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Museopiracy:

Redressing the commemoration of the Endeavour's voyage to the Pacific in *Processions for Tupaia*

Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll

INTRODUCTION

A commemoration of colonial history—that doggedly traditionalist format, which for now persists anachronistically into the twenty-first century—should counter the reified authenticity that is sought from pre-contact, pre-modern British imperial subjects.¹ What has not been discussed in the scholarship and commemorative practice of Captain James Cook's first expedition to the Pacific is the expanse of relationships, which are here explored as phenomenological and political redress of Tupaia and Joseph Banks.² Tupaia was a Ra'iatean priest who boarded the *Endeavour* in Tahiti, providing essential translation, diplomacy and cartography during the voyage.³ Tupaia's drawings, alongside Banks' diaries, reveal a tapestry of diplomacy and cross-cultural participation that can shift the perspective on a static domination into which colonial relationships have tended to ossify.⁴ Centring on ceremonial acts and the little researched role of Tupaia,⁵ the *Cook's New Clothes* project, a collaboration between scholars, tailors and Maori artists, sought to reassert the significance of fabric to the first encounter and of their making today.

In three parts, this paper focusses on the historical context, the theorization of a method of 'museopiracy', and an artwork in which a film of the processional performances resulting

¹ Australia Day, the national holiday and celebration of the foundation of the settler nation state, has in the recent past become known as 'Invasion Day', and then 'Survival Day'. Arguably moving beyond guilt in the discourse of invasion and survival may reflect the ways in which, I will argue in a forthcoming book, we have all never been pre-modern. I have written elsewhere about mobilizing shame through embarrassing facts presented for example on the Immigration Detention Archive project, published as Mary Bosworth and Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll, *Bordered Lives*, Berlin: Sternberg, 2019. About the problem of artists as *deus ex machina* in the museum decolonization process see Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll, 'Object to Project: Artist's Interventions in Museums', in: Christopher Marshall (Ed.), *Sculpture in the Museum*, (Farnham, Ashgate Press, 2012), 216-239.

² This research stems from piratologist Simon Layton's reading of Bank's journals as part of the Sackler-Caird Fellowship we shared at the National Maritime Museum London, 2017-2019.

³ My research on Tupaia began in the Maori community in Gisborne, Aotearoa, with Jody Toroa and Steve Gibbs, who introduced me Tupaia from their oral histories of the encounter of their Maori ancestors with him when Cook first landed at three different points along that coast of the North Island (now "poverty bay").

⁴ [press references here?](#)

⁵ Ekstein, Lars and Anja Schwarz, 'The Making of Tupaia's Map: A Story of the Extent and Mastery of Polynesian Navigation, Competing Systems of Wayfinding on James Cook's Endeavour, and the Invention of an Ingenious Cartographic System', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 2019. [Forthcoming?](#)
[& more Tupaia bibliography?](#)

from the project steers the narrative about a counter-monumental act. This was based on research towards restitution, strategies for exhibiting empire, and infrastructural activism. These research goals question the idea of the grand British Empire that is still so central to historical institutions, which remain structurally racist and rigid towards change and contemporary life. Engaged in decolonizing the museum, museopiracy signals a turn to transparency, movement, performance and experimentation, historical redressing, mourning, healing laughter, and embarrassment about Empire. Simon Schaffer and Richard Drayton have interrogated the static and conservative temporalities and monumentalities of the histories of science and colonialism in ways that are useful for defining a strategy for exhibiting empire. Mobilizing ‘healing laughter,’ Drayton writes, is necessary for exhibiting empire, for it is a gloomy existence if the dark, ironic, emotional modalities cannot be harnessed to further effect.⁶ Beyond the passionate, tragic and comic, what is at stake politically in the project that this paper outlines is a change in history writing and the institutions that keep master narratives. It is into those spaces and stories that the figure of the undead ghost of Tupaia intervenes.



Fig. 1. Gustave Dore, *New Zealander sketching the ruins of London* (1872).

⁶ See Richard Drayton on *Botanical Drift: Protagonists of the invasive herbarium*, Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017, (back cover).

