

*Routledge Studies in Modern British History*

# **LEGACIES OF AN IMPERIAL CITY**

**THE MUSEUM OF LONDON 1976–2007**

Samuel Aylett



# Legacies of an Imperial City

This comprehensive history of the Museum of London traces the ways that the relationship between Britain and its imperial past has changed over the course of three decades, providing a holistic approach to galleries' shifts from Victorian nostalgia to equitable representations.

At its 1976 opening, the Museum of London differed from other museums in its treatment of empire and colonialism as central to its galleries. In response to the public's evolving social and political attitudes, the museum's 1993–1994 'The Peopling of London' exhibition marked a new approach in creating inclusive displays, which explore the impact of immigration and multiculturalism on British history. Through photos, planning documents, and archival research, this book analyses museums' role in enacting change in the public's understanding of history, and this book is the first to critically engage with the Museum of London's theme of empire, particularly in consideration of recent exhibitions.

*Legacies of an Imperial City* is a useful resource for academics and researchers of postcolonial history and museum studies, as well as any student of urban history.

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# Legacies of an Imperial City

## The Museum of London 1976–2007

Samuel Aylett

Bib. .... 600006656 .....  
Item..... 100008958 .....  
Barcode... 000010009669 .....  
Call no. .... AM7 .....  
          ... 526 .....  
          ... 2023 .....  
Date ..... 20 Dec. 66 .....

First published 2023  
by Routledge  
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Aylett, Samuel, 1990– author.

Title: Legacies of an imperial city: the Museum of London 1976–2007 / Samuel Aylett.

Other titles: Museum of London 1976–2007

Description: Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2023. | Series: Routledge studies in modern British history | Includes bibliographical

references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022036592 | ISBN 9780367704070 (hardback) | ISBN 9780367704087 (paperback) | ISBN 9781003146148 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Museum of London – Exhibitions – Evaluation. | The Peopling of London: Fifteen Thousand Years of Settlement from Overseas (Exhibition) (1993–1994 Museum of London, London, England) | London (England) – Historiography. | Multiculturalism – England – London – Historiography. | Immigrants – England – London – Historiography. | Museum of London – History. | Historical museums – England – London – History.

Classification: LCC DA675.5.M87 A84 2023 | DDC 942.1 – dc23/eng/20220812

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022036592>

ISBN: 978-0-367-70407-0 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-367-70408-7 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-14614-8 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003146148

Typeset in Times New Roman  
by Apex CoVantage, LLC



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# Acknowledgements

Writing a book leaves one humbled, indebted to friends and loved ones, apologetic, but ultimately grateful to everyone who provided unwavering support, inspiration and love. There are many people I want to acknowledge, and without whom this book wouldn't have been possible. I first want to acknowledge all my tutors at Brunel University London, including Jay Kleinberg, Inge Dornan, Astrid Swenson, Tamson Pietsch, Alison Carroll, Kenneth Morgan, Tom Linehan, Matthew Seligmann, Matthew Hughes and Martin Folly. The History Department at Brunel University London was an intellectually rich and varied department in which I was provided boundless support and encouragement during my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. I want to say a special thank you to Inge Dornan. Her kindness, understanding and encouragement convinced me to continue with my studies. Also, to Jay Kleinberg, who rekindled my passion for History in my second year with her module on Labour, Race and Gender in the United States, 1776–1920. And of course, Astrid Swenson, who introduced me to the subjects and themes that would ultimately lead to my PhD topic, and later this book, and who introduced me to my partner Ionna.

Moving to a new university for my PhD was daunting, but I was fortunate to have found friendships and collegiality at the Open University, and I was blessed with two brilliant supervisors, who I now have the good fortune to call friends, Dr. Susie West, and Professor Karl Hack. I wouldn't have been able to complete my PhD *without* a generous stipend and fee waiver from the Open University Graduate School, as well research expenses, generously dished out by Marie-Claire each year, and which allowed me to present my research at various conferences across the United Kingdom, as well as in Portugal and Germany. Alongside Susie and Karl, who kept me motivated through my PhD, I also want to thank Dr. Sarah Longair and Dr. Chris Williams for providing me with a challenging and exciting defence. Whilst at the Open University, I also became fast friends with fellow students. I was fortunate to share London with Tom Probert, and we spent many evenings putting the world to rights over a glass of whiskey. Louise Ryland-Epton, Sarah Middle, Jack Taylor, Sophie Mitchell, Sophie Dubillot, Kat Lucas and Lucinda Borkett-Jones provided friendship and camaraderie throughout. We maintain a sort of post-PhD therapy group via Zoom, which continues to be a major source of laughter and energy.

After my PhD, the Open University continued to support me with a Visiting Fellowship as a member of the Ferguson Centre for African and Asian Studies, and for much longer than they had to. During my fellowship, I was able to refine my manuscript through conversations with my colleagues John Slight, Luc-Andre Brunet, Katie Donington, Richard Marsden and Vincent Trott, to name but a few.

Many thanks to everyone who took part in my interviews for my initial PhD research, especially Rozina Visram, who shared her vast wisdom and experience, and Nick Merriman for being so open and engaging in speaking so candidly about 'The Peopling of London' and his time at the Museum of London. Further thanks to everyone at the Museum of London Business Archives and Library, Katie Ormerod, Ruth Thomson and Lluís Tembleque Teres for helping with my archival research. A big thanks also to Robert Langham at Routledge for his editorial guidance.

Finally, I want to thank my family and friends. My mum, who despite her short time with us, gave me the love and support for a lifetime. My dad for encouraging me to do what I loved and nothing less. Jo, my step-mum, who always has my back. Kati, my 'mother-in-love,' accepted me into her family without hesitation. Murph, for always providing a good time and respite from the hard work. And of course, Ionna, my rock, for always believing in me, for sharing her life with me and for loving me unconditionally.

