

Institution: University of Oxford		
Unit of Assessment: 27 English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: 07 Enhancing Public Understanding of War Commemoration		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 – 2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Prof Kate McLoughlin	Professor of English Literature (Harris Manchester College)	Oct 2014 – present
Dr Catherine Gilbert	Mellon Sawyer Series Postdoctoral Fellow and Junior Research Fellow (Harris Manchester College)	July 2017 – July 2019
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Oct 2017–Nov 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Collaboration with veterans, survivors, artists, and institutions enhanced understanding of how public memorialisation can acknowledge diverse communities affected by war. The Australian National Veterans Art Museum and Ishami Foundation for Rwandan genocide survivors (UK) deepened their understanding of commemoration's imperatives, broadening audience-engagement efforts and creative programmes; Historic Royal Palaces (Britain) reviewed best practice models, publishing recommendations for audience research. Creative works were inspired: an oratorio – performed around the world – incorporated diverse languages and marginalised voices, exploring war experience and the limits on its expression; a volume of poetry voiced perspectives historically excluded from commemoration; a collaborative book explored changing attitudes.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>McLoughlin's monograph <i>Veteran Poetics</i> (2018) [i] uses a single figure – the war veteran – to explore how mass-industrialized warfare is represented and remembered in literature from William Wordsworth to J. K. Rowling. The book examines the philosophical, political, and psychological difficulties war presents for being, knowing, communicating, and the capacity of literature to grapple with those difficulties. A series of questions structure readings of texts, including: What can be recovered from the past? Do people stay the same over time? Are there right times of life at which to do certain things? Is there value in experience? Can wisdom be shared? A final chapter undertakes some preliminary thinking toward McLoughlin's ongoing subject of research, the function of silence as a repository for what cannot (in some contexts, should not) be expressed and its wider value in representation and remembrance. It considers the silent war veteran – one who, against expectations, refuses or is unable to relate his experience – thereby registering an epistemological crisis central to 'modernity'.</p> <p><i>Writing War, Writing Lives</i> (2017) [ii], co-edited by McLoughlin with Lara Feigel (KCL) and Nancy Martin (doctoral student, Oxford), examines how traditional forms of life-writing – memoir, biography, letters, diaries – buckle under strain of war. Contributors from institutions around the UK illuminate creative innovations and improvisations that happen when the demands of writing war and writing lives collide. Questions of authenticity are central: How can wars and lives be known? Who can speak of them with authority? Authors examined include Hardy, Auden, Bowen, contemporary Palestinian poet Yousif M. Qasmiyeh, Gazan teenager Farah Baker, and the writers behind pen names Araki Yasusada and Jiri Kajanë.</p> <p>Co-edited with Das (then KCL), <i>The First World War: Literature, Culture, Modernity</i> (2018) [iii], gathers leading scholars including Laura Marcus (Oxford, English), to rethink the intersections between war, literature, culture and modernity. Departing from established approaches to British culture of the First World War, it emphasises contact across national and ethnic boundaries. Three groupings of essays undertake i) a philosophical inquiry into the 'unfathomable' quality of war, reflected in the epistemological concerns of war writing; ii) a representational focus, treating</p>		

technical and formal experiments in literature and film grappling with the maximal intensity of war; iii) a political concentration on international influences and exchanges. The volume gives reasons to dispute conventional approaches to the Great War as an agent of modernisation by pointing up 'deep continuities' with pre-war culture in the area of commemoration. McLoughlin's essay offers a transhistorical analysis of texts by Wordsworth, Rebecca West, and Woolf in which the veteran fails to offer the wisdom-through-experience looked for by non-combatants—probing the significance of a recognised limit to knowability and empathy.

