet pur' in contradistinction to 'l'objet practique', which has its social function intact. Instead, 'l'objet pur, dénué de fonction, ou abstrait de son usage, prend un status strictement subjectif'.[25] The pure object is deprived of its social function and 'devenu relatif au sujet' and it acquires a new function, the function 'd'être possédé'.[26] Like Baudrillard's *objet pur*, the Kitchener Souvenir Shakespeare becomes, in the hands of blinded veterans, an object whose function is that of being possessed.

It is tempting to enquire into the motivations of the League of the British Empire and its Kitchener Souvenir Committee – why Shakespeare? Why not Chaucer or Milton? Why not the Bible? The topicality of the Tercentenary was doubtless behind the choice, but very conveniently so, as other options might have proved unsuitable. The Bible would not have been a wise choice. As the tense struggle between Sir Edward Lutyens and others such as Sir Reginald Blomfield indicates, there was a conflict between those who, like Lutyens, wanted to erase Christian symbols from memorials and acts of war commemoration and those who, like Blomfield, staunchly advocated the presence of the cross.[27] At the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, Blomfield's standard Cross of Sacrifice (which can still be found today in many British towns and villages, as well as in many small, rural church graveyards) stands in stark contrast to the absence of religious iconography in Lutyens's War Stone or Great Stone of Remembrance, a rectangular stone 3.5 m long and 1.5 m high, surrounded by three steps.[28] There is no religious symbolism either in the pure, sober geometry of Lutyens's Whitehall Cenotaph. Shakespeare's works provided a non-religious symbol of national glory, a useful equivalent of Lutyens's abstract and secular replacement of Christian symbols with unadorned Portland stone and entasis. At the same time, what Shakespeare's Complete Works could provide in 1916 was the soothing, healing effect of 'the turn back to the familiar'.[29] For Jay Winter, mourning practices of the First World War often resorted to classical, Romantic and Christian sources because 'in these traditions contemporaries found the language in which they could mourn'.[30] Unlike 'modern memory', Shakespeare still enjoyed a capacity to heal. The Complete Works offered a convenient, non-religious but traditional site of mourning for the multi-creed disabled soldiers of an imperial army.

If the Kitchener Souvenir Complete Works enacts a public ritual of collective mourning and remembrance, Shakespeare could also be the vehicle for the expression of private grief. In 1916, the Shakespeare Head Press published in Stratford a volume of Shakespearian criticism by Lacy Collison-Morley entitled *Shakespeare in Italy*, which attracted enough attention to be

souvenirs, *Popular Arts of the First World War* (London, 1972). Many of these souvenirs, which included shells and soldiers' caps, are still auctioned today, indicating their abiding popularity.

[24] Jean Baudrillard, *Le Système des objets* (Paris, 1968), p. 121.

[25] Baudrillard, *Le Système*, p. 121.

[26] Baudrillard, *Le Système*, p. 121.

[27] For the clash between the diverging ideological programmes of Lutyens and Blomfield and the role played in this by the Imperial War Graves Commission, see Gavin Stamp's study *The Memorial to the Missing of the Somme* (London, 2006). The controversy became so much a matter of public interest that in 1920 there was a parliamentary debate at the House of Commons on the Commission's ban of religious symbols.

[28] See the chapter dedicated to 'The War Stone' in Skelton and Gliddon, *Lutyens*, pp. 23–35.

[29] Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, 'Agents of Memory: How Did People Live between Remembrance and Forgetting?', in *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present*, ed. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost (Cambridge, 2005), p. 182.

