10

Selective Empathy in the Re-designed Imperial War Museum London: Heroes and Perpetrators

Gabriel Koureas

The Imperial War Museum (IWM) opened its doors to the public in 1920.[1] Following a multimillion pound refurbishment to coincide with the centenary anniversary of the First World War in 2014, its new mission, as stated on the website, is to be a 'global authority on the impact of conflict, from the First World War to the present day, in Britain, its former Empire and Commonwealth.' And it aims to achieve this by communicating to the public a 'deeper understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war.'[2]

The focus of this essay is the representation of war, violence and particularly the figure of the perpetrator in the IWM. I want to examine whether the IWM, which claims to be a 'global authority on the impact of conflict,' manages to communicate to the visitor a 'deeper understanding' of war and its consequences. The political philosopher Étienne Balibar argues that if we assume that 'violence is about crossing limits' and if the general formula for violence is that the 'boundaries have been

G. Koureas (✉)
Birkbeck, University of London, London, UK
e-mail: g.koureas@bbk.ac.uk

© The Author(s) 2018

C. Bielby and J. Stevenson Murer (eds.), *Perpetrating Selves*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96785-1_10

violated,' then we cannot 'assign violence to a definite sphere with any precision,'[3] and we cannot clearly assign individuals and groups to the 'categories of those who suffer and those who perpetrate violence.'[4] As Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois argue, 'violence is in the eye of the beholder' and 'depending on one's political-economic position in the world (dis)order, particular acts of violence may be perceived as "depraved" or "glorious"' and violent actors 'alternatively viewed as martyrs or terrorists.'[5] Clearly, like violence, the notion of the perpetrator is ambiguous, and its contingent nature poses a number of representational problems for museums of war and the IWM in particular. Does the IWM challenge established notions of war: 'heroism,' 'justifiable wars,' 'the enemy'? How are wars, and especially British Colonial Wars, framed within the space of the museum? How and for whom are empathy and affect generated? Further, how are specific objects used to generate empathic identifications and affect? And finally, how does personal memory relate to these objects, and how is it used in relation to the cultural memory of conflict and British national identity?

Frames, and especially the framing of war within a political and cultural context, play a pivotal role in representations of war. Judith Butler in her discussion of precarious lives argues that in communicating war, certain frames are in operation, and they work to differentiate the lives we can apprehend and acknowledge from those we cannot: the enemy or perpetrator, the foreigner or 'other' are always those that are not apprehended.[6] These frames not only organise visual experience but also generate specific ways of categorising, responding to and apprehending those around us. The question that arises from this is: how do existing frames—within the media, museums, ceremonies and visual culture—allocate recognition and affect differentially?

Butler argues that the possibility of producing affect—astonishment, outrage, revulsion, admiration—depends on how the content is framed in time and place. The body is central to these affectual encounters since each body finds itself potentially threatened by others who are, by definition, precarious as well. Therefore, forms of domination follow. This generalised condition of precariousness and dependency is exploited by those in power to produce forms of domination and control. An instance of this is the colonised body[7] that through specific policies

and discourses was reduced to what Butler describes as 'lives that are not quite lives, lives that are cast as destructible and ungreivable.'[8]

In war museums, the norm is that war is divorced from violence. This is achieved through curatorial practices that justify and celebrate war in honour of those who fought and died heroically for the nation. A closer examination of these curatorial choices reveals furthermore that a hierarchy of empathic identification is in operation. This hierarchy ranks certain conflicts, often in the name of security and humanity, as justifiable, and labels particular populations as 'war-fighters' and hence as positive/heroic and to be empathised with, whilst others are reduced to perpetrating and violent 'insurgents.' These practices result in the normalisation of certain acts of violence and the condemnation of others.

Museums of War

Only since the 2000s have museums of war and the Holocaust started attracting scholarly attention in terms of their collecting and exhibitionary strategies. These studies mostly concentrate on what Paul Williams has termed 'memorial museums,' which he defines as museums 'dedicated to a historic event commemorating mass suffering of some kind.'[9] The focus of these museums is the commemoration of war rather than its realities, and this is what complicates their representation of war.[10]

Although the IWM was established to commemorate the First World War, the debates surrounding its establishment reveal that the memorial aspect of the museum was always seen as somehow secondary to the historical aspects of war.[11] More recently, the commemorative aspect of the museum seems to have been sidestepped altogether with the museum focusing on the 'understanding of war and its consequences.' Moreover, the desired representational neutrality of the IWM and other war museums has proved problematic; something that Jay Winter has called their 'representational dilemma.'[12] This dilemma is most clearly manifested in the curation of the weapons and machinery of war in ways that depart from the traditional and apparently neutral display of their technical specifications and, most importantly, from exhibitionary strategies that favour their aestheticisation.[13]

My concern with the current historiography of museums of war is the absence of debates around the representation of the perpetrator in British war museums and especially around Britain as a perpetrator nation. Following the end of the Second World War, Germany recognised itself as a 'perpetrator nation'[14] and revisited its troubled past in an attempt at reconciliation with its difficult history.[15] However, Britain has never openly discussed its colonial past and the violence inflicted on the indigenous populations of the colonies. Instead, a national identity has been constructed around notions of victory during the two World Wars, based on the idea of a united and sacrificing nation in the face of adversity and hardship.[16]

By concentrating on two objects in the IWM and on letters and memoirs from the archives of the museum, this essay will investigate what I term selective empathy in order to understand the dynamics and exchanges that take place between memory, history, the victim and perpetrator, and empathy. The two objects on display that I discuss, along with their histories, materialities and curation will be juxtaposed with unseen narratives from the archives in order to reveal the complexities of representing justifiable and unjustifiable wars, heroes and perpetrators and their contingent and ambivalent nature.

