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Commemorative insights: The best of life, in death

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ABSTRACT

This study explores visitor experience at the National Anzac Centre in Western Australia using multiple qualitative methods. Initially, Nethnography is used to assemble a blend of lived experience and online non-dialogical commentary. Nethnography (an alternative to Netnography) is used here as a mechanism for data grooming. Three data sets inform this study: 500 Trip Advisor comments, 500 Visitors' Book comments and four days of participant observation. The data is then analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis and Leximancer in the unsupervised mode. This methodological collage is designed to improve the veracity of interpretation through both lived experience and triangulation across data sources. Findings suggest a significant visitor-thirst for the positive aspects of commemoration. By the same token no respondent reported being motivated by schadenfreude, mortality salience or death. If a certain fascination with, and commodification of death defines popular dark tourism then commemorative tourism's relegation of death indicates exception. It would seem *commemorists* relegate death and darkness to mere context, while gravitas, ritual and cultural validation transcend the superficial and the kitsch. Meanwhile, visitors to the National Anzac Centre concentrate on more endearing traits including sacrifice, love, loss and the nobility of caritas.

Keywords: Anzac; Commemoration; Dark Tourism; Leximancer; Nethnography; Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

1.0   INTRODUCTION.

I have seen men hard pressed not to weep when their horses were killed.

('Stout Hearts that Never Failed' by Ion Idriess, 1932).

Endearing qualities of the human spirit can be a significant motivator in commemorative pilgrimage. One such pilgrimage involves a journey to the southernmost tip of Western Australia. In this quiet part of the world shady eucalypts line both sides of a road leading up to the Desert Corps Memorial atop Mt Clarence, Albany. Established in 1955 the road is called the Avenue of Honour. This place commemorates Australians who died in service or were killed in action, in all wars. For each tree there is an interpretive plaque describing in almost mundane monologue the chaos by those who endured the darkness. On one plaque is a tribute by Ion Idriess, a veteran of the Australian 5th Light Horse. It is an ode to the faithful horse; the "stout hearts that never failed" (Idriess, 1932). More specifically, the 6,100 horses who accompanied 41,948 Australian and New Zealand soldiers on their way to Europe from this place - and subsequently the Anzac[1] legend was born.

The use of the horse; the shared trust and emotional bond between animal and carer is a percipient theme used by the nearby National Anzac Centre's curators. This gentle and dignified relationship is emphasised in curatorial effort; specifically, words, prose, artwork and imagery. Indeed, this deliberate celebration of animal-human friendship is consistent with Ballantyne's challenge to heritage curators to take a positive stance and to use "their craft to address society's needs" (1998, p. 2; for positive emotions in tourism see also Mitas, Yarnal, & Chick, 2012; Packer, Ballantine, & Uzzell, 2019. For associated ethics see Timothy, 2011). If we look beyond these relationships and superficial bravado therein lies glimpses of authentic, loving care or [secular] caritas, made all the more poignant during extraordinary and savage times. Such loyalty and loss of innocence in war, both in animals and humans underpins visitor-experience to this place of commemoration and qualifies as the premise of this study.

1.1 Aim and contribution.

The aim of this study is to Investigate the National Anzac Centre with a view to understanding the degree of engagement, associated emotions and typical behaviours associated with Antipodean commemorism. Opened in 2014 the National Anzac Centre and environs hold significant importance to both Australia and New Zealand as this is where troops heading to fight the Great War 1914-1918 assembled for the long journey to an uncertain fate.

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[1]ANZAC [acronym] refers to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps: formed in Egypt 1915. Later, Anzac [proper noun]; refers to Antipodean involvement in all wars and conflict since 1914.

A review of key concepts; namely pilgrimage, commemoration and the Antipodean ideals of the Anzac follow. The findings comprise a number of themes, of which three are discussed in detail. This addition to our understanding of visitor motives in turn informs stakeholders as to how their efforts are being received and thus provides some insight as to how better manage the perceptual positioning of memorials (see also Dunkley, Morgan & Westwood, 2011; Poria, Reichel, & Biram, 2006; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996; White & Frew, 2013; Winter, 2009, 2010). For the purposes of this study commemorism is defined as the portmanteau of tourism with commemoration and associated pilgrimage; commemorism being the singular noun whereas commemorist is the countable noun.

1.2 Commemorative Pilgrimage.

In 2011 Hyde and Harman define pilgrimage as "a journey to a non-substitutable site embodying the highly valued, the deeply meaningful, or a source of core identity for the traveller" (p. 1343; Lockstone Binney & Atay, 2013). They also claim secular pilgrimage has increasingly replaced religious pilgrimage and is important to the "core identity" of the tourist. Their study of seven visitor groups to the Gallipoli peninsular lists the motives for secular pilgrimage: namely (1) spiritual, (2) nationalistic, (3) family, (4) friendship, and (5) travel (see also Butler & Suntikul, 2018). Brown adds nuance here with her 2016 study of visitors to the graves of Jean Paul Sartre and Simon De Beauvoir in Paris. Brown distils her observations to three motives: (6) a desire for closeness; (7) a wish to pay respects; and (8) an appreciation of the influence the two writers have had on our lives. While it might be a stretch to generalise that all types of secular pilgrimage share these eight motives one must acknowledge Hyde and Harman's data came from Gallipoli visitation and therefore, resonates with commemoration whereas Brown's does not.