Gilbert's Postdoctoral Fellowship research focused on commemoration and reconciliation in the Rwandan post-genocide context. 'Writing as Reconciliation' (2019) [iv] explores future-oriented forms of testimonial writing by Rwandan women and their role facilitating reconciliation. Identifying a pattern of return (second testimonies following first, after several years), the essay offers insights into the changing roles adopted by Yolande Mukagansa, Annick Kayitesi-Jozan and others as they move from the personal need to tell their stories and testify to lives lost in 1994, to bearing witness and assisting efforts at remedying historical injustice.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- i. [Authored Book, Listed in REF2] McLoughlin, Kate. *Veteran Poetics: British Literature in the Age of Mass Warfare, 1790-2015*. Cambridge University Press, 2018. DOI: [10.1017/9781108350754](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108350754)
- ii. [Co-edited book, available on request] *Writing War, Writing Lives*. edited by Lara Feigel, Nancy Martin and Kate McLoughlin. Routledge, 2017. ISBN: 9781138693685
- iii. [Co-Edited Book] McLoughlin, Kate and Santanu Das (eds), *The First World War: Literature, Culture, Modernity*. Oxford University Press, for the British Academy, 2018. DOI: [10.5871/bacad/9780197266267.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197266267.001.0001)
 - Chapter: McLoughlin, Kate. 'Three War Veterans Who Don't Tell War Stories' Chapter DOI: [10.5871/bacad/9780197266267.003.0002](https://doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197266267.003.0002)
- iv. [Chapter, available on request] Gilbert, Catherine. 'Writing as Reconciliation: Bearing Witness to Life after Genocide', in *Rwanda Since 1994: Stories of Change*. ed. Hannah Grayson and Nicki Hitchcott. Liverpool University Press, 2019, 147-67. ISBN: 9781786941992

Funding:

A USD175,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Reference number 31600622), awarded to the University of Oxford in September 2016 to support the Mellon-Sawyer Seminar Series, 2017-18: *Post-War: Commemoration, Reconstruction, Reconciliation*, co-convened by Kate McLoughlin and Niall Munro (Dept of English and Modern Languages, Oxford Brookes). The Mellon Grant supported the post-doctoral fellow (Catherine Gilbert, Oxford) and three postgraduate fellows (2 in Anthropology at Oxford, 1 in Psychology at Oxford Brookes).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The Mellon-Sawyer Seminars, 2017-18, designed and co-convened by McLoughlin and Munro (Oxford Brookes), **enabled public reflection on the forms and practices taken by commemoration and assisted recognition of diverse individual and community investments in remembering war**. Free public 'In Conversation' events headlined the main areas of inquiry identified in the underpinning research: Aminatta Forna (novelist and memoirist) explored Textual Commemoration with Elleke Boehmer (Oxford, English); Daniel Libeskind (architect) reflected on Monumental Commemoration; composer Jonathan Dove considered sound and silence in Aural Commemoration. Audience reach beyond **450 international attendees** was achieved through podcasts on Oxford iTunes (**4,841 unique page views** by July 2020) linked to curated pages on the TORCH website with dedicated Twitter account (432 followers). 'In Conversation' **expanded understanding of what counts as commemoration**: it 'doesn't have to be a state ritual but can simply be a matter of people coming together in a foyer or café' (anonymous feedback, 5.1).

The research emphasis on diverse imperatives for commemoration informed seminars with veterans and survivors, artists, and those with institutional responsibilities for commemorating

war, **transforming participant perspectives and institutional practices**. For the Director of the **Australian National Veterans Art Museum** (himself a veteran), **the transnational and transhistorical approach ‘opened my eyes’, dislodging an Australian ‘veteran-centric perspective’** encouraged by the WWI centenary, bringing ‘perspectives from the American Civil War ... to the Rwandan genocide’ (5.2, 00:02:34-03:24). For the Head of Arts Programs, the attention to literature **provided needed ‘validation’ for the Museum’s work ‘integrating history and heritage ... with greater focus on social connection [to] contemporary veterans and families’**. The series **‘helped guide our programmes’** based in **‘narrative and the narratives of the community** that we work with’—including the narrative of the Museum itself, a disused former WWI repatriation clinic repurposed as a cultural institution (5.2, 00:07:20-08:00). Mellon Sawyer ‘reframe[d] our sense of what is possible’ through 2020 as the Museum responded to the widespread impulse to record experiences of COVID lockdown and bushfires (the largest veteran ‘assist operations’ in Australian history). The seminars also **alerted the Director to the multicultural, multi-generational nature of commemoration**: ‘The blinkers came off’, helping him to see ‘indigenous Australians as setting the gold standard example of art and ... commemoration’ (5.2, 00:38:57-39:45).