The objects I concentrate on are, first, the *'L' Battery QF 13 pdr Mk 1* that has been symbolic of the First World War since it was first exhibited in the IWM in 1920. Second, the *Ferret Mk II, 4 × 4 Scout United Nations Car* that served in Cyprus between 1962 and 1969. In both instances, these two objects are animated with narratives, photographs and films, and become anthropomorphised, metonymic substitutes for the perpetrating self, thus firmly positioning and facilitating, through a hierarchy of empathy, the representation of heroes and perpetrators, humanity and inhumanity, justifiable and unjustifiable violence.

Empathising with Heroes and 'Justifiable' Violence

The *'L' Battery QF 13 pdr Mk 1* artillery gun, otherwise known as the '*Néry*' Gun, because it was in Néry, France that it was used during the First World War, sits proudly in the atrium of the IWM, in more or

less the same location as before the multimillion pound revamp of the museum. The only feature that has changed is the label, which had remained the same since the gun was first exhibited during the inaugural exhibition of the IWM at Crystal Palace in 1920.[17] At that point, the label, which described a particular battle for which the gun had been used, endowed the gun with heroic qualities; it was anthropomorphised and fetishised: 'During the action it accounted for three German guns at the least before it ceased firing,' the label stated.[18] The soldiers serving the gun were framed as subservient to it and their lives, whether lost or injured, were portrayed as secondary to the glorification of the gun and its achievements.

Winston Churchill, at the time Minister of War, envisioned the sacredness of the guns of the IWM during his speech at the opening ceremony: 'Those sombre relics of war would be looked upon, not merely with wonder and astonishment by future generations, they would be regarded as the sacred objects, which represented the sacrifice of one splendid generation.'[19] The guns, given the status of religious relics, encapsulated the sacrificial act of the nation. The cult of the gun was, thus, established. '*Nery*' was even wheeled outside the confines of the museum to attend the unveiling ceremony of the Royal Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner in October 1925. Charles ffoulkes, curator of the IWM at the time, wrote in his memoir: 'I saw men en-route raise their hats to this gallant relic which lay at the foot of the Memorial during the dedication ceremony.'[20] Even six years after the end of the war the gun, as Churchill predicted, became a point of reverence and a memorial in its own right. The fact that this was an object that brought death to a considerable number of people was erased from the cultural memory of the nation.

Fast forward to 2015 and the 'splendid but pathetic relic'[21] acquired a new label that reflects our multimedia society. The new multimedia label uses film, photography, painting and text to tell the visitor the story of the gun and, to a degree, the people who fought around it. We are introduced to the gun, its technical specifications and the significant role the artillery played in the war via a short film clip, and to the importance of the artillery for recruitment purposes via a recruitment poster. We are then presented with the men of the *'L' Battery*, who

served with the gun, through a group photograph on which three men are highlighted on the screen. The final battle in which the gun fought is introduced and the unexpected nature of the attack is emphasised. At this point, the perpetrator nation, Germany, is mentioned for the first time. From what is described as 'the un-canniness' of the attack, because it was sudden and unexpected, we can only presume that the Germans are not honest fighters. As the fight intensifies, the multimedia label turns from film footage, used to represent the importance of the artillery, to painting for support. The presumed factual actuality of documentary film is replaced by the more aestheticised medium of painting. Hence, the destruction and violence of the battle is aestheticised, and the wounding of the main character of the narrative, Bradbury, is represented through these paintings. The horrific scenes of the battle are almost abstracted, to introduce the heroism of Bradbury who although dying shouted orders of encouragement to his men. The idea of heroism is then further stressed through the other two protagonists, Sergeant Nelson and Sergeant Major Dorrell, who had been identified in the group photograph of the battery, culminating in all three receiving the Victoria Cross for bravery.

A metonymic substitution takes place here, where the nastiness of war, death, destruction and perpetration turns into heroism via an interesting interplay between photography, painting and film, reaching its climax in the materiality of the Victoria Cross that we are invited to visit in the Lord Ashcroft Gallery, which itself aims to tell the story of 'incredible bravery and courage.' However, in this gallery, the problematic nature of violence, the perpetrating self and its representation in the museum emerges. Seven text panels identify the main 'types of bravery': boldness, aggression, leadership, skills, sacrifice, initiative and endurance. The 'aggression' panel reads: 'Strike NOW while the iron's hot. Use maximum force. For these people, killing is a MEANS TO AN END. It's NOT COURAGE, adrenalin driven in the heat of the battle. If <u>you</u> don't GET THEM <u>they'll</u> GET YOU' (emphasis in original).[22] Violence and aggression are not only justified but also are strongly encouraged and the heroic acts that the gallery showcases seem to become acts of perpetrating violence. The gallery clearly demonstrates the problematics of the perpetrator, and the fact that we cannot clearly

assign individuals and groups to the 'categories of those who suffer and those who perpetrate violence.'[23]