COMMEMORATION

‘The Native’ is a diehard alterity. As much as I erased it from press releases about *Cook’s New Clothes*, it always snuck back in to give emphasis, in the BBC voice, to the other, those ‘with accents from New Zealand and Australia’.⁷ The figure of the fictional native was captured by Gustave Dore, a French artist in the eighteenth century, in his engraving *New Zealander sketching the ruins of London* (Fig. 1). Dressed for his Grand Tour to the past empire of England, this figure sits on ruins in Greenwich, sketching the skyline of London in which St Paul’s Cathedral has caved in to time’s inevitable change of power. Just as British proto-tourists sketched the ruins of ancient Rome in Dore’s eighteenth century, in the reverse of empire, it is the figure from the New World of *Aotearoa* (New Zealand) that has come to study the specimens of past glory. There is romantic melancholy in this image, which is ironically contemporary for British audiences who today evidently still yearn for the power of empire. *New Zealander sketching the ruins of London* embodies a speculative fabulation of how to both celebrate and mourn the end of empire (as *Cook’s New Clothes* reimagined the figure of the contemplative Maori artist at the very same spot on the Thames, actively subverting the *Endeavour* voyage legacy).⁸

[insert Fig. 2. ‘Chief mourner's costume' drawing and Fig. 3 of fluoro vests]

Tupaia produced drawings that Banks collected, among them is the ‘chief mourner's costume’ (Fig. 2), a cloak made of tapa and capped with a *parae* (headdress) of shimmering feathers and mother-of-pearl—the ‘cosmological function’ of which was ‘to dazzle, bewilder, [and] overwhelm’ all those who crossed paths with its wearer.⁹ A priest and expert in rituals, Tupaia closely observed and even painted the shimmer on the mother-of-pearl disks with watercolour, capturing light and detail of the pearl shells, turtle and coconut shells. To dazzle, bewilder, and overwhelm was also the desired effect of the florescent vests that we carried as processional banners (Fig. 3).

After joining the *Endeavour* as it left Tahiti and the Society Islands, Tupaia began to mediate the protocols of Cook’s encounters, advising him and his men how to dress when meeting the chiefs and elders with whom they came into contact. Meanwhile, Banks wrote at length about their fashions, dresses and dances, with a phenomenological appreciation of the interplay between fabrics, sounds and gestures. Banks’ journal constitutes a lens through which to view the Pacific as a site of continual dressing—in which fabrics were woven in ways that literally bound cultures together, forming the basis for interaction and exchange. Banks can be seen to be interested in negotiating the delicacy of cross-cultural situations. His phenomenology is not just in the register of appreciation, nor is it illuminated by hybridity and transculturation debates. The situation of Banks and Tupaia on board the *Endeavour* between Tahiti and

⁷ The BBC radio's Tim Manns (BBC Saturday morning show on religion and ethics around the world live interview with the author, 30/9/2018) insisted on referring to 'the natives' and in the Plymouth audience one participant made this comment on our exotic accents.

⁸ I am grateful to Simon Schaffer for bringing this engraving to my attention.

⁹ Harriet Parsons, *Collaborative Drawing on Captain Cook’s Endeavour Voyage, 1768-1771: An Intellectual History of Artistic Practice*, PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne, 2019. Thomas, *Artefacts of Encounter*, 215.

Batavia is also different to C. A. Bayly's interest in the alleged increase in uniformity.¹⁰ In his attempt to know what to give away and what to wear to appropriately dress the self, there seems a serious attempt to understand ceremony and to learn from Tupaia.

Maori oral history maintains that when Tupaia, Banks, Cook and the rest of the *Endeavour* crew arrived in 'Poverty Bay', the Maori asked him for tapa cloth. In the *Procession for Tupaia*, tapa cloth from Tahiti was therefore included among the gifts. The technique of making tapa was ritualized in ways that recounted particular genealogies and kinship groups, designed literally to weave ancestors to the living. The *aho*, or wefts of thread that passed across the warp fibres evoked one's ancestral lineage, moving up along the cloth in overlapping folds, which were often made to cascade in a representation of time.