Gallipoli refers to the Gallipoli or Dardanelles campaign (Antipodean nomenclature), also known by the Turks or Türkleri as the Battle of Çanakkale on the Gelibolu (Gallipoli) peninsular in southern Turkey. During WWI, Australian and New Zealanders identified as members of the British Empire; themselves members of the Entente powers. This coalition was at the time intent on weakening the Ottoman Empire and chose to do so by seizing control of the adjacent waterway which was facilitating trade with Russia. The place chosen where the Antipodeans would contribute to this strategy was the Gallipoli peninsular. After several months of costly battle the Entente powers withdrew, essentially admitting defeat.

Although the Gallipoli was not considered an ANZAC victory in a military sense the campaign has nevertheless evolved into a seminal commemorative site due to embodying key trans-national Antipodean traits and semiotics. The term Anzac and the date of the landings, 25th April is often used to punctuate the birth of Australia's and New Zealand's independent national identity. (Çakar, 2018, 2019; Cheal & Griffin, 2013; Hall, Basarin & Lockstone-Binney; 2010; Hyde & Harman, 2011; McKenna & Ward, 2007; Packer et al., 2019; Polonsky et al., 2013; Scates, 2008; Slade, 2003; West, 2010). While over 1,000 Anzac

memorials and cenotaphs are seeded throughout Australia and New Zealand four main sites commemorating the ANZAC stand out on social media: Gallipoli; The Australian War Memorial, Canberra; The Sir John Monash Centre, France; and the National Anzac Centre (NAC). The NAC in Albany, Western Australia is the focus on this study (see also Inglis & Brazier, 1998; Lee, 2010; Nelson, 2019. See also Ekins, 2010).

In highlighting the military heritage of a place, one notes the distinction between a cenotaph and a memorial. A cenotaph is an empty tomb designed to commemorate an individual or group of people whose remains lie elsewhere. A memorial is a symbolic structure designed as a focal point for symbolism and not necessarily the identified, or even unidentified dead. The NAC is a somewhat unusual memorial in that it is situated 10,000 km's from the WWI battlefields, and some wonder why it should be so significant (Scates, 2008, 2009; Stephens, 2014). While the journey, war and associated tribulations form the content the curators promote its location as important. The rationale being Antipodean forces concentrated near the NAC prior to departing in two convoys for Europe. From an affective perspective Albany was the last of Australia thousands of young men and women ever saw. Such poignancy is curatorially highlighted through the story of Faye Howe, the daughter of the lighthouse keeper on nearby Breaksea Island. As the convoys departed it is reported Ms Howe waved at the ships as they passed close by the island. This in turn encouraged the men to write to her from Europe. Such was the volume of letters received the Australian Government donated 4,000 one-penny stamps to facilitate her replies, in the hope of lifting the morale of the troops. The story is the subject of a fictional children's book by Dianne Wolfer titled, *Lighthouse Girl* (2010). Later, this inspired the Western Australian Black Swan Theatre's adaptation of the book in 2017 (Turner, 2017). For the importance of stories in commemoration see Ryan's "Battlefield tourism: History, place and interpretation" (2007; see also Laing and Frost, 2019).

1.3 Commemorative Politics.

While Hyde and Harman's 2011 motives for secular pilgrimage lends itself to a more pragmatic touristic paradigm, Winter takes a different view of commemoration (2019). Winter's interpretation is more spiritual, albeit secular, focussing on the rituals associated with remembrance (see also Pretes, 2003; Rook, 1985). According to Winter, remembrance and pilgrimage are similarly defined and related to Halbwach's 1992 theory of collective social memory, the essence of which being that pilgrims travel to non-substitutable sites with the aim of connecting with a meaningful past. This is achieved through behaviours such as individual and group rituals; including votive deposition (Winter 2019; Hyde and Harman, 2011; Raj, & Griffin, 2015; Willson, McIntosh, & Zahra, 2013) and "national reflection" (Kennell, Šuligoj, & Lesjak, 2018: Frost & Laing, 2013).

In keeping with Halbwach's collective memory theory is Irvine's 2018 interpretation as one of social memory kept alive by negotiation and social agitation. Irvine notes the waxing and waning over time of pilgrim interest in a site with the catalyst being not the state, or even existence of the physical destination but the "cultivation of dissonance" related to its meaning

(p. 366). Citing the case of pilgrims visiting the site of the former statue of Our Lady of Ipswich (destroyed during the Reformation), Irvine purports that for a place to hold significance and draw devotees it does not have to exist in its original form. Memory lives on regardless and is maintained by a state of social interest, fuelled by agonistic discourse. This idea is relevant to the NAC given it acknowledges but subordinates the importance of physical location in the showcasing of national collective memory. In another sense this transient nature of collective memory relegates those who are critical of the decision to locate the National Anzac Centre in a place where no conflict occurred, namely Albany (Scates, 2008, 2009; Stephens, 2014).