[30] Winter and Prost, 'Agents of Memory', p. 182. See also Winter, *Sites of Memory*, pp. 2–5 and pp. 223–9.

prominently reviewed in *The Athenaeum*.[31] This study of Shakespeare's afterlife in Italy since before Voltaire to the end of the nineteenth century was turned by the author into a private war memorial that commemorates the death of his brother in the Western Front at the battle of Loos. The dedication is self-explanatory:

> ***To the memory of my brother***
>
> ***LIEUT.-COLONEL***
>
> ***HAROLD DUKE COLLISON-MORLEY***,
>
> ***soldier and artist***,
>
> ***The Buffs, commanding the 19th London Regt., T. F. (St. Pancras Battalion), who was killed at the head of his men, after being twice wounded, just before reaching the German trenches in the attack on Loos on the 25th September, 1915, aged 37***.
>
> ***Men must endure***
> ***Their going hence, even as their coming hither***.
> ***Ripeness is all***.
>
> ***An enthusiastic Shakespeare lover, he had maintained ever since the South African war that Henry V was the ideal 'soldier's play'. A copy of it, which he had carried with him throughout the present campaign, was found upon him after his death. Only five days before he was killed he wrote: 'There is no hardship or terror or doubt that happens out here that Shakespeare does not touch on or give advice for.'***

With this dedication in a book published in the tercentenary year, 1916, Lacy Collison-Morley turns a volume of Shakespearian criticism into a personal, private memorial. A brother's sorrow (and pride) for his brave sibling is transmogrified, by virtue of being appended to a piece of criticism on Shakespeare, into a permanent site of both memory and mourning. At the same time, by virtue of the materiality of printed matter, private grief is released from the domain of intimacy and becomes public. Shakespeare – or rather his afterlife in Italy – becomes part of a commemoration practice that translates transient feeling into war memorial. A few yards away from Holy Trinity Church and Shakespeare's grave, the Second World War Memorial in Stratford-upon-Avon's garden of remembrance (see Illustration 15) displays an inscription from what Collison-Morley's brother called the ideal 'soldier's play': 'From this day to the ending of the world, but we in it shall be remembered, we few, we happy few, we band of brothers' (taken from *Henry V*, 4.3.58–61). Collison-Morley also resorts to a Shakespearian quotation, 'Men must endure . . . Ripeness is all' (*King Lear*, 5.2. 9–11), to mourn and cope with grief.[32]

Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Duke Collison-Morley is buried at the Dud Corner Cemetery in Loos. Unlike Lutyens's Cenotaph, the memorial at Loos sports a Christian Cross – Blomfield's Cross of Sacrifice – but the memorial also extends all round the walls of the cemetery where the names of the 20,000 soldiers who were missing in action during the Battle of Loos are inscribed and remembered.[33] Here the memorial closely recalls the pages of a book, as the names of the soldiers are carved on huge rectangular stone slabs placed on the inside walls of the cemetery.[34] These slabs, covered in written characters from top to bottom, create an uncanny sight, as if pages from a book had been carefully torn out from a spine and pasted on the walls. The Loos memorial shares with books the materiality of the written word. A visitor so inclined could read the names of the missing moving from slab to slab as one moves from page to page when reading a book. The materiality of Great War commemoration, by virtue of its oscillation between the public and the private, the collective

[31] Lacy Collison-Morley, *Shakespeare in Italy* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1916). See review in *The Athenaeum*, November 1916, p. 409. I must record here my gratitude to Ton Hoenselaars for drawing my attention to the existence of this monograph-cum-war memorial.

[32] Quotations from Shakespeare have been taken from the New Cambridge Shakespeare editions of the plays.

[33] For a view of the Cross of Sacrifice at Dud Corner Cemetery, see for instance www.cwgc.org/CWGCImgs/dud%20corner2006.JPG.

[34] For the inner walls of Dud Corner Cemetery and the Loos Memorial see http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Dud_Corner_and_the_Loos_Memorial.

15. The Second World War Memorial in Stratford-upon-Avon's garden of remembrance with quotation from *Henry V*, 4.3.

and the individual, favours these transformations of books into portable war memorials and of war memorials into stone books.

