Decolonising Museum Cultures: Episodes of an artist and a geographer in collaboration.

Episode One: Decolonising imperial 'ways of seeing'

There is much published research and strategic rhetoric on decolonising the discipline, the academy and institutions of social and cultural importance. However, very little literature examines the steps in the process of decolonising institutions themselves. This paper outlines a collaborative journey that encountered some of the legacies of imperial museology and the paradigms through which we evaluate and exhibit the cultures of 'others'. As you would expect, decolonising, is ideally is praxis including and embracing indigenous knowledges, (see Johnson *et al*, *2007*), to inhabit an ethos of plurality. This kind of *participatory* ethos, is not as simple as re-asserting a new or different paradigm, ontology (Country, B *et al* 2018), or indeed another meta-narrative or taxonomy (Smith, 1999). There is no single template for disciplinary decolonising (Radcliffe, 2017). Importantly, there are institutional and infrastructural ideologies and practices (Ahmed, 2007; Arday and Mirza, 2018), that prevent more than a superficial decolonising praxis (Alexander and Arday, 2015; Noxolo, 2017). Research states that what happens in the decolonising process are a series of struggles, through which we learn what obstacles, political prejudices, complacencies, misunderstandings, culture-clashes, and infrastructural anomolies there are to be overcome, to concretise a decolonised praxis. In the case of our collaboration our aim was to work towards a post-imperial museology. In this paper

the artist Rosanna Raymond and I explore the struggles and obstacles that there are in our own collaboration to encourage and embed (plural and diverse) indigenous, postcolonial, post-imperial histories, cultural narratives and praxis within the museum space. So our focus has been the question of '*(w)hat is needed to decolonise the museum and indeed become a truly internationalist in ordering, curating and displaying world cultures?*' To do this, we provide series of axes outlined as 'episodes' that illustrate how current museum practices and conditions of exhibition, currently jar with the expectations of source communities. In this case our focus has been Māori and Polynesian cultural representations at the British Museum. These, we argue are treated as an example, a starting point on revising and undermining the prevailing assumed authorised heritage discourses that dominate representational cultures of museums when presenting Māori cultures. These axes are intellectual and provide a pathway of change, revision and re-ordering of the frameworks of thinking and exhibiting Māori heritage beyond colonial paradigms of cultural relativism (Bennet, 2013). Underpinning these, is the continued encounter with European exhibitionary grammars and articulations, where the 'other', is outside modernity, and has separate capabilities culturally, spiritually and intellectually (Said, 1979; Hall, 1992). Historical, cultural and heritage representations of 'other' cultures are mythologised and objectified (Young, 2004). The idea that non-Western societies are "'closed' places – ethnically pure, culturally traditional, undisturbed until yesterday by the ruptures of modernity – is a Western fantasy about 'otherness': a 'colonial fantasy' maintained about the periphery by the West" (Hall, 1992: 305). These are the

accounts of 'otherness' that are encountered at the museum, about non-Western cultures. Araeen (2010), the 'Other' is European culture's supressed unconscious; it is culturally, "the land of savages and primitives frozen in a state of blissful innocence. It cannot therefore explain or legitimise its relationship. . ." (Araeen, 2010: 284). The museum space is one where this relationship is naturalised, reiterated, and consolidated. The episodes outlined below are interwoven, co-dependent and exemplify where interventions are needed as a practice of *disturbance* of the re-production of imperial hierarchies of culture (see Faris, 1988).

Our collaboration was centred on a common understanding that we need to decolonise the very structures of understanding other cultures, set out in the 19th century, including cultural hierarchies as depicted in the *Great Chain of Being* (see Lovejoy, 2011) and other scientific accounts. Exhibiting and narrating other cultures within Royal societies and museum spaces depended on 'regimes of truth' and technologies of categorising other world, peoples and places (Said, 1979). Dominant in technologies of exhibition are imperial 'ways of seeing', of labelling, categorising, curating and framing other cultures, in-relation to European societies. These collective grammars of ordering, narrating and exhibiting are repeated and re-experienced in various contexts and on examining exhibitions of various non-European cultures (Hall, 1997). On examining the British Museum's galleries we found that there was a synthesis in our reactions and experience of the museum's material practice as lacking self-determined accounts of cultural values, as well as

source-community voice, knowledge and narratives. Significantly, we experienced

the exhibiting of 'other' cultures as having different textures, framings and epistemic

values (Grosfogul, 2007) to the exhibition of 'European' artefacts. We discovered

through visiting the British Museum's and African galleries that we had similar

problems with the experience of the gallery; we were moved to contest their

framings. As visitors to museum exhibitions, the audience is unconsciously co-opted

into a 'way of seeing' (Berger, 1972). Polynesian is used here throughout the piece to

denote cultures from the Pacific Islands, including Māori. An alternative

contemporary term for Pacific Islanders as a community is *tangata moana*,

Moana Oceania or just *Moana[i]*.

Our perspective of re-framing cultural artefacts through our postcolonial positioning

(Hall, 1989) revealed systematic epistemic violence that operated through the

technologies of museum displays and curatorship at the museum. Both of us had

experience of curatorship, exhibition, and invitations to re-frame and re-narrate

galleries, through a postcolonial lens. Essentially my own concern was with the

continued resonances of 19th century accounts of scientific racism in the narration of

'other' cultures. Rosanna Raymond's experiences of re-curating Māori and

Polyneisan cultural artefacts in the UK and Aoteroa/New Zealand, has left her

feeling as though the knowledges that were being re-narrated were also significantly

stuck in the 19th century, despite being actively in communication with and

surrounded by source community expertise and contributions to museum galleries. For both of us, there was a retention of the gap between 'representation' of 'other' cultures, and the expressive cultures of modern source communities and their understanding of their archaeologies, histories and geographies. Through the recording of particular nexus points in our collaboration, what is expressed here are the problematics of decolonising museums, even within progressive partnerships where authorship is deemed to be shared and interests aligned. Our review of the representations of Polyneisan (the positioning that Rosanna Raymond chooses) culture exposed the systems of representation as singularising, partial, and myopic accounts without sanction from source communities themselves. Overall, we agreed that disturbing and de-naturalising the 'ways of seeing' other cultures are foundational to any project of decolonising the museum. What is needed is critical reflection and review of this lens, and the epistemic violence that it promulgates.

In John Berger's (1972) 'ways of seeing' he argues that looking is a political act, and that it is embedded within a historical and cultural process. There is a gap between what we see and what we know and as such we bring into play certain assumptions (the assumed logics of understanding what we see). These are learnt assumptions through which we negotiate the gap between what we see and what we know.

> "Many of these assumptions no longer accord with the world as it is. (The world-as-it-is is more than pure objective fact, it includes consciousness.) Out

of true with the present, these assumptions obscure the past. They mystify

rather than clarify" (Berger, 1972, p11)

Berger argues that we are bound to an (un)ethical complicity if we inhabit these

assumptions without critical reflection and review. Decolonising the museum is the

project of unravelling the frameworks through which we see accept and assign

value, meaning and cultural logics, using a critical lens. 'Decolonising' is an

important imperative, especially for the re-enfranchisement of the majority

population of the world which constitutes the 'other' to the European. The legacy of

the imperial schema of hierarchies of species, cultures and ideas are reflected in

contemporary museum collections and historical representations therein (Hall,

2005). On considering art and culture from the Polynesia, the artist Rosanna

Raymond (2008) argues that in a year where there were three aligned exhibitions at

the British Museum (*Power and Taboo*), Sainsbury Centre for Visual Culture (*Pacific*

Encounters) and Cambridge's University Museum of Archaeology (*Pasifica*

Styles: http://www.pasifikastyles.org.uk/), there was a placing of Pacific / Polynesian

art, artists and culture in an international arena. For Rosanna Raymond, the 2006 and

2007 exhibitions ironically, reaffirmed the *invisibility* of Pacific / Polynesian art as the

mainstream national media did not recognise the value and history of Pacific/

Polynesian art and exhibitions (2008: 284). This invisibility reaffirmed the value that

museums afforded these collection; they 'have no permanent gallery in the

museum'. Representations in the articulation of Māori and Polynesian culture were

not redressed, but re-narrated using an imperial set of textures, narratives and well-worn aestheticisation of Pacific / Polynesian cultures as 'exotic', and framed outside of the 'modern' era (p286). In Hall *et al's* (2017) account, we, as a society, risk continued *epistemicide*, if we foreground westnocentric accounts of history and heritage. What is needed are new systems of knowledge democracy with source communities and indigenous communities *per se.*

