



Decolonising the museum? Dilemmas, possibilities, alternatives

By
Vanessa Whittington

Abstract

As institutions that arose during the European age of imperial expansion to glorify and display the achievements of empire, museums have historically been deeply implicated in the colonial enterprise. However if we understand coloniality not as a residue of the age of imperialism, but rather an ongoing structural feature of global dynamics, the challenge faced by museums in decolonising their practice must be viewed as ongoing. This is the case not just in former centres of empire, but in settler-colonial nations such as Australia, where “the colonisers did not go home” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 10). As a white, Western institution, a number of arguably intrinsic features of the museum represent a significant challenge to decolonisation, including the traditional museum practices and values evinced by the universal museum. Using a number of case studies, this paper considers the extent to which mainstream museums in Australia, Britain and Europe have been able to change their practices to become more consultative and inclusive of Black and Indigenous peoples. Not only this, it discusses approaches that extend beyond a politics of inclusion to ask whether museums have been prepared to hand over representational power, by giving control of exhibitions to Black and Indigenous communities. Given the challenges posed by traditional museum values and practices, such as the strong preference of the universal museum to maintain intact collections, this paper asks whether community museums and cultural centres located within Indigenous communities may represent viable alternative models. The role of the Uluru Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre in Australia’s Northern Territory is considered in this light, including whether Traditional Custodians are able to exert control over visitor interpretation offered by this jointly managed centre to ensure that contentious aspects of Australian history are included within the interpretation.

Whittington, Vanessa: “Decolonising the museum? Dilemmas, possibilities, alternatives”, *Culture Unbound*, Volume 13, issue 2, 2021: 250-274. Published by Linköping University Electronic Press: <http://www.cultureunbound.ep.liu.se>



Introduction

As institutions that arose during the European age of imperial expansion to glorify and display the achievements of empire, museums were deeply implicated in the colonial enterprise (Bennett 1995, Petersen et al 2008). However, if we understand colonialism as producing “long-standing patterns of power...that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations” (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 243), the challenge faced by museums in decolonising their practice must be viewed as ongoing. This is the case not just in former centres of empire such as Britain and France, but in settler-colonial nations such as Australia, where “the colonisers did not go home” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 10), and settler-colonialism is best understood as a “structure, not an event” (Wolfe 1999: 2).

There has been a growing awareness of the importance of museums and decolonisation in recent years, a focus no doubt heightened by the Black Lives Matter movement’s opposition to public monuments celebrating colonial figures implicated in slavery and imperialism (McGonigle 2020). This interest is reflected in an increasing number of academic publications on the theme of museums and decolonisation (Bodenstein & Pagani 2014, Giblin et al 2019, Soares 2021), and a new interest in this topic by museum curators, particularly of ethnographic collections (Hicks 2020). While on face value this trend is encouraging, Dan Hicks, a curator at Oxford University’s Pitt Rivers’ Museum, identifies a range of risks associated with this new curatorial focus. These risks relate to employing the rhetoric of decolonisation, without a genuine commitment to its practice and thus can result in “obfuscation, ... tokenism, ...the co-option of activists, ...the appropriation of the labour of ‘source’...communities...[and] a hundred varieties of sidestep that allow violence to persist” (Hicks 2020, 9). This is the case, Hicks argues, when the unspoken premise is that collections obtained through colonial violence such as the Benin Bronzes should remain in the museums of these same colonial powers. Consequently, it is important that museums’ claims to decolonisation are assessed with care, and that one key measure of this, as discussed below, is responses to repatriation claims.

The Challenges of Museum Decolonisation

Even for those museums that are willing to seriously consider repatriation of looted objects and human remains, as white, Western institutions, a number of arguably intrinsic features of the traditionally conceived museum represent a significant challenge to decolonisation. These include organisational structures based on non-Indigenous systems of authority and a focus on material rather than intangible heritage, involving object collecting, display, conservation, research

and interpretation (Boast 2011). In addition, the preeminent valuing of scientific inquiry as a form of knowledge-making and of public access to collections as part of the museum's research and educational role, are often at odds with the cultural values and priorities of Indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, the model of the universal museum within former centres of empire, which understands its mandate as acquiring the "heritage of humanity" (ICOM 2007, n. p.), as discussed below, is antithetical to a decolonising ethos. This is because it presumes not only the right to claim the heritage of others, often from majority¹ world nations, as its own, but also the prerogative to retain valued objects within its collection, regardless of the legality or ethics of their historic acquisition. As will be discussed below, the way in which museums respond to the demands of Indigenous peoples for the repatriation of their material cultural heritage and their ancestors' human remains is a touchstone of decolonisation.

Responses to the issue of repatriation vary not only in institutions of the former imperial centre, but also the colonial periphery. It must thus be recognised that not only are museums socially constructed institutions reflecting their social, political and economic milieus, and therefore subject to change over time, but that they also reflect variable organisational cultures, management systems, ethical approaches and priorities (Marstine 2011). In settler-colonial nations such as Australia and New Zealand, there have been quite recognisable changes in regard to attitudes and approaches to consulting and including Indigenous peoples, including the rise of Indigenous curators and Indigenous managed exhibitions (Kelly et al 2006, McCarthy et al 2013, Hopkins 2017, McBride and Smith 2021). At the same time, greater inclusivity falls well short of decolonisation, which although a contested concept, could be understood as a thoroughgoing transformation of both thinking and approach that challenges "postcolonising" (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 10) structures of power.

Inclusivity, on the other hand, could be regarded as yet another form of assimilation, a strategy employed by the settler-colonial state to subsume Indigenous peoples within white institutions and ways of being, thereby eliminating their distinct identities (Armitage 1995; Wolfe 2006). On the other hand, there is a growing number of examples of engagement of Black and Indigenous peoples with museums in ways that are empowering for them not only as professionals and community consultants, but also as audiences, highlighting the importance of audience engagement in any process of decolonisation (Wajid and Minott 2019). These more recent developments suggest that to abjure the museum because of its colonial history and institutional culture would ignore its capacity to be recreated in the present by resurgent Indigenous cultures and anti-colonial activists.

The extent to which museums can respond to the priorities of Indigenous and other marginalised peoples by engaging with them in new ways of constructing

knowledge - for example through conversation and interaction, a focus on social and oral history rather than exclusively on object display, and not only consult with creator communities but hand over control of exhibitions to them - are some of the questions that need to be answered to determine if far-reaching decolonisation is occurring within museums (Unruh 2015). One of the important questions that Indigenous scholar Amy Lonetree (2009) raises is the extent to which museums provide an Indigenous perspective on colonial history or gloss over this in favour of presenting an essentialist vision of Indigenous culture. A consideration of these and related issues through case studies focusing on the repatriation approaches of institutions in Britain and Australia, and the ways that museums in Britain, Europe and Australia have approached Indigenous stories, objects and peoples, goes some way to addressing these questions. These issues are discussed in relation to ongoing challenges of power, control and self-representation in alternative models to the public museum such as the Uluru Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre, based on the author's 2019 doctoral fieldwork in Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia's Northern Territory.

What is Decolonisation?