# Abbreviations

ACE	Arts and Crafts in Education
AHD	Authorised Heritage Discourse
ANL	Anti-Nazi League
BAME	Black Asian Minority Ethnic
BECC	Black Emergency Cultural Coalition
BECM	British Empire and Commonwealth Museum
BHS	Brooklyn Historical Society
BMAG	Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery
BNP	British National Party
BPA	Black People's Alliance
CAMOC	International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities
CNER	Centre for New Ethnicities Research
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
GLC	Greater London Council
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
ISML	International Slavery Museum Liverpool
LCC	London County Council
LDDC	London Docklands Development Corporation
LSS	London, Sugar and Slavery
MHDT	Mayor's Heritage Diversity Taskforce
MiDP	Museum in Docklands Project
MoL	Museum of London
MoLD	Museum of London Docklands
PLA	Port of London Authority
THACMHO	Tower Hamlets African Caribbean Mental Health Organisation
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific Cultural Organisation

Part One

The Origin Story 1826–1976

Introduction

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# 1 Introduction

## Museums and Empire

### Introduction

Opened in 1976 by Queen Elizabeth II, the Museum of London (MoL) was an amalgamation of the London Museum (1912) and the Guildhall Museum (founded 1826), both prominent institutions with collections covering archaeological antiquities, the built city and urban development. The London Museum also held contemporary collections relating to London's working life. As London's foremost metropolitan museum, the MoL had focused chiefly on the lived experiences of London's white British inhabitants over the last 250 years, and London's pre-history. In 1993, the Museum launched their temporary exhibition 'The Peopling of London 15,000 Years of Settlement from Overseas.' The title's emphasis on 'from overseas' and the exhibition content signalled the MoL's engagement with multicultural histories of London and the beginning of the Museum's exploration of the legacies of empire. Local historian Sylvia Collicott remarked that 'Peopling' was important not least 'that for the first time a major museum in London had addressed the truly multicultural history of London life.'<sup>1</sup>

Not long after the MoL opened, the Museum in Docklands Project (MiD-P), which had begun life as a collecting programme under the auspices of the MoL in 1979, came under the supervision of a newly established independent trust responsible for establishing a new museum. In 1982, the MoL drew up plans for a new museum with exhibitions on the history of the Dock area, its decline through containerisation and the working history of the Dock.<sup>2</sup> As plans to develop a new museum got underway, the MiD-P began to work closely with the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) and Port of London Authority (PLA hereafter) to create travelling exhibitions that told the story of the Docks up to the closure of the West India Docks in the 1980s.<sup>3</sup> In 1994, the MoL co-opted the MiD-P's mobile museum trailer for 'Peopling,' which will be discussed later. At the same time, in 1994, LDDC Joint Chief Executive Roger Squire and MoL Director Max Hebditch announced the return of a statue of Robert Milligan – former deputy chairman of the West Indian Dock – to the West India Quay outside what would become the MoLD.

Born in Dumfries c. 1746, Robert Milligan was a Scottish merchant and slave trader in Jamaica, before helping to establish the West India Docks in London. In

acknowledgement of Milligan's role in establishing the West India Docks, a statue was erected in 1813, near the entrance to the docks, with a plaque which read:

[t]o perpetuate on this spot the memory of Robert Milligan a merchant of London, to whose genius, perseverance and guardian care the surrounding great work principally owes its design, accomplishment and regulation.<sup>4</sup>

The statue was moved to the Main Gate in 1875 and then placed in storage in 1943, before being returned to its original site in 1997. As Kate Donington has argued, the statue has long been a controversial part of the built environment of the West India Docks. When the 'London, Sugar, Slavery' exhibition was opened in 2007 as part of the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, the statue was veiled.<sup>5</sup> This exhibition will be discussed at length later in the book.

In June 2020, in the wake of the Black Lives Matters protests, statues associated with the history of empire and imperialism, and the history of slavery in America and Europe, became lightning rods around which protestors coalesced to demand their removal. Not long after the statue of Edward Colston met its pelagic downfall at Bristol Harbour on June 7, 2020, the statue of Robert Milligan was removed by local authorities. A spokesperson from the MoLD stated that 'the monument is part of the ongoing problematic regime of white-washing history, which disregards the pain of those who are still wrestling with the remnants of the crimes Milligan committed against humanity.' The statue is now in storage, where it will remain as discussions take place on how best to display the statue at the Museum. In its place, the Canal and River Trust, which owned the land on which the statue stood, will develop a 'proposal for the future use of the dock-side plinth to reflect the diversity and values of the local community.'<sup>6</sup>

In many ways this book is about change; that is, the discursive limitations of museums. Simon Knell argues that change in museums can be characterised as much by the adopting of norms, or even incremental change around more general inertia, as by 'revolutionary change.'<sup>7</sup> Museums are constantly in flux. How is it that three years after 'Peopling' set new precedents for engaging with London's multicultural present and its imperial past, a statue of a slave trader was erected outside its sister institution? This book aims to provide a comprehensive study of the origins, nature and impact of the MoL, and its interaction with the theme of empire, decolonisation and the postcolonial throughout its history (and the history of its progenitor institutions). More specifically, it presents an extended case study of the MoL's 1993 temporary exhibition, 'The Peopling of London: 15,000 Years of Settlement from Overseas' to address when, why and how representations of empire and colonialism at the MoL began to change. The cumulative picture is a complex, sometimes ambiguous, relationship between the Museum and London's colonial past. Before the planned move of the MoL to the abandoned Smithfield's Market in 2023, a reassessment of the Museum (and the MoLD), its history and its social role are timely. This book will provide a fitting look back on how the Museum has met the challenge of representing the multicultural realities of London in the postcolonial era.

What, then, was the historical legacy of museum representation and acknowledgement of empire that the MoL inherited when it began to consider its 1993 'Peopling' exhibition? Critical assessments of this relationship between museums and empire have emphasised museums' long historical associations with empire-building. Formative studies that have addressed this relationship from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century have focused principally on national and regional museums, arguing that since the eighteenth-century museums have mirrored the socio-political arguments for the necessity of empire.

## Museums and Empire

The so-called universal type museum emerged in the eighteenth century in lock-step with the march of empire.<sup>8</sup> The British Museum (founded 1753), like other prominent museums at the time, including the Ashmolean (1683), the Glasgow Hunterian Museums (1807) and the South Kensington Museum (1855), was furnished by the spoils of imperial expansion, 'wherever in the British Empire railways and roads, telegraphs and modes of exploitation of the environment advanced, surveyors and engineers, miners and farmers were inevitably sucked into the fascinations of geology, palaeontology and archaeology.'<sup>9</sup> The technologies of colonisation could, therefore, be seen as contributing to the national storehouse of knowledge, a knowledge rooted in imperial expansion.

Individual collectors and their social and material networks were equally, if not more so, instrumental in establishing these museums from the eighteenth century and drove this quest for the universalisation of knowledge rooted in imperial conquest. More recent museum histories have moved away from traditional narrative histories of museums to focus on the social and material networks that constituted museums from the eighteenth century onwards. This shift in focus has been precipitated by such works as Gosden and Larson's *Knowing things: exploring the collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum 1884–1945* (2007), which charted the social and material connections in the foundation of the Pitt Rivers Museum to demonstrate the relational nature of museums.<sup>10</sup> Whilst these works have developed our methodological approaches to museum histories, they have been criticised for failing to address the violence that permeated these relational connections. Dan Hicks responded directly to the 'relational museum' project in his book *The Brutish Museum* (2021) to condemn its over-emphasis on object biographies and the relational nature of museums in sustaining the erasure of the history of colonial violence in the Victorian period.<sup>11</sup> Works published after the 'relational museum' project, such as James Delbourgo's biography of Hans Sloane *Collecting the World* (2017), have placed empire, and its violence, at the centre of these histories.<sup>12</sup> Unpacking these institutional, social and material relationships between museums and empire has been the focus of scholars for more than three decades.