Location, and collective social memory are popular themes encountered in commemorative studies. In Tourism, Fathi, focusses on social discourse and national agenda as the reasons behind Antipodean pilgrimage to the village of Villers Bretonneux in France (2019). Using a somewhat cynical paradigm Fathi claims, "Commemorative diplomacy cares little about history, but does much to facilitate the country's political and commercial agendas of the day" (para. 33). This is claimed in the context that "the vast majority of the French are unaware of the Anzacs" [*sic*] (para. 28), but [presumably] appear comfortable with Australia's $104M investment that is the Sir John Monash Centre near Villers Brettoneux. Fathi's perception contrasts markedly with the Centre's Deputy Director, Catherine Carnel. Carnel notes the French are indeed interested in Antipodean involvement during the Great War and particularly the battles fought in the Somme valley. Carnel notes that this interest is growing (personal communication, July 11th, 2019; see also Bond, 2002; Inglis & Brazier, 1998; Lee, 2010; Nelson, 2020; Todman, 2005).

This nexus of place, poignancy, and collective social meaning is a powerful facilitator of nationalism and national identity (Kennel et al., 2018; Frew & White, 2015). No doubt justifying the annual pilgrimage of Antipodeans to the Gallipoli peninsular to commune (Holt, 1995) with others over an idea they respect and hold dear (Çakar, 2018, 2019, 2020; Cheal & Griffin, 2013; Hall et al., 2010; Hyde & Harman, 2011; McKenna & Ward, 2007; Polonsky, 2013; Scates, 2008, 2009; Slade, 2003; West, 2010). Such appreciation would also no doubt justify the Australian Government's allocation of $498M AUD to the 2020 upgrade of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. An upgrade that has attracted significant controversy with submissions to a parliamentary inquiry warning of excessive veneration. Which begs the question, how much is enough? It also begs the question of who is being targeted and what this "therapeutic mileau" will actually do (The Guardian, June 16, 2020; see also Fathi, 2019; Laing & Frost, 2019). One possibility is attracting tourists for the sake of numbers risking turning commemoration into a theme park experience. As Daley cautions, "We demean our history when we turn the Australian War Memorial into Disneyland" (2019, Sept 5). Yet surely extraordinary and emotional moments in a nation's history are deserving of legacy. Hirsch expands further that if memories are traumatic enough that they can be passed on to the next generation in a form of 'postmemory' (2006; 2012; see also Weissman, 2018). And so, the politicising of commemoration continues from one generation to the next.

Fig 1. The National Anzac Centre, Albany, Western Australia[2]. © City of Albany.

2.0   METHOD.

This study is part of a larger project using data from the National Anzac Centre. The project includes a discussion of Nethnography, which is the marrying of non-dialogical Netnography with lived experience and in doing so qualify as an ethnographic method. The project also includes the introduction of Dialectic Thematic Analysis (DTA), a modular analytical method designed to straddle and bind existing knowledge with new knowledge. This is achieved through the coincidental validation of past published work during the revelation of new knowledge. In actively using past knowledge to inform new knowledge DTA strengthens the link between what is discovered, with what has been purported to exist. The method is dialectical (meaning opposing with a common goal) in the sense simultaneous paths of deduction and induction inform each other, and the findings. This article showcases the inductive path of DTA. The methods highlighted in this study include Nethnography (MacCarthy & Fanning, 2020), Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019), and Content Analysis via Leximancer) Angus, 2014; Smith & York, 2016).

As is typical of induction, themes emerge from a large volume of unstructured data. These themes are essentially grounded in the data although this method is not strictly Grounded Theory. The methodology is nested in interpretivism which is detailed in two seminal works:

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[2] A visual overview of the NAC can be found here: https://youtu.be/yL4qF5LF1BA

Lincoln and Guba's 1985 Naturalistic Inquiry, and Denzin and Lincoln's Handbook of Qualitative Research (2000; see also Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Silverman, 2011). The particular data grooming method used here is a recent adaptation involving the use of Netnography preceded by a period of familiarisation with the phenomenon; in this case Participant Observation. The combination of lived experience with passive online scraping is referred to as Nethnography[3] For the avoidance of doubt Nethnography is a distinct method to the more traditional dialogical Netnography (see Costello, McDermott, & Wallace, 2017; Kozinets, 1998, 2002, 2010, 2015; MacCarthy & Fanning, 2020).

In this case, two researchers visited the NAC on two occasions in 2018, three months apart for two days each time. Immersed as visitors, we observed and recorded activity while interacting with both the public and custodians. As participants we engaged in conversation, recording comments from 21 visitors and 8 staff while guided by a semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix A.). More visitors were observed but not engaged. This included inside the NAC where was deemed sensitively inappropriate.

Photo elicitation, and introspection (Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993) informed the process as the authors later reviewed hand-written notes, photographs and video footage of the interior and discussed happenings in the evenings. This data was then compared with a second data set; that being a post-experience corpus. The corpus comprises 500 entries (3,337 words) from the NAC visitors' book (see Winter, 2011), with a further 500 NAC-specific comments (31,733 words) compiled from the popular touristic site Trip Advisor (see Çakar, 2018). The scrape was limited to English language speakers. Commentary also includes 533 photographs taken by visitors and attached to their reviews (Timothy & Groves, 2001). This does not include photographs or video taken by the researchers.