In order to understand what is meant by decolonisation, it is first necessary to consider the varying manifestations and ongoing nature of coloniality. Decolonial thinkers (Grosfoguel 2007, Lugones 2011, Maldonado-Torres 2007, Mignolo 2007, 2011, Quijano 2007) understand coloniality not as a residue of the age of imperialism, but rather an ongoing structural, cultural, social and economic feature of global dynamics.

Integral to these global dynamics was the creation of ideas of race and the exploitation of the labour of supposedly inferior races, starting with the conquest of the Americas. Similarly, critical Indigenous scholar Moreton-Robinson argues for theorising contemporary Australian society not as postcolonial but "post-colonising" (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 10), to signal that colonisation is still in process. Her use of the term "postcolonising" is also intended to signal that settler-colonial societies such as Australia are different from other 'postcolonial' nations. Without this theoretical intervention, the specific experiences of Indigenous people in settler nations such as Australia, Canada and the United States, for example, are elided and made invisible, including that colonisation is in effect continuing through the ongoing occupation of unceded Indigenous land, and systems of control and management of Indigenous peoples and their cultural patrimony, including museums.

Key decolonial thinker Anibal Quijano (2007) contends that colonial structures of power have an enduring legacy in producing "social discriminations

which later were codified as ‘racial’, ‘ethnic’, ‘anthropological’” (Quijano 2007: 168), which correspond to contemporary patterns of race-based exploitation. He also makes the important point that at the same time that European coloniality was establishing itself, “the cultural complex known as European modernity/ rationality was being constituted”, and that these developments are inextricably linked (Quijano 2007: 172). Europe, he argues, took on the role of the rational Cartesian subject, and other cultures could only be “objects’ of knowledge or/ and of domination practices” (Quijano 2007: 174). The role of the museum in constituting the ‘Other’ as “objects of knowledge” through processes of collecting and cataloging implicates it in these practices of domination. The anthropological museum was also party to the modernist construction of history as an “evolutionary continuum from the primitive to the civilized; from the traditional to the modern; from the savage to the rational” (Quijano 2007: 176). Quijano thus identifies “epistemological decolonization” as a vital first step in the “destruction of the coloniality of world power” (Quijano 2007: 177).

Mignolo (2011) further develops Quijano’s critique of modernity/ coloniality, taking up his call for epistemological decolonisation. Bhambra neatly encapsulates his position as arguing, like Lugones (2011), that the “geopolitical locations of knowledge” should be acknowledged, championing “those modes and practices of knowledge that have been denied by the dominance of particular forms” (Bhambra 2014: 118). Accordingly, Mignolo calls for “delink[ing] from territorial and imperial epistemology grounded on theological (Renaissance) and egological (Enlightenment) politics of knowledge”, and in its place turning to “border thinking” and to “the reservoir of ways of life and modes of thinking that have been disqualified by Christian theology since the Renaissance” (Mignolo 2011: 274-275). Border thinking, he explains, means “dwelling and thinking in the borders of local histories confronting global designs, thereby enacting a form of “epistemic disobedience” (Mignolo 2011: 277).

Similarly, Dussel calls for “transmodernity”, by which he means transcending majority world modernity, using as a “point of departure... that which has been *discarded*, *devalued*, and judged *useless* among global cultures, including colonised or peripheral philosophies” (Dussel 2008: 19-20, emphasis in original). As Mignolo (2007) rightly points out, the idea of ‘primitive’ people and ‘traditions’ are constructs of European modernity: “[t]radition’ is not a way of life that predated ‘modernity’ but an invention of the rhetoric of modernity” (Mignolo 2007: 472). Consequently, decolonial scholars encourage us to reject these categories as constructs of a racialised modernity.

The principle of epistemological decolonisation is taken up by scholars such as Chambers and Buzinde (2015), who discuss the need to reclaim Indigenous and non-western ontologies and epistemologies if we are to truly decolonise our

thinking and institutions. Not only this, the projects of decolonisation must also be articulated by the colonised: if the coloniser wants to decolonise, this can only occur under the “intellectual guidance” of the colonised (Mignolo 2007: 458). While Mignolo’s use of the term ‘the colonised’ is unfortunate, as it implies a monolithic and ahistorical identity, his argument highlights the importance of Indigenous people taking the lead in defining what decolonisation means in a museum context. In a similar way to Quijano, Chilisa (2012, 9) makes it clear that colonisation not only typically involves “invasion and loss of territory” but also “the loss of control and ownership of ...knowledge systems, beliefs and behaviours... resulting in the captive or colonised mind”. In this way colonisation can continue even though the political and legal systems that subordinate the colonised may have been reformed.

For scholars such as Tuck and Yang, writing within the paradigm of critical Indigenous studies, “decolonization is not a metaphor” but “brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life” (Tuck and Yang 2012: 1). Treating decolonisation as a metaphor that can be used in a range of contexts, gives it a rhetorical rather than activist function, as part of what they term settler “moves to innocence” (Tuck and Yang 2012: 3). In their view, one shared by Moreton-Robinson (2015), colonisation, particularly in a settler-colonial context, is about the theft of Indigenous land, which is “remade into property [and a resource] and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property” (Tuck and Yang, 2012: 5). Tuck and Yang contend that “decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted” (Tuck and Yang 2012: 7). However, as I argue below with regard to the Uluru Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre, repatriation of land is insufficient if full governance and control over that land is not simultaneously ceded.

Tuck and Yang would thus take issue with the idea of decolonising the museum as part of settler “moves to innocence”, and it is possible to interpret some claims that overstate the extent of museum decolonisation, in this light (Lonetree 2009, Smith 2005). However, the epistemic decolonisation of such institutions through the displacement of dominant Eurocentric knowledge systems is in line with the arguments put forward by decolonial thinkers such as Mignolo and Quijano, suggesting that there is not complete unison between scholars working in the areas of decolonial and critical Indigenous studies on this issue. One way the decolonisation envisaged by Mignolo and Quijano could be achieved is through the abandonment of the principle of universalism, whereby some institutions regard themselves as having a universal function and as legitimately holding and displaying an international cultural patrimony, regardless of how it was obtained.

The second way decolonisation could be progressed is by revaluing and prioritising what decolonial thinkers describe as marginalised forms of knowledge, that is Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. A practical way of achieving this, which is now standard practice in Australian museums such as the National Museum of Australia, is to respect cultural restrictions on knowledge, and to store and display objects according to cultural protocols determined in consultation with creator communities (Kaus 2008). In this way museums can transition to becoming caretakers of objects on behalf of communities, rather than withholding cultural patrimony based on the premise of ownership. As discussed below, this is occurring in relation to the National Museum of Australia's retention of some Aboriginal human remains at the request of communities, because of difficulties determining the communities that they should be returned to, or lack of access to traditional lands for reburial (Turnbull 2020).