Episode Two: Voicing our *Positioning*

A significant part of decolonising the museum is about *situating* collections, making explicit the cultural contexts of imperialism and colonisation. To effectively de-stabilise colonial and imperial framings there is a need to examine other embodied philosophies and politics, such as Māori feminist philosophy / *Mana Wahine* (Simonds, 2011). For post-imperial museology, our bodies and political *positionings* (Hall, 1997) should be explicit for an ethical framework. It is important to outline our own positionalities, as 'all knowledge is produced in specific circumstances and that those circumstances shape it in some way' (Rose, 1997: 305). Being clear about our positioning, contextualises our authorial voice and the power dynamics through which we articulate our narrative claims, thus making us ethical and accountable. Our collaboration was consolidated through discussions on our need for us individually to have a space for intellectual dialogue and support based on our mutual politics and trust in each other as colleagues. The development of trust was

based on an emergent synthesis in our political vision of how museums need to engage with source communities as a source of knowledge as well as stewardship. There have also been arguments made (see Truettner, 2008) on the need to readdress historical amnesia that is structurally embedded in museum narratives and exhibitions (355). At the space of the museum, we both were troubled by the gap between source community's narratives of their heritage and that of the museum. Our early meetings were held after touring the British Museum displays on the Oceanic / Polynesian cultures and discussions afterward were focussed on the obstacles to decolonising museums and re-figuring the relationship that source communities have with them. The contextual apparatus too were fixed in an imperial way of seeing, which co-opted indigenous cultures and positioned them as consumers of 'expert' knowledges; an ideology materialised in gallery design, architectures, curatorship, technologies which were aimed to improve and educate the visiting population. Rosanna Raymond's approach is best captured in her *YouTube* recordings made at the British Museum[ii].

Our collaboration occurs within a period of engagement with geographers' collaborations in theory and in practice (Tolia-Kelly, 2012; Hawkins, 2013). However there is a need for critical focus or concern towards the praxis, power dynamics and nature of collaboration and their potential effects. Within the discipline of geography, these collaborations have often between the 'established' career academic and the more precariously employed, or commissioned artist excepting

those where the artist is established and funded (see for example: Nash 2005; Cook, 2000; Foster and Lorimer, 2007). Collaborations have the political power to impact upon social and cultural processes, perceptions and politics. At the very least they can add to the textures of engagement available in the public sphere which communicate cultural geographies of understanding place, belonging, community and positionings (Hall, 1996). In this current collaboration Rosanna Raymond and I are working towards a post-imperial exhibitionary praxis where museums, such as the British Museum (BM), are mindful of the connections between source communities and visitor experience (Peers and Brown, 2003; Sherman, 2008); as well as reframing collections through decolonial / postcolonial politics and visual grammars. The BM here is positioned as an example site where Raymond has been a curator, artist an advisor on conservation, preservation and provider of genealogies of knowledge to the Māori and Oceanic collection keepers. It is not considered as interchangeable with other museums, but as an example site of exploration and praxis, where we have worked with source communities and visitors from these communities at the BM galleries. And where the BM have invited re-framings, re-positionings and re-workings of relationships between collections, curators and treasures / artefacts. The collaboration, is at its heart, a methodology (Smith, 1999) embedded in trajectories of thinking 'decolonial' and 'postcolonial' both of which have differing histories and geographies (Bhambra, 2014), but which here, coalesce to rethink the notion of Oceanic / Polynseian culture and the exhibitionary practices through which it is figured.

In editorial comments, we, were asked to elaborate further with an account of the rhythms and atmospheres of collaboration. *Positioning* is outlined here, in the vein of Stuart Hall's thought, that is anti-essentialist, anti-authentic, and accepting that cultural identities are always in the process of becoming, in dynamic relation to the material world (Hall, 1994).

> "Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of
> identification and suture, which are made, within the discourses of history
> and culture. Not an essence, but a *positioning*. Hence there is always a politics
> of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an
> unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin'. (Hall, 1994: 226).

Our journey began in 2005 when I was introduced to Rosanna Raymond by Professor Ruth Panelli (UCL, Geography), an author of challenging Western notions of ontology (Panelli, 2008; 2010). Rosanna was invited to an interdisciplinary event on 'home' at Durham Institute for Advanced Studies. It was clear that for both Rosanna and myself, as postcolonial migrants, *home*, was a luxury concept. That for the majority population in the world 'home' was continually contingent, fragmentary, unresolved, ephemeral and un-situated within a frame of secure territory with specific co-ordinates (see Un Migration Report 2017[iii]). In this situation, as outsider to the new culture, we look for recognition, connection and enfranchisement. For Rosanna Raymond she was far from Māori and Polynesian

culture and she turned to the museum as a space of reconciliation, and a meeting of the familiar and affirmations of the past. Here, Rosanna describes her search at the space of the museum as a settled migrant in London, away from a marae, away from 'structures of feeling'.

When I went away from my base culture the museum all of a sudden became a place where I knew that I could find parts of our history. I was quite shocked actually of how little we're represented. That's when I really did get a shock. Knowing how many of our cultural treasures are in these places - let's take the British Museum for example. I knew that they had one of the biggest collections of Oceanic / Polynesian cultural treasures in the world. So I was really excited to go to this huge museum. So you can imagine how I was quite overwhelmed with how little we are represented. There are a few little corners. So that was actually quite shocking to me, so that's when I had to really work hard to try and find out, well where are they? Then I realised that they were all in the storerooms. Then I had to build up a relationship so that I could actually - that's what I mean, trying to knock on the door to get in. Luckily I had an introduction through Prof. Nicholas Thomas, who had written about our activist artist group the Pacific Sisters and the work that we'd done in New Zealand. So that was my in; an introduction from one of their kind. But it was very different when it was just Rosanna Raymond trying to ring them up and get in.

Personal Interview Oct 9th 2015

Embedded in this positioning is an account of being NZ born, and an urban citizen of Māori and Polynesian descent, but without a narrowing of the essence of what it is to be from that cultural community. Being Māori and Polynesian in London meant that there was a disconnection due to migration, and that the museum became a source of *suture* towards a sense of cultural belonging. It is important also to note that *nostalgia* isn't the driving sentiment here. The connective sentiment is based on a sense of requiring *recognition*, seeing a territory of belonging and familiarity; a set of co-ordinates of cultural belonging that embodied the grammars of acceptance and nourishment. As Fullenweider (2017) argues recognition is key to postcolonial affirmation outside of colonial thought. Fullenweider (2017; 44), states that "(*i*)ndigenous artists are always working within a complex negotiation of settler occupation, but self-representation must still be understood as self-determination and an expression of ongoing indigenous autonomy". There are several matrices of recognition that frame self-determined accounts of culture and identity, often decolonising is about reasserting these matrices in the museum display.

