

Commemorations of Imperial Sacrifice at Home and Abroad: British Memorials of the Great War

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SCHOLARS HAVE LONG RECOGNIZED that the Great War produced a remarkable amount of artistic and cultural expression ranging from poetry to painting to novels to architecture. This cultural production, both during and after the war, reflected a deep need to define and understand the tremendous destruction caused by a war that demanded a level of human sacrifice previously unimagined. Poets, painters, sculptors, and war memorialists attempted to capture in aesthetic form the *newness* of this war experience and, in particular, its profound human costs. Artists attempted to lay bare the suffering of soldiers, their families, and even the state through empathetic renderings of loss, which often allowed not just families, but also communities and nations to mourn together, helping to create a sense of renewed national unity that had suffered from the experiences of war. This article is concerned with one such cultural expression, British war memorials, which were erected in Britain, on the continent, and throughout the colonial world. The Cenotaph in London and the All-India War Memorial in New Delhi, both of which were designed and built by Edwin Lutyens, one of the twentieth century's most talented architects, were two of the most important.

The study and analysis of visual resources, such as war memorials, in the classroom is an effective strategy to teach students the manner by which objects become laden with meaning. This is not to suggest that written

resources are a pedagogical anachronism, but some of the most powerful statements in society come from visual media, whether they are paintings, posters, or monuments. In the case of the Great War, these artifacts provide wonderful openings as well as departure points for discussing war-time experiences and memory. As historians and teachers, it is important that we provide our students with the capabilities to examine these primary sources in order to gain a deeper understanding of the past and the power of cultural artifacts for producing meaning and memory.

The study of visual resources is particularly relevant to Generation Y students who are arguably more greatly affected by visual rather than textual stimuli in modern culture. They absorb media and especially video game images at increasingly higher rates. They are knowledgeable about the genres, conventions, and messages of visual sources. Such is the extent of this cultural shift that one scholar recently quipped that American children now more readily choose to enjoy the “great indoors” rather than to go outside and play.¹ And yet they are rarely asked to critically examine what they are seeing. Thus, while they have become masters at absorbing information, their analytical ability to transform this information into critical understandings of the contemporary world has become seemingly diminished. This should not be surprising. Reality TV, for example, does not ask viewers to really *think* about what they are watching, but rather to *experience* the drama played out on the screen in the safety of their homes. The challenge for teachers is to shift students’ general viewing habits from one of pleasure seeking to one of knowledge acquisition. Educational research suggests a solution whereby teachers actively engage students’ existing schema to move them into deeper understandings of the disciplinary knowledge and practice.² By incorporating students’ familiarity and expertise with visual images, teachers can use these sources to support student learning and prepare them to deepen their analytical abilities.³

This article proposes the utilization of a template to teach students the analytical skills necessary to engage them in thoughtful visual analysis of primary sources that memorialize World War I. The article will introduce the template and then suggest several methods that teachers can employ to create a comparative analysis of visual sources. Our strategy encourages students to slow down the process by which information is received so that they can more easily parse what they are seeing and thus, hopefully, begin reading images with a critical eye. We call this the “6 C’s of Primary Source Analysis”: Content, Citation, Context, Connection, Communication, and Conclusion.⁴ This template is founded on the basic assumption that an image is the sum of its parts and thus requires a holistic analysis. The template begins, therefore, by asking students to identify or describe the (1) *Content* of the source. This first section encourages students to

approach the image as objective observers by focusing on precisely what they see—no more and no less. Content forces students to observe the outermost layer of an image, its skin, but to not penetrate its depths (this comes later as students work through the template). (2) *Citation* provides students with the background information to locate the source in its proper (3) *Context*. The teacher often needs to provide students with the information necessary for them to complete the citation and context portions of the analysis. Other than as a hook to grab students' interests at the beginning of a new class topic, few instructors would use an image in class without some contextualization; images rarely tell a complete story. Instead, they capture moments in time (e.g., a photo of soldiers crossing "No-Man's Land" under fire), or an idea (e.g., an army recruitment poster designed to encourage enlistments), or an emotion (e.g., mourning the death of soldiers), etc. Images may portray the consequences of the Great War, for example, but they tell us very little about how the war started (e.g., the failure of European diplomacy) or why so many soldiers lost their lives (e.g., the failure of military leaders to understand the nature of modern warfare). (4) *Connection* is a place where students can think about how this source reminds them of other things they have learned. Connections can be made to other histories learned under this historical topic (e.g., trench warfare), or previous class topics (e.g., nineteenth-century frontal assaults), or even topics from other courses. There are rich connections, for example, between history and literature. (5) *Communication* asks students to analyze the message of the source as well as to consider the bias or the author's point of view. After considering all of the C's, students are able to reach a (6) *Conclusion* about the primary source. The template was developed with high school history students in mind, and it is now in use in undergraduate history courses at both of our universities. The 6 C's of Primary Source analysis serves as a teaching tool for a rigorous analysis of one or more primary sources.