For Eric Murangwa, Founder and Executive Director of the Ishami Foundation, a Mellon Sawyer workshop **enabled contact and sharing of experiences** between those ‘from military background in different countries’ and those like himself ‘who have suffered from conflicts and genocide’ (5.3, 00:03:00-03:55). **The Foundation was inspired to increase its use of art to ‘tell these complex and sensitive stories ... , keep memories alive and educate people’** (5.3, 00:11:20-13:20). Examples (5.3, 00:13:20-17:58) include the ‘100 stories from Rwanda’ project, co-led by Murangwa and Jo Ingabire Moys (Art Therapist) from 2018; and a 2019 ‘Kwibuka 25’ workshop with 15 survivors, who learned to tell their stories ‘in a creative way’, including in poetry. Performed at the Victoria and Albert Museum as part of Refugee Week, 2019, their narratives are now an online ‘Learning Resource’ for ‘share and tell’ use in schools (5.4). These two projects provided content for a schools workshop, London City Hall, May 2019, marking 25 years since the genocide—Gilbert assisting. Her research concentration on ‘women and girls in commemoration’ **heightened Murangwa’s awareness (‘the gender element ... was a standout’ of the seminars) leading to further collaborations** that have **assisted diversity in the Foundation’s work** (5.3, 00:09:20-10:20).

The seminars **aided critical reflection within Historic Royal Palaces** on criteria for ‘successful’ memorialisation. An attendee, then Research Leadership Fellow at HRP, undertook audience research detailing how cultural organisations can best understand the different meanings people find in commemoration (see blog post, 5.5) and organised an HRP training symposium for 40 museum and heritage sector staff, Sept 2019. The **symposium report**, published on the HRP website, **made recommendations for improved operations**, including sharing audience research between heritage organizations to assist understanding of diverse investments in commemoration (5.6). Another attendee, then WWI Memorials Programme Manager at HRP, 2018, now leading Historic England’s High Street Heritage Action Zone programme, testifies that the series **clarified best practice**, increasing ‘the scope of who we might look to’ when engaging local communities: Mellon Sawyer’s emphasis on public spaces permitting meaningful sharing of personal experiences informed her subsequent efforts to reach out to groups not yet engaged with Historic England and tackle ‘contested’ high-street heritage (video interview, 5.7, 00:04:00-04:20, 05:25).

Three creative productions put the research insights into practice.

From Gallipoli to the Somme, **a composition informed by McLoughlin and Das’s research, is the first major work of war commemorative music to represent minority voices.**

Commissioned and conducted by the Parliament Choir director, written by New Zealand composer Anthony Ritchie and librettist Kate Kennedy, its world première was recorded in Dunedin, 11 November 2016, made freely available with score online (5.8.i). Mellon Sawyer funding **enabled the European première**: a free public concert filled the 650-seat Sheldonian theatre, 2 June 2018 and the Southbank Centre, 11 June (audience c. 900). Kennedy testifies that the ‘shape of the composition was decided upon in discussion with McLoughlin’, with Das’s