Banks was struck by how tapa cloth could be 'put on in a thousand different ways' and was not at all reporting with the Victorian prudishness and moralism about the primitivity associated also with dressing in animal skins. He returned repeatedly to dog skin, as 'the great pride of their dress', fringing the cloaks worn only by chiefs and holy men. It seems plausible that one that Banks himself famously wore in the portrait by Benjamin West was neither given to him nor purchased but had most likely been presented to Tupaia, in recognition of his *mana* and spiritual authority. Since Tupaia had in turn not been given a uniform on board *Endeavour* the idea of making a naval uniform out of dog furs like the valuable cloaks emerged.

Cloaks are an ancient and transnational form. The word Cloak comes from the Medieval Latin *Clocca* and *Klocke*, the German word for 'clock'; being the shape of a bell, a pre-digital clock, the cloak is the embodied timekeeper. The human body turned to bell, ringing in time was an association I used in an earlier cloak choreography in Kew Gardens where I commissioned a cloak costume from Kimberit (Fig. 4) performed by the dancer Emma Howes, improvising movement with wind, plants, and atmosphere.

[insert Fig. 4. Emma Howes in Kimberit cloak]

Cook's New Clothes turned to upcycling and infrastructural activism, for example, in the various health and safety regulations including the enforcement of florescent safety vests for the processional performance in London became the basis for a set of processional fibre sculptures carried in the performance. The processional mass of florescent vests, emulating Pacific styles with materials woven into their mesh, resembled hybrid sea critters, billowing in the waters and winds. The National Maritime Museum's moratorium on the parading of fur, born of the concern for the ethics of London dog lovers and dog walkers, led me to commission two Indigenous Australian scholars—environmental historian and human geographer Tamara Murdoch, and art historian Jessyca Hutchens—to research the histories of the dingo, which they presented as a performance lecture before the procession.¹¹

The idea of redressing Cook's highly-politicised legacy in the Pacific, which is indexical of colonialism, also redresses the lack of a cloak in Cook's collection, which would have been the most respectable gift to be given to him in the Pacific. Our belated manufacture of a new

¹⁰ This is the basis for a forthcoming article on *Sartorial Cosmopolitanism*, by Simon Layton and Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll.

¹¹ Publi

cloak for Cook is made instead of recycled plastics, taken from the ubiquitously patterned 'refugee bag', a kind of plastic tartan that has literally and metaphorically littered the shores of the Pacific since the beginning of the refugee crisis. To proclaim that Cook is naked is to open up the opportunity to redress his figure, and those with him on the *Endeavour* voyage. The shadow of Cook on the voyage is Tupaia, an Indigenous islander chronicled by Banks as being particularly elegantly dressed, the two of them donning their best outfits as they walked through Batavia (now Jakarta, Indonesia) together. Tupaia had replaced the voyage artist, translator and navigator, and his passing suddenly in Batavia on the return voyage is the basis for the commemorative procession that is also part of *Cook's New Clothes*.

The central object in *Cook's New Clothes* is a uniform for Tupaia, sewn by a tailor in Australia based on patterns that British naval lieutenants wore at the time, but replacing the wool with the dingo fur that Pacific peoples most prized.¹² These cross-dressings that cross materials and techniques also redress cross-cultural moments in history. Cross-dressing subverts not only gender roles, but the fixity of cultural designs on 'authentic' and 'traditional' textile production, in favour of the more playful contemporary textile practices by which islanders and colonial centres exchanged cloaks and uniforms. It thereby disrupts the hermetic and unitary identity to acknowledge that both wearers are imbricated over one another, and can be sutured together in ways that produce new designs. Rather than recapitulating existing animosities, they inscribe the asymmetrical power relations established during colonialism. Joseph Banks, the voyage botanist and bon vivant dressed up and into the other's symbolic regalia. Having left Plymouth with an array of courtly costumes, he was well prepared to meet the priest and nobleman Tupaia, and to share and exchange clothing, as they moved through the city of Batavia.¹³

MUSEOPIRACY

Pirates study treasure, develop strategies for looting and are therefore well suited to working with museums.¹⁴ Seen as a storehouse of treasures by many whose wealth was depleted by colonialism, the museum as institutional vessel represents a stranded colossus full of treasures. A maritime museum is even more so a vessel for voyages, wealth and the representation of maritime mastery. Museopiracy then, is what I see formulated by our group of pirates in the National Maritime Museum London. Officially we are an artistic research project by a group of artists collaborating in the Royal Museums Greenwich, yet within that my focus is on the impact of pirates on state treasure chests as embodiment of disobedience.