When working on primary source analysis with students, it is important to remind them that the specific genre or medium of the source requires us to address its function and meaning within the period under study. While most historians rely on textual primary sources and are familiar with the methods and questions that are necessary for understanding written sources and the genres to which they belong, when evaluating visual sources, we often have to consider employing methods and questions from other disciplines to support our analysis. Donis Dondis's seminal book, *A Primer of Visual Literacy*, serves as an introduction to visual studies.⁵ He, like many other visual theorists, argues that the invention of the camera was as significant as the advent of the book in the West and that a new type of literacy is necessary for "purposeful understanding"—just as reading and

THE 6 C'S of PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS

CONTENT

Main Idea
Describe in detail what you see.

CITATION

Author/Creator
When was this created?

CONTEXT

What is going on in the world, the country, the region,
or the locality when this was created?

CONNECTIONS

Prior Knowledge
*Link the primary source to other things that you already know
or have learned about.*

COMMUNICATION

Point-of-view or bias
Is this source reliable?

CONCLUSIONS

How does the primary source contribute to our
understanding of history?

What questions do you have about this source?
What other source might you need to gain a deeper understandings of
the topic?

writing textually is learned, visual analysis must be taught to students.⁶ Visual literacy, like verbal literacy, follows certain structures, including the composition of visual media, the basic elements of design—such as the dot, line, color, and scale—and the visual message. Researchers concerned with visual literacy remind us that analysis is not only about seeing, but about comprehending and understanding the visual information.

The specific strategies suggested by visual theorists highlight the need for teachers to explicitly teach students how to deconstruct images. Visual sources have organizational structures different from written texts and students should become familiar with the different approaches to these two types of primary sources. Gunther Kress compares the act of reading texts and images and asserts that written texts are organized by time and sequence, while in contrast, images are governed by space to make meaning.⁷ Jon Callow, an educational theorist, suggests that unlike written texts, visual artifacts are experienced “all at once” rather than in a structured, linear method.⁸ With this in mind, let us revisit the 6 C’s of Primary Source Analysis and consider what changes we would have to make to the process when analyzing a visual source. First, the research points to specific questions that should be considered when analyzing the content, citation, and communication of the visual source. These include basic questions, such as “what is represented in the image?” Additionally, questions that relate to the structure and design of the image should be posed so that students can consider the way that the artist organized elements within the given space. Questions dealing with the creator of the image and his or her relationship to the subject as well as the audience must be addressed in the citation and communication portion of the template. Finally, students can consider the way that the symbols and structures of the artifact represent ideas or concepts that have a deeper cultural meaning.

Although we believe this template can be used with any primary source, we will model visual analysis through an examination of monuments memorializing the Great War: the Cenotaph and the All India War Memorial. By historicizing the act of commemoration, we can suggest to students that these memorials served as a break with the past because they commemorate the sacrifice of the common soldier. This democratization of memorials can also be seen in the increase in state and local governments’ as well as public and private organizations’ construction of monuments to soldiers involved in the Great War. Inaugurating these memorials was often a new experience for these groups and served as an alternative to other types of commissions that memorialized the soldiers in a more practical way, such as the development of hospital wards, schools, or libraries.⁹

One of the most notable of these war memorials was the Cenotaph, erected by British architect Edwin Lutyens. Lutyens was famous for the

many country estates he built for England's wealthy. His greatest architectural work, however, was accomplished in India as one of the primary architects of New Delhi—Britain's last imperial capital in India. Yet Lutyens was more than an architect and city planner. He was also one of Europe's leading war memorial designers and had strong and relatively progressive ideas about the nature of war memorials. He recognized the religious and racial diversity of Britain's military forces in World War I and thus urged the creation of memorials that were free of culturally-specific iconography such as crosses.¹⁰ Lutyens, like other war memorialists, was struck by the profound loss of life in this tragic war. In the end, he followed a design that Christopher Hussey, Lutyens' most noted biographer, called the "Elemental Mode."¹¹ This style of commemoration relied on a classical, universal architectural style free of religious ornamentation. With the public success of the Cenotaph, Lutyens went on to create monuments for the dead and missing soldiers of World War I in Britain and throughout Europe. Between 1918 and 1930, Lutyens designed sixty-five more memorials for public and private groups in Britain.¹²

Lutyens was initially commissioned to create a memorial for British soldiers whose remains were not recovered on the battlefield. The popular outpouring of support for the Cenotaph as a memorial led to other commissions for war monuments throughout Europe and culminated in the All India War Memorial constructed in New Delhi. Through a comparative analysis of these war memorials, this article proposes a method for analysis that deepens students' content knowledge and at the same time allows them to practice the thinking skills they need to "read," or analyze, the visual sources as text.

These considerations about visual imagery can serve as a guide as we begin our analysis of Lutyens' monuments. This will allow us to set up a comparative examination of the role of visual culture and the memory of World War I. Some relevant questions are: Why were monuments commissioned by Britain to commemorate the war? How did the British government both in the metropole and colony construct specific understandings of the war and the soldiers who fought for Britain? What message did the war memorials communicate to the people who viewed them? How did people engage and interact with these memorials? By implementing the 6 C's of Primary Source Analysis template, we can frame a comparative approach for our students. To begin the process of visual analysis in the classroom, the teacher should work through the 6 C's template with their students to focus on an analysis of one monument. We suggest beginning with the Cenotaph, Lutyens' first memorial, which became a standard for memorials in Britain and throughout Europe. The classroom discussion of the Cenotaph will allow students to make connections between this



Figure 1: Edwin Lutyens' Cenotaph located in London. Photo by David Johnson.

memorial and the broader context of post-war Europe so that students can examine the ways that Europeans constructed memories of the war through cultural artifacts.