The combined digital data set of n=1,000 entries are the most recent and therefore considered to be a random proxy. Random in the sense that no comments from a larger available corpus were selected for inclusion, and none from the most recent 500 were excluded. They are simply 500 of the most recent social media, and 500 most recent visitors' book comments. The 1,000 comments were then transposed into an Excel spreadsheet where they have been read multiple times. As each potential theme was explored and discussed individual cells of comments were highlighted using Stottok, Bergaus & Gorra's technique of colour-codes and worksheets (2011). The Sort, Search and formula functions of Excel were then used to assist analysis of the data (e.g. LOOKUP, SORT and COUNTIF) (Bree & Gallagher, 2016; Solveig, 2016).

In parallel, both digital data sets were also analysed using the social research software Leximancer. Various analytical aspects of the software were used to explore sentiment, identify co-occurrence, and distil themes. The software's ability to explore relationships was

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[3] Note the difference in spelling. Netnography advocates dialogical interaction and immersion with online respondents. Nethnography advocates non-dialogical scraping of online [*Big*] data with a compulsory period of phenomena immersion, typical lived experience.

less relevant as the digital data is non-dialogical, meaning there is no interaction between respondents or researchers. Respondents are not engaged in conventional online discourse but merely publishing a single comment in the expectation someone will read and appreciate their effort. With Leximancer, the most useful aspect was the unsupervised (automated) ontological model highlighting occurrence and co-occurrence. The summative aspect of the program was also helpful. In a sense, computer analytics contemporaneously fortifies researcher observation. To improve the credibility of findings included in the method was a member-check with two drafts forwarded to the staff of the NAC and the City of Albany for comment. No amendments were requested (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989).
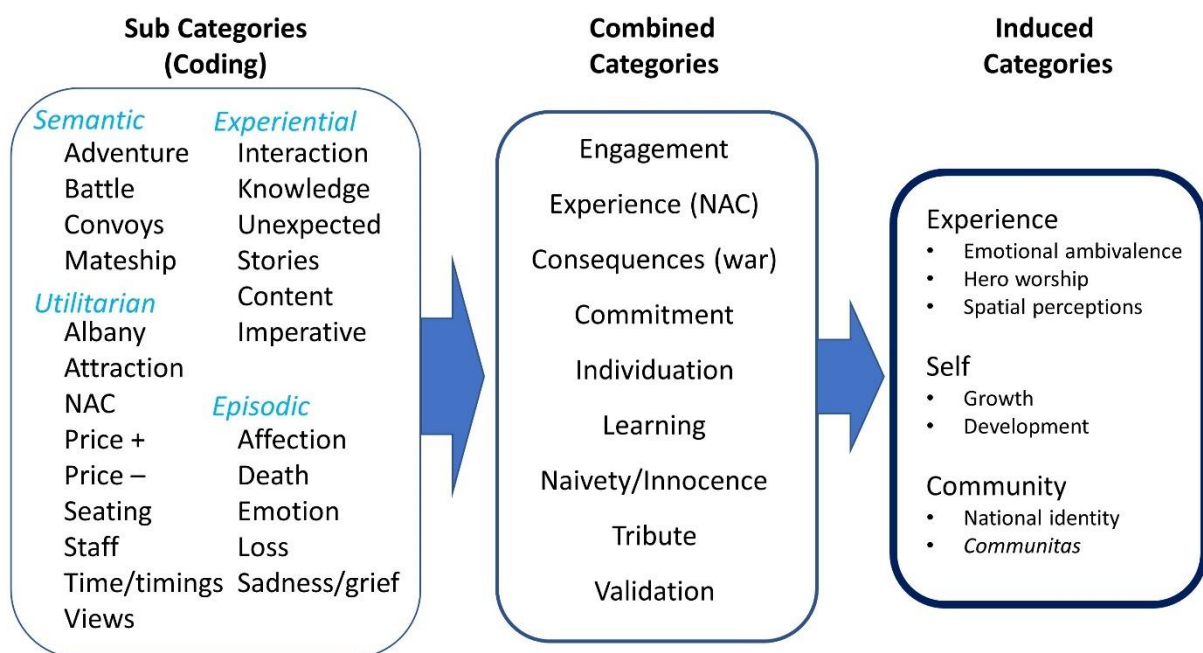

Fig 2. Inductive Process.

3.0   FINDINGS.

Complementing each other are the two methods of analysis used in this study; namely Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) and computer-assisted Content Analysis (CA). Figure 2. displays the inductive process of RTA, while Figure 3. displays the results of Leximancer. Unlike Leximancer's CA, the inductive process in RTA is overt and can be followed/validated, which in turn encourages credibility. Leximancer's process however is latent, proprietary, and couched in the inviolate nature of implied veracity.