Formative books including, such as Barringer and Flynn's *Colonialism and the Object* (1988), influenced as they were by post-colonial critiques, expanded our understanding of the influence of colonialism on museum objects and material culture more broadly; how material culture tells us something about the societies

that produce and consume them, and transactional inequities between coloniser and the colonised.<sup>13</sup> *Colonialism and the Object*, and formative museum histories, in particular works such as Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's *Museum and Disciplinary Societies* (1989), with their emphasis on power revealed through the museum and material culture, were heavily influenced by Foucault's concept of the disciplinary society. Seeing Museums as technologies, which allowed the state to 'survey, classify, and control time, space, bodies and things,' these works endorsed the idea of a centrally organised imperial museum project.<sup>14</sup> As Sarah Longair has argued, these earlier studies, which focused on the 'exertion and entrenchment of power relations,' naturally lent themselves to the study of museum in a colonial context, for example Bernard Cohn's *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (1996) placed museums alongside the census as a disciplinary technology of empire, and led scholars to view the museum as intimately 'tied with the exercise of power . . . bounded by a series of underlying dichotomies between coloniser and colonised.'<sup>15</sup> Moving away from these studies, which misunderstood the 'particular and peculiar workings of museums' in diverse temporal and geographical contexts, more recent scholarship has focused on the specific historical context of individual institutions.<sup>16</sup> Focusing for the first time on city museums, and contemporary representations, this book will contribute to this more recent scholarship.

Building not only on Flynn and Barringer's work but also on formative cultural histories, like John Mackenzie's *Museums and Empire: Natural History, Human Cultures and Colonial Identities* (2009), so-called New Imperial Histories have enriched our understanding of the nature and context of imperial collections. Two seminal collections, published under the Manchester University Press Studies in Imperialism, *Art and the British Empire* (2007) and *Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience* (2012), illustrated the relationship between museums, display and how the British public came to understand their empire and their place within it. For example, Eleanor Hughes, in her study of marine paintings hung at the Royal Academy in 1784, shows how works like Dominic Serres' which depicted British naval victories, when juxtaposed with history paintings depicting royal personages and Shakespearean subjects, were situated within the national story to bolster 'national self-regard in the aftermath of devastating territorial loss by prompting the public to reconceive Britain as a maritime empire.'<sup>17</sup> Conversely, John McAleer's study of Thomas Baines, a marine painter who curated the Africa Display at the King's Lynn Athenaeum inauguration of 1854, in which he curated his own work depicting his time as David Livingstone's exhibition to the Zambezi alongside works on loan from the London Society of Art's Indian, African and Chinese Collections, and which also featured a 'miniature display of an African glen on the Kat River, in which the Hottentot rebellions broke out in 1850,' were contextualised for visitors in part by the frequent appearances of the Eight Frontier War (1850–1853). This, McAleer argues, would have furnished the public with a particular understanding of Baines' display and collections within a broader imperial context. Here, as with similar exhibitions and displays, curators used the museum to create visual displays of the colonies and empire for British visitors.<sup>18</sup> Thus, museums and their exhibitions were not neutral

participants in empire, and in dissemination of the other, but were intertwined with the 'promotion of commerce and consequently, the development of empire' and a wider imperial culture.<sup>19</sup> In the second half of the nineteenth century, museums and exhibitions were transformed into visual explanations of empire, and Britain's national identity.

As the number of museums in Britain increased in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a greater interest in the material past developed alongside the emergence of antiquarian and archaeological societies. Archaeological and anthropology museums emerged from the violence of empire, which has been illustrated in more recent works such as Dan Hicks' *The Brutish Museums* (2019). Informed by the 'explanatory powers' and the alleged 'epistemological transparency of objects,'<sup>20</sup> and underwritten by colonial violence, which saw the looting of so much of, for example, African material heritage, anthropology and archaeology museums, like the Pitt Rivers Museums in Oxford, founded in 1884, developed new evolutionary taxonomies, which organised their collections to emphasise the progress of cultures from savagery to civilisation to reify the West's superiority in contrast to the other engendering racial hierarchies. New Imperial Histories, and more recent museological works, have developed on this discourse about the relationship between museums and empire, acknowledging museums as rich sites for understanding imperial citizenry in a range of British museums from the eighteenth century, and how visitors' readings of colonial objects and displays, and their subsequent understanding of empire, were contextualised by a wider imperial culture that emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

The great exhibitions and world's fairs, such as the 1886 Colonial and India Exhibition in particular, were expressions of the growing popular imperialism, which amalgamated this idea of cultural progress.<sup>22</sup> As John MacKenzie argued, popular imperialism, expressed through exhibitions, poster art, the music halls, literature and moving pictures, created for the British 'a world view which was central to their perceptions of themselves.' This emerged in the last three decades of the nineteenth century and coalesced around a renewed militarism, devotion to royalty, identification and worship of national heroes, and racial ideas associated with social Darwinism.<sup>23</sup> Mackenzie goes on to argue that museums and the great exhibitions offered pleasure mixed with instruction and were suffused with imperial themes representing a national obsession with all things exotic and imperial. These exhibitions and museums emerged alongside an intensified imperial propaganda that Mackenzie argued saturated British culture. It is worth noting that the 1924–1925 Wembley Exhibition attracted more than 27 million visits.<sup>24</sup> In this way, museums and the great exhibitions have been used to highlight how the public came to know about their empire, and that the empire was seen as something conducive to British prosperity.

Andrew Thompson has argued that the influence of empire on British culture was complex and there was no 'single monolithic imperial culture in Britain.'<sup>25</sup> In turn, those works referenced earlier, such as Longair and McAleer's *Curating Empire*, in which scholars have questioned the individual museums and their specific historical context, focused attention on trying to understand visitors'

experience and their understanding of imperial collections and displays. Take Claire Wintle's study of the Royal Pavilions and Museums in Brighton from 1900 to 1950. Wintle argues that visitors understood collections of non-European material culture at the Royal Pavilion and Museums, and thus their understanding of the 'people of their empire,' by drawing on wider local cultural references. In the first half of the twentieth century, Brighton was a popular place for the returning colonial elite, where the local charity bazaars and lantern shows, with their imperial motifs, provided a 'sociable, dynamic environment, ripe for individual involvement and group participation,' in which locals furnished their understanding of those 'people of their empire.' Wintle argues that the museum provided an official interpretation of empire, albeit messy and unintelligible, but that visitors were able to make it intelligible because of their wider cultural experiences.<sup>26</sup> Thus, visitors ascribed their own meaning, material culture and imperial collections, which in turn helped them to understand their relative position as imperial citizens.