Returning to the atrium of the museum, the materiality of '*Néry*' becomes even more significant in view of the above. The gun's materiality invites us to view its battle scars, the dents and dings on its barrel, the ruts and scratches on its carriage, which endow it with heroic and sacred qualities. What about the men who served alongside the gun? Can they be seen as perpetrators of violence and death? The presentation does not address this, nor does it address the fact that a gun by its nature is a killing machine, let alone the vast number of German soldiers it killed. From the fact that we are told the amount of ammunition the gun fired, we are only to presume that it wounded and killed a considerable number of men. The personified heroic gun and the men who served it ought then to be represented as perpetrators of violence and death.

Tucked away towards the end of the exhibition 'Truth and Memory' (July 2014–March 2015), the '*Néry*' gun re-emerges in a photograph from the first exhibition of the IWM at Crystal Palace, London in 1920. In the photograph, Charles ffoulkes is seen placing a wreath at the foot of the gun. The label tentatively addresses the issue of exhibiting heavy guns and weaponry, and the risk the museum was taking in glorifying the destructiveness of modern war. Referring to the custom of placing wreaths at the foot of '*Néry*,' the label states: 'By fetishizing the "*Néry*" gun, the museum did more than merely confer significance to an early skirmish. It assuaged the discomforting reality of the First World War's wholesale destructiveness by seeking to preserve a pre-1914 notion of war as a righteous human endeavour.'[24] However, these issues are not raised in the atrium of the IWM, where the gun is presented to the public as an anthropomorphised, heroic object whose battle scars demonstrate war as a 'righteous human endeavour' instead of being presented as a powerful tool able to inflict death and injury.

Returning again to the atrium, another important narrative and metonymic substitution emerges from the positioning of the gun next to Jeremy Deller's *Baghdad, 5 March 2007*. The work consists of the mangled remains of a car that was salvaged after a suicide street bombing in 2007 at Baghdad's famous Al-Mutanabbi book market, a place at the

heart of the city's cultural and intellectual life. The bomb killed 38 people and wounded many more. During a panel discussion in 2011 with Jeremy Deller, Roger Tolson, head of collections at the time the car was first exhibited at the IWM in 2010, acknowledged that the atrium of the IWM London was full of 'polished and extraordinarily destructive machines' and that Deller's work provided an opportunity to undermine that.[25] The IWM Annual Report for 2010–2011 mentions the acquisition of Deller's work under the 'exhibitions' section, which according to the museum provided an opportunity to 'engage diverse audiences and encourage new visitors' as well as providing 'something different for regular visitors.'[26] The Director General of the IWM, Diane Lees, stated in relation to the *Baghdad Car* that the museum hoped the new exhibit 'will prove a thought-provoking addition to our permanent collections and encourage visitors to consider not just this car, but all our exhibits, in a new light.' She added that it 'will serve as a sobering reminder of the impact of war on civilians.'[27] The car was instantly presented by the museum officials as transgressing the space of the atrium and providing an alternative view of warfare. According to them, it provided a form of dialogue between the machinery of war and its consequences. However, what both the artist and museum officials excluded from the dialogue they envisioned was the figure of the insurgent, the perpetrator who used their own body to create the horror of the mangled metal that the artist and museum saw as providing a challenge to the machinery of war as well as to the soldiers as perpetrators of violence.

The curation of the machinery of war that forms part of the display in the atrium, and the '*Néry*' gun in particular which is adjacent to the *Baghdad Car*, also testifies to the IWM's denial of their destructiveness: The highly polished and clean surfaces are in sharp contrast to the realities of the battlefield where it is always a nearly impossible task to keep machines in functioning order. In the atrium, they reflect, rather than inviting an empathetic engagement with the visitor by deflecting difficult thoughts through the heroic qualities that have been attached to them. By sharp contrast, the *Baghdad Car* with its rusted metal could offer the possibility of an empathetic engagement—and one might imagine that the destroyed car is indeed the result of what the machines surrounding it could ultimately achieve. However, a metonymic

substitution is taking place in the narrative that runs through the atrium: The aestheticised objects of warfare and their assumed innocence because of the heroic qualities they acquired though their presentation in the museum not only cannot have caused this destruction but they also deflect any such possibility through their shining surfaces. Here, I am mobilising the cultural philosopher Byung-Chul Han's argument that the 'world of smoothness' is one in which 'there is no pain, no injury and no guilt.' It allows an encounter with 'oneself and not the *other*,'[28] thus denying the possibility of empathic identification. Hence, the *Baghdad Car* fails to enter into any meaningful dialogue with the objects that surround it. Most importantly, the mangled piece fails to enter into a conversation with the visitor as the actuality of its destruction through the perpetrator suicide bomber becomes an absence that comes to haunt the mangled remains of the car. The horror and inability of the West to engage with the suicide bomber becomes a phantom that haunts the atrium of the IWM together with the deaths that the guns in the atrium have inflicted. The objects on display and the mangled car function instead like an eighteenth century 'conversation piece,' peepshows into the lives of others who have no voice.[29]