In 1926, eight years after the Armistice, Vera Leslie, wife of Shakespearian actor Henry Doughty, also known as 'Gunga Din' – presumably for his dexterity at entertaining the troops with recitations of Kipling's famous poem about an Indian water-bearer – presented the Imperial War Museum with a copy of a book which strangely inhabits a realm astride the public and the private: *An Actor-Soldier. Extracts from his Letters, 1914–1919. Henry Doughty ('Gunga Din')*.[35] Doughty enlisted in 1914, at the outbreak of war, long before conscription was enforced, and was allocated to Horse Transport in an artillery company. In his earliest letters he writes: 'Work is the word. We start at 6 tomorrow. I think our "Falstaff's army" will really do quite well with discipline. They are much better as soon as they get into uniform' (p. 18). A female pony allocated to his unit seems deranged and when he notices that the soldiers have plaited hay in her mane, he christens her 'Ophelia' – a name the soldiers do not relate to and replace with 'Amelia' or 'Camelia' (pp. 34–6). Doughty begins to give recitations early in the war and continues to take part in concerts arranged by the YMCA (p. 44). Together with Kipling's 'Gunga Din' and other poems, his repertory includes 'Seven Ages', 'St Crispin' and scenes from *Othello*. He continues to perform throughout the Tercentenary Year, even though he is training to become an officer: 'The tests are pretty stiff – foot-drill, riding, driving and supply. We did the "Othello" scene last Sunday and it made quite a sensation' (p. 52). On Boxing Day 1916, Doughty recited from *Othello* again during a YMCA concert, this time, he says, 'in costume'.

[35] Henry Doughty, *An Actor-Soldier: Extracts from his Letters, 1914–1919. Henry Doughty, 'Gunga Din'* (London, *c.*1926?). IWM Catalogue No.: 11789.

The Allied Advance in 1918 finds him in the thick of the action, at the Ypres Salient, and he writes:

> I have been up to my new location in search of a site. The country is awful, indescribable. I had to go through one of the worst, I should think really the worst devastated of all. The whole countryside is pock-marked with shell holes and there are dozen of smashed–up tanks and aeroplanes. Scorched stumps of trees show what once were woods. If I were an artist, I could paint a weird picture of 'The Blasted Heath' for *Macbeth*. The approach is awful. My wagons will be up to their axles in mud. (p. 80)

The published volume of Doughty's letters ends with the following colophon, a printed memorial which bears a noticeable resemblance to the text of an epitaph:

> In Memory of
>
> Henry Doughty
>
> Actor and Soldier (1914–1919)
>
> Lieut. Horse Transport, R.A.S.C.
>
> Forgotten 1919–1922
>
> Passed away 27th November, 1922
>
> ≪THE REST IS SILENCE≫

Hamlet's famous and final words are quoted knowingly by Vera Leslie, a wife who presents herself, in the copy of the book donated to the Imperial War Museum, as 'the Writer's wife and Comrade in Art (Drama)'. The war could not silence the Shakespearian actor, but the return to civil life did. On a typescript note pasted onto the back cover of the Imperial War Museum copy, Doughty is described as an actor who before the war had 'an excellent position' and was 'connected with most of the London theatres'. He had been actor-manager of the 'Doughty Leslie' touring company. As a Shakespearian actor, he had performed at the Lyceum under Sir Henry Irving and also played secondary roles in the Shakespearian repertory company of Robert Taber and Julia Marlowe who toured in the US. The war allowed him to continue to perform but, the note tells us, 'From the time of his demobilisation to the date of his death, he could get no dramatic work.'

Doughty was one of many veterans who found it difficult to find employment after demobilization. The multiplicity of posters encouraging employers to take in veterans as employees testifies to this considerable social problem.[36] Unrest and riots occasioned by the masses of unemployed ex-service men were a feature of the postwar period.[37] Doughty found occasional work as a cinema actor, but in the six months prior to his death the only job he found was that of Father Christmas at Selfridges. After exposure to a heavy storm of rain and a brief illness, he died – possibly of Spanish fever. 'A slaughter by itself is too commonplace for notice' – writes Paul Fussell in *The Great War and Modern Memory* – 'When it makes an ironic point it becomes memorable.'[38] An actor voluntarily enlists, trains and becomes an officer, is willing to fight not only for 'King and country' but also for his national Bard, and survives the war after getting close enough to the Ypres Salient to describe it in detail as a set fit for *Macbeth*, but he fails to survive a London winter. The life and death of Henry Doughty, minor Shakespearian actor, becomes memorable through the irony of his death.