Example 1—Visual Analysis Using the 6 C's: The Cenotaph in London

Content: The first C that must be addressed is content—what is the student looking at? Here, students can answer some extremely simple questions. What type of primary source are they looking at? This is a photograph of a monument. What is the primary subject of the photograph? The subject of the photograph is a white marble monument. The monument is tall and rectangular-shaped with what looks like a coffin at the top. The monument has a wreath on one of the narrower sides, with the words “The Glorious Dead” written below. Three flags are on poles on one of the longer sides of the monument. The center flag is a Union Jack, the one on the left is red and white with the Union Jack, and the other is blue with the Union Jack. The title of the image is Cenotaph. The teacher may want to relate to the students that the word cenotaph can be defined as a monument to a deceased person whose body is buried elsewhere. Not much seems to be happening in the image, but there are some interesting possibilities that lead to more complicated questions. These latter questions lead us into other areas of inquiry, but first the primary source needs to be properly cited.

Citation: The Cenotaph was commissioned by the British government in July 1919. The creator of the Cenotaph was Edwin Lutyens. Initially, the government wanted a temporary monument that would serve as an honor to the soldiers from the Great War during a victory parade in November 1919. The Cenotaph monument was well received by both government officials and the populous, which led to the creation of a permanent monument made of stone, completed in November 1920.

Context: European historians have examined the post-war period as one of immense cultural change as a result of peoples’ experience of World War I. Nine million soldiers and twelve million civilians died during the war.¹³ While many soldiers, an entire generation, did not return from the front lines, many more returned injured and disabled. This massive dying affected all Europeans. After the war, a British teacher reflected, “As I look back over the last 4 ½ years I can see so many of my old boys who are dead or wounded, or dying of consumption & recall them as boys at school where I used to urge on them the duty of patriotism, so that at present, it doesn’t seem right that those who have escaped shall give themselves up to Joy days.”¹⁴ This comment suggests that the war had a dramatic effect on individuals, veterans and non-combatants alike, leaving them with feelings of grief, guilt, and vulnerability. As individuals, communities, and nations grieved, soldiers were memorialized through countless cultural artifacts, most notably by the creation of national and local monuments

and cemeteries that marked their sacrifice. The Cenotaph serves as one example of these numerous monuments that memorialized soldiers—from the common foot soldier to the high-ranking officer.

Memory and remembrance of the Great War has interested historians who have examined monuments to the fallen soldiers as well as other sources of cultural production from the combatants themselves. “Cultural memory consists of objectified culture, that is, the texts, rites, images, buildings, and monuments which are designed to recall fateful events in the history of the collective.”¹⁵ The centrality of visual sources for understanding the history of memory necessitates that we teach students how to consider the important role that visual culture has had in constructing the understandings of the past. By providing students with a brief historiography of the Great War and memory, teachers can allow students to consider the significance of cultural sources for shaping our understanding of history and memory.

The seminal work on World War I and memory can serve as a starting point for students to study the first-hand experiences of soldiers both during and after the war. Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory* examines the literature produced by veterans of the war in order to understand the effects of the war on British soldiers. These men recorded their memories of the innocence of pre-war Europe in contrast to their modern “ironic” understanding of the world after their experience of warfare.¹⁶ Fussell clearly articulates the dislocation that soldiers felt at their return to the home front, where news of the war was mediated through the censored press and mail. Thus, civilians remained unaware of the horrors of the front lines and, upon their homecoming, soldiers felt dislocated from their family and friends.¹⁷ The literature and memoirs that Fussell includes in his research can be incorporated into the classroom as additional primary sources to engage students. By reading these first-hand accounts of British soldiers’ recollections of the war, students can gain insight into the specific details and perspectives of soldiers’ lives during the war and afterwards, and develop an empathetic understanding of the war experience.

A class discussion may include an analysis of the binary between veterans’ experiences in the trenches and the civilians of the home front. George Mosse, in his examination of the “Myth of the War Experience,” suggests that patriotism is often mythologized by a state and/or society as a way to promote unity and support for the war effort and to valorize veterans’ experiences. As Mosse explains, this myth “was to make an inherently unpalatable past acceptable, important not just for the purpose of consolation but above all for the justification of the nation in whose name the war had been fought.”¹⁸ This myth created the context for Europeans to reimagine the war as sacred and the fallen soldier as a mar-

tyr.¹⁹ His research examines post-war cultural artifacts—from cemeteries to consumer goods—to analyze the cult of masculinity surrounding the concept of the fallen soldier. War memorials played an important role in this myth making by memorializing all soldiers—not just generals and other members of the officer class. “Each individual soldier who fell in battle had become a person of note, sharing the mission of all the fallen, a mission which paid no heed to rank or status.”²⁰ The “democratization” of the monuments allowed the memorial to symbolize the sacrifice of the nation and thus promoted an idealized notion of masculinity that centered on the concept of the soldier sacrificing for the nation.