My own positioning is that I also arrived as an expelled migrant in 1973 from Nairobi Kenya. Up 30, 000 British Asians arrived in the UK expelled from the former colony of British East Africa. It was a period of time after Enoch Powell's 1968 'rivers of blood' speech, when the fascist *National Front* were on the rise and racist behaviours were part of our everyday. We were brought up as 'British' with ingrained *Englishness* in our cultural practices. We were of the belief that we were

empire, and empire was us, but were struck at how this patriotic sentiment stopped at the border. On arrival we were the flood, the source of tainting the national culture, a source of disease and deterioration of English National Life. Within the architectures of heritage and history, we were 'Indian' but the grammars of *Indianess* were not available to us as we were 'British'. The grammars of *'Kenyaness'* too were of little suture as we had been expelled as 'other' to African citizenry. So without territory, place and culture that recognised us in our situated history and identities, our heritage story remained in the domestic sphere; oral histories, photographs, music and food cultures. Finding a path through the everyday of being seen as exemplars of racist stereotypes of 'Paki', 'foreigner', and 'dirty migrants', meant that there was limited space for self-determined accounts to be acknowledged, recognised and valued. The narratives that were available to self-identity, understanding, and 'positioning' (Hall, 1997) were the narratives of 'others' reading through the occidental lens. Instead of a non-presence, instead of a negation of our British migrant culture, there was no blank space, only one constructed through a colonial frame (see Fellenweider, 2017), that reduced us to caricature and types (Tolia-Kelly, 2010). Attending the exhibitions at the BM, meant seeing 'India' as an ancient culture outside of modernity. In the hierarchy of cultures, African identity was constructed as 'black', and thus homogeneous, outside of modernity. Being British Asian and Kenyan was seemingly deemed an anomaly. Reconciling oneself within an absence of our histories, identities and heritage stories was a continual challenge. Migrant history is an *in-between* history absent from the histories of Kenya

and popular histories of the UK. In writing this piece, the sensibilities evoked of being 'in-between', 'authentic English' and 'migrant'; 'ancient' and 'modern' cultures resonated with both Rosanna Raymond and I. Despite our different cultural communities of 'origin', our experiences of the axes of identification were parallel. The effects of the architectures, narratives, displays and grammars within the space of the museum was experienced similarly by both of us. The collaboration emerged as part of the process of trying to reconcile this positioning with its simultaneous negation in official discourses of nation and culture. We emerged, in agreement over several axes of discordancy that needed to be refigured as part of the decolonising process. One of these axes of refiguring is the attention paid to *Primitivism* as a paradigm that we were continually encountering; we were used to seeing ourselves through the lens of primitivism. This is an overarching logic within cultural and art history that informs museum curatorial praxis. As racialized academic and artist we could not embody the voice of the 'invisible', objective voices that had gone before in academia; instead we were from inside source communities and outside the structures of determination at the museum space.

Episode Three: Primitivism

Rasheed Araeen (1987; 2010), has long since argued that 'primivitism' is a Western invention, it operates 'as a projection and representation of non-European peoples and their cultures in Western philosophy or discourse it in turn justifies Western

colonial expansion and domination. In his re-curating of the British Museum galleries in the 1990s Araeen simply re-positioned the Egyptian galleries to being placed within the African. Thus challenging the epistemic categorisations defined by a notion of 'the capability' of African artists, sculptures as being separate from those that produced the high-civilisation of the ancient Egyptians. The lie of primitivism relegates Egypt as outside of the conceptual territory of the continent of Africa. As the possibility of African high culture cannot be reconciled within colonial paradigms of beauty, high art and civilised culture (Nicodemus, 1993). A decolonising approach to the museum would consider the co-constitution of modernity; a consequence of contact between Europe and its' 'others' producing transformations in both directions. "Thus, contrary to the view that Western art followed a self-generating intellectual and aesthetic progression – with the occasional 'affinity' – cross-cultural encounters are perceived as central to the formation of modernism, not supplementary"(Fisher, 2009). In other literatures, reconciling indigenous, settler and colonial ways of thinking and racialized populations there are many strategies to overcome fissures, violences and contrary fields of vision. Sometimes, it's about fundamentally meeting knowledges, in forms, rhythms and textures (the ecologies) within which they are produced and shared, as *alterity* to 'white' knowledges and spatialities (see Panelli, *et* al 2009). In the research praxis of Suchet-Pearson, and Lloyd (see Lloyd *et al* 2010) they promote an engagement with *country* as a means of engaging with the fabric of indigenous knowleges. In Bawaka Country *et al's* (2019) account, *songspirals,* become a

connective tissue as a means as 'to wake Country, to make and remake the life-giving connections between people and place' (Country *et al.* 2019). Thinking heritage and history through *songspirals* is a radical challenge to the Western infrastructures and paradigms that define history and what can count as history (De Certeau, 1989) or heritage, beyond 'Authorised Heritage Discourses' (see Waterton and Smith, 2010). Postcolonial theory (see Said, 1979; Young, 2001) with a focus on texts, has outlined the ways in which Occidentalism continues to define much of what can be said and what frameworks of thinking can be applied to narrating non-western cultural identities and cultural heritage. By connecting beyond the text, through ecosystem, bodies and sounds, there is scope for extending the repertoire of knowledge production beyond the exhibiting or, or writing of cultures.

Episode Four: Imperial Collections

One aspect of the collecting and exhibiting of collections at museums such as the British Museum where Rosanna Raymond has exhibited, worked and curated, is that for Māori – the very removal of *taonga* from kinship relationships is an act of rupture and violence. *Taonga* are meant to be in continual relationship with their living ancestors 'we live through them and they through us' (p21, Raymond, 2016 A Body of VA'rt). The rupture disrupts stewardship and the enlivening relationship that should be preserved between *taonga* and source communities. In Raymond's work the task has been to 'attempt to activate and connect with the *taonga* [treasure], to

keep the *taonga* alive and active. Because they activate creativity in us.' (Raymond and Jacobs, 2009: 127). Raymond through her *acti.VA.tions* essentially creates a community of stewardship that reconnects and enlivens the *taonga*. Using poetry, adornments, performance and presence; the relationship with ancestors, is reactivated. This living relationship thus posits *taonga* as deities and as such they are neither 'art' in the Western canon, or 'artefact'. They do not sit as ethnographic exemplars in past times, but as vital ancestors with biographies, spirit, desires and power. Situating them in cabinets, or store-rooms, relegates them to deadened artefact rather than living artful beings. Foster (2012) has made a case 'for recovering the commodity aspect of things, ordinarily valued as either art or artefact and accordingly put on display' (p130); this strategic framing would reveal a nexus of relations, currently occluded (p152), but which could include exchanges, sales, and collection by the museum itself, thus denaturalising the presence of objects on display.

'The British Museum drives me crazy because we don't even have a permanent gallery, and the reason why they maintain that they can hold onto these taongas is because they can give greater access to the world. The taonga are here, the legacy is here, and it must be respected' (Rosanna Raymond and Karen Jacobs, 2009; p135)

One aspect of the deadening effect of imperial collecting is the scale of collecting, recording and labelling (Tolia-Kelly, 2016). The very mass of materials hoarded evidences a lack of value, respect and mechanistic practice that diminishes those

very cultures that are the object of interest and 'scientific' study (Henare, 2005).

Collecting at this scale, embodying imperial logics (Barringer, 1988), diminishes the

value of objects collected. They move from being considered as living, sacred

artefacts to one of many exemplars. 'Representative' is what they become, without

attention paid to their biographical life (Gell, 1986), the power of their affective

presence, or indeed value to the community from which they came. Collecting,

dehumanises, deadens, and diminishes the value of artefacts, to things, rather than

beings, or art, or indeed enlivening ancestral forces (Tolia-Kelly, 2016) that are

needed for the heritage futures of Oceanic and Polynesian societies (Raymond and

Jacobs, 2009). The naturalised systems of epistemic categorisations and hierarchy of

cultures, delimit and ultimately 'fix', dehumanise, silence and reduce cultural

expressions of 'other' cultures to a place in the Hegelian continuum, outside of

modernity:

> *"What concerns me is the way that Hegel uses India as a model of a 'primitive'*
>
> *culture and then builds up the whole evolutionary continuum in which the West takes*
>
> *up the most advanced position. The result of this, by implication . . is that non-*
>
> *European peoples are seen as belonging to the past, but they also become fixed entities*
>
> *with historically exhausted physical and mental abilities." (Araeen, 1987)*

The contemporary calls for decolonising our various institutions iv and knowledge

structures therein such as the curriculum, the university, the museum and other

sites, encapsulate a response to an institutionalised set of imperial and colonial values and thought. These values are out of sync with the cultural ecologies of the contemporary world. These knowledge systems continue to use imperial frameworks of positioning humans, ideas, species of flora and fauna within hierarchical, singular Universalist, encyclopaedic schema, where everything has a rightful place. This fundamental commitment to a singularising world-view schema have limited our understandings of 'value' and 'capacities' of human and non-human life. These schema are at best anachronistic, and at their worst, disingenuous to the powerful value and contribution of all human cultures. In the museum the display of other cultures and the production of knowledge through their curatorship is in need of refiguring through a pluralising and self-defined exhibitionary lens. We need to reorder the ways in which we make meaning of cultures and their place in the schema of world cultures. Our very 'world-view' and the visual paradigms through we construct intellectual and visceral frameworks of engaging and understanding 'other' cultures require new infrastructures of understanding. Decolonising is a way of strategically seeing the present curatorial habits as de-naturalised, de-authorised and indeed effectively neutralised of their historical and material defining logics based on colonial values. The ideal schema for decolonising the museum space requires the removal of the dominant ontological framework that reflects systemic 'structural colonialism' (Todd, 2016). Within academia and museum cultures and curatorship, a shift in orientation is required towards rethinking whose knowledge, epistemologies and voice is credible. Todd argues that '(a)pparently, to

be seen as credible in the European academy, indigenous thought must be filtered

through white intermediaries' (p7, 2016). The very 'nature 'of being and of others is

defined through imperial epistemologies. These shape the ways in which 'other'

cultures are encountered and understood at the museum (Bennett, 2004). The effects

of imperial taxonomies dictate the cultural logics through which we make meaning

of artefacts, and cultural representations (Hall, 1997; Bennett, 2005).