Initially, four general groups were used to code the data and within each are related concepts (see Fig 2.). These were then combined to produce categories and finally distilled to three overarching themes: *Visitor Experience, Self-development* and *Community Significance*. Given Self-development and Community already appear in the literature (Çakar, 2018, 2019,

2020; Cheal & Griffin, 2013; Fathi, 2019; Hall et al., 2010; Hyde & Harman, 2011; Lockstone-Binney, Hall & Atay (2013); McKenna & Ward, 2007; Polonsky, 2013; Scates, 2008, 2009; Slade, 2003; West, 2010) a focus on the three unique sub themes of *Visitor Experience*: namely *Hero Worship, Emotional Ambivalence, and Spatial Perceptions* was deemed more ampliative for this study (for *Communitas* see Celsi Leigh & Rose, 1993).

The three experiential themes are: (1) Emotional ambivalence, referring to the opposing extremes of life and death, while specifically valorising caritas. This in turn encourages respondent empathy. (2) The absence of hero worship or hagiography, which in turn encourages respondent engagement. (3) Expanding the use of physical space, by using digital technology and seamless connections with meaningful environs. This considered use of digital technology encourages perceptions that there is more commemorative space than literal. Prior to discussing these three themes an overview of Leximancer's analysis complements the process.

Fig 3. displays Leximancer's version of the data, teased from an automatic run of the two digitised data sets; the Visitors' Book, and Trip Advisor comments. CSV files of both cohorts were combined and run in an "unsupervised" [inductive] manner (Angus, 2014; Smith & York, 2016). The default setting of two sentences per considered block was adjusted to accommodate the many comments that were no more than one sentence. 96% of the Visitors' Book have single-sentence comments only whereas the Trip Advisor corpus has an average number of sentences per respondent of 3.9. A point of clarity here; many respondents failed to properly punctuate their comments requiring the data to be "cleaned" prior to analysis. This includes acronyms, spelling, grammar and syntax errors. The tenet underpinning this process was to keep as much of the original meaning intact.

3.1 Analysis.

On consideration of Leximancer's concept map (Fig. 3) one sees 'War', 'Displays', 'Centre' and 'Anzac' conflated by co-occurrence. This means Anzac is often mentioned in the same sentence as 'Display' and 'Centre'. What is also associated with this nexus is 'Excellent' and related synonyms. This suggests an overwhelmingly positive experience for most respondents. Indeed, only 32 or the 1,000 comments contain negative sentiment. The main concern appears to be the price of entry. The price of admissions in the case of detractors is perceived to be high, along with questions being asked as to why it is being charged at all. This implies overt commodification of commemoration is being perceived by respondents to be incongruous (Stone, Hartmann, Seaton, Sharpley, & White, 2018).

Another theme of interest are the commanding views which include the natural harbours of Shoal and Frenchman Bays. This is where both convoys assembled in 1914. The Centre resides atop Mt Clarence in the wider Albany Heritage Park, commanding sweeping views of the approaches to Albany and environs. Designers have capitalised on these views by including four expansive windows in the Centre; two facing south-west and two south-east.

Visitors were observed gathering at the windows while admiring and commenting on the uninterrupted views. The theme, "Windows" co-occurs with "Visit" and "Hours" suggesting the views are of communal significance while visiting the Centre. 'Hours' refers to the time taken, and the time required to do the activity justice, or at least the time spent by the respondent at the Centre. The literal time most often mentioned is one to two hours required to adequately absorb the material. Allied with this are the many respondents admitting to, and/or being surprised at how much information is available to warrant this time.

Fig 3. Unsupervised Analysis of Visitors' Book and Tip Advisor Comments.

3.2 Theme One: The Paradox of Emotional Ambivalence.

Two things are clear when considering the nature of the NAC experience; that it strives to make the experience personal and that it does not opine the topic. To clarify, the NAC does

not either overtly promote or demote military conflict. Instead, values such a courage, mateship, honour, loyalty, innocence; in many cases couched in endearing naivety are emphasised in curation. The word "Caritas" in its secular form describes the complex nexus of military camaraderie and mateship which is magnified during times of conflict – 'Brothers [and sisters] in arms' if you will. In commemoration, caritas' etymology precedes its contemporary medieval religious connotation. Caritas can be considered an amalgam of three ancient Greek concepts of love; that being *storge* (empathy), *philia* (friendship among equals) and *agape* (unconditional love for one's God and [institutional: military] 'family'). While each of the three affinities appear in commemorative display, sometimes they are individuated and sometimes combined. The corollary here is the search for a single descriptor that underpins such uncommon affinity, in a contemporary lexicon that otherwise struggles to do the concept justice. The emphasis in this context is extraordinary, selfless loyalty and affection associated with men, women and animals who often willingly risk and sacrifice their lives for colleagues and country.