The Universal Museum

However, abandoning the model of the universal museum represents a significant challenge to some institutions. What this implies in practice is that a sizable proportion of objects in minority world collections such as the British Museum that were illegally or unethically obtained could legitimately be identified for repatriation by the countries from which they were taken. One recent example is the Benin Bronzes held by the British Museum, that the museum acknowledges the Benin Royal Court has publicly requested be returned (British Museum n. d.; Hicks 2020). However institutions such as the British Museum are notably reluctant to repatriate items in their collections. Rather than straightforwardly agreeing to repatriation requests, the British Museum frames its response in terms of ongoing dialogue, digital collaboration and a commitment to acknowledging the colonial collection history of such objects (British Museum n.d.). However, Hicks (2020, xiii) is highly critical of a curatorial positioning that claims that decolonisation can be achieved “by the mere re-writing of labels or shuffling around stolen objects in new displays that re-tell the history of empire, no matter how ‘critically’ or self-consciously”, since reflexivity, in these circumstances, “becomes mere self-regard” (2020, 218). The argument for decolonising the museum thus goes well beyond the radical transparency of interpretation advocated by Marstine (2011) in her discussion of the new museum ethics.

In response to ongoing calls for repatriation, the directors of eighteen American and European museums signed the ‘Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums’, which appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* on 12 December 2002 (Karp et al 2006). This Declaration seeks to rationalise and

justify these museums' claim to "objects and monumental work... acquired in earlier times...whether by purchase, gift, or partage"² on the basis that "they have become part of the museums that have cared for them, and by extension, part of the heritage of the nations which house them" (Karp et al 2006, n.p.). The document claims that the current value attributed to Greek sculpture, for example, has arisen as a result of its collection and display by public museums, thereby justifying Britain's continued retention of the Elgin Marbles. While the Declaration acknowledges that "[c]alls to repatriate objects that have belonged to museum collections for many years have become an important issue for museums" and that "each case has to be judged individually", it nevertheless argues in favour of retention on the basis that universal "museums serve not just the citizens of one nation but the people of every nation" (Karp et al 2006). Such claims are debunked by Hicks (2020) who questions how museums based in the global north holding the cultural patrimony of the global south can claim to be universal and points out that curators of universal museums often have very limited understanding of what in fact is in their collections.

From a decolonial perspective, the approach taken in the Declaration is decidedly Euro - and North American - centric, reflected in that museums from these parts of the globe are the sole signatories. It is similar to the rationale provided above by the British Museum for its refusal to return the Parthenon Marbles, in its claim that the universal museum is a resource for all the world, and that objects claimed by countries of origin are part of the world's shared heritage. Such rationales fail to acknowledge the unequal international power dynamics such as imperialism and slavery, largely based on exploitation of the global south, that resulted in the universal museum's possession of many of the objects it seeks to retain. In the case of the acquisition of Indigenous objects and human remains, these arguments appear oblivious that this typically occurred within the context of minority world invasion, genocide and appropriation of Indigenous land. The avowedly universal museum's attachment to its own status and commitment to the institutional imperative of maintaining its collection, has led it to approach the question of repatriation with strong reluctance, placing a number of barriers within the way of such claims, as explored further below in regard to policies on the repatriation of human remains.

Approaches to the Repatriation of Human Remains

The British Museum Policy on Human Remains makes it clear under the heading, Principles (5.1), that "the primary legal duty of the Trustees is to safeguard the Museum's Collection for the benefit of present and future generations throughout the world. Therefore, the Trustees' overarching presumption is that the Collection

should remain intact” (British Museum 2018: 2). The policy then goes on to name a number of alleged “public benefits” of the retention of human remains in its collection, including that they “help advance important research in fields such as archaeology, human biology, the history of disease,” etc. (British Museum 2018: 3). However, it is possible to argue that the continued championing of the interests of research over the rights of Indigenous people to have their ancestors’ remains returned to them is another form of what Chilisa describes as “scientific colonialism” (Chilisa 2012: 9).

The British Museum policy also specifies the conditions under which the trustees of the Museum will “*consider*” (British Museum 2018: 4, emphasis added) a claim for repatriation, and that in making a decision these claims will be weighed on the basis of what it terms “the public interest test”. This test requires a discretionary judgment by the Museum’s trustees, in the case of remains more than 100 years old, as to whether “the significance of the *cultural continuity* and the *cultural importance* of the human remains demonstrated by the community making the request outweigh the public benefit to the world community of retaining the human remains in the Collection” (British Museum 2018: 6, emphasis in original). What this means is that an Indigenous community could substantiate a claim for repatriation on the basis of cultural continuity and cultural importance, and have it denied by the Museum on the basis that there is an allegedly higher, albeit amorphous, form of public interest that outweighs this claim.

The British Museum’s policy, by its own admission, favours the retention of human remains as part of its collection, rather than prioritising the wishes of Indigenous communities whose ancestors’ remains were typically taken without the community’s knowledge or consent, for example, in the context of a war of invasion, such as occurred in Australia³. This is despite the fact that the *United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* unequivocally recognises the repatriation of human remains as a right of Indigenous peoples (Article 12) (United Nations 2007) and that the Australian Government calls for “unconditional” repatriation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander remains (Australian Government 2011).

The issue of the repatriation of human remains is treated more progressively by a growing number of institutions, largely as a result of ongoing lobbying by Indigenous peoples (Daley 2014). For example, Fforde (2009, 41) notes that Edinburgh University’s pro-repatriation policy, adopted in 1990 after a campaign by Indigenous Australians, was almost fifteen years ahead of any other institution housing a similar number of remains. Although the remains were displayed in the Medical School’s Anatomy Museum until the 1950s, when it ceased to operate, it is noteworthy that this early pro-repatriation policy was adopted as a result of a decision by a university rather than a museum.

Australia's oldest museum, the Australian Museum, has also shown a leadership role in adopting a policy of "sympathetic consideration of repatriation requests" (Australian Museum 2007: 2) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secret/sacred objects and ancestral remains. This museum makes it clear that it "fully endorses" the repatriation of this material to "an appropriate person or persons in cases where traditional rights can be substantiated" (Australian Museum 2007: 3). Furthermore, the policy states that although "the collections may have immense scientific value... the wishes of Aboriginal people take precedence. One consequence of this is that the secret/sacred and ancestral remains collections are closed to researchers until such a time that appropriate Aboriginal owner/managers desire otherwise" (Australian Museum 2007: 3).

The Australian Museum thus prioritises the wishes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities above those of researchers, in contrast with the position taken by the British Museum. However, as Turnbull (2020) outlines, repatriation is not always a simplistic matter, as the identification of communities to whom human remains belong is not necessarily straightforward and communities do not always have access to their traditional lands for reburial. Returned remains that fall into these categories are currently held by the National Museum of Australia, some at the request of Aboriginal communities, although the Australian Government is currently investigating the creation of a national resting place for these remains (Turnbull 2020).

Museums at the Colonial Centre

The unreconstructed museum: Musée Quai Branly (MQB) Permanent Collection

Museums are thus not homogenous institutions and the extent to which de-colonisation is occurring is not only influenced by broader social and political factors such as the rise of Indigenous activism, but institutional culture, the self-perceived status and role of the museum and the attitudes of senior staff and trustees (Harrison 2005). This is again apparent in considering the approach taken by the Musée Quai Branly (MQB), which is characteristic of museums that regard themselves as having a universal function. Although a newly created museum, the MQB has little in common with the 'new museum' of the 21st century, described as embracing a "transformed cultural politics, [and] challenging colonial hierarchies" (Message 2006, cited in Jolly 2011: 109).