Henry Doughty's letters, which originally belonged to the realm of the individual, transgress that confinement when his wife publishes them, turning private correspondence into a war memorial. A book that has its origin in a personal, intimate exchange between man and wife, actor and

[36] For First World War posters that encouraged employers to employ veterans see IWM PST 13800, 13801, 13802 and 13803 at www.iwmcollections.org.uk/qryArt.php.

[37] On 19 July 1919, the very day London was celebrating Peace Day with marching troops parading in front of Lutyens's original Cenotaph, a riot in Luton ended with unemployed veterans setting fire to the Town Hall (Hynes, *A War Imagined*, p. 281) and the army had to be brought in to end the disturbances, resulting in Luton being occupied by military troops for several days (Neil Hanson, *The Unknown Soldier* (London, 2007, first published 2005), pp. 416–17). Commemoration and social unrest often took place in unison.

[38] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford, 1975), p. 31.

actress, becomes, by virtue of the materiality of its publication and presentation to the Imperial War Museum, a public site of memory and mourning. As the colophon suggests, the drive behind this war memorial is the desire to preclude oblivion: 'Forgotten 1919–1922'. The letters of Henry Doughty are not particularly literary – they simply encapsulate a syncopated narrative of the war years – but the act of publication places them in a public space that memorializes individual experience. If, as Baudrillard argues, 'Forgetting extermination is a part of extermination, because it is also the extermination of memory, of history, of the social',[39] Vera Leslie's printed memorial for her husband turns her into an 'agent of memory',[40] a 'social agent of remembrance',[41] and a solo 'memory activist',[42] who actively contributes to the shaping of cultural memory. The function of memorials is precisely to preclude oblivion, a feeling which tainted the report of an eye-witness at the Peace Conference in 1919. William Orpen, who had been, like Paul Nash and Wyndham Lewis, Official War Painter at the Front, was allowed to see the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in the Hall of Mirrors and his comment on such a crucial occasion was: 'The Army was forgotten. Some dead and forgotten, others maimed and forgotten, others alive and well – but equally forgotten.'[43]

'Forgotten 1919–1922' expresses the wish that the period of oblivion may be finite, of limited duration, but it also shapes Vera Leslie's memorial for her husband and fellow actor into what Samuel Hynes has called an 'anti-monument'. For Hynes, anti-monuments are 'monuments of loss' (loss of values, of a sense of order, of beliefs) and they testify to 'a sense of impoverishment' expressed in 'the language of disillusionment and rejection'.[44] Doughty's life is a story of hope abridged and disillusionment, not with the war as in the case of Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon and many others, but with the aftermath of a war supposedly fought to preserve civilization and the status quo.[45] Like Virginia Woolf's Septimus in *Mrs Dalloway*, he survives the war to be killed by the postwar, which makes it impossible to resume civilian life in the same terms as before the war. Leonard V. Smith has shown how First World War narratives often construe the soldier as victim and 'tragic hero'.[46] Doughty's epitaph rewrites the usual First World War tragic narrative and replaces it with a 'veteran as victim' narrative that links the end of the actor-soldier to Hamlet's death.

III. SHAKESPEARE AS *L'OBJET PUR* – THE CULTURAL BIOGRAPHY OF THE PLAYS

Reading these three books as war memorials shows how Shakespeare may crucially contribute 'to approach[ing] the history of collective remembrance from the angle of small-scale, locally rooted social action',[47] expanding thus our knowledge of the material practices of commemoration and the cultural history of the First World War. I hope to have shown (a) that war memorials in the shape of books appeared long before the end of the war itself; (b) that a study of the cultures of commemoration and remembrance which sprouted during and after the 1914–1918 war should take into account the function of books as portable war memorials and sites of mourning; and (c) that Shakespeare and his works played a substantial role in the material culture of Great War commemoration, partly because Shakespeare's