The absence of the terrorist/perpetrator becomes even more pronounced when the conflict is what can be labelled as 'unjustifiable wars,' such as the British Colonial Wars. Before the re-design of the exhibition spaces, a small section of the basement of the museum, which has now been removed, was dedicated to colonial wars of independence, and a small vitrine representing the Cypriot War of Independence (1955–1959) showed some of the material culture of the conflict—flags, letters, pamphlets, ammunition and guns. The uprising was of course described as a 'terrorist act,' and none of the methods used by the British army such as torture were mentioned in the display. Following the re-design of the museum and the removal of the colonial wars section, a small part on the second level is now dedicated to the 'Irish Troubles' under the general theme 'Your Britain (1945-1963).' The wall text clearly states that, following the Second World War, Britain was determined to 'remain a global empire with international responsibilities.' Nowhere is it mentioned that by this time, Britain had lost several of its colonies and that others were revolting against British

colonial rule. Instead, opposite this introductory wall text, an armoured personnel vehicle stands at the entrance of the 'Irish Troubles' section. The label states: 'British soldiers were trained to fight conventional wars on the battlefield. They were not prepared for the challenging task of patrolling British streets. The enemy was unseen, little different from the people they knew in their home towns.'[30] This invisible enemy is firmly placed within the context of British soil, and the Irish Troubles are reduced to an issue of divided British communities rather than a case of British colonial aggression. The label does not even hint at any other British Colonial Wars. These have been erased completely from the space of the IWM and to a large degree from British cultural memory.

Walking along the second level of the IWM, the visitor comes across a white United Nations (UN) patrol car, the *Ferret Mk II, 4 × 4 Scout United Nations Car*. In what follows, I will concentrate on this exhibit in order to elaborate further on the erasure of British Colonial Wars from British cultural memory. To do so, I will juxtapose the memoirs and letters of servicemen who served in Cyprus during the period of the uprising (1955–1959) from the archives of the IWM, with the way the *Scout Car* is curated. At one side of the car, a table displays a map of the Eastern Mediterranean with Cyprus highlighted in green. A series of photographs, depicting the buffer zone that has divided the island since 1974, are placed next to the map. The 'stick-it' like notes that clearly seem to form part of the new exhibitionary strategy of the museum, give a brief history of the car and its involvement in Cyprus. We are informed that the Eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus was divided in 1974 and that since then a United Nations peacekeeping force has enforced a buffer zone, known as the 'Green Line,' between the Turkish-speaking northern half of the island and the Greek-speaking southern half. Nowhere are we told that the so-called 'Green Line' was first invented by the British Truce Force in 1963, after the first inter-communal clashes that took place following the independence of the island from British colonial rule and the enforcement of an unworkable constitution by Britain to secure military bases on the island. Furthermore, nowhere is it mentioned that during the war of independence from colonial rule (1955–1959), the British colonial forces actively

encouraged the conflict between the Greek- and Turkish-speaking communities, by, for example, employing Turkish-speaking police personnel to fight the Greek community.[31] Instead, we are informed that from 1878, Cyprus was governed by Britain because of its strategic position in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Following what the information panel describes as a 'bitter terrorist campaign' seeking independence from British colonial rule, the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960, but it soon ended in the division of the island because of Greek Cypriot demands for union with Greece, which was resisted by the Turkish minority, resulting in Turkey's intervention in 1974 to protect their rights.

In what follows I want to investigate possible ways of re-framing the representation of colonial wars in the IWM and the possibilities that might offer for a different empathic and affectual understanding of the precariousness of life in the colonies. In particular, I want to explore how a reframing of the coloniser/colonised perpetrator positions can provide an understanding of the contingent nature of the term. To do so, I venture into the archives of the IWM, to understand the curatorial concerns and collecting strategies of the museum and the archival personal narratives of the soldiers who served in Cyprus, which are absent from the space of the museum, unlike the personal narratives of soldiers from the two World Wars.

Re-framings: Collecting and Exhibiting Colonial Wars

At the meeting of the board of trustees of the IWM on 13 April 1959, the trustees were informed that the director of the museum had applied through the War Office for a small selection of EOKA (*Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston*—National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) exhibits. The Director stated that the reason for requesting the material was that it was of great interest to the public at the time,[32] not least because General Service Medals had been awarded for service in Cyprus since 1956.[33] Gallantry, as exemplified by the award of medals, provided the impetus for the request for items from Cyprus.

The items that were collected included: a home-made shotgun used by a member of EOKA; cloth-lined plastic bags used to conceal ammunition and weapons in underground hides; the belt of batteries worn around the waist and used to ignite remote-controlled land mines; a glass tube of pepper used by EOKA terrorists in the hills to destroy their scent for British tracker-dog patrols; a water bottle carried by EOKA terrorist leader Kyriakos Matsis who was killed during a raid. (The water bottle was damaged by a bullet during the raid.) Bergmann 9 mm automatic pistol, holster, belt and pouch containing two locally made grenades, made by EOKA group leader Gregoris Afxentiou who was killed in a hide out in 1957; one of the three 'biscuit tin' bombs planted in the transmitter unit of the Cyprus Broadcasting Studio. (Finger prints found on the case of this bomb had led to the arrest of a Greek engineer on the studio staff.) The remains of a bomb which exploded while being removed from a car. (The staff sergeant who removed the bomb received severe injuries to his hands.)[34]