British monuments to fallen soldiers changed in this period from commemorating the heroic deeds of military leaders to being more inclusive and highlighting the contributions that individual soldiers made for the war effort. Before the creation of the Cenotaph, notable war monuments in London celebrated military leadership during important battles. The two most well-known monuments were of Admiral Nelson and the Duke of Wellington during the Napoleonic wars. These London monuments each depict the military valor of military heroes; Admiral Nelson’s column memorializes the momentous naval battle of Trafalgar, while the Wellington Arch in Hyde Park commemorates the Duke’s leadership of the Army. Just as these men dominated the military branch for which they served, the monuments originally depicted figurative representations of the leader atop the monument (e.g., Nelson was at the top of the column facing the admiralty and Wellington was depicted on horseback). In contrast, Great War memorialists sought to create monuments that included the experience of the common soldier in the trenches rather than to focus solely on the leaders. “At what was regarded as the nadir of European civilization, artists and monument makers vociferously resisted traditional mimetic and heroic evocations of events, contending that any such remembrance would elevate and mythologize events.”²¹ Monuments commemorating the Great War such as the Cenotaph served to memorialize the sacrifices of soldiers for the nation by creating solemn a tribute to the soldiers who did not return from the front. The design representing these soldiers did not depict a specific battle or military group, nor did it include figures of soldiers or commanders. Rather, Lutyens employed classical design, much like Nelson’s column and Wellington’s arch; however, without the figurative representation, the Cenotaph can be seen as a break from tradition.

Through a study of memorials, notions of continuity and change over time can be clearly examined by students. With a focused discussion of commemorative artifacts, the teacher can introduce students to the historiography of the Great War. Alongside the writings that are included in Fussell’s study, students may also consider Jay Winter’s research of post-war

cultural production to examine the permanence of cultural symbols, forms, and metaphors.²² Through an analysis of visual sources, such as film, photography, and war monuments, Winter examines the ways that Europeans mourned and argues that as a result of people's need for comfort, they turned toward traditional representations to ease their suffering. He states, "The strength of what may be termed 'traditional' forms in social and cultural life, in art, poetry, and ritual, lay in their power to mediate bereavement."²³ Rather than imagining the war as a division between modernity and tradition, Winter examines the cultural continuities to argue that the effect of the war was to allow people to create new meanings out of traditional themes. The Cenotaph serves as an important example of a monument that employs classical design to commemorate a modern tragedy.

The British state acknowledged people's need for remembrance by creating the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) on which Edward Lutyens served as a member. Lutyens designed cemeteries and memorials in France and Belgium where soldiers were buried. David Crellin suggests, "The reduced forms of Lutyens' work for the IWGC ... have been interpreted as offering an implicit critique of the patriotic and military values embodied by more conventional classicism."²⁴ In 1919, when Lutyens was commissioned by Prime Minister Lloyd George to create a monument to honor the dead soldiers of the Great War, he continued using the classical style that served as the design for the cemeteries of the IWGC. The Cenotaph, by utilizing classical architecture, and not religious ornamentation or figurative representations, served as an inclusive cultural symbol to memorialize the sacrifice of the citizen-soldier, thus relying on the traditional forms to serve as the representation of commemoration for the British public.

With this discussion of the historiography of memory and the Great War, teachers can provide students with specific examples of the way that historians have examined visual sources to understand the impact of war on society. Through a brief comparison of the utilization of textual and visual sources and the questions that historians have asked of these artifacts, teachers communicate to students the methods that historians employ when engaging in a historical investigation. The teacher is then able to situate the analysis of the Cenotaph in the context of a larger discourse of history and memory of the Great War, where students are empowered to take on the role of historian by analyzing the primary source.

Connections: This section of the 6 C's of Primary Source Analysis is one where students should take the lead and make connections between the source under study and their own prior knowledge. With the process of making connections, or comparing, students undertake the complex work of highlighting similarities between this source and other historical sources. Teachers may need to scaffold this process for students so that comparisons

are not superficial, but instead are “distinctive” and “common.” Robert Bain suggests that students should identify not only shared features for aspects of comparison, but also highlight what is unique or important about the object under study.²⁵ Students can brainstorm individually or in pairs to consider how the Cenotaph is familiar to them as a memorial. Teachers may share an image of a local memorial so that students can make connections to objects they experience in their own lives. Students may also want to consider local memorials and the history and memory that are significant for these structures. Students can compare the structure, the symbols and images represented, and the location of these monuments. A teacher may include one of our national memorials (e.g., the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, or the Lincoln Memorial) and ask students to consider the way that people interact with these memorials and analyze how this is similar and different. Finally, students may examine the topic from a broader perspective by brainstorming what is it that they know already about World War I and the immediate after-effects of this war on culture in Europe and its colonies as well as the United States.

Communication: When examining the message communicated by the artifact, we must ask students to examine both the meaning and the audience of the memorial. An important component for understanding the message of a memorial is to consider where the monument is located and how the site is related to the larger area. The Cenotaph is located in London in the Whitehall area of the city, which is part of central London, near the government offices and Westminster Abbey. The permanent monument’s location highlights the significance given to this monument, which would come to memorialize Britain’s experience of the Great War.