The MQB opened in Paris in 2007, bringing together collections from the Musée de l'Homme and the Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie. The museum's website indicates it shows the 'arts' of Africa, Oceania, Asia, and the Americas, which can be experienced as "part of the historical and artistic grand

tour of the capital” (MQB n.d.). The emphasis on the museum’s location in the heart of Paris’ prestigious museum quarter is intended to enhance the collection’s status, while the importance of the arts and culture of these regions is framed in terms of the European art movements of Fauvism and Cubism. This collection is thus clearly positioned in terms of its aesthetic and historical value to the Western ‘centre’, its viewing audience, rather than to creator communities, arguably a form of Eurocentrism.

The permanent collection, which includes paintings by Aboriginal artists such as Rover Thomas, has been critiqued as aestheticising these works through their mode of display and lack of contextual information, to convey a sense of the exotic non-western ‘Other’ (Jolly 2011, Lebovics 2006). The museum’s focus is on Indigenous material culture, when, as is well established, Indigenous cultural heritage is self-perceived as residing not simply in objects but in the intangible cultural practices and beliefs that give them meaning (Simpson 2006, Thompson n.d). To have explored this would have necessitated direct engagement with Indigenous people, however there is no evidence of such engagement in the curating of the museum’s permanent collection, although Marstine (2011) positions such engagement as an important form of ethical museum practice for the 21st century.

Rather than a human presence, the way that the MQB fetishizes the object is apparent in the statement of the museum’s president that the purpose of the museum is to foreground the “purity and authenticity of the object”, without “undue contextual information and ... didactic storytelling (Jolly 2011: 113). This is reminiscent of the attitude of nineteenth century collectors, who were fascinated with Aboriginal objects, but had little interest in the people who made them. In the case of paintings by Rover Thomas such as ‘Ord River, Bow River, Denham River’, the lack of contextual commentary means that they are likely to be viewed “through the lens of modernist abstraction, leaving viewers unaware of their caustic and painful commentary on Australian colonial massacres” (Price 2007, Thomas 1996, cited in Jolly 2011: 121). I argue that failing to engage with Indigenous communities around display and interpretation, decontextualizing objects and works of art and over emphasising their aesthetic qualities, is a quintessential form of neo-colonial museum practice.

The Divided Museum: The Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM)

Permanent Collection

At first glance, the PRM at Oxford University also appears to be an unreconstructed neo-colonial institution. However, a closer examination of the museum’s work reveals complex and at times contradictory practices that challenge the notion of

the museum as a monolithic entity. A museum of archaeology and anthropology since 1884, the PRM holds over 15,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander objects, 1350 photographs and a significant number of Aboriginal human remains. It has been criticised for continuing to adopt a social evolutionary curatorial positioning through “typological displays of similar objects from different cultures and regions grouped together to show the hierarchical stages of universal progress” (Berk 2015: 151). This type of thematic grouping is apparent from the museum’s website, where shields and spears from Australia form part of a collection with unrelated weapons such as swords and armour from Japan, as if the aim was to show one of each type of ‘primitive’ weapon from around the world in spectacle of imperial accumulation. Moody aptly describes the museum’s collection as typifying the “colonising impulse to know, to catalogue, to record, to document, [in]... the quest for a totalising knowledge that would underpin and sustain the British Empire” (Moody 2013: 38).

Exhibition Rethinking Pitt-Rivers: analysing the activities of a nineteenth century collector

The virtual exhibition *Rethinking Pitt-Rivers: analysing the activities of a nineteenth century collector*, demonstrates a museum-centric focus similar to that of the MQB in its discussion of a collection of nineteenth century photographic portraits of Australian Aboriginal peoples. The exhibition includes a number of photographs of Aboriginal people from the museum’s founding collection, including ‘10 Queensland Photographs’ pasted onto a uniform mount. The photographs, copies of others taken between 1863 and 1872, are of Aboriginal people in awkward, staged poses and are variously labelled, Brisbane, Rockhampton etc., to indicate where they were taken. The name of the photographer, studio and other provenance details are recorded, but not the names of the subjects of these photographs, reflecting that these people were not seen as individuals but as typologies.

These photographs were reported to have been collected because “Indigenous Australians were of some research interest to Pitt-Rivers, usually appearing as the most primitive (sic) element within his typological series” (Lane Fox 1875: 9, cited Pitt Rivers n.d.). This information is provided without any form of critical curatorial comment, positioning these as views of the time that are now recognised as demeaning to Aboriginal peoples. In addition, no engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people appears to have occurred around the display of these photographs, although repatriation discussions suggest that living descendants may exist. There is also no attempt made to warn an Aboriginal audience that the website contains photographs of Aboriginal people who have died, in recognition of the cultural sensitivity that can exist around this issue.

Exhibition 'We Bury Our Own' Pitt Rivers Long Gallery

However, the initiative of the curator of Pitt Rivers Photographic Collection in inviting Australian Aboriginal artist Christian Thompson “to develop a body of work ... inspired by and in dialogue with the Australian photographic collection” (Thompson n.d.), represents a clear decolonising practice. The work, consisting of eight self-portraits and a video-installation, entitled *We Bury Our Own*, uses votive imagery such as candles, crystals and flowers to “perform a ‘spiritual repatriation’” of these images (Thompson n.d.), using the “redemptive process of self-portraiture” (Morton n.d.). Thompson’s desire to respond spiritually to these photographs accords with an Aboriginal perception of photography as having “a direct and spiritual connection to the person photographed” (Morton n.d.).

Thompson also critically engages with the ethnographic head and shoulders portraiture mode, appropriating it through self-representation. The artist’s statement on the museum’s website both in the form of text and video achieves a further interpretive self-representation. Although not directly critical of the museum’s collection of early photography of Aboriginal people, Thompson’s spiritual engagement with these images is nevertheless a decolonising practice as it aims to facilitate the “deliverance of the spirit back to land”, based on the notion that “art could be the vehicle for such a passage” (Thompson n.d.). Thompson makes it clear that his creative engagement with these images within the archive, which he describes as a form of “performance” and “ceremony” (Thompson n.d.), is a key part of the actual artwork itself, reflecting the significance of such actions within Aboriginal Australian cultures.

Through the performance of this work, Thompson achieves a spiritual repatriation of the people whose images have been collected in these photographs and the presence of the artworks within the archive environment and on the PRM website can be regarded as a counter-hegemonic discourse. Accordingly, I argue that while the overall orientation of a museum may be neo-colonial, individual practice within a museum such as Morton’s work with Christian Thompson, has the potential to disrupt this dominant paradigm by taking the collection “as a departure point from the archive into the contemporary” (Thompson n.d.).