The above list of objects, which were exhibited at the IWM until its recent redesign, reveals the insistence of the museum curators on displaying the perceived terrorist acts of the perpetrator insurgents. The perpetrator, or terrorist as the official language of the museum insists on using, is encapsulated in these objects and their destructive power. The objects also demonstrate the uncanniness of the perpetrator and the devious methods that he used to carry out his operations—concealment of ammunition, erasing tracks, using household objects to create bombs—which contrast with the heroic actions of the British soldiers who were awarded the General Service Medal. The wall text that accompanied the galleries dedicated to British Colonial Wars placed the objects within the discourse of terrorism, and most importantly identified the insurgents as 'perpetrators,' emphasising the 'random character of terrorist attacks' and the fact that their acts 'often alienate the perpetrators from the people they seek to attack.'[35] This was further stressed in the wall text that accompanied the display of the Cyprus uprising. The text started by outlining the British position at the outset of the conflict, quoting assertions from the Colonial Office in 1954 that there is 'no question of any change of sovereignty in Cyprus' because of its strategically important position on the main sea route between Europe

and Asia.[36] The wall text panel then proceeded to describe the 'campaign of violence' that was mounted by EOKA, thus establishing the organisation and the men who fought for independence as the perpetrators of violence. The fact that Britain was the original perpetrator through its colonial expansion policy and its geopolitical interests in the Middle East is not mentioned in the text which quotes Henry Hopkinson, Minister of Colonial Affairs: 'Nothing less than continued sovereignty over the island can enable Britain to carry out her strategic obligation to Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.'[37] Hence, British colonial interests give license for the use of violence from the British perspective. During the state of emergency that was imposed following the beginning of the uprising on 1 April 1955, the colonial authorities saw all acts of violence from the insurgents as acts of terrorism. However, if one looks at the perpetration of violence as an act committed by both sides, then a different picture starts to emerge and certain similar characteristics surface in relation to the perpetrating self.

Perpetrating Colonial Masculinities

The booklet 'Wanted Men in Cyprus,'[38] which was displayed in the vitrine dedicated to the Cyprus uprising and was issued by the British colonial administration and circulated to British troops in Cyprus during that period, captures the face of the perpetrator in its parade of identification photographs. Each page contains two photographs of 'wanted' men with a brief description of their physical characteristics and where appropriate the detention centre from which they escaped. These identification photographs function not only as tools of surveillance and control by the authorities but also as manifestations of masculinities that needed to be contained and disciplined. The perpetrator is seen by the colonial authorities not only as the instigator of violence, but also as transgressing western masculinities. In the caption for the military leader of EOKA, George Grivas Digenis, there are attempts to deflate Digenis' masculine demeanour—his broad shoulders occupy the width of the photograph—through reference to a 'medium to broad build (possibly less thickset than indicated in the photograph).'

There is seemingly a need to contain his 'strong broad face,' 'dark and bushy eyebrows' and 'wide shut mouth with firm jaw.'[39] In fact, in his private papers, located in the IWM archive, Lord Harding, the Colonial Governor of Cyprus from 1955 to 1957, identified EOKA as the main element of 'disorder and subversion' which needed to be brought under control using the 'power of detention,' 'screening' and the 'imposition of collective punishment.' To render EOKA 'powerless as a terrorist organisation,' Lord Harding recommended a vigorous offensive military campaign.[40]

The attempted containment of these transgressive and threatening masculinities took the form of several states of emergency measures, such as road blocks, traffic and house searches and detention without trial. The leaflet in the archives of the IWM 'Search by Security Forces,' issued by the British forces and distributed to the population, outlines the reasons for the curtailment of civil liberties, stating that 'operations such as this are necessary in order to free the people of CYPRUS [sic] from fear and protect them from violence.' This was promoted as the 'duty of the Security Forces,' who carried out their 'task with determination and impartiality.'[41]

Another state of emergency measure was the authorisation to open fire against civilians. The leaflet's instructions to the security forces stated that it was the individual soldier's responsibility to assess any situation in which opening fire might be necessary. Examples of such situations were to 'defend oneself, their comrades, families and peaceable inhabitants against attacks'; attacks on government property and the threat of 'a riotous mob' that could potentially pose a risk to 'life and property.' The leaflet then proceeded to instruct the forces on 'how to fire': 'Always fire aimed shots; Aim at the part of the body you are least likely to miss i.e., in the middle.'[42] Shooting was not the only deterrent during the state of emergency; hanging was also introduced as a means of controlling what was perceived by the authorities as 'public disorder' and 'lawlessness.' According to Lord Harding, 'it was fear of hanging which provided the most effective deterrent against the terrorists and started the flow of information from those arrested.'[43]