This turn towards the visitor in museum studies and museum history is relevant inasmuch much of this book is about how visitors understand histories of empire and colonialism as displayed at the MoL. This shift in museum studies and museum histories to focus on the visitor was precipitated in part by Bourdieu and Darbel's 1966 study of European Museums *The Love of Art* (1966), which concluded there was a causal relationship between those who visited art galleries and their level of cultural capital; an individual's level of education not only is the sum total of their schooling but is also predicated on an individual's social stratification through which an individual developed their social and cultural education.<sup>27</sup> The greater their cultural capital, their greater their likelihood to engage in culture. Bourdieu and Darbel's study was not recognised in the United Kingdom until the 1980s, at which time the New Museology movement emerged, which turned scholars' attention to the role of visitors and the ways in which they were active meaning-makers. This focus on the visitor diminished the idea that visitors were empty vessels waiting for knowledge. The visitor in turn will be discussed in greater detail in my discussion around the usefulness of visitor comment books in Chapter 7. What is important here is that such studies are indicative of an obligation to consider the visitor in negotiating histories of museums and material culture.

Turning to London, once the hub of empire, which is the backdrop for this book not least because much of what is considered imperial architecture and material legacies remains in plain sight today, was shot through with empire. Cultural histories of empire inspired by Anthony King and Doreen Massey, which argued for a recognition of the way in which the identity of places in the modern world are informed as much by their relationship to other places, have analysed the way in which global processes of imperialism shaped the modern European City.<sup>28</sup> London, Felix Driver and Adam Gilbert argue in *Imperial Cities* (1999), was a place in which a variety of imperial sights could be seen, and in which aspects of empire including 'political authority, commercial power, cosmopolitan consumption, scientific progress, popular display' were represented by different urban sites, such as Admiralty Arch at Westminster.<sup>29</sup> Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose have gone even further and argued that domestically, empire was never entirely



off the political and civic agenda from the 1770s and critical to the development of metropolitan culture.<sup>30</sup> Rather than considering whether empire had an impact, like Mackenzie and Thompson's work, they are concerned with how empire was lived through everyday life in London. What is interesting here, and important for this book, is how many of the essays in both Driver and Gilbert's and Hall and Rose's show how visitors often subvert official interpretations.

Take Deborah S. Ryan's essay on 'Staging the Imperial City: The Pageant of London 1911' (1999). Ryan argues that the elaborate displays, which told the history of London from pre-history to colonial power, were designed intentionally, with educational and imperial propagandist agendas, to stage the City of London as the imperial capital, the 'seat of national government at the heart of the British Empire.' Pageants often recreated the far-flung reaches of empire allowing visitors and pageanteers to explore the colonies. Performing the role of travellers, visitors could take the 'All Red Tour,' which would take people on a mile and a half trip by electric railway through the overseas colonies, which Ryan argues instilled in people a sense of colonial progress, how to be a part of empire and how empire was a part of them.<sup>31</sup> Ryan also argues that participation allowed some to subvert this meaning. Fifteen thousand volunteers from across London's boroughs meant that there were conflicting local identities. Each borough oversaw their own scene and as a result, suburban rivalries, personal aims and objectives and individual's meanings influenced participants' experience.<sup>32</sup> Whatever wider culture of empire existed in this period, there was a tangible decline in a popular imperial spirit over the twentieth century despite remnants of London as an imperial city hiding plain sight in Britain.

Decolonisation, a process visible from the 1940s with the independence of India and which came to an end in the 1960s in which no fewer than 17 nations declared their independence in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, precipitated a change in the place of value of empire in contemporary British culture. Events such as the Suez Crisis in 1956 exposed Britain's military and financial weakness, diminishing its position in the world as a global geopolitical force.<sup>33</sup> This shift was reflected in many aspects of material culture that had once promoted empire as a modernising force. The 1951 Festival of Empire, which staged an exhibition entitled 'A Focus on Colonial Progress,' was indicative of Britain's attempt to reimagine itself as a benevolent trustee of the Commonwealth leading emerging nations towards self-government to which all could aspire.<sup>34</sup> This process of reorientation was reflected in museums across Britain and in how they sought to redisplay and reinterpret their collections.<sup>35</sup>

There are many examples in which museums began to reframe their displays with the onset of decolonisation. Tipu's Tiger, taken by the British at the siege of Seringapatam in 1799 during the last Anglo-Mysore war, displayed in East India House in London from 1808, and subsequently displayed in the Imperial Institute in South Kensington from 1879, was displayed as a trophy of war against a supposedly aggressive eastern rule. In 1947, Tipu's Tiger was displayed in the South Kensington Museum before being moved to the Victoria and Albert Museums in 1956, recontextualised as a masterpiece of Indian art. Sadiah Qureshi argues that



this redisplay was an attempt to reflect Britain's acknowledgement of former colonies' independence and the road to self-determination, each with their own unique material cultures. Nonetheless, its origins as imperial loot were ignored.<sup>36</sup>

Several studies have argued that after the Second World War museums reconfigured their colonial and ethnographic displays reflecting the broader political process of decolonisation. After all, the 'stresses and strains of imperial decline were not safely contained within the realm of high politics' and reverberated throughout civil society, shaping political and cultural processes and institutions.<sup>37</sup> Returning to the Imperial Institute, Wintle has reinforced this argument that colonial museums engaged in a reorientation of their colonial displays as a reaction to the wider process of decolonisation. Wintle, however, argues that it would be untrue to say that museums in this period simply reflected the larger process of decolonisation. Alongside decolonisation was a parallel shift in curatorial practices. In her study of the former Imperial Institute, she looks at how it was rebranded as the Commonwealth Institute in 1958 (moving to a new building in 1962), and how it changed its practices to accommodate the susceptibilities of newly independent countries. She demonstrates the Institute's efforts to develop shared curatorial practices between former colonies and exhibitions in Britain. New organisational and financial structures enacted at the new Commonwealth Institute gave new Commonwealth nations the opportunity to sit on the institute's board of directors. This allowed them to assist in funding the displays, and to set agendas with regard to displays of their own histories and cultures.<sup>38</sup>

From the perspective of this study, it is important to note that empire as a frame of reference for deconstructing or explaining material culture, and culture more broadly, became far less prominent at this time. If the idea of empire was increasingly condemned because of decolonisation, kept away from public view, ignored or reframed in other contexts, scholars have argued that it gradually returned from the mid-1980s. This return is indicative of a broader representational shift in museums, which began to address the more difficult place of empire in a postcolonial era.

### **The Past in the Present**

It is more generally accepted that Britain's recent coming to terms with its imperial and colonial past is part the result of a broader conversation about Britain's relationship with its past. Heritage, for the purposes of this book, is broadly understood as a past reworked and received through the tangible and the intangible including, but not limited to, display, representation, location, events, memories, practices and commemorations. As academic research in heritage went through a threshold moment in the 1980s, alongside developments in museum studies, and postcolonial discourses, imperial historians, in turn, focused on the heritage of empire and how it has been expressed and consumed in museums, culture and politics in the United Kingdom.