Museums at the Colonial Periphery: Decolonising Practices

Tayenebe: Tasmanian Aboriginal women’s fibre work at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG)

The 2009 exhibition *Tayenebe: Tasmanian Aboriginal women’s fibre work* at TMAG also demonstrates that a long-established institution with a colonial history, albeit on the colonial periphery, can function in a decolonising way. This project, funded

as a Commonwealth Cultural Retrieval Program, involved Tasmanian Aboriginal women relearning basket making skills and developing a travelling exhibition accompanied by basket making workshops. Key decolonising features were the curating of *Tayenebe* by Julie Gough, a Tasmanian Aboriginal artist, and the full involvement of Tasmanian Aboriginal women in all stages of the project, including planning, relearning skills, basket making, decision-making around display, writing accompanying interpretive text and determining the overall meaning of the exhibition. As argued by Unruh (2015), this form of self-representation is a vital decolonising practice.

Tayenebe is an example of not just a community consultation model, but one of cultural revitalisation and control, in which a museum revised its past practice of erasing the Aboriginal identities of a people it had declared extinct. The control the women were able to exercise is also apparent in that knowledge of the basket weaving process was restricted by not fully documenting it. This concern for restricting access to Traditional Knowledge is a characteristic of the management of cultural heritage by Aboriginal peoples (Simpson 2008).

Berk explains that *Tayenebe*, “was an enactment of a particular idea of Tasmanian Aboriginality” that emphasised the communal nature of the process of creation, “not the object’s aesthetic beauty or the end product” (Berk 2015: 155). The artists wanted the exhibition “to stress cultural return, connections to place and people, and shared workshop experiences” (Berk 2015: 155). Connection with the baskets made by ancestors such as Truganini was shown by displaying new and older baskets together rather than separating them on the basis of date of creation. The women also chose to frame the exhibition as “knowledge resurrected or awoken” (Berk 2015: 157) emphasising a connection with ancestors rather than a disjunction with the past. At the same time, new styles and materials were incorporated reflecting the individual creativity of the makers and the capacity to respect tradition but not be constrained by it.

Unsettled: An Australian Museum Exhibition

The *Unsettled* exhibition opened at Sydney’s Australia Museum in May 2021. This Indigenous led exhibition is the work of two Indigenous female curators who are members of the museum’s staff, Wailwan and Kooma woman Laura McBride and Yuin woman, Dr Mariko Smith. What is remarkable about the exhibition is that it is a response to the 250th anniversary of the Endeavour’s 1770 East Coast voyage, but rather than celebrating an event that from a settler-colonial perspective represented the discovery of Australia, community consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples resulted in an exhibition that provides an Indigenous perspective that is critical of colonisation. The themes identified in these consultations including the need for truth-telling about events

such as invasion, massacres, dispossession, assimilation, resistance and survival (McBride and Smith 2021), and each of these themes come through strongly from an Indigenous standpoint. The title of the exhibition itself highlights that not only was Australia not peacefully settled, but that Australian history is “unresolved” and “relationships between First Nations peoples and [non-Indigenous] Australians are uneasy” (McBride and Smith 2021, 9).

In its consultation processes and Indigenous curation, this museum demonstrates a strong commitment to Indigenous agency and self-determination. This is also apparent in the use of the first-person Indigenous voice in exhibition labels such as the description of objects like the Wailwan Grindstone fragment c 30,000 years old, as “Made by Ancestor”, rather than more typical attributions which do not highlight the connection that living Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel to such objects, including those from deep time. This language also positions the exhibition as not only about Indigenous people and their response to invasion, but also for them, as they are addressed as an audience.

This willingness to prioritise Indigenous perspectives is apparent throughout the exhibition, including in the account by Kaurareg First Nations people that disputes Captain Cook’s claim that he landed on Tuined, which he named Possession Island. Although Cook writes in his journal that he went ashore, raised the British flag and claimed Australia and its surrounding islands for Britain, the Kaurareg dispute that these events took place. Direct quotes from Elder Waubin Richard Aken are provided in the exhibition, indicating that his people had advance notice of the passage of Cook’s ship through smoke signals, and that warriors were waiting to attack, should he come to shore. Although white historians have prioritised the written record such as colonial journals in reconstructing events, and questioned the validity of Indigenous oral histories, the exhibition curators reverse this attribution of value in favour of oral accounts, or at least give these equal weight.

Through these and other curatorial strategies this exhibition repurposes what is Australia’s oldest ethnographic and natural history museum to challenge colonial narratives and accounts and to foreground Indigenous voices and perspectives. *Unsettled* suggests that mainstream public museums can play an important role in decolonisation, if museum executives refuse to celebrate colonial milestones in predictable ways, and if Indigenous curators, under the guidance of Indigenous communities, are given control over exhibition content.

Alternative Models? Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centres

In contrast to large, well-funded public museums based in urban centres, the

community museum and Indigenous-controlled cultural centre often lacks the constraints associated with both public funding and hierarchical management structures (Hoobler 2006, Simpson 2006, Unruh 2015). Small in scale and based in local communities, who both manage and staff it, the community museum and cultural centre is often free to develop innovative curatorial practices, that avoid a focus on the display of objects and invite meaningful audience participation. Simpson (2006) notes that some cultural centres emphasise cultural renewal through the transmission of knowledge, while others, such as Brambuk Aboriginal Cultural Centre in Victoria achieve self-representation by countering the inaccuracies of the Australian historical record on colonial violence. Managed and predominantly staffed by local Aboriginal people, Simpson observes that these centres also provide an educative function for the non-Aboriginal community by teaching visitors about public aspects of Aboriginal culture, including through cultural tours.

The Uluru Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre, located in Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park (UKTNP) in Australia's Northern Territory, is an example of a centre of this type. The UKTNP Cultural Centre represents a form of Indigenous adaption of Western museum practice by locating a partially community controlled cultural complex which includes interpretation, Anangu owned arts centres and visitor information provision within an Aboriginal community. The depiction of the culture of the Traditional Custodians of UKTNP, the Anangu, within the Cultural Centre is via self-representation, and the "community concepts of preserving and protecting culture, especially aspects that are secret and restricted" (Simpson 2006: 160) are adhered to. The model of the cultural centre is a way for Aboriginal people to re-assert control over the interpretation of their cultural heritage, and where appropriate, the conservation and display of objects that are an expression of culture (Hoobler 2006), although object display is not a key focus of the UKTNP Cultural Centre. Furthermore, by avoiding use of the term museum, the connotation that museums have with dead culture and objects (Adorno 1967), and their colonial history of appropriation and display of Aboriginal objects, is avoided.

The UKTNP Cultural Centre was opened in 1995, after four years of planning, and was designed in consultation with Anangu⁴. It is made of local mud bricks, giving it a direct connection to Aboriginal Country, and the architecture is symbolic of an important Anangu Creation story, that of Kuniya and Liru, as the buildings are designed to resemble two snakes. Artists from the Mutitjulu Aboriginal community within the Park worked on the paintings, ceramics, glass, wood and audio-visual displays within the Centre (Parks Australia n.d.). After arriving at the Cultural Centre by tour bus or private car, paths direct visitors into the Centre via the cool, unlit space of the curving Tjukurpa⁵ tunnel, where the park is interpreted from the perspective of Anangu through wall-based text,

artwork and photographs. A recording of Anangu chanting can be heard in the background. There is a sensation that in stepping into this space, you are entering a place outside of the normal, something extraordinary and unique, a type of liminal zone associated with the transformative potential of cultural tourism.