work on aural testimonies of Indian soldiers, fragments of writing and recorded testimony informing incorporation of diverse languages (including Turkish and Maori), individual voices, and found text (e.g. battle-plans). McLoughlin's research into silence and the limits of verbal testimony helped guide the decision to put a violin, 'sing[ing] wordlessly', at the centre. The testimony of an NZ soldier who took his violin on his war travels provided the libretto thread; the surviving instrument was played at the première—'perhaps the first time that theories of object-biography have been incorporated into a musical work' (5.8.ii; recorded highlights, 5.9.i). The 2018 performances **enacted diversity in commemoration**: 'Sung by the Parliament choir – the traditional voice of governmental authority' with the City Choir Dunedin and an international orchestra 'represent[ing] almost every nation affected by the war' (5.8.ii), they **expanded audience awareness of the range of aural responses to war and challenge of aural memorialisation today**. Attendees recognised 'a most moving and inventive combination' of music and words (poet) (5.9.iii); a 'personal, colossal, majestic, ironic, heartbreaking piece' (a choir conductor) (5.1). **For 275 performers', it was 'spine-tingling'** (UK Parliament Choir on Twitter) (5.9.ii; and choir responses at iii). Subsequent performances, including at the RAF Church, St Clement Danes, for Remembrance Sunday service, 2019, have helped modernise commemorative musical programming (5.9.iv). *G to the S* was voted New Zealand's favourite piece of classical music, 2020 (Radio NZ rankings) – the first NZ composition to top the poll (5.9.v), reflecting the piece's **integration of Maori experience and culture with western classical commemoration** (5.8.ii). During lockdown, the Atatürk chorus **expressed solidarity around the world**: NZ musicians unable to travel home for Christmas, performed it in a recorded Albert Hall concert, released online to support furloughed singers (more than 7,800 Youtube views; GBP50,000 raised) (5.9.vi and vii); it was played on Radio NZ, Christmas Day (5.9.vii).

The **innovative forms** of *Tenter*, by Mellon-Sawyer poet-in-residence Susie Campbell (Guillemot Press, 2020), **reflect the series' impact on her creative practice**. Published in lockdown, May 2020, *Tenter* launched online with a publisher's website interview in lieu of live event. Campbell acknowledged the seminars' role in 'enabl[ing] me to listen to the [...] plurality of voice around any experience of war'; and guiding her diagnosis of 'a breakdown in [the UK's] commemorative practice', 'paralysis in the face of a refugee crisis on its front door step' even as "'Lest We Forget" was the keynote of the WWI centenary period' (5.10.i and ii). Her reflective essay for Australian journal *Axon* explored wider implications, grappling with how contemporary poetry can de-'privilege' the 'one voice', admitting competing perspectives and ... tensions, while acknowledging 'the lyric impulse' (5.10.ii). Early reviews provide qualitative recognition of her achievement: 'excellent' (Mehmet Izbuduk, translator and poet); 'ambitious, layered, challenging' (*Sabotage Reviews*) (5.10.iii).

A crossover trade-scholarly volume, *On Commemoration* (Peter Lang, 2020) **informed public recognition of changing perspectives on commemoration**, with contributions from creatives (Forna, Libeskind, Dove, Campbell), military veterans, an international human-rights lawyer, faith representatives, a war journalist, alongside essays by the researchers. A foreword by participant Lord Alderdice (first speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, consultant psychiatrist) recognised exceptional inclusivity **enabling 'perspectives ... not imagined before', collectively grasping the 'emotional imperative' of commemoration** (5.11.i). Jay Winter, historian/co-founder of the Historial de la Guerre (Somme Museum), applauded **'expansion of the space of commemoration beyond monuments', the focusing of persistent 'existential questions', and the 'originality' of attention to the 'sound to silence' spectrum in commemorative practices** (5.11.ii).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Excerpts from 'Mellon-Sawyer Seminar Series 2017-18 *Post-War: Commemoration, Reconstruction, Reconciliation*. University of Oxford/Oxford Brookes University. Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Reference Number 31600622. Final Report'. [Full text on request.]