Monuments and other visual images often have symbols that students should consider when analyzing the message of the source. What is notable about the Cenotaph is the absence of religious symbols. Lutyens, as previously mentioned, explicitly omitted religious symbolism and instead left the exterior unmarked with the exception of the wreath, flags, and the quote, “The Glorious Dead.” The laurel wreath is a classical symbol of peace that is often represented on tombs and gravestones. The three flags placed on each side of the monument represent the unifying nature of the Cenotaph. The Union Jack stands at the center, representing the nation, while the other flags are of each branch of the military, thus suggesting the shared sacrifice of the armed forces involved in the fighting. The simplicity of the design allowed the British people to ascribe meaning to the monument. “It became a place of pilgrimage, and managed to transform the commemorative landscape by making all of ‘official’ London into an imagined cemetery.”²⁶ The location as well as the design of the monument communicated a sense of inclusiveness as a shared symbol of mourning

and sacrifice that all citizens participated in as result of the war effort.

The universal appeal of the starkness of the monument resounded mightily with the Britons who visited the memorial. In a letter to *The Times*, a Briton attempted to influence the larger public, “The Cenotaph in Whitehall is so simple and dignified that it would be a pity to consider it merely an ephemeral erection . . . The absence of all ornament will dispose of any criticism on this score, and the simple inscription will be a constant reminder to us that will be far more poignant than any pile of sculpture or architecture.”²⁷ According to Dan Todman, the support for the Cenotaph as a symbol of the nation’s mourning surpassed government officials’ expectations. “The form of that commemoration came largely from below: it was based on the interaction of the expressed and perceived desires of the population at large, rather than officially imposed.”²⁸ The effectiveness of this memorial in communicating the grief and loss of Britons after the war highlights the unintended consequences of cultural artifacts that memorialize important events.

The British government sought to employ the Cenotaph as a site for memorializing the fallen soldiers during the Peace Day Parade of 1919. The government expected the parade to be both a commemoration for the dead and a celebration of victory.²⁹ However, the powerful emotional appeal of the monument drew crowds who pressed together to gather around the monument. *The Times* reported that “A larger proportion of the people here were still wearing mourning, very many brought wreaths in memory of a fallen loved one, and some of these, despairing of ever getting near enough to deposit their wreaths, raised them above their heads and they were passed from hand to hand over the heads of the people until they found a resting place at the foot of the Cenotaph.”³⁰ The public’s reaction to the monument highlights the power of symbols to unite individuals who shared experiences of loss and mourning as members of a national body. Although the government intended the event to be one of reflection and celebration, the public’s interaction with the war memorial overshadowed other anticipated aspects of the event and created a moment of national mourning centered on the symbol of the fallen soldier.

Conclusion: After going through the process of primary source analysis outlined in the template, we are able to reach a conclusion about the role of the Cenotaph in memorializing World War I. This can allow students to begin answering the questions that shaped our consideration of the monument. While the monument serves as a national symbol, the simplicity and starkness of the design allows individuals to ascribe personal meanings and understandings to the monument. No individual soldier is depicted on the memorial; no ornamentation save a wreath and flags decorates the marble edifice.

The physical presence of thousands of mourners at the site transformed the Cenotaph from an ancillary component of the Peace Day Parade and ceremony to a central symbol of mourning and memory of the Great War. The public's reception of the Cenotaph led to the creation of a permanent structure that would serve as the symbol of soldiers and their families' sacrifice for the nation. Additionally, what began as a celebration of peace and victory, November 11, became a day of mourning and remembrance. In 1920, when the permanent Cenotaph was unveiled, the ceremony included the burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey, an event that included over a million Britons. According to Todman, specific rituals of mourning became a central component to the observance of Armistice Day.³¹ This public response formed in contrast to government officials' conceptions of the holiday. Lord Curzon, the chair of the 1921 Armistice Day committee asserted, "in this and subsequent years, the 11th of November would not be a day of mourning but would be the commemoration of a great day in the country's history."³² However, the perceived victory was overshadowed by the nation's sense of loss and mourning, which continues to pervade the Armistice Day ceremonies. Even today, Britons consider this date to be one of reflection and meditation.

Our study of the Cenotaph is an effective way to teach students how to analyze a visual source through an examination of memory of World War I. However, in most world history courses, and even in European history courses, it is important to move students beyond a Eurocentric understanding to consider the global implications for this conflict. Once students are familiar with the components of the 6 C's of Primary Source Analysis template, we can analyze another Lutyen's creation, the All-India War Memorial. An examination of this memorial gives students the opportunity to study a different war memorial built by the same person, but the All-India War Memorial's location in New Delhi, India shifted its meaning in specific ways. Both memorials were meant to commemorate soldiers who died fighting for the British cause, but the All-India War Memorial, erected in a colonial setting for colonial purposes, carried a different message than the Cenotaph built at the heart of the British Empire.

Example 2—Visual Analysis Using the 6 C's: The All-India War Memorial

Content: Again, what is the student looking at? A large arch made of reddish/pinkish brick material with few distinguishing markings and certainly no religious iconography. For Lutyens, New Delhi's All-India War Memorial symbolized Britain and India's inseparability. The memorial commemorated Indians who had died in World War I and the Afghan



Figure 2: *The All-India War Memorial located in New Delhi. Photo by David Johnson.*

Wars.³³ David Crellin described the arch as a “creative reworking of the Arc de Triomphe.”³⁴ Lutyens reduced the ornamentation on his memorial arch and made his “proportions slimmer and more elegant” by making the height of the opening two and one half times its width.³⁵ The names of 13,617 Indian soldiers were inscribed into the memorial.³⁶ During the British colonial period, the archway spanned the Kingsway, New Delhi’s main processional route, and at the opposite end of this broad avenue sat the Viceroy’s House (now Rashtrapati Bhavan), a structure that at the time of its inauguration in 1931 was not only the largest private residence in the world, but also the paramount symbol of British imperial power in South

Asia. Thus, at the westernmost point of the Kingsway stood a powerful symbol of empire and at the eastern end stood a symbol of imperial sacrifice. For Lutyens and many others, it was the sacrifices of loyal colonial subjects which made the British Empire great.