For the colonial authorities, these forms of violence were justifiable, whereas violence from EOKA was seen as resulting in suffering and fear

amongst the population. A 'Secret Report on the Cyprus Emergency'[44] assessed the outcome of the operations after the end of the troubles in 1959 and was signed by Lord Harding. EOKA is described as an organisation which aimed to 'capture public opinion' by 'intimidation, passive resistance, violence and the denigration of Government and the security forces.' The result of such tactics was that the colonial forces could not tackle EOKA by 'purely overt means' because of the 'subversive nature' of the movement. The report recommended that the fight against EOKA could be achieved by 'deploying small numbers of troops in order not to alienate public opinion.' The small number of troops needed to be 'skilled and well trained' with a 'thorough understanding of terrorist tactics.' The antidote to EOKA was to 'rely on brains and not brawn,' and 'surprise, deception, stealth, continual alertness and marksmanship were the needs of the day.' Targets, the report concludes, were 'infrequent and elusive,' and it was necessary for the standards of training to be very 'high' so that when 'opportunities occurred they were not missed.' What becomes clear from the above is that EOKA and, by implication, the masculinities of its men are violent, intimidating, subversive, deceitful and lacking brain power. By contrast, the British soldiers are highly skilled and relied on their intellect rather than their sheer physical power.

But how did the soldiers and special forces who served in Cyprus see their role? Did they see themselves as perpetrators of violence and, if so, did they conceive their acts as justifiable?

The Ambivalent Nature of the Perpetrator and Its Self-Narration

Following the end of the uprising and the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, the British government started receiving resettlement claims from British citizens who had settled in Cyprus in the years prior to the events. A letter to Lord Harding from one such individual, A. E. Cummings, provides an illustration of the ambivalence of the term 'perpetrator' and, most importantly, of what Primo Levi termed the 'grey zone,' a zone at the intersection and divergence of two camps: the

masters and slaves.[45] Cummings who was superintendent in the police force highlighted the 'misfortunes' of people like him and particularly the ambivalence generated by the reversal of the role of the perpetrator:

> If the blackguards, thugs and murderers of yesterday, today become the heroic fighters of freedom then, in the eyes of Greek Cypriots their blood-stained and part-worn mantles will be re-issued to their former British opponents who continue to reside in the Island.[46]

Cummings raises the important issue of the contingent nature of the notion of the perpetrator in the colonial and post-colonial context as well as the contingent nature of heroism and masculinities. The letter outlines in detail Cumming's duties and contribution to the arrests of many 'terrorists.'[47] Because of his activities, he asserts, he was on three occasions warned that his life was in danger. What he seemed to be more worried about though was the existence of official correspondence bearing his name with regard to 'dealing with subversive activities of individuals' and detainees: 'These murderers will in due course be installed in Government appointments,' which, he concluded, will make his 'own future in Cyprus impossible.' He added that the state of emergency reversed his position of authority and '[he] became a marked man.'[48]

For Primo Levi, the 'grey zone' contains an 'incredibly complicated internal structure' which results in making judgement difficult and almost impossible. Unlike the two World Wars for which a clear, although one can argue very subjective, demarcation line is drawn by the IWM between heroes and perpetrators, the above letter reveals the ambivalence and transgressive nature of the perpetrator. This results in British Colonial Wars of independence posing a representational problem, not only for museums of war but also importantly for British cultural memory. The way that the re-designed IWM dealt with this representational problem was to remove most of the references to and displays of British Colonial Wars completely and concentrate instead on the perceived clear demarcations between heroes and perpetrators that the two World Wars provide through their grand narratives.

In the archives of the IWM, the personal memoirs and letters of servicemen who served during the colonial wars of independence from

British rule are very few compared to the letters of those who fought in the two World Wars. This provides an indication of the extent to which such wars and their cultural memory are considered as worth preserving and, by implication, the status of these wars within British cultural memory.

Ian Martin was trained as an interpreter at the British Institute in Nicosia and in 1957 was attached to the Special Branch of the Cyprus Police and later to the 1st Battalion of the Royal Ulster Rifles (RUR) serving in Cyprus. His short memoir in the archive of the IWM provides a concise summary of the political and historical events he witnessed and also includes copies of the letters he sent to his parents, describing those events. His archive complicates and problematises further the ambivalent nature of the perpetrator and especially the subjectivities of the violent perpetrating self. In one of the letters, he describes an incident following a shooting in a shop in one of the main commercial streets in Nicosia:

> [W]hen I arrived two platoons from 'B' company and the RUR riot squad were smashing up every single thing in the place: books, cups and plates, chairs, tables, furniture, mirrors etc. Everyone except me thoroughly enjoying themselves, especially the RUR officers of course, one of whom said to me he hadn't enjoyed himself so much in years.[49]

The letter reveals that Martin was very much in a minority position in his attitude towards the behaviour of his comrades towards the Cypriot population. It also highlights the pleasure of the British troops in inflicting violence and destruction. Martin repeatedly states to his parents that 'I saw enough of this' or 'I can just about restrain myself for my remaining time out here, and certainly no longer.'