[39] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Shelia Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor, 1994, first published 1981), p. 49.
[40] Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, p. 173.
[41] Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 136.
[42] Carol Gluck quoted in Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 136.
[43] Quoted in Hynes, *A War Imagined*, p. 294.
[44] Hynes, *A War Imagined*, p. 307.
[45] For the contested role of 'disillusionment' in representations of the First World War and its texts (diaries and letters), see 'The Soldier's Story: Publishing and the Postwar Years', in Janet S. K. Watson's study of war as lived experienced versus war as memory, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 185–218.
[46] Leonard V. Smith, 'Narrative and Identity at the Front: "Theory and the Poor Bloody Infantry"', in *The Great War and the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter, Geoffrey Parker and Mary R. Habeck (New Haven and London, 2000), pp. 132–65; p. 135.
[47] Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 150.

16. Stratford-upon-Avon's First World War Memorial in its original location at the top of Bridge Street.

status as national poet was fuelled and enlarged by the celebrations of the 1916 Tercentenary of his death during the second year of the first world-wide conflict.

Shakespeare should naturally be part of the study of cultural memory and the dynamics of cultural transmission. If, as Assmann suggests, 'Cultural memory is at the furthest remove from individual memory',[48] by turning the works of Shakespeare into a memorial for a lost leader, a text read by a soldier in the trenches, or a play performed at the front, these encounters with Shakespeare transcend individual memory and enter the land of cultural memory. Assmann also distinguishes cultural memory from communicative or oral memory and from Halbwachs's collective, bonding memory. Unlike communicative memory, cultural memory 'encompasses the age-old, out-of-the-way, and discarded' and by contrast with collective memory, it 'includes the noninstrumentalizable, heretical, subversive, and disowned'.[49] Cultural memory is the closest we may ever be to Benjamin's ideal of history which is only available to a 'redeemed mankind' on Judgement Day: 'nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history'.[50] Messy, unruly, unstructured as it is, cultural memory ignores the discontinuities that challenge a unitary conception of human history and overcomes the fear that feeds Benjamin's vision of the angel of history.[51] Age-old, out-of-the-way, discarded and disowned by scholarship as these three Shakespearian war memorials might be, they have an important role to play in the cultural memory of the First World War.

[48] Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, 2006), p. 27.

[49] Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, p. 27.

[50] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London, 1999), p. 246. First published as *Schriften* (1955).

[51] Benjamin's angel of history, inspired by Paul Klee's painting 'Angelus Novus', is willing to face the past but caught in the stormy wind of history is inevitably pushed backwards into the future. The stormy wind blows from Paradise and is what we call 'progress' (Benjamin, 'Theses', p. 249). Our postcolonial, postmodern view of history partly stems, according to Modris Eksteins, from the cultural legacy of the First World War, which has taught us to replace hope and confidence with humility and respect (Modris Eksteins, 'The Cultural Legacy of the Great War', in *The Great War*, ed. Winter, Parker and Habeck, pp. 331–49; p. 344).

Although the role played by Shakespeare in commemoration and memory rites around 1916 must necessarily be of interest to British First World War historians and cultural historians, what benefit a study such as this entails for Shakespearian scholarship may appear to be a moot point. There are, however, some directions – provisional no doubt – in which a cultural history of war may illuminate our knowledge of Shakespeare the icon and Shakespeare the body of texts. It seems that beyond their function as texts, the works of Shakespeare enjoyed a new social life during the First World War. Shakespeare – his works, their afterlives in a foreign country, the performance of his plays at the Front – provided an occasion for the erection of sites of public memory and private mourning, a chance for the ritualized practice of commemoration and remembrance to expand into book gifts and dedications. Two of the three Shakespearian war memorials discussed here – Lacy Collison-Morley's dedication and Vera Leslie's epitaph – make use of Shakespearian quotations to cope with grief and bereavement; the third one is a gift edition of the Complete Works for those who have suffered pain and hardship. Shakespeare is thus called upon to provide comfort. A few days before the Battle of Loos, Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Duke Collison-Morley, according to his brother, wrote: 'There is no hardship or terror or doubt that happens out here that Shakespeare does not touch on or give advice for.' He has become the universal, ultimate advice-giver and his plays, now as a surrogate religion, provide moral guidance.