Citation: Edwin Lutyens conceived of, designed, and built the All-India War Memorial to serve as an important axial point for New Delhi, a city that he helped design and build between 1912 and 1931. The arch was part of the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission, which received its Royal Charter in 1917, to aid in the erection of headstones and memorials for soldiers who had died in World War I without commemoration.³⁷

Context: Understanding historical context is one of the most important aspects of analyzing an image. As with many types of image analyses by students, teachers need to provide some background information. What was going on in the locality, the region, or the world when the memorial was created? Why is the object in the image important for the topic under study? In this case, the All-India War Memorial was designed and built during the height of Indian anti-colonialism when Indian nationalists placed tremendous stress on the workings of the British colonial government through civil disobedience, such as refusing to pay taxes, or through boycotts, such as refusing to purchase British-made textiles.³⁸ Much of the anger fueling anti-colonialism came from post-war British colonial policies. As a strategy to win greater Indian support for the war effort, British Parliament passed the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in 1917. According to these reforms, the underlying principle of British colonialism in India was to prepare India for future independence. But as the war came to a close, the British colonial government in India seemed to break its war-time promises to India by extending a series of repressive acts passed during the Great War. The Rowlatt Acts, called the “black acts” by many Indians, gave the colonial government the authority to suppress seditious activities in India by, for example, censoring Indian presses or searching without warrant private residences for seditious materials. Indian leaders, such as Mahatma Gandhi, recognized this colonial legerdemain of offering greater freedom through constitutional reforms while taking it away through the extension of anti-sedition acts in the post-war period. Gandhi, once a war-time recruiter for the British who became one of the most formidable leaders of the Indian National Congress, called for a nation-wide movement to pressure the British government to repeal the Rowlatt Acts. Some of the most aggrieved Indians came from the Punjab, a British-Indian province that traditionally supplied a large number of recruits for Britain’s Indian Army. On April 13, 1919, in the city of Amritsar, a large but unarmed and peaceful demonstration was fired upon by troops under

the command of General R. E. H. Dyer. Estimates vary on the number of Indian demonstrators killed, but a conservative number is close to 400 dead with well over 1,000 injured. The “Amritsar Massacre,” as the event came to be called, served as a watershed moment when millions of Indians turned against the British.

In response to the growing appeal of the Indian nationalist movement, British colonial officials expanded their efforts to win Indian consent to colonial rule through hegemonic strategies of control. One such strategy was to offer Indians greater governmental responsibility by allowing Indian officials to be elected to provincial legislatures throughout British India. British officials, however, could veto any legislation passed by an Indian-dominated legislature if the legislation hurt the imperial government. Another important strategy was to simply remind Indians of the rights and benefits they had won under the paternalistic British. The All-India War Memorial served both these functions.

The paternalistic meaning of the war memorial can be understood best by briefly examining the speeches during the unveiling ceremonies in February 1931. General Fabian Ware of the Imperial War Graves Commission, while giving the opening address, reminded the audience about Britain and India’s unbreakable imperial bond, which had been strengthened by the mutual sacrifices of British and Indian soldiers in the defense of the empire. For Ware, the great threat of the war was not simply the annihilation of the British Empire, but also the destruction of the values it stood for. “On the day of testing, when the flails of the almighty separated the chaff from the grain,” claimed Ware, “India was found standing freely shoulder to shoulder with other nations of the Empire on the side of right and freedom.”³⁹ Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India at the time, was more pointed in his commemoration speech, “We are here to recall the four unforgettable years during which nations and peoples and races . . . became one in a common impulse of loyalty to the throne and one in the defence unto death of the rights they had won under the protection of that sovereign.”⁴⁰ Irwin’s speech underscored the tenuousness of the rights and benefits that Indians had gained under British rule. Indeed, warned Irwin, the progress made by India toward independence could be easily lost without Britain’s continued help, guidance, and imperial protection.

Connections: While images can be used as a hook to begin a lecture topic, they seem to work most effectively as part of an ongoing lecture or curriculum unit. Student learning will occur best when the object depicted in the image connects to something the students have already learned or are in the process of learning.⁴¹ Images of the All-India War Memorial might be shown during a curriculum unit on colonialism, anti-colonialism, or the end of empire. A visual analysis of the memorial offers insights

into Britain's colonial image of itself and its colonial subjects as well as the limitations and contradictions of the British response to India's anti-colonial movement.