The BM as an example of a 'world museum'; a display of material cultures and art>

At the BM the grammars of display are tools for the education and enlightenment of

visitors. Collections are also geopolitical, historically, they were about establishing

cultural superiority thus re-affirming imperial cultural hierarchies (Gosden and

Knowles, 2001; Coombes, 1997). As housed in 'national' museums, 'collections

allowed nation-states to show their possession and mastery of the world - something

that colonial powers were especially well able to demonstrate through the

accumulation of material culture from the countries they colonised' (Macdonald,

2011; 85) Hooper-Greenhill (1989) has argued that there is a tension between

thinking of a museum, such as the British Museum, as 'an elite temple of the arts' for

those who are equipped with the tools of museum-literacy, and as 'a utilitarian

instrument for democratic education' (p63) for those who are seen as not skilled in

understanding and producing knowledge themselves. Bennett (2011) finds this

differentiation a critical means of constructing the notion of 'civic seeing'. Bennett

articulates the politics of 'seeing' at the museum, he articulates how the museum has

a 'regime of vision' through which it narrates, informs and organises knowledge, and indeed produces 'ways of being' and 'receiving' heritage knowledges that co-produce historically and culturally situated citizens. Effectively these moral and visual geographies of the museum depend on the historical-material economies that inform the civic institution's role – either to educate and improve citizens, or embody institutions which provide an undifferentiated approach to visitors as citizens without engaging with them as producers of knowledge, or cultural agency (p263). Decolonising the regimes of vision ultimately disturb euro-centric epistemologies and optical myopias that the imperial lens renders. Another aspect of decolonising is to disturb the reliance on vision itself. There are examples of museum practice that has foregrounded this approach. Smith (2005) exemplifies this through her reflections on the practice of decolonising the museum at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington DC.

Episode Five: Visceral Epistemologies

The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) exemplifies those postcolonial curatorial approaches and the intellectual axes through which renegotiations and representations have to be embraced. The NMAI advances and expresses decolonial exhibition praxis by representing American Indian heritage through the following axes of postcolonial critique. The steps that have been identified include exhibiting American Indian culture (1) through a space designed

by the communities represented therein; (2) as living and within modernity rather than fixed in the past (3) as diverse rather than homogeneous and 'in the manner in which traditional indigenous cosmologies, philosophies and worldview's inform the lives of communities; (4) with displays that challenge museum conventions of for example separating 'art' and 'science'. "Freed from an over-arching curatorial voice and the distracting labelling of individual objects, the exhibits convey the 'big picture'' (Smith, 2005:p430) with the possibility of multivalent interpretations; (5) using Indigenous classification systems; (6) recognising indigenous expert knowledge and exhibiting an indigenous route to knowledge through 'experience' (7) by exhibiting American Indian culture as being 'in a constant state of becoming. . .We are still here and we are still evolving' (2004, p434). As museums shape our historical memory, any decolonising of the museum space refigures the sovereignty of indigenous knowledge systems; thus the shared museum narrative can be grounded within a postcolonial frame, and illustrate clearly the impact of colonialism and it's violence's be they physical, political, ideological and epistemological. The key is to think through history, memory and heritage as embodied and memorialised expressive cultures beyond the formalised, sanctioned written archives and texts (Tolia-Kelly, 2016). Postcolonial and decolonial praxis acknowledges the expression of heritage as intangible, in multitudinous textual forms (Morrison, 1990), global mediations (Appadurai,1990), and through gestures and sounds in circulation (Gilroy, 1992). A recognition of the dynamic nature of culture unfixed from time and space, as 'past' or outside of 'modernity' reinvigorates

an account of heritage at the museum that reconciles with contemporary source communities and their self-determined accounts of cultural artefacts and their value.

Raymond argues that for postcolonial peoples the visceral, affective and performativity are tropes for a decolonising artistic practice (Raymond, 2016). The space with *taonga*, or the $V\bar{A}$' is activated by people, binding people and things together, forming relationships and reciprocal obligations' (Raymond, 2016; 24). In this new paradigm, there is communication, agency, accountability and power that is between the *taonga* and its 'public'. In the decolonised museum, there is no wall of glass to separate people and *taonga*, nor is there a label to reduce the ancestor to 'artefact', that deadens and denudes the agency and power of the *taonga*. There is an activation of the relationship between ancestor and genealogies. Vision is simply a fraction of the logics of understanding and communications between them. The that Raymond engenders in the museum space could be considered a starting point, where ethnocentric and universal values are co-produced with stewardship, knowledge and power of source communities and their historical cultural narratives which themselves co-produced modernity. Erasing modernity's co-constitution with 'other' cultures, reduces both modernity and history to a singular palette of cultural value. This palette is not fit for the purpose of recording, acknowledging and learning from global structures-of-feeling layered within and outside our cultural institutions and their collections.

Doing Postcolonial Heritage in Praxis

In this collaboration with Rosanna Raymond the 'outputs' are the process itself; conversations, dialogue, joint presentations, joint tours of spaces, themselves. These effectively have coalesced to inform both of our sets of intellectual framings of 'how to' decolonise the museum space, and to 'how to' effectively represent, narrate and determine values of non-European, racialised cultures such as Māori, beyond the imperial account. By disturbing the accepted value and politics of collaboration in, we hope to illustrate the added-value of being-with-each-other, and of space for decolonial pedagogy and epistemologies at the museum. When thinking postcolonially, Gosden (2012) argues that there is a need to 'subvert and work against the various colonial heritages to create a new future' (p252). In the exhibitions that Rosanna Raymond and I have curated, part of the decolonising process is to subvert what is expected, challenge the assumptions of 'other' cultures and expose their heterogeneity. For example, in the exhibition '*An archaeology of 'race'*' (http://www.dur.ac.uk/geography/race/) the display of the painting by Graham Lowe itself is about challenging the assumptions about race in the North East of England, and expose the perpetuation of the false elision between 'whiteness' and 'Englishness' (Byrne, 2007; Gilroy, 1990; Jackson, 1988; Nayak, 1999; Ware, 2001). By placing a full length mirror alongside this painting, the audience are drawn to consider their genealogies, longitudinally. The audience is also asked to consider their connections with military postings of their own relatives through time, as the

North East has had a strong commitment to working in the military armed forces from Roman times onwards, with exceptional recruitment figures in WWI. The North-East and its frontier history is considered as having 'a masculine culture of toughness, of stamina, of relying on your mates' (Jackson quoted in Henderson, 2014). Wilson (2008) has also argued that there is significant evidence of a pronounced 'military culture' in the North-East region of England which 'have provided a disproportionate number of recruits to the British Army' (p29).

Here, everyday geopolitics of race and racism are addressed and challenged through the process of dialogue about both the presence of the Black English from Roman times. The exhibition also attends to the international nature of the UNESCOvworld heritage site and its environs as a zone of cultural and technological exchange; a corridor of trade, exchange and transcultural living. Exhibitions (e.g. Tolia-Kelly, 2010) have been a way of making the circulations of aesthetics, more reflective and representational of everyday inclusive Britishness, beyond the reductive sensibilities of 'nation' reflected in our national institutions, heritage sites and practices (see Crang and Tolia-Kelly, 2010; Hall, 2005; Matless, 2016; Mercer, 1999; Darby, 2000).