The Kitchener Souvenir Complete Works, intended as a joint memorial for both Lord Kitchener of Khartoum and William Shakespeare of Stratford, may provide a useful site, a foundation stone for a cultural biography of the plays. As Kopytoff suggests, when aiming to trace the cultural biography of a thing, 'one would ask questions similar to . . . How does the thing's use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?'[52] For a disabled soldier, and particularly for a blinded one, the meaning of the works of Shakespeare may not be enshrined in their value as literature but rather in a symbolic

17. Stratford-upon-Avon's First World War Memorial after having been hit by a lorry in 1927.

value as gift and memorial, rendering the plays' use, meaning and value close to that of a Staffordshire crested souvenir. To imagine the works of Shakespeare on the mantelpiece of a British home, between a crested bust of Kitchener and a miniature replica of the Cenotaph is to begin to see how Shakespeare's plays have acquired a social life as object, and even *objet pur*, independent of their life in academia or on the stage, whose symbolic meaning stems from the very act of being possessed.

The commodification of Shakespeare's plays through the Kitchener Souvenir – Shakespeare as war memorial – took place precisely at a time in which the cultural life of the plays on the London stage was declining. The demise of the system of the actor-manager, to which Doughty's life and

[52] Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things', pp. 66–7.

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18. Stratford-upon-Avon's First World War Memorial in its present location, with Holy Trinity Church emerging through the trees in the background.

death testify, also account for the decline of 'live Shakespeare' in the metropolis – and his highlights from Shakespeare at the Front, delivered as part of a YMCA 'concert', suggest that a sizeable section of Edwardian Shakespeare was 'music-hall' or 'revue' Shakespeare. As the – real or imaginary – presence of a copy of *Henry V* upon the dead body of a British officer after the attack on German positions at Loos in 1915 suggests, individual plays may also generate cultural biographies of their own. The presence of Shakespeare and his plays in the practices of First World War commemoration indicates that a cultural biography of the Works would not prove a simple, uncomplicated pursuit – and that there are many and varied ways of engaging in close encounters with Shakespeare other than the close reading of the plays.

Shakespeare himself was of course well aware of the value and usefulness of memorials and shrines. In Sonnet 55 ('Not marble nor the gilded monuments') he contended that poetry and the written word make better, more reliable sites of remembrance than funereal monuments. The Shakespeare war memorials discussed here have in fact lasted longer than some WWI war shrines that have been 'besmear'd with sluttish time'. The Maltese Cross erected in Hyde Park in August 1918 to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the start of the war remained in place only for fifteen months, as it was damaged and had to be removed in October 1919.[53] Lutyens's original Cenotaph, made of wood and plaster, was initially raised only to commemorate the fallen during Victory Parade in July 1919 and was, as an afterthought, left in place until the Armistice commemoration on 11 November 1919. At the end of this year, the Cenotaph was 'badly dilapidated' and was dismantled in January 1920,[54] so the very same structure that Foch and marching Allied soldiers saluted on Peace Day, having been exposed to London's weather, only lasted six months. Even war memorials made of

[53] Hanson, *The Unknown Soldier*, p. 420.
[54] Hanson, *The Unknown Soldier*, p. 421.

stone, such as Stratford-upon-Avon's Cross of Sacrifice, which stood at the top of Bridge Street (Illustration 16), did not last long in their original locations. Erected in 1922 and hit by a lorry in 1927 (Illustration 17), this memorial has seen two earlier sites, before finding its actual prominent place in Stratford's garden of remembrance for the glorious dead of several wars, situated just outside Holy Trinity Church, within a stone's throw of Shakespeare's own grave and shrine (Illustration 18). In contrast to the stone crosses of the First World War, the Shakespearian war memorials memorialized in these pages remain for the eyes of all posterity movable, portable memorials while equally serving as lasting sites and a living record of memory and mourning.

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