Before moving on, it is important to reflect on the role of collective memory and where it intersects with heritage, as it will be important for later discussions around

contemporary displays which have challenged dominant heritage discourses around empire. Halbwachs argued that collective memory is several individual recollections of people with a shared experience that has been constituted by mutual interaction with the larger group.<sup>39</sup> Later in 1983, Benedict Anderson put forward his theory of the imagined nation in which he argued that the nation is imagined 'because the members of even the smallest nation will never know their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'<sup>40</sup> One way in which the imagined communities come into being is through a nation's material culture. In this way museums are not simply an archive but select 'certain cultural products for official safe-keeping, for posterity and public display – a process which recognised and affirms some identities and omits to recognise and affirm others.'<sup>41</sup> Here, it is pertinent to mention Laurajane Smith's theory of authorised heritage discourses, that is the 'practice of rounding up the usual suspects to conserve and "pass on" to future generations, and in doing so promotes a certain set of Western elite cultural values as being universally applicable.'<sup>42</sup> Museums then are key sites in which individual and collective memories are negotiated, and with the increase in multicultural communities and multiple epistemic communities, romanticised version of Britain's imperial past was increasingly criticised.

Such critiques were part of a broader movement within academic heritage studies which perceived a growing romanticism and commercialisation of official versions of the past, sanitised and pre-packaged for visitors as part of a 'heritage industry.' Appreciated for its own sake, David Lowenthal criticised this heritage industry in his seminal work *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985), in which he argued that the past 'in the late eighteenth century came to be perceived as a different realm [and] gradually ceased to provide comparative lessons but came to be cherished as a heritage that validated and exalted the present.'<sup>43</sup> Often political in nature, Lowenthal saw heritage at odds with history – as a debased history – being more about re-packaging of the past for some purpose in the present. Robert Hewison built on this to argue that this heritage industry distracted its patrons from developing an interest in contemporary culture and served only to reinforce the values of the dominant classes.<sup>44</sup> There were those who asserted that the popularity of heritage attractions should not be underestimated, and Raphael Samuels argued that heritage made the past more democratic 'offering more points of access to "ordinary people."<sup>45</sup> Whilst there is merit to both arguments, what is important for this book is that these critiques, alongside the growth in cultural studies, gender studies and postcolonial discourses, precipitated new critical readings of museums and their collections especially with regard to colonialism.

Around the same time that Lowenthal and Hewison were writing their formative texts, important museological works emerged, including Peter Vergo's *The New Museology* (1989) and Robert Lumley's *The Museum Time Machine* (1988), which situated the role of museums within this broader conversation about the heritage industry. For example, Tony Bennett's article on open-air museums in Lumley's volume observed that 'folklore has been studied primarily as a picturesque element,' and that whilst the number of museums dedicated to displaying working

histories exploded in the twentieth century, they were not ‘of the people,’ concerned with the way in which living museums had idealised the lives of the working class and failed to ‘display any [genuine] interest in the lives, habits and customs of either the contemporary working classes or the labouring classes of pre-industrial societies.’<sup>46</sup> Such works precipitated new methods of interpretation and display that focused on who was represented, how and what for. Foundational museological texts sought to deconstruct the ‘historical and structural narratives [of the museum], practices and strategies of display, and the concerns and imperatives of governing ideologies.’<sup>47</sup> One key idea propagated by these foundational texts was that museums were subject to the same political, historical and cultural influences as other institutions. The museum thus became an intellectual battleground, where proponents of this new critical museology argued that they should be more concerned with issues of power, communication . . . a place of ‘pluralism and inclusion,’ no longer ‘disinterested and apolitical.’<sup>48</sup> With regard to colonial collections, histories and displays, these new critical museological works, informed as they were by postcolonial discourse, were at the frontier of new representational critiques which bought into question how meaning comes to be inscribed and by whom, and what are the dominant modes of representation within the museum, and most importantly what was, and had been, excluded.<sup>49</sup>

In the 1970s, increasing demands from Indigenous peoples in Australia and the United States (as well as other subaltern communities) for greater recognition of their histories, cultures and practices, and the return of cultural objects and ancestral remains, also helped to shape debates about the role of museums. In the United Kingdom, similar historical contexts were at work. Moira Simpson in *Making Representations: Museums in a Postcolonial Era* (1996)<sup>50</sup> conceptualised the resulting representational shift as ‘History Revisited.’ In the United Kingdom, this emerged as Black people began to voice their dissatisfaction over the failure of museums to represent their history and cultural contribution. Simpson used the example of the Geffrye Museum which in 1988 revised its displays to reflect recent scholarship on the history of Black people in Britain, notably Peter Fryer’s *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (1984).<sup>51</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, which provides historical context for the emergence of ‘Peopling.’ Simpson’s work has been subsequently criticised inasmuch that ‘her international approach focuses upon examples from nations like Canada, Australia and the United States, it tends to homogenise, disguising differences both subtle and profound.’<sup>52</sup> This book, in focusing on the specific historical and museological landscape against which ‘Peopling’ emerged, will seek to discuss differences, whilst recognising the international context.

One significant museological development which accompanied this representational shift was the idea of working with source communities. The practice of consulting Indigenous and minority communities when curating displays, foremost in ethnographic and anthropology museums, focused on ‘an increased sensitivity for questioning the authority of modern ethnographers to represent cultural “others.”’ In the 1980s, James Clifford, one of the leading figures in this area, was concerned about the role of the curator in presenting Indigenous cultures in two

ways: 'as pre-modern, ahistorical, and traditional; or as modern peoples assimilated into Western culture and thus "inauthentic" cultural representatives.'<sup>53</sup> Later in 1996, at a conference held at the Open University, Clifford introduced the notion of 'contact-zones' to museological thinking. Mary Louise Pratt coined the term 'contact zones' to describe the space of colonial encounters in which 'peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of inequality, and intractable conflict.'<sup>54</sup> Clifford repurposed this term to conceive of the one-sided imperial relationship still present in museums – their appropriation of Indigenous culture. Clifford argued that Indigenous communities should, by contrast, now exploit the museum to regain ownership of their heritage, 'When museums are seen as contact zones, their organizing structure as a collection becomes an ongoing historical, political, moral relationship – a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull.'<sup>55</sup> Clifford also notes that communities are diverse and that no one community or person is necessarily representative, and that museums work within budgetary, curatorial and cultural constraints and are susceptible to 'community hostility and misconception, that militate against museum practice.'<sup>56</sup>