The aim of collaboration, is to challenge the reproduction of 'other's', to readdress the balance of the occluded representations and to add 'other' national sensibilities to dominant national aesthetics and narratives. Those 'other' voices are often encountered as stereotypes, as the enemy within or strange exotic 'other's' to Britishness (Gilroy, 1991; 1997; Hall, 1978; 1992; 1997). At the core of my engagement

with visual culture as a geographer has been to attend to the politics and practice of inclusion in relation to national heritage. Within collaborations, it is important that artistic practice and academic practice coalesce to produce something beyond both a singular focus on 'art' and 'geography' respectively. For example Fisher, (2014) argues that the black arts movement of the 1980s became a self-ghettoising movement; black art and culture, 'led by socio-political 'theory' became a mere illustration of it'. It is important that the effect of the collaboration is not simply the artist illustrating research outcomes (Driver et al. 2002 ;) or indeed the geographer narrating the value of a creative artist's work to cultural thought (Cant and Morris, 2006; Marston and DeLeew, 2013; Nash, 1996).

{INSERT IMAGE} Full Tusk Maiden (2009) photography *Kerry Brown*

In the collaboration with Raymond, the value of the dialogue has been about negotiating a way of doing postcolonial heritage at the museum space. The aim has been about navigating between the essentialising tendencies of museum narratives and the distinctiveness of particular cultural ecologies determined by communities themselves. The creating and retaining a sustainable space for a self-determined account of Māori and Polynesian culture was at the heart of our dialogue. For both of us the context of our praxis was a continued professional practice where we were creating a platform for 'other voices', 'outside' of sanctioned and authorised

producers of knowledge accepted by academia, museums and their curatorial staff. Rosanna Raymond outlines her definition of the nature of our collaboration below:

"For me our collaboration has developed slowly but surely creating a deep-rooted relationship not just based an academic frame. It is an ongoing relationship based on trust and friendship, this is important to me, as many collaborations between academics and artists are only for the duration of 'the project'". Rosanna Raymond calls the relationship *teu le vā* ; an important concept on how you sustain /maintain the *vā* relationship. Overall, the concrete outputs more highly valued than the "softer" outcomes, often leaving the artists input marginalised. We have collaborated on building ideas, refining theory and practice, sometimes weaving them together and sometimes letting them sit side by side, we have created spaces for both our voices to talk to and through each other; thus enhancing both of our academic/artistic practice. This (collaboration) has been a great benefit to my art practice and continues to inspire me especially when working inside the museum space, as you have made me aware of how important this work is inside this highly privileged space. I feel we will both continue to reap the benefits of our collaboration as we continue to explore and unpack heritage inside institutional spaces, through words, visuals and the body."

The practical process for decolonising the museum space, is where the focus is on the obstacles that are present when self-determined (not those imperial, sanctioned, authorised heritage values) cultural definitions, values and narratives articulate and

curate the collections. As Smith (2005) argues, museums and art galleries are saturated with notions of racial difference and human classification.

Episode Six: Art and Artefact

Starting with the artificial differentiation between treating objects as either 'art' or 'artefact' there is a traceable route that chimes with postcolonial theories of 'othering', 'fixing' and 'objectifying' other. At the British Museum the galleries of 'Māori' collections have been re-curated by George Nuku and Rosanna Raymond, by invitation[vi], including the commissioning of adornments and new pieces in acrylic and jade. One of the features of displaying *taonga* in cabinets and display cases is that the process reduces *taonga* to artefact, a deadened, object to be looked upon, ruptured from its society. Often within museum displays the galleries of non-European culture represent ethnographic textures of those societies. At the British Museum, the African galleries are curated using 'ethnographic' framings – hair braids, drums, cloth and military artefacts dominate; the grammars of the 'art museum' subside to foreground the grammars of anthropological artefact. For Thomas and Loche (1999) there is a double vision that operates between the visual grammars of European and Oceanic cultures, and he argues, has done so since contact and collections commenced; the products of 'other' societies do not share a platform with European art, they are relegated to artefact without distinction.

'Art world discourse, in particular, often characterises indigenous cultures through generic values of spirituality and attachment to place. . . . the affirmative evocation of these aspects of indigenous tradition too often obscures the distinctiveness of indigenous Australian and Oceanic cultures' Thomas and Loche (1999; 3).

African, Asian and Oceanic cultures have often been categorised as those societies whose art is 'primitive', these categorisations have thus allowed the construct of modernism which is denied these cultures but is allowed to characterise European art such as Picasso, whose art is indebted to the cultural aesthetics of African and non-European artistic practice (Araeen, 2010). Effectively, modernity becomes unavailable to 'other' artists, it is another 'space-time' that is never reached by the colonised. And the dominant paradigm of primitive as a referant of 'other' artists comes into play further when and if in turn they do produce aesthetics that are 'modern' these artists are deemed as imitating (assuming thus that they are not capable of embodying it, or expressing it in artful-form) European modernism. Khair (2000) exemplifies this further, "Picasso can adopt elements from non-Western cultures and create modernist art, but non-Western artists incorporating, say, European techniques, themes or material in their work would nevertheless continue to be seen to create derivative art."(p8).

In her iteration as *Full Tusk Maiden*, (2009), Raymond uses her own aesthetics to re-envision and reclaim the power and dynamism of the often encountered *Dusky Maiden*.

"With both hands placed on her hips and legs spread wide, the Full Tusk Maiden assumes a powerful haka stance-a posture that in many Oceanic and Polynesian cultures denotes defiance and strength... [H]er steady, penetrating gaze conveys in a potent way self-possession, self-sufficiency, and agency. The Full Tusk Maiden is not only beautiful-she is intimidating... rather than being polar opposites, [the dusky maiden and her Full Tusk sibling] are instead two sides of the same coin, flipping back and forth through the transformative space of the wā [vā] when it suits them" (Tamaira 2010, 16-18). This disrupts an account of 'essential' woman as feminine, supplicant to a masculine opposite; here masculinity and femininity are irrelevant as they are intricately conjoined. Bringing FTM to life is part of Raymond's mission to re-activate connections with Māori artefacts at the museum. Through her performances at museums Raymond activates and reactivates the *Vā*; the space between the ancestors / *taonga* and the community of stewardship that are co-constituted and where care is reciprocated.

Cultural Heirarchies

At heart, the challenging of cultural hierarchies at the museum space requires the privileging and recognising self-determined accounts of identity and indeed histories. The recognition of self-determined epistemes are urgently needed. Notions

of mobility and indigeneity need to be recognised rather than archaic notions of 'fixing' others within time-space frames outside of now. Contemporary Native people live in multiple world-views simultaneously (Fullenwieder 2017, p44) and as such epistemologies are dynamic and contemporary. Reconciliation between source communities and museums thus rely on shifts in time frames, understandings of indigeneity as modern as well as engaging the community to self-define, curate and challenge epistemic violences encountered therein. Race relations, power and oppression are at the heart of our collections and their definitions; Raymond and I aim to in our collaboration bring Race Theory and Museum Space together, to collide and to fracture assumptions created over centuries, reworked with new visual grammars and vocabularies.

In reflecting on the 'Musee du Quai, Branly' (MQB) Clifford's (2007: 3) laments on how the museum was to be formed from 'a coalition of different agendas'. This is how a decolonised museum space would look like – encompassing a decolonised 'way of seeing' that is truly internationalist, and coproduced through genuine dialogue and acknowledgement of knowledges from beyond the academic frame. The MQB has been criticised for failing that agenda, and indeed reaffirming the imperial politics of cultural hierarchies through its curatorial practices. Price (2007) critiques the reaffirmation of cultural hierarchies that exoticise non-European cultures and has argued that 'primitive aestheticism' has prevailed, and that

postcolonial articulations simply did not materialise. Retaining a primitivist lens in this way reaffirms imperial and scientific accounts of racial hierarchies and cultural capabilities in relation to geographical locations. However there are examples within museums that have defied the difficulties and are deemed successful in decolonising by using an inclusive approach with respectful engagement with the communities represented.