The notion of companion animals as not only tools but proxy family is not new (Hirschman, 1994; Kylkilahti, Syrjälä, Autio, Kuismin, & Autio, 2016), but the willingness to risk death across species goes beyond such pedestrian notions. In a commemorative context it is more similar to Casbeard & Booth's notion of "exceptionalism" (2012). A case in point is the recent posthumous award of the PDSA Dickin Medal[4] to the Australian SAS Working Dog, Nordenstamm Joep, call-name *Kuga*. In Afghanistan, August 26, 2011 during contact Kuga received multiple gunshot wounds from a lone enemy combatant. Despite being mortally wounded Kuga was not deterred and wrestled with the gunman until incapacitated. This act reportedly drew fire away from his human colleagues and has been subsequently perceived to be selfless. Kuga suffered both mentally and physically during convalescence, eventually succumbing a year later. His death is officially recorded as 'Died of wounds'.

Whether Kuga consciously risked his life to protect his human companions or whether the behaviour was autonomic is arguably moot. Those who steward Kuga's memorial at Campbell Barracks, Perth profoundly believe the former to be the case (name withheld, [Regimental Sergeant Major − custodian; SASR], personal communication, August 24, 2019). From a social science perspective, we must acknowledge that such perceptions are by default, reality. For when considering the implications of social discourse, it matters not what is real, but what respondents believe is real. "He's the one who chose to go forward. He's the one who chose to take bullets for both me and my mates" (Sergeant J [name withheld] cited in Waseem, 2018, Para. 12). On receiving the award on behalf of the Special Air Service Regiment, Corporal Mark Donaldson [VC] is quoted, "He just wouldn't give up on his mates" ("Special Operations Dog", 2018, Para. 10). Punctuating this perceived display of cross-species caritas is the citation awarded in 2018 as a tribute to the memory of Kuga: "For unstinting bravery and life-saving devotion to his handler and his unit, while on patrol with

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[4] The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA), Dickin Medal is awarded to Commonwealth animals that have displayed 'outstanding gallantry' in wartime.

Operation Slipper in Afghanistan, 2011". (Hayne, 2018; Unsung Heroes − Afghanistan, 2020).

Such commemorative emphasis contrasts markedly with Sharpley and Stone's definition of thanatourism, that being underpinned by mortality salience (2011; Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Nor is the data consistent with a macabre interest in death and suffering, as emphasised in Foley and Lennon's 1996 treatise on death-related tourism; or their "Dark Tourism" definition (2000). Nor is this related to emerging, alternate views of the topic, such as Podoshen, Venkatesh, Wallin, Andrzejewski, & Jin's view of an emerging dystopian dark tourism founded in an uncertain future (2015). Without doubt, the data is unrelated to Gross' emphasis on trauma and the "negative sublime" (2006). These findings are a distinction, an exception, for instead the NAC valorises venerable human traits that emerge in extraordinary times – but most importantly, in spite of death. Visitation to the NAC is demonstrably different from the disrespectful kitsch of popular dark tourism. It has more in common with cultural validation, a sense of national duty (Griffins & Sharpley, 2012), and wonderment at what humans and animals are capable of under duress. Visitor experience at the NAC is typified by profound sadness, quiet dignity, wonderment, and the celebration of all that is impressive about the human spirit. A heightened feeling of emotional ambivalence; of all that is good about life, in the context of death. The contrast between remarkable life associated with contextual death is surely an uncomfortable, yet sanguine confliction.

Illustrating this further, the following interpretive description on display at the NAC accompanies a photograph of Brigadier General Harold Edward Elliot, the day after his battalion's action at Fromelles, 1916: "An abiding memory was Elliot weeping as he shook hands with the pitifully few survivors". Then there are visitor comments resonating with this tenet;

> "...the horrors of war and the bravery and wonderful spirit of those who fight them." (SM117)

> "Very thought provoking and reflective of the bravery, mateship and horrors these Men went through and all that have followed them in the conflicts since...very humbling." (SM118)

Returning to cross-species affection which includes the opening epigraph we observe the role of the horse in the NAC is emphasized. This bond between horse and rider is a poignant contributor to the trans-national Anzac spirit. In deference to this, a life-size copper sculpture of a horse and its rider by local artist Bradley Lucas features prominently on display. The sculpture *ANZAC Spirit* resides in one of the main rooms overlooking the harbour (see Fig. 4). Some examples of visitor comments regarding the appreciation of this bond include sympathy typically reserved for humans;

> "I was close to tears reading the accounts. What really came out was the deep affection for the horses and how devastated the soldiers were that they had to leave them behind." (SM152).

"I loved the see-through sculpture of a soldier watering his horse from his hat, representing the love the men had for their faithful friends…a moving memorial to those brave men, women and their 4-legged mates." (SM113)

"One thing that got me was all the horses, dragged over there and killed." (M40)

Fig 4. Sculpture, *Horse and Rider* overlooking Albany harbour. The inscription reads: *Sharing the last of my water with my old mate. He deserves a drink as much as I before the charge*. © MacCarthy, 2018

3.3 Theme Two: Hero Worship.

Greater fates gain greater rewards

(Heraclitus, circa 400BC).