More recently, the democratising potential of collaborative practice has been challenged. Samuel Alberti and Bernadette Lynch, in speaking of their experience curating the Manchester Museum exhibition 'Revealing Histories: Myths about Race' (2007–2009), have argued that 'There is nothing "post" about colonialism as a view of the world that persists. Encounters between museum professionals and external individuals, particularly those from diaspora communities, still bear traces of coloniser meeting colonised.'<sup>57</sup> Alberti and Lynch's paper reflects growing criticisms of collaborative practices and structural problems at the heart of the museums, which have increased alongside calls to decolonise.<sup>58</sup>

Debates around repatriation emerged concomitantly. From the 1970s onwards, Indigenous rights groups began to make demands for the repatriation of ancestral remains from Europe. This found more favour, evident in the UK *Human Tissues Act* (2004), which provided a legal framework for repatriation. In the 1970s and 1980s, Indigenous rights groups in Australia began to draw attention to the considerable number of Indigenous remains held in European museums, as they began to assert recognition of their pre-colonial common law rights.<sup>59</sup> According to Rodney Harrison, it was not until the late 1990s that steps were taken by the UK and Australian governments to begin a serious process of repatriation, resulting in the 2004 Act. For a long time, reflecting the universalist argument, museum professionals argued that the scientific value of the human remains was of global importance. In the 1970s, Indigenous Australians began to attend archaeological conferences to assert their views on when and under what circumstances archaeological fieldwork should take place, ensuring consultation with Indigenous communities took place.<sup>60</sup> Over the last several decades these debates have drawn attention to issues of control and ownership within the practice of archaeology,<sup>61</sup> and across other disciplines.

As discourses around museums and empire expanded, so too did discussions around race. Race has played an integral part in shaping British identity. In the late



eighteenth century, western opinion towards colonial subjects was built upon this idea of a ‘racial ladder of development that placed white northern Europeans at the pinnacle of reason and progress,’ discussed earlier in this chapter.<sup>62</sup> Still, in the twentieth century, colonial ideologies remained dominant, underwritten by a white British middle class history which exemplified the monumental, rendering the history and heritage of Britain ‘self-aggrandising,’ and ignorant of its multiculturalism as a result of British colonialism.<sup>63</sup> As a result, however, of a ‘deep slow-motion revolution’ precipitated by several arts and culture initiatives throughout the United Kingdom, this dominant heritage discourse, grounded in part through racial ideas of a dominant white middle class, has been unsettled in the contemporary period, resulting in competing histories and narratives about the colonial past and the postcolonial present in Britain, causing problems for the modern museum.<sup>64</sup>

Shortly before ‘Peopling’ emerged, prominent cultural theorists like Paul Gilroy were debating the effects of neo-racism, that is the ‘the confluence of “race”, nationality and culture in the contemporary politics of racial exclusion,’ which typically results in the exclusion, on account of a person’s ‘blackness’ from participation in the ‘national community.’<sup>65</sup> This was also true across Europe more widely, even as multiculturalism was emerging in the 1970s. It extended to all ethnic minorities including those from former colonies who were rightfully British citizens. Education became a key locus in which multiculturalism was promoted and racism challenged, though there were those in key educational positions who challenged the multicultural education agenda.<sup>66</sup> In the latter half of the twentieth century, ethnic minorities and Black communities also began to assert and celebrate their identities through poetry, reggae music and other events, for example, the Notting Hill Carnival, much of which challenged racism in Britain.

Equally important for this book, multiculturalist critiques of imperial history were seen by some groups as ‘anti-white’ and anti-British,’ as Elizabeth Buettner has shown. Throughout this period there were regular violent clashes between ethnic minorities and the police, and minorities and right-wing fascist groups. In the United Kingdom, this culminated in 1993 with the death of Stephen Lawrence, creating a watershed moment for race relations in Britain which subsequently led to the Macpherson report. The report concluded that ‘institutional racism’ was rampant in the police force and that the Race Relations Act 1976 needed strengthening. This period was reflected in culture also. There was, for example, the Black Arts movement, which took a ‘militant stance against the exclusion of ethnic minorities from the British art establishment.’<sup>67</sup>

Migration museums also emerged as key sites where issues of colonialism came to be discussed in the 1980s and 1990s. This occurred principally in former settler colonies, where museums were in close proximity to Indigenous communities. An early example was the Australian Migration Museum in Adelaide which opened in 1986.<sup>68</sup> Migration museums were a much later phenomenon in the United Kingdom, the first permanent museum not opening until 2017 in London.<sup>69</sup> It is important to clarify here that the Migration Museum in London has staged temporary exhibitions and workshops since 2013, working towards opening a permanent museum. City museums, however, which have long dealt with immigration, like the MoL, are

useful comparators. Recently, scholars have become increasingly interested in how city museums have addressed issues of immigration with reference to how they might better represent marginalised groups and multiculturalism.<sup>70</sup> For city museums, according to migration scholars, dealing with colonial histories and legacies was unavoidable. 'Peopling' is an example of this. More than ever, scholars are interested in the material traces of colonialism and empire found in the city and city museums, and this book hopes to make a significant contribution to this topic.<sup>71</sup>

In the second half of the twentieth century, museums have become contentious spaces where the postcolonial and decolonial are continually renegotiated. Power relationships are similarly renegotiated, and greater demands for representation and recognition from former colonial peoples continue to be made. These debates, whilst having far-reaching implications for human rights and social justice, have precipitated a new understanding of heritage in terms of power and ownership, and museums continue to be shaped by and to shape debates concerning former colonial people's heritage.

## No Longer at Home With Empire

Museums offer a rich context in which to question issues of imperialism and the postcolonial. Historically, the national museums of colonial powers, through both their holdings and their displays, have illustrated and thus helped to sustain imperialist discourses. They are useful in helping us to map shifting representations of empire. As Thomas notes, 'The metamorphosis of European museums from the colonial to post-colonial era effectively mirrors the disquiet about the heritage of imperialism.'<sup>72</sup> This disquiet has become more vociferous since the 1990s. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, museums' engagement with the legacies of empire have increased alongside growing anxieties around issues such as slavery, taking a central role in shaping debates and promoting a public understanding of Britain's colonial past.

Museums in port cities in the early 1990s show how this disquiet around Britain's colonial heritage marked a new period in Britain's relationship with their imperial past. Many, if not all, former port cities 'are steeped in material vestiges of their past. From old maritime waterfronts to grand mercantile architecture, from street names to statues, and from monuments to museums.'<sup>73</sup> As 'sites of memory',<sup>74</sup> and susceptible to the same forces that precipitated representational shifts in museums globally, these former port cities and their museums became important sites where challenges to collective memories and recollections of the imperial past were raised.<sup>75</sup> Liverpool, Bristol and London, and their respective museums are a testament to this. In the early 1990s, several port city museums, including the Merseyside Maritime Museum, and Bristol City Archives, began to reflect on their imperial pasts, especially their role in the slave trade. Liverpool was a major slave trading port. By 1795, Liverpool controlled over 80% of the British and over 40% of the entire European slave trade.<sup>76</sup> Bristol, meanwhile, financed over 2,000 slaving voyages between 1698 and 1807, and forcibly transported over 500,000 enslaved Africans from Africa to the Americas.