The relationship with the local population and the subjectivity of the perpetrating self are also manifested in the memoirs of P. J. Houghton-Brown who served in Cyprus with the 1st Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment. The order to shoot at 'anyone you see who might be going to throw a bomb' makes Houghton-Brown wonder how 'we are not going to get hateful to the people.' However, a few lines later, the mood shifts to one of trophy capture: 'We have caught a lot of EOKA and found

many bombs. It was us that caught the terrorist with a £5000 price on his head. We have all become bloodthirsty.'[50] And subsequently: 'They killed 24 troops last year and we only killed 6. We should shoot more of them.' The memoir then proceeds to describe further incidents of violence and the satisfaction gained from such violent acts. Houghton-Brown adds that there was a 'spirit of quiet efficiency born of tough experience in carrying out the painstaking, distasteful and often unrewarding job of searching, questioning and guarding.'[51]

However, the 'efficiency' with which the search was carried out and the pride Houghton-Brown took in this, is soon overshadowed by the 'worst thing that happened,' which affected him personally. One morning, he woke up only to discover that his 'usual cup of tea' had not been served by his batman, and 'to find that my batman had been shot dead while on patrol that night.' He could still remember the 'funeral, the coffin and being unable to write the letters.' The memoir concludes with reference to the 'Wanted Men in Cyprus' leaflet:

> There is still in my possession a book of 'Mug' shots, headed 'Wanted Men in Cyprus.' Some have a rather ominous cross against them. Were they shot or captured? I expect that those that got away went on to become the Greek community leaders and helped to build the holiday destination that is now Cyprus.
>
> We returned to Northern Cyprus in 1999 and stayed at the Dome hotel. It was of course the same lovely place with its wild flowers, the sea, and the mountains looking away to Turkey. […] Everything is so cheap and the people welcoming.[52]

Houghton-Brown's weaving of memories of perpetrating violence, the bloodthirstiness of the troops, the arrest and caging of people for interrogation juxtaposed with the death of his batman, the wanted men of Cyprus 'mug' shots juxtaposed with his holiday in Cyprus provide a clue to the ambivalence, not only of the term 'perpetrator' but also towards the trajectory of its affect. Although neither Martin nor Houghton-Brown explicitly use the term 'perpetrator,' both narratives acknowledge the acts of perpetrating violence, their resulting destruction, pain,

misery and most importantly complexity. This is closely related to what is also inherent in both narratives, the final act of apprehension of the 'other,' the enemy: For Martin, the appreciation of the complex history and many-sided culture of Cyprus; and for Houghton-Brown, the welcoming people of Cyprus. In both instances the narratives apprehend what Butler describes as traces of subjective and not just subjected life.

Conclusion

How do such narratives work in the space of the IWM? The memoirs and letters are out of public display in the archives of the museum. What is exhibited provides a very different narrative of British Colonial Wars. Judith Butler argues that to question the frame is to show that the frame never quite contained the scene it was meant to limit, that something was already outside, which made the very sense of the inside possible, recognisable. Something exceeds the frame that troubles our sense of reality; in other words, something occurs that does not conform to our established understanding of things.[53]

Returning from the archive to the exhibition space of the IWM, it can be noted that the label of the *Ferret Scout Car*, situated in the post Second World War section of the museum, informs us that it was used by the British army in Cyprus, first in the British sovereign military bases and then as part of the UN peacekeeping force during the inter-communal conflict on the island. We are also informed that following the independence of Cyprus, Britain was able to keep two military bases under its own territorial control. However, nowhere is it mentioned that this was a stipulation imposed on the Cypriot negotiators in order for Britain to grant independence to the island. The *Scout Car* is of course presented as providing a much needed helping hand in maintaining peace on the island. The photographs in the adjacent display that are meant to contextualise the *Scout Car* were taken along the border that has divided the island since 1974 and is patrolled by United Nation forces using vehicles like the *Scout Car*. The label states that these are 'official British photographs,' thus endowing them with undoubted authenticity. The car demonstrates, according to the label

and the display of photographs, the 'eerie emptiness of what was left behind.' The silence of the border, which is also known locally as the 'dead zone,' veils what has been lost from British cultural memory. The materiality of the *Scout Car* and the official nature of the photograph come together to establish beyond reasonable doubt the image of the British nation as peace loving, thus erasing from British cultural memory the Colonial Wars and the image of Britain as perpetrator.

Notes

1. For a fuller discussion of the establishment of the IWM, see Gabriel Koureas, *Memory, Masculinity and National Identity in British Visual Culture, 1914–1930: A Study of 'Unconquerable Manhood'* (London: Routledge, 2007), Chapter 4.
2. Imperial War Museum, *Imperial War Museum Annual Report 2014–15* (London, 2015), p. 4.
3. Étienne Balibar, *Violence and Civility: On the Limits of Political Philosophy*, Wellek Library Lectures (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), p. 271.
4. Ibid., p. 275.
5. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, 'Introduction: Making Sense of Violence,' in *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, ed. by Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 1–31 (p. 2). See also T.K. Beck, 'The Eye of the Beholder: Violence as a Social Process,' *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 5.2 (2011), 345–56 (353).
6. Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable* (London and New York: Verso, 2009), p. 3.
7. Ibid., p. 30.
8. Ibid., p. 31.
9. Paul Harvey Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p. 8.
10. Literature on memorial museums often collapses the distinction between museums of war, the Holocaust and memorial museums. This chapter concentrates only on museums of war and the possibilities they offer not only for its memorialisation but also its representation.