The war memorial, as a piece of monumental architecture, also allows teachers to draw contrasts to South Asian memorial building traditions. Memorial building had long occurred in South Asia. Asoka, who ruled the Mauryan Empire in the third century B.C.E., had his law code inscribed into stone pillars that were then erected in public places across northern India. From the twelfth to the seventeenth century C.E., one of the first acts of powerful Muslim emperors in northern India was to build new imperial capitals, often near Delhi or Agra, on their ascension to the throne. These capitals acted as official stamps of imperial power. Far more famous, however, were the magnificent mausoleums built by emperors to house their remains or the remains of their loved ones. The Taj Mahal, built near the city of Agra by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan for his beloved Mumtaz Mahal in the seventeenth century, is the most famous of these memorials, but there were others as well, such as Humayun's Tomb or the tombs of the Lodi Sultanate, all near Delhi. Yet this memorial building tradition, though certainly magnificent, always commemorated a single powerful individual. They were memorials to either an emperor's love (e.g., the Taj Mahal), his rule (e.g., the imperial city of Shahjahanabad, now commonly called old Delhi), or himself (e.g., Humayun's tomb). In many ways, the All-India War Memorial was an alien concept in the Indian context, for it celebrated common soldiers. It also commemorated the unbreakable imperial bond between Britain and India, a bond shaped by an imperial framework in which a foreign rather than indigenous power held sway over the greater part of India.

Communication: As with the Cenotaph, when examining the meaning of the All-India War Memorial, students must be encouraged to think about the memorial's prescribed meaning, embedded by Lutyens with the encouragement of the British colonial government, and audience perception. The concern with the latter is particularly important in the colonial context since imperial symbols, even ones meant to commemorate colonial subjects, carried powerful messages of colonial domination. The All-India War Memorial was much more than a place to commemorate Indians who had died fighting for the British Empire. It was a site of imperial memory, of imperial mourning, and of imperial power. As British and Indians passed by the war memorial, which they could not fail to do because of its central location in New Delhi, they were reminded of the power of the British Empire, of individual sacrifices made for it, and, most importantly, of their own status within the colonial state. What the memorial meant for a British colonial civil servant, for example, was different from what

it meant for an Indian rickshaw driver. While the British might admire Indians who had sacrificed themselves in the protection of “rights” and “freedoms” cherished by the British Empire, many Indians recognized that these were rights and freedoms that they were not fully entitled to as second-class citizens of the British Empire.

Conclusion: The tremendous importance of the monument is underscored by its physical location. It occupies the eastern axial point of New Delhi’s Central Vista, the main government sector. While Lutyens may have been relatively open-minded in his rejection of the use of religious iconography in war memorials, he was still an imperialist and remarkably conservative in regards to the existing colonial order.⁴² In an often-quoted sentence from a letter to his wife, Emily, he stated that “India, like Africa, makes one very Tory and pre-Tory feudal.”⁴³ For Lutyens, the All-India War Memorial symbolized “duty, discipline, unity, fraternity, loyalty, service, and sacrifice.”⁴⁴ Though building a monument to memorialize Indians who had supposedly died fighting for freedom in France, and though certainly in favor of showing religious respect by designing a memorial that approached war-time sacrifices in a universal manner, Lutyens continued to ground his memorial in British imperial paternalism.⁴⁵

The war memorial reaffirmed what Joseph Chamberlain called in 1902 a “community of sacrifice.”⁴⁶ The British Empire’s strength, according to Niall Ferguson, was grounded in the “ties between the different branches of the Anglo-Saxon race which form[ed] the Empire.”⁴⁷ The empire endured because Anglo-Saxons, who were spread throughout Britain’s colonial world, were willing to make sacrifices for the empire and its ideals. At the heart of this imperial thinking was an obdurate belief in England’s unique relationship to democratic reform, particularly in regard to liberty.⁴⁸ Hence, *Englishness* became intimately connected with the didactic process of spreading self-government and political reform to the much more numerous non-Anglo-Saxon races of the British Empire. Colonial rule, as Thomas Metcalf insists, was made possible by the creation of a difference that privileged Britain. Citing their own political heritage consisting of profoundly important democratic moments such as the Glorious Revolution or the three great reform bills of the nineteenth century, British officials could claim that no other people were better qualified to teach Indians responsible government than themselves. Interestingly, the unveiling of this war memorial commemorated a sacrifice by Indian soldiers for freedoms and liberties which were, ironically, not fully given to them. Politically, India could become an integral member of an imperial brotherhood that officials spoke of in their speeches at the commemoration, but how could it possibly be part of Chamberlain’s “community of sacrifice?” Indians, simply, were the wrong race.

In contrast to the Cenotaph in London, which continues to represent the dead, the All-India War Memorial is a fascinating example of how colonial urban spaces have been given new meaning in the post-colonial period. India's post-independence governments have struggled with what to do with the many imperial artifacts left behind by the British. Many of them, like the war memorial, were irremovable. This particular imperial war memorial was renamed India Gate. From a memorial designed to represent the inseparability of Britain and India, it now symbolizes the Indian nationalist movement and thus the impossibility of Britain and India's colonial relationship. Unlike the Cenotaph in London, the memorial has gone from being a site of mourning—a commemoration of war dead—to a site of festivity. Ice cream vendors hawk their wares while residents cool down on the spacious lawns in the evening. With its large lawns and canals, the area around the memorial is one of the nicer places to spend a hot summer evening in the Delhi area, where nighttime summer temperatures can hover near 110° F. This re-rendering of meaning concerning the war memorial offers insights into the relationship between the Indian government and the needs of local residents who make New Delhi a lived environment. With independence, the memorial has been reinscribed with a nationalist and at times militaristic purpose by the Indian state. However, the understandings and interactions of Indian people highlight the tension between these considerations of the monument and the intention of the state.