The interpretation in the Tjukurpa tunnel is provided from the perspective of Anangu, using the Anangu first person voice. It includes an explanation of Anangu spiritual beliefs and law, based around the ontology of Tjukurpa, and information about Anangu lifeways, including men's and women's food gathering practices, tools and social practices such as marriage. It concludes with an Anangu perspective on the Uluru climb, explaining why Anangu ask visitors not to climb this sacred landscape feature⁶. The tunnel also includes an alcove with seating where the 'hand-back' video plays on a loop. The video tells the story of the 1985 'hand-back' of the Park by the Australian Government from the perspective of Anangu, and includes archival footage of the event, including interviews with Anangu about how important 'hand-back' was to them. The use of the Pitjantjatjara language is a feature of interpretation in the Tjukurpa tunnel and the hand-back video.

Although the Cultural Centre is visited by many tourists, it is also a place of importance to Anangu. Anangu women come to paint in the art centres that sell their paintings, and there is a ground for inma (ceremony). Traditional Custodians also conduct a cultural tour, Punu Putitja (Bush Plants tour), on bush tracks around the Cultural Centre, showing visitors local plants and explaining their uses. I gained the strong impression that the Traditional Custodian leading this tour regarded the Centre as very much an Anangu place and took pride in it. As we walked around the grounds, she pushed a piece of wood into place to prevent visitors walking off the path and damaging the plants, as if she was rearranging part of her own backyard.

While I do not have scope to discuss visitor responses to the Cultural Centre at length, on the whole, visitor interviewees⁷ had a high opinion of the interpretation provided at the Cultural Centre, particularly in the Tjukurpa Tunnel. Visitors described the interpretation as useful, interesting and informative, but tended to be most emotionally engaged by the hand-back video and the text explaining why Anangu ask visitors not to climb Uluru. This suggests that some visitors are open to engaging with content that deals with contemporary historical events and contentious issues such as the Uluru climb, despite the reluctance of non-Anangu park managers and the Parks Australia bureaucracy to deal with such issues in a substantive way within the Visitor Centre or park based interpretative signage.

A case in point is the account of a shooting of a member of the Uluru family at Uluru in the 1930s (Cowley 2018), that Anangu have argued should be included in interpretative information provided in the Visitors' Centre. Although the pressure they have exerted has resulted in the inclusion of a short statement

about this event, Anangu were not satisfied with this and have argued for a more substantial focus, which Parks Australia have now reportedly agreed to⁸. The fact that this sort of decision-making is a process of negotiation between Anangu and Parks Australia highlights one of the drawbacks of joint management of the Park, in that Anangu lack full control over the interpretative content offered within a Cultural Centre located on their land. A desire to avoid contentious social and political issues came through quite strongly in an interview the author conducted with a Parks Australia manager, who argued "...this isn't the place for a discourse about some of the social issues and injustices of the past, I think they can be mentioned, they shouldn't be hidden. But I certainly don't believe they need...to be dwelt on in a significant way". This contrasts with a privately run cultural tour I engaged in with an Anangu tour provider, in which content ranging from colonial frontier violence to policies of child removal and later the Aboriginal land rights movement was able to be discussed with visitors without censorship.

Despite these limitations, visitors generally had a positive response to the Cultural Centre, some appreciating the focus on Anangu culture and language, rather than the European history of the park. June, a retired professional travelling Australia with her husband, valued the Cultural Centre because it,

"was very much from an Indigenous perspective...[from] the beginning... all the way through from end to end. That was good. That positioned it as 'our centre, telling our story of our culture, from our point of view'. And there wasn't a lot of stuff about white people and how they discovered it and what they thought... it was all about 'what this place means to us'".

While June is correct in identifying this focus, the absences or silences in this discourse were less easy for visitors to identify, although some discussed a desire to learn more about the contemporary circumstances of the Aboriginal community living within the Park they were visiting. Even in the absence of an accurate historical account of the experiences of Anangu since white colonisation, the Cultural Centre could still have a transformative impact on some visitors. For example, Derrick, an older Anglo-Australian from Victoria expressed increased empathy for Anangu, including their perspective on the climb of Uluru, after experiencing the Cultural Centre. This led Derrick to abandon his intention to climb Uluru and to critically reflect that his former perspective had been racist, as he states,

"Yeah, I came here to climb the rock and have a look at the rock and everything about the rock. Now, it's 180 degrees. It's good to see the rock and it's wonderful. But to learn the significance of it to them, and to see

that gee I know nothing... it's completely changed me in many ways in a matter of hours. I think when I first came here, I was actually quite racist through ignorance and now I really want to learn and I sort of want to know things and I want to...get their side of the story.

Similarly, Paul, a young international visitor from Ireland, was deeply engaged by the hand-back video, recalling that it showed,

“one of the Anangu leaders, when they were trying to organise that [hand-back], all of the flights they had to take down to Canberra [Australia's capital city]...I suppose the thing that struck me about that was how alien that must have been to the Anangu people, and again they were the ones having to go out of their comfort zone, going out of their environment to ultimately fight for something that was previously theirs. Ahem *laughs*, so I thought they weren't exactly dealt a very fair hand... but I have a lot of respect for the fact that they continually went out of their comfort zone to fight for that”.

What is apparent from the accounts of visitors such as Derrick is that the UKTNP Cultural Centre, because it conveys messages about their culture that Anangu want visitors to receive, has the clear potential to decolonise the thinking of some visitors in a way that produces behaviour change. As evinced by Paul, it also fosters greater respect and empathy towards Anangu, eliciting support for their land rights struggle. Other visitors indicated it had evoked a desire to learn more about the culture of Anangu and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The potential of such centres thus far exceeds simply educating the viewer to effecting a change in outlook, emotional engagement and behavioural intention and thus effectively activates a decolonising agenda. However, as Lonetree (2009) has argued, including a focus on colonial history from an Indigenous perspective, including telling aspects of this history that settler-colonials might prefer to silence, is an important aspect of decolonisation. The way that this should be done and what should be said must be decided by Indigenous communities, including whether it is better to tell some of the stories around the campfire, as one older Anangu man I consulted suggested, or include these within the interpretative content in a Visitor Centre.

A number of visitors expressed a feeling of gratitude for having access to a place like the Cultural Centre and for the generosity of Anangu in sharing their culture with them, perceived by one visitor as a type of “gift”. The perception that the Cultural Centre is a gift that Anangu share with the visitor, evokes the generosity of Anangu in extending knowledge about their culture to the visitor, but also their

capacity to withhold this gift. The gift of cultural knowledge also carries with it an obligation to respect what has been learnt by not engaging in practices that are against Anangu law, such as climbing Uluru or taking photographs of culturally sensitive places, and thus entails within it a concept of reciprocity (Mauss 2001).