The Mersey Maritime Museum, a precursor to the International Slavery Museum Liverpool (ISML), was one of the first port city museums to deal with its slave-trading past, starting from 1994. This evolution itself reflects the ebbs and flows of the impact of empire on Liverpool as a port city. This symbiotic relationship between city, museum, empire and urban identity is summed up by Alice Mah:

One can read the city like a museum or an archive. But one can also read the city within the museum, and the museum in relation to the city. Indeed, museums are important spaces for negotiation and interpretation of urban identities. Museums of slavery and colonial history in Liverpool, Marseille, and New Orleans reveal how uncomfortable legacies are framed within competing narratives about urban identity.<sup>77</sup>

The former imperial port city is, then, a rich site for understanding how museums came to confront their imperial pasts and postcolonial futures. Bristol, for example, began seriously to confront its colonial legacies from the 1990s, and Olivette Otele has demonstrated how disagreements arose over what, and more importantly who, was included in Bristol's collective memory and heritage as a maritime centre. Such discussions precipitated a move towards more inclusive representations, which actively dealt with the city's slave-trading past.<sup>78</sup> Despite this growing confidence of museums to address Britain's challenging colonial past, several museums faced public and scholarly criticism. Slavery and empire continued to constitute 'difficult heritage,' that is, topics where conflicting memories prove difficult to negotiate.<sup>79</sup> The MoLD, a separate project which ultimately came under MoL control, is an obvious comparator to Bristol and will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Museums across the world have struggled with such potentially divisive histories and memories. Thomas Gieryn's article 'Balancing Acts: Science, Enola Gay and History Wars at the Smithsonian' (1998) is a good illustration of this. He returned from visiting two controversial exhibitions in 1996 at the Smithsonian about the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki:

unconvinced that the inevitable world of multiple epistemic communities is something to celebrate (but rather, to struggle through), depressed by the realisation that none of our sometimes-well-intentioned rhetorical weapons (objectivity, interpretive skill, dispassion) are fail-safe in convincing everybody else to accept our stories over different ones.<sup>80</sup>

The Smithsonian had attempted to tell both the bombing story and its effects in a balanced script. But devices such as juxtaposing the massive hull of the B29 bomber *Enola Gay* with a child's lunchbox, with carbonised food inside, angered some veterans. They felt such devices questioned the morality of the bombing.<sup>81</sup> In short, museums may struggle to accommodate these multiple views.

There are many examples of such controversy arising over not just slavery exhibitions but also empire in general. The British Empire and Commonwealth



Society is one such case. Opened in 2002, more than 20 years after it was originally conceptualised by arts campaigner John Letts in the 1970s, it was the first major museum specifically dedicated to the history of Britain's overseas empire. According to McAleer, it aimed to present the facts and history in an objective way, to allow people to explore for themselves what empire meant to them.<sup>82</sup> The museum officially closed in 2012, but whilst it was open, the museum appeared 249 times in the *Bristol Evening Post* in the four years between July 23, 2002, and July 3, 2006, and a large proportion of the stories highlighted negative responses from the public.

Controversy over the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum (BECM) began as early as the 1970s when concerns were raised over the inclusion of the word empire in the name. It also had difficulty tapping the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for funding as the 2007 slavery commemorative date approach. Katherine Prior, the in-house historical advisor for the BECM, had noted that 'no-one wins plaudits in Britain for funding exhibitions on empire.'<sup>83</sup> McAleer writes that despite money having been allocated by the HLF for museums, the BECM's application for funds was denied in December 2005. The BECM continued to expand through private donations, and their membership network.<sup>84</sup>

The issue of finance, or lack of it, touches a wider point about museums' recognition of the importance of visitors. Scholars have argued that parallel with museums adopting of a more active social role in the 1980s, there has been an increasing emphasis on pleasing their visitors and their 'government paymasters.'<sup>85</sup> In the case of the BECM, Prior has noted that professional and public criticisms of the BECM, before it had even opened, was an obstacle to potential funding. Critics of Britain's Empire, she argues, were concerned the Museum risked engaging in flag-waving jingoism owing to its largely pro-empire sponsors. Prior contends that these criticisms were because many academics feared 'that the average white Briton remains a flag-waving imperialist at heart.'<sup>86</sup> On the other hand, since the 1980s, other attempts to engage with empire have been successful. To what degree public affirmation plays a role in the success of such exhibitions remains largely unexplored. Laurajane Smith concludes that whilst visitors are mindful of wider debate when visiting a museum, the majority go to reinforce their intellectual positions. She concedes, however, that exhibitions still have the potential to modify or change people's views.<sup>87</sup>

Evidence of Smith's view is borne out in the case of the BECM. As Jennifer Carvill notes, on May 9, 2006, the BECM staged debates about Bristol's role in the slave trade and whether an apology should be issued by Bristol City Council, in 2006, a year prior to its 'Breaking the Chains Exhibition.' The debate was sparked a week earlier when the local *Bristol Evening News* declared that 'It's time the city said sorry.' Carvill notes how this caused controversy, with 96% of the audience voting against apologising for Bristol's role in the slave trade. Subsequently, participants appeared to become more sympathetic towards the idea as the debate wore on.<sup>88</sup> Several newspaper articles covered it at the time including the *guardian*.

The controversy over the 'Breaking the Chains' exhibition suggests that, to understand the discussions, debates and concerns surrounding the 2007

anniversary year, these need to be considered within the wider context of British imperial history. Hall has argued that it is because we are no longer at home with the empire that imperial historians have begun to question the place and value of empire in contemporary British society. The shifting historiography of empire has resulted in a questioning of whether or not the history of British colonialism is conducive to a positive self-affirming British identity.<sup>89</sup> New histories, such as *Britain's Gulag* (2005) by Caroline Elkins, have challenged our understanding of Britain's exit from empire, as something much more violent than previously been credited: as featuring a series of 'dirty wars'.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, as a result of immigration from former colonies, multiple epistemic communities have brought multiple perspectives to the history of British colonialism in the postcolonial era, and repeated challenges over time to museums to accommodate new perspectives and claims.