2. Kate McLoughlin, long-term impact interview with Mark Johnston (Director of the Australian National Veterans Art Museum (ANVAM)) Tanja Johnston, 3 November 2020 (Zoom recording, 48 mins).
3. Kate McLoughlin, long-term impact interview with professional athlete and genocide survivor Eric Murangwa, 19 November 2020 (Zoom recording, 28 mins).
4. 'Kwibuka 25 at City Hall', with link to Teaching Materials, Ishami Foundation webpage, 7 April 2019. <https://ishamifoundation.org/kwibuka25atcityhall/>
5. Blog post by Megan Gooch (Creative Producer & Research Leadership Fellow) on Historic Royal Palaces website, 'How do we know what the Tower Poppies meant to people?', 13 December 2019, <https://blog.hrp.org.uk/how-do-we-know-what-the-tower-poppies-meant-to-people/>.
6. *(En)gauging audience data & research within museums and heritage: A symposium held at the Tower of London on 26 September 2019—Report by Dr James Wallis [Research Associate, Cumberland Lodge]* (Nov 2019), downloadable from the HRP website: https://www.hrp.org.uk/media/2488/lestweforgetsymposium_final.pdf (Key recommendations within Executive Summary, p. 1.)
7. Kate McLoughlin, long-term impact interview with Emma Login (Programme Manager - Historic England's High Street Heritage Action Zone programme / WWI Memorials Programme Manager at HRP), 17 November 2020 (Zoom recording, 16 mins).
8. Materials relating to composer Anthony Ritchie's *Gallipoli to the Somme*:
 - i. Anthony Ritchie, *Gallipoli to the Somme* (musical composition): recording, sample score, and score to purchase, on sounz (Centre for New Zealand Music) website (2016): <https://sounz.org.nz/works/22840>
 - ii. Testimonial letter from librettist Kate Kennedy, 22 December 2020.
9. Further materials relating to *Gallipoli to the Somme*:
 - i. Recorded highlights of the Remembrance concert 2 June 2018 <https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/remembrance-a-concert>
 - ii. UK Parliament Choir Twitter response: @parliamentchoir: 3 June 2020, 9:34AM.
 - iii. City Choir Dunedin - collected responses 5 July 2018 at: <https://www.citychoirdunedin.org.nz/2018/07/gallipoli-to-somme-in-uk.html>
 - iv. Royal Air Force St Clement Danes Church, service sheet for Remembrance Sunday Service, 2019 ('The Anthem').
 - v. 'Settling the Score 2020: The Top 100', Radio New Zealand (RNZ) website, 26 October 2020 <https://www.rnz.co.nz/concert/programmes/settlingthescore/audio/2018769696/settling-the-score-2020-the-top-100>
 - vi. *Whānau – voices of Aotearoa, far from home*, recorded 4 November 2020, Ataturk chorus @ 00:55:42 https://www.whanaulondonvoices.com/watch?mc_cid=8d4079ae46&mc_eid=a5b4346fe2
 - vii. Julien van Mellaerts (NZ baritone), email fwd to Kate Kennedy, 3 December 2020
10. Materials relating to *Tenter* (poetry composition):
 - i. 'The Making of Tenter, by Susie Campbell and Rose Ferraby', 3 May 2020. <https://www.quillemotpress.co.uk/news>
 - ii. Susie Campbell, 'Post-Peace: Radicalising the Contemporary War Lyric', *Axon* Iss 4, April 2019. <https://axonjournal.com.au/issue-axon-capsule-4-special-issue-april-2019>
 - iii. Combined reviews of *Tenter* [screenshots]:
 - a) @baudelaires_cat, 26 May 2020, 3:38PM
 - b) Stephen Payne, Review of *Tenter* in *Sabotage Reviews*, 16 November 2020. <http://sabotagereviews.com/2020/11/16/tenter-by-susie-campbell-illustrated-by-rose-ferraby/>
11. Materials relating to *On Commemoration* (collection of essays)
 - i. Lord Alderdice, Foreword to *On Commemoration: Global Reflections upon Remembering War*, ed. Catherine Gilbert, Kate McLoughlin, Neil Munro (Peter Lang, 2020), p. xvi. <https://doi.org/10.3726/b14904> [Copy available on request.]
 - ii. Reviewed by Jay Winter, *Times Literary Supplement*, 27 November 2020. <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/politics-war-memorials-book-review/>