That the gift is given on Anangu's terms is apparent in the decision to share only three Tjukurpa stories, to prohibit photography within the Cultural Centre and to share no stories about Kata Tjuta, a key landscape feature of the park, because knowledge of it is considered secret/ sacred. That it is possible to withhold the gift, makes the decision to share culture all the more meaningful. The decision-making power that Anangu have in UKTNP that enables them to share culture on their terms needs to be understood not simply on the basis that UKTNP is jointly managed by Anangu and Parks Australia, but on the basis of the empowerment that flows from regaining title to their land. However, in exercising decision-making authority over interpretative content within the Cultural Centre, it seems that ownership of the Park is not enough, but that a governance arrangement that provides full management control is required, to enable difficult stories to be told.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although the community museum and cultural centre is more aligned with Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, in practice these models are not without their flaws, particularly in circumstances where Indigenous communities lack full governance control and must share management with agencies of the settler-colonial state. While institutions like the British Museum and MQB continue to argue for universalism, other public museums with longstanding colonial histories have shown that they have the capacity to take steps towards decolonization. This is apparent in the adoption of pro-repatriation policies and in the willingness of organisations such as TMAG and the Australian Museum to delegate control of exhibitions to Indigenous communities and curators. What this suggests is that there is not a single model for decolonising the 'museum', but that both large public institutions and more locally based and community-oriented centres each have an important role to play, as long as it is recognised that Indigenous sovereignty is both unceded and inalienable (Mutu 2021) and that this is reflected in governance structures and exhibition management.

Author

Vanessa Whittington is a settler-colonial Australian living on unceded Darug and Gundungurra land, who attempts to use her scholarship and teaching to

critique settler-colonial institutions and their ontological and epistemological foundations. She is also a Doctoral candidate with the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University and a sessional academic. Her Doctoral research investigates visitor responses to recognised places of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Australian national parks. She has a Master's Degree in Museum and Heritage Studies, (Sydney University), a Master of Arts (Hons) in Women's Studies/ Interdisciplinary Studies (University of New South Wales) and a Bachelor of Arts with majors in History and Political Science (Australian National University). She has previously worked in senior policy and research roles for government and non-government agencies with a human services, social justice and social policy focus. She has published in the areas of housing, homelessness and social policy; heritage and contested memory in a settler-colonial context; the marginalisation of working class urban heritage and world heritage discourse and gender.

-
1. Minority and majority world are terms used by decolonial theorists to refer, respectively, to the First and Third Worlds to avoid the pejorative nature of these and similar terms such as Lesser Developed Countries.
 2. Partage refers to "the practice of appropriating cultural artefacts or works of art from poorer countries for display in Western museums" (<https://www.lexico.com/definition/partage>).
 3. For example the head of the renowned Aboriginal warrior of the Sydney region, Pemulwuy, was removed after his death and sent back to England at the request of Sir Joseph Banks, who had written to Governor King expressing a desire for "a New Hollander's head" (Gapps 2018, 154). According to the National Museum of Australia, who have made efforts to locate the head with a view to repatriation, it has since been lost, <https://www.nma.gov.au/about/media/media-releases-listing-by-year/2015/national-museum-honours-aboriginal-warrior-pemulwuy>.
 4. The description of the Cultural Centre provided in the remainder of this paragraph is based on the author's observations while visiting the park in 2019 to conduct research on visitor responses to the interpretation of the Anangu cultural heritage of the park. It is followed by a discussion of visitor responses to the interpretation provided at the Cultural Centre, with an emphasis on the Tjukurpa tunnel.
 5. "Tjukurpa is the foundation of Anangu life and society. Tjukurpa refers to the creation period when ancestral beings, Tjukuritja, created the world as we know it, and from this the religion, law and moral systems", Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park Fact Sheet, Tjukurpa, <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/abf7defb-4118-4247-bb47-2d2d8681b6a8/files/uktnp-a4factsheet-tjukurpa-small.pdf>, accessed 12/10/2010.
 6. The climb of Uluru was permanently closed in October 2019, several months after I recorded this description, in accordance with the wishes of Anangu.
 7. I interviewed 10 visitors at the Cultural Centre about their responses to it. Visitors to the Cultural Centre within Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park comprised a mix of domestic and international tourists. Visitors were approached randomly upon exiting the Tjukurpa Tunnel and asked to participate in a brief interview. Seven of those who agreed to be interviewed were Anglo-Australians, one a British permanent resident and one was an international visitor from Britain living and working in Australia. Most (7) were over 55 years old. Some visitors interviewed at other locations within the Park primarily to discuss other interpretative experiences also spoke about their response to the Cultural Centre.
 8. These details were reported in an interview with a Parks Australia staff member conducted by the author in May 2019.

References

- Adorno T. (1967): *Prisms*. S. and S. Weber (trans.). London: Neville Spearman.
- Armitage A. (1995): *Comparing the Policy of Aboriginal Assimilation: Australia, Canada, and New Zealand*, Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Australian Government (2011): "Australian Government Policy on Indigenous Repatriation", https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/default/files/australian-government-policy-on-indigenous-repatriation-august2011.pdf?acsf_files_redirect, (accessed 8/10/2020).
- Australian Museum (2007): "Repatriation Policy for Australian Aboriginal Secret /Sacred and Aboriginal Ancestral Remains Collections", <https://australian-museum-prd.s3.amazonaws.com/media/dd/Uploads/Documents/7546/repatriation-2007.c37babd.pdf>, (accessed 7/10/2020).
- Bennett T. (1995): *The Birth of the Museum: History, theory, politics*, New York: Routledge.
- Berk C. (2015): "This exhibition is about now: Tasmanian Aboriginality at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery", *Museum Anthropology*, 38: 2, 149–162.
- Bhambra G. (2014): "Postcolonial and decolonial dialogues", *Postcolonial Studies*, 17:2, 115-121, DOI: 10.1080/13688790.2014.966414.
- Boast R. (2011), "Neocolonial collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited", *Museum Anthropology*, 34, 56–70.
- Bodenstein F. and Pagani C. 2017, "Decolonising National Museums of Ethnography in Europe: Exposing and Reshaping Colonial Heritage (2000–2012)", in *The Postcolonial Museum: The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*, (ed) Iain Chambers, Taylor & Francis Group, ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwsau/detail.action?docID=1610022>,
- British Museum (n.d.) 'Benin Bronzes', <https://www.britishmuseum.org/about-us/british-museum-story/contested-objects-collection/benin-bronzes>, (accessed 27/08/2021).
- British Museum (2018): "British Museum Policy on Human Remains", https://www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/Human_Remains_policy_061218.pdf, (accessed 9/10/2020).
- Chambers D. and Buzinde C. (2015): "Tourism and decolonisation: Locating research and self", *Annals of Tourism Research*, 51,1-16, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/10.1016/j.annals.2014.12.002>.
- Chilisa B. (2012): *Indigenous research methodologies*, California: Sage Publications.
- Cowley J. with the Uluru family (2018): *I am Uluru- A family's story*, Alice Springs, Kungka Kutjara Aboriginal Corporation.
- Daley P. (2014): "The Bone Collectors: A Brutal Chapter in Australia's Past", *The Guardian*, 14 June 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/14/ab-original-bones-being-returned-australia>, (accessed 9/10/2020).