Episode Seven: *Atmospheres of Collaboration*

At the 4th Emotional Geographies conference held in July 2013 at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. We were invited to curate a 'special session' that was in a format beyond the usual conference plenary or paper presentation. We designed an experience entitled *Theatres of Pain* which aimed to reflect our long term collaboration on thinking through the question of 'how can 21st century museum displays of Māori and Pacific cultures be post-Imperial and post-racial?' The exhibition space of the national museum is seen here as *a theatre of pain*; a vehicle of effecting the pain of epistemic violences, of overlooking the biography of artefacts (Gell, 1986), imperial genocide and ecological imperialism (Crosby, 2015) and the deadening of artefacts (Bennett, 2004; 2005b; Tolia-Kelly, 2016). Overall at the BM, or indeed any art museum exhibiting artefacts from Māori and Pacific or *Tangata Moana* (people of the Pacific), 'becomes a mausoleum for the European eye, but which petrifies living cultures' (Bennett, 2004; 2005a). The emotional geographies of

the museum space from Māori and Polynesian perspectives is set-up, enlivened and performed here in this session enabling the consideration of the BM museum space as a theatre of pain for Māori and Polynesian visitors. The performance aimed to re-orientate mind/body to Polynesian framings of discourse, learning and exchange. Thinking through the body is what we wish to engage, using the body to activate a relational space between audience and ourselves as curators. There was embedded in the design of the session, textures in the piece involving music, spoken word, aural histories, projection on the walls, fabrics to decentre the usual grammars of conference exhibition and performance. Overall, we wanted a visceral experience for attendees, so we decided to design a performance that stimulated all senses. Visually we darkened the room and had images projected on the walls. The Soundtrack was also very important to us – we chose to lead with Gil Scott-Heron's (1970) 'Whitey on the moon', from the album Small Talk at 125th and Lenox. The walls were projected with the video for the track (https://youtu.be/e5smPcN8AoE). *Whitey on the moon* is Gil Scott-Heron's song outlining the inequalities of life for black citizens in the US, despite having a multi-billion dollar space programme there are black people without healthy spaces to live, food to eat or indeed medical care for basic injuries. These inequalities are in sharp focus when we are faced with the costs and investment in the military space missions in a world where 925 million people are without food (see Chiroux, 2012). Whitey on the moon articulates the structural inequalities experienced because of the colour of your skin; this dictates the life you can hope for. The aural texture of this song is about rhythm, Jazz, poetry and has a

modern metropolitan aesthetic – counter to expectations of primitive or fixed

aesthetics involved in the usual repertoires of museology and indigenous art. The

discordance between the vocalising of Rosanna Raymond's Māori re-activation chant

and Scott-Heron's is deliberate – to bring them into simultaneous alignment. The

aim is to get the affective flavour of Jazz, Scott-Heron's voice and Māori text and

aura in the same field of experience. Race and racialisation are the cornerstones of

Black musical culture in the USA, and here we bring them into alignment with

representational practices at the museum. Rather than accepting indigenous culture

as naturally residing in a separate realm of cognition of the 'other' (Said, 1979), or

alterity (Gilroy, 1990) we de-naturalise their assumed place outside of modernity, to

bring them within modernity, and place their representational realm within the

logics of race-politics (Hall, 1997).

Ecological imperial violence (see Crosby, 2004) was a theme within the session we

played Neil Young's *After the Gold Rush*; we chose this because of the way it disrupts

what we expect in terms of aesthetics. The song disrupts notions of linear space-time

as well as the neo-liberal dream. Young's sound and lyrics disrupt the notions of

democracy and economic promise by presencing the apocalyptic devastation of

earth through military and ecological violence. As Young states: "*After The Gold*

Rush is an environmental song . . . I recognise in it now this thread that goes through

a lotta my songs that's this time-travel thing… When I look out the window, the first

thing that comes to my mind is the way this place looked a hundred years ago."

(Hasted, 2016). The song was intended to connect to space-time against the grain of Eurocentric accounts, where the aesthetics of the apocalypse are in the process of becoming, however this presencing brings to the visceral, those sequential violences that have occurred in Māori and Pacific territories for centuries. The loss of a territory of hope is at the heart of connecting the sounds of Young with the sensibilities of Māori and Pacific or *Tangata Moana* (people of the Pacific). The visceral pain experienced by rupture with ancestors and *taonga* / treasures and artefacts (Tolia-Kelly, 2016). Rosanna Raymond's performances are about *acti.VA.tions* reactivates relationships; pasts, present and future space-time relationship are enlivened, enabling a rightful stewardship of *taonga*. The session continued with the performance of an Acti.VA.tion by Raymond in the conference space much like that performed in Berlin's Ethnological Museum in 2016 (see: https://vimeo.com/110965423). This performance and chanting produces a re-figuring of bodies in the room by first creating a disconnect with the habit of being with each other in a 'conference' frame, and disrupts through voice, sounds and aesthetics the usual ways of engaging. Raymond uses unexpected modern aesthetics to communicate her activation thus reducing disenfranchisement within a colonial frame.

Conclusions: Co-constituting Knowledge at the British Museum

Revising, and continually challenging representational strategies is at the heart of

decolonising. At the BM the Māori galleries were re-curated by artist in residence

George Nuku with Rosanna Raymond in 2009 resulting in a relaunch of the galleries

(Crang and Tolia-Kelly, 2010). Rosanna Raymond was a member of a London Māori

community focus group which led to the major work by George Nuku. Rosanna

Raymond was key in bringing the Māori community into the space of the BM. This

commissioning, was part of the BM updating its collection's narratives, but also to

encourage community relationships with source communities, curators and keepers

of artefact. George Nuku gifted the perspex taonga to honour the collaboration

(named after his son) Te Aonehe. As a result the pieces were curated into the cabinet

effectively materialises that relationship into an artefact at the BM. The gallery's

relaunch was part of the British Museum's project of incorporating contemporary

modes of heritage representation and remaking this imperial space of education,

improvement and a 'temple' to world cultures'. Nuku reworked traditional forms of

art, so instead of recreating carvings and sculpting jade and wood, Nuku utilised

new materials such as Perspex and polystyrene. Here his aim was to place Māori and

Polynesian squarely as a dynamic form of cultural expression; to stress that

exchange, invention and transcultural flows have always been, part of the cultural

traditions. The space was created for self-determined expressive accounts of what it

is to be Māori and Pacific or *Tangata Moana* (people of the Pacific). The galleries were

re-figured as a marae reflecting Māori and Pacific senses and sensibilities and

stewardship of their heritage in their terms. The space of the Welcome Trust

Galleries became place of rightful belonging of both objects and peoples. Nuku's

work was for the refurbishment of the Wellcome Trust Galleries entitled Living and

Dying it was a community event which proffered a state of citizenship to all of those

attending, a truly civic status to museum and community.

At the relaunch of the King's Library at the British Museum another such event

occurred; where source communities and museum were in alignment:

"The event was full of magic and the presence of our ancestors revealed in the room with us . . . It touched the very souls of all who attended: museum staff, the security staff and Ngati Ranana[vii]. Even though the two parties have very different agendas in the preservation of the taonga, the night brought together three worlds, the past, present and the future. I now see working with institutions as a venue to help bridge the gaps that have evolved in the process of housing, collecting and writing about indigenous peoples over the past 200 years. I see the future of collections and museums becoming an arena for cultural exchange, going outside the boundary of the museum space into everyday life"

(Rosanna Raymond, personal interview 2010).

Building bridges, having a dialogue and embracing 'cool loyalties' (Turner, 2002) are

expressed in the collaboration that Raymond and I are in the process of. A true

postcolonial curatorial politics would embody a change beyond struggling for

recognition, inclusion (beyond the struggle for indigenous communities to be seen,

felt and heard), instead we could embody exhibition cultures that are self-defined

and inclusive. Overall, questions of disturbing sites of power, epistemologies and

ontologies (Panelli, 2008; 2010) are at the heart of decolonising the museum. The

very practice of co-constituting knowledge that are represented at the BM is

exemplified in the process of relaunching its spaces with source communities.