11. Sue Malvern, 'War, Memory and Museums: Art and Artefact in the Imperial War Museum,' *History Workshop Journal*, 49 (Spring 2000), 177–203; Koureas, *Memory, Masculinity and National Identity*, Chapter 4.
12. Jay Winter, 'Museums and the Representation of War,' *Museum and Society*, 10.3 (2012), 150–63.
13. On the display of armoury in Graz, Austria, see Bettina Habsburg-Lothringen, 'Introduction: Does War Belong in Museums? The Representation of Violence in Exhibitions,' *Museum and Society*, 10.3 (2012), 148–49; on the German Tank Museum, Münster, see Ralf Raths, 'From Technical Showroom to Full-Fledged Museum: The German Tank Museum Munster,' *Museum and Society*, 10.3 (2012), 174–92.
14. Katharina von Kellenbach, *The Mark of Cain: Guilt and Denial in the Post-war Lives of Nazi Perpetrators* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
15. William John Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
16. *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, ed. by Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
17. The IWM was founded in 1917. Because of the lack of a permanent home for the museum, its first exhibition in 1920 was at Crystal Palace. From 1924 to 1935 the museum was housed at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington. It was not until 1936 that the museum moved to its current permanent location in Lambeth, South London in what used to be the Bethlem Royal Hospital, a Victorian mental asylum. For more details see Koureas, *Memory, Masculinity and National Identity*, Chapter 4.
18. Imperial War Museum, Central Files, A2/4, 'L' Battery RHA Nery, Guns Army.
19. Winston Churchill, 'The Greatest War Memorial,' *Times*, 10 June 1920, 11.
20. Charles ffoulkes, *Arms and the Tower* (London: John Murray, 1939), p. 146.
21. Ibid.
22. Extraordinary Heroes Exhibition, The Lord Ashcroft Gallery, Exhibition Panel, IWM London.
23. Balibar, *Violence and Civility*, p. 275.
24. 'Truth and Memory: British Art of the First World War,' Temporary Exhibition at the IWM London, July 2014–March 2015, label text.

25. Roger Tolson, 'The Baghdad Car. Panel Discussion,' 11 July 2011. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSBqfL9II54 (accessed 20 March 2015).
26. Imperial War Museum, *Annual Report, 2010–2011* (London, 2012), p. 11.
27. 'Iraq Car Wreckage Goes on Display at Imperial War Museum,' Diane Lees interviewed by Mark Brown, *The Guardian*, 9 December 2010. https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/sep/09/iraq-car-imperial-war-museum-jeremy-deller (accessed 20 March 2015).
28. Byung-Chul Han, *Saving Beauty* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018), p. 5.
29. For a fuller discussion of the *Baghdad Car* as conversation piece, see Gabriel Koureas, 'Competing Masculinities in the Museum Space: Terrorists, Machines and Mangled Metal,' in *Terrorist Transgressions: Gender and the Visual Culture of the Terrorist*, ed. by Sue Malvern and Koureas (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), pp. 126–39.
30. 'Your Britain (1945–1963),' Wall Panel Text, IWM London.
31. For a history of the uprising see Robert Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954–1959* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998); S. Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency 1944–1960* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995).
32. IWM Central Archives, Letter from the Director of the IWM, L.R. Bradley to Lt. Col. Sutherland, War Office, 5 August 1959.
33. IWM Central Archive, Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees, 13 April 1959, Item 6.
34. IWM Central Archive, Middle East Objects, Exhibit Sheets, 1987. The term 'terrorist' is the one used by the IWM.
35. IWM Central Archives, Conflicts since 1945, Exhibition text, Graphic G115: Terrorism, Final Version, 29 January 1996.
36. IWM Central Archives, Conflicts since 1945, Exhibition text, Graphic G89: Cyprus, Final Version, 29 January 1996.
37. Henry Hopkinson, 28 July 1954, IWM Central Archives, Conflicts since 1945, Exhibition text, Graphic G89.
38. IWM Collections, 'Wanted Men in Cyprus,' issued by COSHEG for use of Security Forces, British Forces Cyprus Documents 1955–1958 (Documents.5442).
39. IWM Collections, 'Wanted Men in Cyprus.'

40. IWM Archives, Private Papers Field Marshal Lord Harding Petherton GCB CBE DSO MC (Documents.5568), 'Lord Harding to Secretary of State,' Telegram, 3 December 1955.
41. IWM Collections, 'Search by Security Forces,' British Forces Cyprus Documents 1955–1958 (Documents.5442).
42. IWM Collections, 'Instructions to Individuals for Opening Fire in Cyprus,' issued by Chief of Staff to H.E. the Governor—Leaflet Number: C8/1060/A/Dec.55.
43. IWM Archives, Private Papers Field Marshal Lord Harding Petherton GCB CBE DSO MC (Documents.5568), telegram to the Secretary of State for Colonies from the Acting Governor, 25 November 1957.
44. IWM Archives, Private Papers Field Marshal Lord Harding Petherton GCB CBE DSO MC (Documents.5568), Secret Report on the Cyprus Emergency, 31 July 1959.
45. Primo Levi, 'The Grey Zone,' in *Violence in War and Peace*, ed. by Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, pp. 83–90 (p. 85).
46. IWM Archives, Private Papers Field Marshal Lord Harding Petherton GCB CBE DSO MC (Documents.5568), Letter from A.E. Cumming to Harding 18 October 1959.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. IWM Archives, Private Papers I.W.G. Martin (Documents.1779), p. 19.
50. IWM Archives, Private Papers P.J. Houghton-Brown (Documents.15316), no pagination.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Butler, *Frames of War*, p. 9.