In contrast to traditional cultural norms it is fair to say that the NAC is not a collection of hagiographies. Instead, curators have deliberately chosen to avoid hero worship preferring

instead a neutral or non-judgemental stance. Exactly how much veneration should curators emphasize is of concern as this is fundamental to the experience. From a stated perspective the NAC makes clear their policy on the matter: "The experience is known for commemorating the war through the stories of the ANZACs [*sic*] as opposed to telling its own story via pro-war or anti-war sentiments" (National ANZAC Centre, 2020). This calculated position is unusual given the degree of hagiography on display in other museums and venues. Hero worship of key community figures is often emphasised: including battles, wars, deaths, resurrections, trials, miracles, sacrifices, journeys and tribulations. Indeed, writers such as O'Guinn (1991) would have us believe that societies have always needed heroes. 'Heroes and their associated myths help us make sense of our lives…When heroes and gods are reasoned away, a vacuum of anxiety remains' (p. 103). Deliberately taking an egalitarian stance therefore is arguably culturally counter-intuitive and not without risk that some may take umbrage. The overwhelming feedback suggests otherwise however with visitors reporting empathy with the characters as ordinary people caught up in an adventure with tragic consequences:

> "What I liked the most is that they showed pictures of soldiers and officers and what they did. The battles also showed lots of pictures. It helped us to get closer to these heroes." (SM86)

Fig 5. A sample of the 32 luminaries chosen to adorn NAC interpretive cards. While some are highly decorated, all are portrayed as ordinary people coping in extraordinary circumstances. © City of Albany, 2020.

3.4 Theme Three: Expanding the Physical Space.

A third notable observation is the use of both symbolism and digital technology to extend the finite physical space. The NAC has co-opted the digital space as an integral part of the experience. Specifically, the use of 9x6.5cm 'baseball' cards of 32 personas involved with

the convoy and subsequent conflict. On the front is a picture of the luminary with their name, role and affiliation. On the back is an optical character recognition symbol which is used to access information via a number of readers throughout the NAC. On leaving, visitors are encouraged to retain their baseball card as a memento. Allied with the use of this technology is the use of touch screens and the use of audio pens using touch-screen activation technology. In combination, these techniques extend the physical space into the digital world of potentially unlimited space. A digital page complements the 32 baseball cards on the main website titled, "Research an ANZAC" (National Anzac Centre, 2020). Respondent surprise at spatial perception was a common theme:

> "…it looks small, but there is A LOT of information!" (SM192)

> "I thought it was a lot bigger than it was, but still very impressed."
> (SM370)

Another technique used to extend the physical space is through linking the perimeter of the NAC with meaningful surroundings. The architecture of the NAC has four large windows by which the Albany's King George Sound features prominently. It is here the two convoys assembled to embark the main portion of the 41,000 troops. In one room there is a large photograph of the sound and a convoy at anchor. Visitors are encouraged to look out at the harbour and imagine what it looked like in 1914.

Extending physical space through co-opting meaningful surroundings is not without precedent. A second room contains an infinity pool pointing towards the passage between Breaksea Island and Torndirrup Peninsula where the convoys left for an uncertain future. A larger infinity pool similarly resides adjacent to the Visitors Centre at the American Cemetery in Colleville sur Mer, France. Both the NAC and the American Cemetery use infinity pools and windows to extend the finite physical space into wider meaningful surroundings. Visitors can then appreciate the importance of location or place and in doing so enhance the experience – by elminating physical boundaries, the experience is less finite.

4.0   CONCLUSIONS.

This study examines attendance and behaviours at the national Anzac Centre in Albany Western Australia. Three sources of data: participant observation, Visitors' Book and social media commentary were compiled using Nethnography which was then analysed using both computer-assisted CA and Reflexive TA. These two qualitative analytical techniques represent the extremes of the Big Q/little q continuum (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Kidder & Fine, 1987). Resulting themes include: *Experience*, *Self [development]* and *Community*. *Experience* was then parsed with three sub-themes discussed in detail; they are Emotional Ambivalence, Hero worship and Spatial perceptions.

Allied with this are inductive themes teased from the data by Leximancer. They include the co-occurrence of "War", "Displays" and "Centre". The co-occurrence of "Anzacs", "War", "Experience" and "Tribute"; and the co-occurrence of "Visit" with "Windows" (views) and "Hours" (time). The co-occurrence of "Displays" with "Excellent" and related synonyms suggests a majority appreciation of the experience. The final distillation reveals two overarching Leximancer "Tags": that being "War" and "Visit". One point of note is the distinction between textual and contextual findings. The study's RTA findings derived from manual coding and informed by the lived experience are more contextual. The lived experience includes participant observation in situ but also a lifetime of prior commemorative experience; both authors have affiliation with the Australian Defence Force. The first author is a former serving soldier and commissioned officer. Indeed, contextual consideration at every step underpins the reflexive nature of RTA. By contrast, Leximancer's findings are entirely non-contextual, metric-based and more akin to CA. The outcome appears more superficial and based on the frequency and co-occurrence of words alone. These words require post analysis contextualising, placing the onus on the researcher to grasp the significance at the end of the latent process. The advantage of computer assisted CA is however that it is less effortful and markedly quicker. It is also a point of note that Leximancer's findings comprise the two digitised cohorts only. The ontological map does not include the lived experience.