Reversing the ownership of the floor of the museum (albeit temporarily) challenges

the archetypal accounts of those 'Other cultures' being outside Europe, being

exhibited (rather than teaching knowledge) embodying registers of victim, savage,

exotic, and outside of metropolitan modernity. Here the London Māori community

structurally disturbed accounts of ownership, modernity, and being fixed in a past

time-space (Hall, 1997).

Other obstacles to decolonising processes, include moments where source

communities' knowledge, labels or descriptions of *taonga* were not accepted; they

needed confirmation from anthropologists in the academy. Sometimes these

occlusions led to errors, misrepresentations and disrespectful curatorial practice. In

this process, source communities' identities thus were relegated to amateur or non-

authentic without authority or indeed bearers of sanctionable knowledge. They were

positioned as exhibitors, not authorities on culture. Rosanna Raymond articulates

her experience with museums over decades:

*"To read about yourself labelled as hybrid and having your authenticity questioned by people
outside your community left me feeling disempowered. Often our involvement as
practitioners was welcomed but our analysis of what we were doing was not considered as
important unless validated by an educated expert."*

There was one incident where, on completing works for the display, Rosanna

Raymond enquired as to why she was not acknowledged in the labels in the

cabinets. In response the museum staff stated that this could not be changed as 'the labels had been printed months ago' (RR personal Interview 2010). This negation is felt accumulatively. The *taonga* are mislabelled, or mis-positioned, and they are collectively labelled 'artefacts'; as such they are positioned very differently to European art in other museum galleries. However there have been attempts in the past to recognise the power and agency of collections beyond the binary framing of European and 'other'. Sometimes these do slip into registers of patronage or exoticisation of collections, but one example cited by Foster (2012) argues that in the 1940s at the Buffallo Museum of Science, displayed the Oceanic collection to highlight 'a concern with aesthetics' (p142), in fact Trevor Thomas's curation challenged conventions of displaying 'primitive art' exposing 'modernism's universal aesthetic criteria' (p142). Thomas positioned the collection as fine arts and not ethnographic artefacts, and rejected environmental determinism as a contextual logic to their production. More recently we see continuing political struggles challenging museums to decolonise (e.g. Viso, 2018). Within the academy, Mirzeoff, (2017) has called for creating spaces where you are willing to be challenged, to make 'new' without hierarchies, 'a space that embraces the necessity of decolonization. . . an institution that doesn't reproduce white supremacy' (p21). In this paper we have shared the experience of episodes of collaborative dialogue focussed on (w)*hat happens when we want to decolonise the museum?* These episodes are about highlighting the political axes of change needed; especially if imperial ecologies are going to make way to enfranchise source communities rather than pain and alienate (Tolia-

Kelly, 2016). Here we are outlining the problematics and the politics of practice in unpacking the continued obstacles present when decolonising museums. The collaboration does not have simple discrete *effects* or artefacts of its own; the conversation is outlined here as episodes of coalescence and formulate arguments that are beyond our individual perspectives, materialised in either *art* or *article*.

Ahmed, S., 2007. 'You end up doing the document rather than doing the doing': Diversity, race equality and the politics of documentation. *Ethnic and racial studies*, *30*(4), pp.590-609.

Alexander, C.E. and Arday, J. eds., 2015. *Aiming higher: Race, inequality and diversity in the academy*. Runnymede.

Arday, J. and Mirza, H.S. eds., 2018. *Dismantling race in higher education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy*. Springer

Araeen, R., 1987. From primitivism to ethnic arts. *Third Text*, 1(1), pp.6-25.

Araeen, R., 2010. Modernity, modernism and Africa's authentic voice. *Third Text*, 24(2), pp.277-286.

Bawaka Country, Sandie Suchet-Pearson, Sarah Wright, Kate Lloyd, Matalena Tofa, Laklak Burarrwanga, Ritjilili Ganambarr, Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr-Stubbs, Banbapuy Ganambarr & Djawundil Maymuru (2019) 'Bunbum ga dhä-yuṯagum: to

make it right again, to remake' *Social & Cultural*

Geography, DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2019.1584825

Barringer, T., 1998. The South Kensington Museum and the colonial

project. *Colonialism and the object: Empire, material culture and the museum*, pp.11-27.

Bennett, T 2004, *Pasts beyond memories: evolution, museums, colonialism*, Routledge,

London & New York.

Bennett, T. 2005a, 'Civic Laboratories: Museums, Cultural Objecthood and the

Governance of the Social', *Cultural Studies*, 19(5): 521-547.

Bennett, T., 2005b. The exhibitionary complex. In *Thinking about exhibitions* (pp. 71-

93). Routledge.

Bennett, T., 2011. Civic seeing: museums and the organization of vision. *A companion*

to museum studies, Ch16: 263.

Bennett, T., 2013. *The birth of the museum: History, theory, politics*. Routledge.

Berger, J., 1972. *Ways of Seeing* BBC. London: Penguin

Bhambra, G.K., 2014. Postcolonial and decolonial dialogues. *Postcolonial*

studies, 17(2), pp.115-121.

Byrne, B., 2007. Crisis of Identity: Englishness, Britishness and Whiteness. *Empire and*

After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective. Oxford and New York: Berghahn.

Cant, S.G. and Morris, N.J., 2006. Geographies of art and the environment. *Social & cultural geography*, 7(6), pp.857-861.

Country, B., Wright, S., Suchet-Pearson, S., Lloyd, K., Burarrwanga, L., Ganambarr, R., Ganambarr-Stubbs, M., Ganambarr, B., Maymuru, D. and Sweeney, J., 2016. Co-becoming Bawaka: Towards a relational understanding of place/space. *Progress in Human Geography*, 40(4), pp.455-475.

Mathis Chiroux, (2012) 'Whitey on the Moon' Huffington Post accessed May 11th 2018 (https://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthis-chiroux/whitey-on-the-moon-again_b_1188220.html)

Cook, I., 2000. Cultural geographies in practice: social sculpture and connective aesthetics: Shelley Sacks's 'Exchange values'. *Ecumene*, 7(3), pp.337-343.

Coombes, A.E., 1997. *Reinventing Africa: Museums, material culture and popular imagination in late Victorian and Edwardian England*. Yale University Press.

Crang, M. and Tolia-Kelly, D.P., 2010. Nation, race, and affect: senses and sensibilities at national heritage sites. *Environment and planning A*, 42(10), pp.2315-2331.

Crosby, A.W., 2004. *Ecological imperialism: the biological expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. Cambridge University Press.

Driver, F., Nash, C. and Prendergast, K., 2002. *Landing: eight collaborative projects between artists+ geographers.* Royal Holloway.

Faris, J.C., 1988. " ART/artifact": On the Museum and Anthropology. *Current Anthropology*, 29(5), pp.775-779.

Jean Fisher, 2009 'The Other Story and the Past Imperfect ', *Tate Papers*, Autumn no.12, (http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/no-12/the-other-story-and-the-past-imperfect, accessed 1 May 2018).

Foster, R.J., 2012. Art/Artefact/Commodity: Installation design and the exhibition of Oceanic things at two New York museums in the 1940s. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 23(2), pp.129-157.

Foster, K. and Lorimer, H., 2007. Cultural geographies in practice: Some reflections on art-geography as collaboration. *Cultural Geographies*, 14(3), pp.425-432.

Fullenwieder, L., 2017. Framing indigenous self-recognition: the visual and cultural work of the politics of recognition. *Postcolonial Studies*, 20(1), pp.34-50.

Gee, H. *Nature* 420, 611 (2002).

Gell, A., 1986. Newcomers to the world of goods: consumption among the Muria Gonds. *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, pp.110-138.

Gosden, C., 2012. Postcolonial archaeology. *Archaeological theory today*, pp.251-266.

Gosden, C. and Knowles, C., 2001. *Collecting colonialism: material culture and colonial change*.

Gilroy, P., 1990. Art of darkness: black art and the problem of belonging to England. *Third Text*, 4(10), pp.45-52.

Gilroy, P., 2013. *There ain't no black in the Union Jack*. Routledge.

Grosfoguel, R., 2007. The epistemic decolonial turn: Beyond political-economy paradigms. *Cultural studies*, *21*(2-3), pp.211-223.