Our analysis of both the Cenotaph and the India Gate show that people engage with these monuments in ways that do not always align to the prescribed message of the state. The location of the Cenotaph and the India Gate, both at the governmental centers of world cities, suggests that the original meaning of these monuments may be lost on residents and tourists alike, who consider these structures as part of the existing landscape and create their own meanings surrounding the role of these memorials in the contemporary world. What remains constant, however, is the intertwined relationship between context and meaning, a lesson in historical thinking that becomes evident through a study of these monuments. By considering change and continuity alongside audience and intention, students can develop the ability to think historically and engage in a rigorous analysis of these primary sources using the template, 6 C's of Primary Source Analysis. With the utilization of this template, teachers can model the skills that are necessary for a close reading of visual artifacts, thereby guiding students through the process of critically analyzing a text. Students' interpretations of these monuments will encourage them to consider the important role of visual culture in their own lives and empower them to critically engage with these artifacts as both creators and consumers.

Notes

1. Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).
2. Elizabeth Mirr Moje, et al., "Working Toward a Third Space in Content Area Literacy: An Examination of Everyday Funds of Knowledge and Discourse," *Reading Research Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (January-March 2004).
3. David Johnson and Nicole Gilbertson, "Architecture and Visual Literacy: Reading the Colonial Built Environment," *World History Bulletin* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2009).
4. A copy of the "6 C's" template can be found on page 566 of this article. A PDF version also can be found by visiting the University of California, Irvine, History Project website at <<http://www.humanities.uci.edu/history/ucihp/wh/>>.
5. Donis A. Dondis, *A Primer of Visual Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1973).
6. *Ibid.*, 10.
7. Gunther Kress, *Literacy in the New Media Age* (London, U.K.: Routledge, 2003), 2.
8. John Callow, "As I See It: Integrating Viewing Across the Curriculum," New Literacies: A Professional Development Wiki for Educators, <<http://newlits.wikispaces.com/Integrating+viewing+across+the+curriculum>>.
9. Jonathan Black, "'Thanks for the Memory': War Memorials, Spectatorship and the Trajectories of Commemoration, 1919-2001," in *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory and the First World War*, ed. Nicholas J. Saunders (London, U.K.: Routledge, 2004), 134.
10. Lutyens designed small memorials for families as well as the large memorials such as Thiepval in the Netherlands and the Cenotaph in London.
11. David Crellin, "'Some Corner of a Foreign Field': Lutyens, Empire and the Sites of Remembrance," *Lutyens Abroad: The Work of Sir Edwin Lutyens Outside the British Isles* (London, U.K.: The British School at Rome, 2002), 101.
12. Edwin Landseer Lutyens, *The Letters of Edwin Lutyens to His Wife Emily* (London, U.K.: Collins, 1985), 346.
13. Gerard J. De Groot, *The First World War* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 1.
14. Robert Saunders in Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London, U.K.: Hambledon and London, 2005), 50.
15. Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory," *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (May 2002): 182.
16. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1975), 35.
17. *Ibid.*, 86-87.
18. George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7.
19. *Ibid.*, 7.
20. *Ibid.*, 99.
21. James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 10.
22. Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
23. *Ibid.*, 5.
24. Crellin, 102.
25. Robert B. Bain, "Building an Essential World History Tool: Teaching Compara-

- tive History,” in *Teaching World History: A Resource Book*, ed. Heide Roupp (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 29-30.
26. Winter, 104.
 27. *The Times* (London), 21 July 1919.
 28. Todman, 51.
 29. *Ibid.*, 50.
 30. *The Times* (London), 12 November 1919.
 31. Todman, 51.
 32. Lord Curzon in Todman, 53.
 33. According to Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, second ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 102, almost 60,000 Indian soldiers died fighting for the British Empire in Europe and the Middle East.
 34. Crellin, 103.
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. National Archives of India, NAI/HD File No. 66, Public 1931.
 37. Winter, 23 and Crellin, 101.
 38. Johnson and Gilbertson.
 37. Fabian Ware, speech at the unveiling of the All-India War Memorial, New Delhi, India, 14 February 1931.
 40. *Ibid.*
 41. Johnson and Gilbertson.
 42. See Jane Ridley, *The Architect and His Wife: A Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens* (London, U.K.: Chatto and Windus, 2002); Thomas Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Clayre Percy and Jane Ridley's edited volume, *The Letters of Edwin Lutyens to His Wife Emily* (London, U.K.: Collins, 1985) for examples of his well-documented chauvinism.
 43. Thomas Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2002), 234.
 44. Robert Grant Irving, *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker, and Imperial New Delhi* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 259.
 45. David Johnson, “A British Empire for the Twentieth Century: The Inauguration of New Delhi, 1931,” *Urban History* 35, no. 3 (December 2008).
 46. Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London, U.K.: Allen Lane, 2003), 251.
 47. *Ibid.*
 48. See Barry Hindess, “The Liberal Government of Unfreedom,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 26, no. 2 (April 2001) and Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999).