Public activism and broader public criticism of the legacies of empire have intensified alongside calls to decolonise the museum and material culture relating to empire more broadly. Decolonial activism and scholarship attracted greater public interest with the 'Rhodes Must Fall' campaign, which began at the University of Cape Town South Africa when students called for a removal of a statue of the imperialist Cecil Rhodes from the campus grounds. The movement began on March 9, 2015, and the statue was finally removed on April 9, 2015. This movement then spread to Oriel College, Oxford, with students demanding the removal from the college façade a statue of Cecil Rhodes. As protest mounted, a consultation process was initiated by the university to discuss potential solutions. Already by January 2016, the university stated that the process had shown "overwhelming" support for keeping it.<sup>91</sup> Decisively, however, many former Oriel college students, and former and current donors threatened to pull financial backing if the statue was removed.<sup>92</sup> These calls to decolonise are founded on the argument that decolonisation is an ongoing process and one that needs to be addressed in order to tackle structural inequalities and colonial ideologies, which continue to permeate western society, including in the museum where they have perpetuated inequitable narratives surrounding people of colour.

One concern about western museums, furnished as they are by the spoils of colonial expansion, is whether 'they are so embedded in the history and power structures that decoloniality challenges, that they will only end up co-opting decoloniality'.<sup>93</sup> These arguments are largely inspired by Audré Lorde, who in 1978 wrote that 'The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change'.<sup>94</sup> Many now argue that museums are not even willing to confront these structural inequalities.<sup>95</sup> These views are necessarily deterministic, perhaps fatalistic. Looking towards those third spaces – that is those museums that emerged in the post-war period and are not normatively implicated in colonialism – might shed some light on this new debate, and how museums have attempted to strive towards more equitable futures through more critical museological practice around collections and interpretation.

This book is a critical contribution to these debates. It will provide this by constructing a sustained analysis of shifting interpretations of empire at the MoL and MoLD from 1989 to 2020. My book will also situate the MoL experience in the broader story of Britain's attitudes to, and debates about, its empire story by comparing these two institutions with other port/city museums and broader postcolonial politics. The book itself is broken into three parts. The first part looks at the origins and history of the MoL (Chapters 2 and 3). The second part focuses on 'Peopling' as the locus for change (Chapters 4 to 6). The third part, finally, looks at how this impacted back out onto the museum, and beyond the museum too (Chapters 7 to 9).

The first part of this book, then, consists of Chapters 2 and 3, and considers the origins, amalgamation and formative galleries at the MoL. These chapters together provide the baseline with which to establish the change that 'Peopling' represented. Chapter 2 is about the origin story of the MoL, that is the amalgamation of the Guildhall Museum (1824) and the London Museum (1912), and the extent to which their approach to collecting and display shaped the MoL's interpretation. The first half of the chapter outlines their origins and early history. The remainder then situates the creation of the MoL both within its specific historical context in the emergence of new types of social history museums in the United Kingdom, and at a time when the 'heritage industry' signalled a post-war museum boom, before moving on to look more closely at its displays. Chapter 3 looks more closely at the permanent galleries as they were when the MoL opened in 1976. There are two main aims of this chapter: Firstly, to establish the character of the permanent galleries and to try and understand the interpretive approach and key themes that were used to create a narrative of the history of London from pre-history to the present day. Secondly, to establish the place and value of empire in creating that history of London. This chapter will, therefore, shed new light on representations of empire in a formative city museum in the postcolonial era.

The second part of this book, which forms the main body of my work, focuses on my case study of 'Peopling' as the locus of change towards London's multicultural present. Here, my analysis takes seriously the catalogue and educational activities as additional interpretive layers. A secondary aim of these chapters in seeing 'Peopling' as a creative event is to explore the lasting impact of 'Peopling' moving forward across all the Museum's activities. Altogether, this part of the book will provide a holistic analysis of the exhibition and the influences that shaped it. Chapter 4 starts by locating 'Peopling' within broader socio-political and museological shifts taking place at the time, and by tracing the concept and planning of the exhibition. From the late twentieth century, minority demands for greater political and cultural representation forced postcolonial critiques onto the museum. Britain, like other former European empires, increasingly struggled towards the end of the twentieth century to reconcile their colonial past with contemporary postcolonial and multicultural realities. The MoL was not immune to these external pressures and debates. Chapter 5 moves on to address the 'Peopling' displays as a means of articulating how the re-telling of London's history through immigration resulted in a shift in the way in which the histories of empire were

interpreted. In this way we can see how their engagement with histories of empire changes when compared with their 1976 permanent galleries. Chapter 6 considers additional interpretive layers including the ‘Peopling’ book and educational resource pack as a way of further exploring this shift and identifying additional contextual vectors.

The third part of this book moves onto reception, impacts, legacies and ongoing influence, and begins with Chapter 7 looking at reception, which is a part of the experience of the exhibition, and in a way already an impact of it. I will identify the various socio-cultural contexts through which visitors understood the displays, later focusing how visitor comments may illuminate public understanding of this representational shift as bound up with the broader contours of British colonial history. To date, studies that have considered contemporary responses to exhibitions about empire are limited. Evidence to qualify public responses is scant, with most scholars relying on newspapers, comment pieces and limited archival material.<sup>96</sup> This is an exciting area which has generated greater awareness of the challenges museums face in attempting to engage with Britain’s colonial heritage, whilst simultaneously aiming to generate greater public awareness and cohesion around Britain’s colonial past. Debates around reception is also part of a larger discussion concerning difficult heritage, that is ‘a past that is recognised as meaningful in the present but that is also contested and awkward for public reconciliation with a positive, self-affirming contemporary identity.’<sup>97</sup> How did the museum negotiate difficult histories around immigration and empire? How did people in London respond to ‘Peopling?’ How did visitors frame their experience through various socio-cultural contexts of the time? My case study will address these questions in order to provide a new understanding of the nature of public responses to representations of empire and the postcolonial. It will, therefore, be a critical contribution to a more nuanced understanding of the place of museums in society. Chapter 8 moves to trace the impact of ‘Peopling’ in the longer term. This chapter is divided into five parts to see how the legacy of ‘Peopling’ impacted across the MoL’s activities, including permanent and temporary programming as well as community and outreach events, before moving on to see how the legacy of ‘Peopling’ can be traced in the MoLD programming. The principal aim of this chapter is to argue that this small temporary exhibition had a profound, albeit piecemeal at first, impact on the Museum’s engagement with histories of empire, as presented through several temporary exhibitions and changes to the permanent galleries at both the MoL and MoLD from 1993 and leading up to the opening of the ‘London, Sugar and Slavery’ (LSS) gallery at the MoLD in 2007. Put simply, it looks at those processes largely invisible to the visitor’s eye, which continue to work in the background shaping the Museum’s programming.

The book finishes with Chapter 9, its conclusion, bringing together the findings from my case study to show how and why ‘Peopling’ came about. This will bring the book full circle in dealing with representations of empire at the United Kingdom’s foremost city museum, making an original contribution to the historiography outlined in Chapter 1, and bring the history of the MoL up to date. Before the planned move of the MoL to the abandoned Smithfield’s Market in 2023, a

reassessment of the MoL, its history and its social role is timely.<sup>98</sup> My book will provide a fitting look back on how the museum has met the challenge of representing the multicultural realities of London in the postcolonial era.

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