By using two complementary analytical methods, RTA and CA one can argue that the findings are more robust. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages when used independently however when combined there appears to be a synergistic effect regarding insight − they inform each other. Depending on the volume and veracity of CA this has implications for generalizability, or the postmodern equivalent, transferability (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). The importance of this study lies not only in examining the experience of the NAC for its own sake but also adding, or at least emphasising the notion of positive human traits including caritas as an important, if not an integral criterion of commemoration. A preoccupation with 'darkness' and all the pejorative aspects of conflict has caused us to overlook the gallant deeds and uplifting sentiment that is often associated with war heritage. Such sanguinity is critical to the experience. For many respondents, immersive caritas is their fundamental expectation of commemoration. Judging by the literature the relegation of dark autotelic motives appears to resonate in similar places of commemoration (Brown, 2016; MacCarthy & Willson, 2015; Winter, 2010).

One overarching observation pervading the NAC is that it is not an ostentatious Legenda Aurea[5]-style of repository. It is not replete with heroes deified, idealized and idolized as moral exemplars. Respondents describe a place of significance and cultural identity, but without celebrity heroes. Emerging from the dark, Anzac commemoration is a respectful celebration of all that is potentially good about human dignity, regardless of geopolitics and in spite of war.

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[5] Legenda Aurea, the original [Latin] title for The Golden Legend; 100+ hagiographies compiled by Jacobus de Varagine (Ca. 13th century).

As this project seeks to expand our understanding of dark tourism there remains unanswered questions. Questions such as; What is the relationship between hero-worship and visitor empathy. What theories can be incorporated into the architecture and content of heritage sites to enhance visitor expectations of immersive caritas. Is commemoration really dark tourism or should we redefine the hypernym. In Stone's 'Dark to Light' scale, perhaps commemorism prefers the light (2006).

While death underpins both commemorative and dark tourism the attitude to each is antithetical. It appears only in the initial manual coding for RTA and does not appear at all in computer-generated CA. While recreational tourists and "passers-by" (Brown, 2016) might view death as an autotelic motivator, commemorists relegate death to an instrumental catalyst. The focus at the NAC is not on death itself, but what death facilitates. One conclusion being that motives for visiting such a place appear more related to revelling in what death facilitated in the zeitgeist. Death is therefore a catalyst for more positive traits: secular care, overcoming adversity, heroism, courage, and love – love of fraternity (including animals) and love of nation. Visitors are wanting to empathise with the stories and similarly we see empathy contributing to personal and collective identity (Kutbay & Aykac 2016; Laing & Frost, 2019). A place acknowledged as a "conduit to reflecting about oneself and others" (p. 197). Hubbert considers grief and crisis from a different perspective, "It's often loss, it's often crisis, it's often disappointment that has much more to teach us than the bright, shiny moments in life." (Scopelianos, 2020, para 17.). Hubbert suggest that grief and crisis are part of everyday life and dealing with this can be a catalyst for wellbeing. Wellbeing defined as not simply happiness but also 'interest, engagement, confidence and affection', along with longer term personal realisations such as control, potential and a sense of purpose (Huppert, 2009). Tourism can benefit from Psychology's paradigm shift; from a focus on dysfunction and disorder to facilitating wellbeing and positive mental states (Argyll, 1999; Huppert, 2009; Selligman, 2002). The notion that commemorative custodians should endeavour to make visitors happy is not necessarily what they want or perhaps need. No visitors to the NAC expressed happiness and yet the majority expressed satisfaction and similar traits of growth, development and wellbeing.

If visitors seek immersion in positive traits should this be emphasised by custodians for a more satisfying experience. Conversely, a focus on negative commemorative emotion may result in long term adverse consequences. Supporting this is Nawihjn and Fricke's study of 240 visitors to the Neuengamme [concentration camp] memorial (2015). Should we therefore de-emphasise the negative and promote the positive or as Cook refers to the concept, 'counter-narratives' (2016). Should we instead pander to consumer demand for an expected experience (Laing & Frost, 2019; Stone, 2006), and what is our responsibility, if any for lasting impressions – including revisit intention (Dimitrovski et al., 2017; Nawihjn & Fricke, 2015).

And what of the commodification that straddles both dark and commemorative tourism; specifically, the commercialisation of pilgrimage and entry to memorial sites. There is evidence in these findings of confliction. While some bemoan and punctuate the juxtaposition of charging an entry fee to a sacred site, others accept the pragmatism that staff need to be

paid and the facilities maintained. Still others believe the entry fee is beneath such an emotive and transformative experience. One thing is for certain − where phronesis or practical wisdom is concerned, there is still much to be resolved.

5.0   ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

6.0   REFERENCES.

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Appendix A.

Participant Observation Phase, Albany Heritage Park.

Semi-structured questions asked in no particular order.

Where are you from?

What are you doing while here?

- How long are you planning to spend doing…?
- How long did you spend doing…?
- Are you visiting any other part of Albany or the South West?

How is this experience relevant to you?

Are you connected to anyone from the original Anzacs?

- If yes, tell me about them.

Who are you with today?

- How are they related?
- What is their connection with the NAC?

What are your thoughts on the experience?

- What did you learn?
- How has the visit changed you?
- Did it meet your expectations? If not, what can be improved?
- Were there any interesting connections interactions?