- Fforde C. (2009): "From Edinburgh university to the Ngarrindjeri nation, South Australia", *Museum International*, Vol 61:1-2: 41-47, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-0033.2009.01673.x.
- Gapps S. (2018): *The Sydney Wars: Conflict in the Early Colony 1788-1817*, Sydney: New South.
- Giblin J., Ramos I. & Grout N. (2019) "Dismantling the Master's House", *Third Text*, 33:4-5, 471-486, DOI: 10.1080/09528822.2019.1653065.
- Grosfoguel R. (2007): "The Epistemic Decolonial Turn", *Cultural Studies*, 21:2-3, 211-223, DOI: 10.1080/09502380601162514.harrison
- Harrison J. (2005), "Shaping collaboration: Considering institutional culture", *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 20: 3, 195-212.
- Hicks D. (2020), *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*, London, Pluto Press.
- Hoobler E. (2006), "To Take Their Heritage in Their Hands: Indigenous Self-Representation and Decolonization in the Community Museums of Oaxaca, Mexico", *American Indian Quarterly*, 30: 3/4, 441-460.
- Hopkins C. 2017, "We Are Always Turning Around on Purpose: Reflecting on Three Decades of Indigenous Curatorial Practice", *Art Journal*, Vol. 76, No. 2: 39-47.
- Jolly M. (2011), "Becoming a 'new' museum? Contesting Oceanic Visions at Musee du Quai Branly", *The Contemporary Pacific*, 23: 1, 108-139.
- Kaus D. (2008): "The management of restricted Aboriginal objects by the National Museum of Australia", *reCollections* 3: 1, https://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol_3_no_1/notes_and_comments/the_management_of_restricted_aboriginal_objects#1, (accessed 12/10/2019).
- Karp I. Butinx G., Kirshenblatt-Gimblett B., Rassoll C (2006): 'Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums: 'Museums Serve Every Nation', in Karp I., Butinx G., Kirshenblatt-Gimblett B., Rassoll C., (eds) *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, Duke University Press: ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwsau/detail.action?docID=1169312>
- Kelly L., Cook C, Gordon P. (2006): "Building relationships through communities of practice: Museums and Indigenous People", *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 49: 2, 217-234.
- Lebovics H. (2006): "The Musee du Quai Branly: Art? Artifact? Spectacle!", *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 24: 3, 96-110.
- Lonetree A (2009), "Museums as Sites of Decolonization- Truth Telling in National and Tribal Museums", in *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous Perspectives*, (ed) Susan Sleeper-Smith, University of Nebraska Press: 322-337, ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwsau/detail.action?docID=452187>.

- Lugones M. (2011): "Toward a Decolonial Feminism", *Hypatia* 25: 4, 2011, 742–759.
- Marstine J. (2011): "The contingent nature of the new museum ethics" in *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics*, (ed) J. Martsine, Abingdon and New York, Routledge: 3-25.
- Mauss M. (2001): *Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, Taylor & Francis Group, ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwsau/detail.action?docID=1829415>.
- McBride L. and Smith M. (2021): *Unsettled*, Sydney, Australian Museum Trust.
- McCarthy C., Dorfman E., Hakiwai A. and Twomey A. (2013): "Mana Taonga: Connecting Communities with New Zealand museums through ancestral Maori culture", *Museum International*, 65, 5-15.
- McGonigle Leyh B. 2020, "Imperatives of the Present: Black Lives Matter and the politics of memory and memorialization", *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*, Vol. 38(4): 239–245.
- Mignolo W. (2007): "Delinking", *Cultural Studies*, 21:2-3, 449-514, DOI: 10.1080/09502380601162647.
- Mignolo W. (2011): "Geopolitics of sensing and knowing: on (de)coloniality, border thinking and epistemic disobedience", *Postcolonial Studies*, 14:3, 273-283, DOI: 10.1080/13688790.2011.613105.
- Moody A. (2013): 'Review of Christian Thompson 'We bury our own', *Das Platforms*, 27: 38-42, <http://dasplatforms.com/magazines/issue-27/christian-thompson-we-bury-our-own/>, (accessed 5/11/2015)
- Moreton-Robinson A. (2015): *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt155jmpf. (Accessed 9/10/2020).
- Moreton-Robinson A. (2021): "Incommensurable sovereignties- Indigenous ontology matters" in *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies* (eds) Hokowhitu B, Moreton-Robinson A, Tuhiwai Smith, Anderson C and Larkin S, New York and London, Routledge.
- Morton C. (n. d.): "Spiritual repatriation and the archive in Christian Thompson's We Bury Our Own (catalogue essay)", <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/christianthompson.html> (accessed 5/09/2021)
- Musee Quai Branly (n.d.): <http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/a-propos/the-public-institution.html>, accessed 3 November 2015.
- Mutu M. 2021, 'Mana Maori Motuhake- Maori concepts and practices of sovereignty', in *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies* (eds) Hokowhitu B, Moreton-Robinson A, Tuhiwai Smith, Anderson C and Larkin S, New York and London, Routledge.
- Maldonado-Torres N. (2007): "On the Coloniality of Being", *Cultural Studies*, 21:2-3, 240-270, DOI: 10.1080/09502380601162548.

- Parks Australia (n.d.): <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/uluru/do/cultural-centre/>, (accessed 12/10/2020).
- Petersen N., Allen L, Hamby L. (2008): 'Introduction', in *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections*, Petersen N., Allen L, Hamby (eds), Victoria: Melbourne University Press.
- Pitt Rivers Museum (n.d): "Rethinking Pitt-Rivers: analysing the activities of a nineteenth century collector", <http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/rpr/index.php/objectbiographies/72-10-queensland-photographs.html>.
- Quijano A. (2007): "Coloniality and Modernity/ Rationality", *Cultural Studies*, 21: 2-3, 168-178, DOI: 10.1080/09502380601164353.
- Shultz L. (2014): "Maintaining Aboriginal engagement in Australian museums: two models of inclusion", *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 29: 5, 412-428.
- Simpson M. (2006): "Revealing and Concealing: Museums, Objects, and the Transmission of Knowledge in Aboriginal Australia", in Marstine J. (ed), *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Smith, C. (2005): "Decolonising the museum: the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC", *Antiquity*, Vol 79: 424-439.
- Sullivan T., Kelly L., Gordon P. (2003): "Museums and Indigenous People in Australia: A Review of Previous Possessions, New Obligations: Policies for Museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples", *Curator*, 46: 2, 208-227.
- Thompson C. (n. d.): "Artist's Statement: We bury our own", <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/christianthompson.html>, (accessed 5/11/ 2015).
- Tuck K. and Lang E. (2012): "Decolonization is not a metaphor", *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1: 1, 1-40.
- Turnbull P. (2020): "International Repatriations of Indigenous Human Remains and Its Complexities: the Australian Experience", *Museum & Society*, Vol 18:1, 6-19.
- United Nations (2007): "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples", <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>, (accessed 8/10/2020).
- Unruh L. (2015): "Dialogical Curating: Towards Aboriginal Self-Representation in Museums", *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 58, 77-89.
- Wajid S and Minott R. (2019): "Detoxing and Decolonising Museums" in *Museum Activism* (eds) R. Janes and R. Sandell, Abingdon and New York, Routledge: 25-36.
- Wolfe P. (2006): "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native", *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8:4, 387-409, DOI: 10.1080/14623520601056240.