Hall, B.L. and Tandon, R., 2017. Decolonization of knowledge, epistemicide, participatory research and higher education. *Research for All*, *1*(1), pp.6-19.

Hall, S. ed., 1997. *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (Vol. 2). Sage.

Hall, S., 1996. New ethnicities. *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies*, pp.441-449.

Hall, S., 2005. Whose heritage? Un-settling 'the heritage', re-imagining the post-nation. The politics of heritage: The legacies of 'race, *Third Text* pp.23-35.

Hasted, N., 2016. 'The Story Behind The Song: Neil Young After The Gold Rush' in *Loudersound*: November 12, 2016: https://www.loudersound.com/features/the-stories-behind-the-songs-neil-young-after-the-gold-rush (Accessed May 11th 2018)

Hawkins, H., 2013. Geography and art. An expanding field: Site, the body and practice. *Progress in Human Geography*, 37(1), pp.52-71.

Henderson, T. (2014) 'Tough' North East culture theory for rush to enlist in First World War' *The Journal* (7th October, 2014) accessed Dec 13th 2017.

Henare, A., 2005. *Museums, anthropology and imperial exchange*. Cambridge University Press.

Hooper-Greenhill, E., 1989. The museum in the disciplinary society. In S. Pearce (ed) *Museum studies in material culture*, pp.61-72. Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Jackson, P., 1998. Constructions of 'whiteness' in the geographical imagination. *Area*, 30(2), pp.99-106.

Johnson, J.T., Cant, G., Howitt, R. and Peters, E., 2007. Creating anti-colonial geographies: embracing indigenous peoples' knowledges and rights. *Geographical Research*, *45*(2), pp.117-120.

Jolly, M., 2011. 'Becoming a "New" Museum?: Contesting Oceanic Visions at Museee du Quai Branly' in *The Contemporary Polynesian* vol 23:1, pp108-139.

Khair, T., 2001. Modernism and modernity: The patented fragments. *Third Text*, 15(55), pp.3-13.

Lovejoy, A. O. *The Great Chain of Being* (Harper and Row, New York, 1965).

Lloyd, K., Suchet-Pearson, S., Wright, S. and Burarrwanga, L.L., 2010. Stories of crossings and connections from Bawaka, north east Arnhem Land, Australia. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *11*(7), pp.701-717.

Marston, S.A. and De Leeuw, S., 2013. Creativity and geography: Toward a politicized intervention. Geographical Review, 103(2).

Maynard Smith, J. & Szathmáry, E. *The Major Transitions of Evolutio*n (W. H. Freeman & Co., Oxford, 1995).

McMullin, D.T., 2017. The Acti. VA. tions of Rosanna Raymond. *Artlink,* 37(2), p.70.

Mercer, K., 1999. Ethnicity and internationally: New British art and diaspora-based blackness. *Third Text*, 13(49), pp.51-62.

Nash, C., 2005. Mapping emotion: Longing and location in the work of Kathy Prendergast. *A Shared Legacy: Essays on Irish and Scottish Art and Visual Culture.* Farnham: Ashgate.

Nayak, A., 1999. 'White English Ethnicities': racism, anti-racism and student perspectives. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 2(2), pp.177-202.

Nee, S. *Nature* 429, 804–805 (2004).

Everlyn Nicodemus (1993) Meeting Carl Einstein, *Third Text* , 7:23, 31-38

Noxolo, P., 2017. Decolonial theory in a time of the re-colonisation of UK research. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *42*(3), pp.342-344.

Panelli, R., 2008. Social geographies: encounters with Indigenous and more-than-White/Anglo geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(6), pp.801-811.

Panelli, R., 2010. More-than-human social geographies: Posthuman and other possibilities. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(1), pp.79-87.

Panelli, R., Hubbard, P., Coombes, B. and Suchet-Pearson, S., 2009. De-centring White ruralities: ethnicity and indigeneity. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 25(4), pp.355-443.

Peers, L.L. and Brown, A.K. eds., 2003. *Museums and source communities: A Routledge reader*. Psychology Press.

Price, S (2007) Paris Primitive : *Jaques Chirac's Museum on the Quai Branly* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Radcliffe, S.A., 2017. Decolonising geographical knowledges. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 42(3), pp.329-333.

Raymond, R. and Jacobs, K., 2009. AN ARTIST'S PERSPECTIVE, 1. *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, (21), pp.127-138.

Raymond, R., 2016. A Body of VA'rt. *Te Kaharoa*, 9(1).

Rose, G., 1997. Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. *Progress in human geography*, 21(3), pp.305-320.

Said, E.W., 1979. *Orientalism* (1st Vintage Books ed.). New York, NY: Vintage.

Sherman, D.J., 2008. *Museums and difference* (Vol. 2). Indiana Univ Pr.

Simmonds, N., 2011. Mana wahine: Decolonising politics. *Women's studies Journal*, 25(2), p.11.

Smith, C. 2005. 'Decolonising the museum: the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC' *Antiquity* 79(pp424-439)

Smith, L.T., 1999. *Decolonising methodologies. Research and Indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books.

Tamaira, A.M., 2010. From Full Dusk to Full Tusk: Reimagining the" Dusky Maiden" through the Visual Arts. *The Contemporary Polynesian*, 22(1), pp.1-35.

Todd, Z., 2016, 'An indigenous feminist take on the ontological turn: 'Ontology' is just another word for colonialism' in the Journal of Historical Sociology Vol 29; pp4-22.

Thomas, N. and Loshe, D., 1999. *Double Vision: Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Tolia-Kelly, D.P., 2007. Fear in paradise: the affective registers of the English Lake District landscape re-visited. *The Senses and Society*, 2(3), pp.329-351.

Tolia-Kelly, D.P., 2008. Motion/emotion: picturing translocal landscapes in the nurturing ecologies research project. *Mobilities*, 3(1), pp.117-140.

Tolia-Kelly, D.P., 2012. The geographies of cultural geography II: Visual culture. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(1), pp.135-142.

Tolia-Kelly, D.P., 2016. Feeling and being at the (postcolonial) Museum: Presencing the affective politics of 'race'and culture. *Sociology*, 50(5), pp.896-912.

Truettner, W.H., 2008. Museums and historical amnesia. In (eds) Sherman D.J. *Museums and difference*, pp.354-374.

Viso, O (2018) It's Time for Museums to 'Decolonize' in *Frieze* (4th May 2018 issue)

Ware, V., 2001. Perfidious Albion: Whiteness and the international imagination. *The making and unmaking of whiteness*, pp.184-213.

Waterton, E. and Smith, L., 2010. The recognition and misrecognition of community heritage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *16*(1-2), pp.4-15.

Wilson, P.H., 2008 Defining Military Culture in *The Journal of Military History* 72: 1, pp11-41.

Welch, R.V. and Panelli, R., 2007. Questioning community as a collective antidote to fear: Jean-Luc Nancy's 'singularity'and 'being singular plural'. *Area*, *39*(3), pp.349-356.

Wood, B., Henare, A., Lander, M., & Kanawa, K. (2003). Visiting the House of Gifts: The 1998 Māori Exhibition at the British Museum. *Journal of New Zealand Literature: JNZL,* (21), 83-101. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20112357

[i] These advisory comments are in editorial comments from Rosanna Raymond –sent by email on Monday 8th July 2019.

[ii] Rosanna Raymond *Where Art Thou Taonga (1)?* (2011) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwTrCdtCGYE and *Where Art Thou Taonga (2)?* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82Dlcp47zLc.

[iii] UN Migration Report 2017: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf

[iv] See for e.g. Decolonising the Medical curriculum at UCL: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/whats-on/decolonising-medical-curriculum (accessed April 24th 2018); Cambridge University students call for decolonising the curriculum: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/oct/25/cambridge-academics-seek-to-decolonise-english-syllabus; Brighton University: https://www.brightonsu.com/news/article/13715/Decolonise-The-Curriculum/

[v] UNESCO listing of the Roman Limes that includes Hadrian's Wall (UK) https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/430

[vi]

[vii] *Ngati Ranana* the Māori Tribe of London for over 50 years and considered the cradle of Māori culture in London.