¹² The choice of tailor came from research into the Australian convict tailoring and the positive reception of it even in the highest echelons of London's Saville Row. See Keith Levitt, in *Cook's New Clothes*, forthcoming.

¹³ Part of the research for the soundtrack of *Cook's New Clothes* was into what Batavia would have sounded like at this time and what music might have been played at a funeral for Tupaia. The composition I commissioned from Mo'ong Santoso Pribadi, an Indonesian musician for Tupaia's dirge.

¹⁴ On the redress of looting most recently see: Sarr, Felwine and Benedicte Savoy, *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics*, (Translated by Drew S. Burk). French government report, available at: https://www.about-africa.de/images/sonstiges/2018/sarr_savoy_en.pdf (accessed 30 December, 2018). Also, Renfrew, Colin, *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership: The Ethical Crisis in Archaeology*, London: Bloomsbury, 2000.

Rather than focussing on particular objects in the collections, a method of pirating (otherwise called our historical research) underlies this reflection on the effects of the museum on foreign and disobedient communities, or what I am calling museopirates.

Museopiracy has its roots in a movement of interventionist practices applied in ethnographic collections since the 1990s. As articulated by Fred Wilson, Julie Gough, and other artists, these involve using institutional critique to highlight the inherent racism in the state museum. The movement has typically focussed on object-oriented research in museums: Wilson on the artifacts of the slave trade in the United States, Gough on Tasmanian Aboriginal collections and so forth.¹⁵ By contrast, museopirates seek to take the vessel itself, not just the artefact.

Creating a lived relation with the museum and its collection, museopiracy is a process of therapeutic pirating that gives more than it takes—that inserts rather than extracts. Museopiracy critically re-appropriates parallel strategies such as biopiracy, from which pharmaceutical companies profit. It posits that the piracy from which the museum profited is turned around through institutional disobedience. Piracy emerges from what Paul Goodwin has described as a necessary disobedience.¹⁶ ‘To England will I steal, and there I’ll steal’—his curatorial practice turns the Shakespearean phrase into ‘to the university will I steal, and there I’ll steal’ by playing with arts funding schemes in Britain, so as to redirect resources away from ostensibly neoliberal interests in capital accumulation by universities and museums, and to benefit artists and cultural workers struggling under the current funding structure.

Cook’s New Clothes’ marriage of playful fabulation with serious historical revisionism is evocative of the kind of ‘museum detox’ that Goodwin asserts is necessary for the institution. Even so, using the artists’ subversive potential to lighten the burden of museum guilt cannot be entirely successful. A museum detox needs to go into the body of the museum itself, rather than function as a brief *Deus ex Machina*. Changes must be instituted across the institutional body’s mainstay permanent staff, sources of funding, collections and policies.¹⁷

A story about Karl Marx’s use of the British Library (then within the British Museum) comes to mind in relation to cloaks and institutional rules in the centre of empire. Peter Stallybrass writes about Marx’s coat—a sartorial requirement set by the institution to ensure only gentlemen used the library—when he was writing *Das Kapital*.¹⁸ Marx was so impoverished that he regularly pawned his only gentleman’s coat so he could eat; when he did, he could not work in the library. I also wonder what Marx made of the marbles and other loot he passed on his way to the reading room, where he was writing about alienation:

[O]bjects in themselves are external to man, and consequently alienable by him. In order that this alienation may be reciprocal, it is only necessary for men, by a tacit

¹⁵ On Wilson and interventions see: Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll, ‘Object to Project: Artist’s Interventions in Museums’, in: Christopher Marshall (Ed.), *Sculpture in the Museum*, (Farnham, Ashgate Press, 2012), 216-239. For Gough see: Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll, *The Importance of Being Anachronistic: Contemporary Aboriginal Art and Museum Reparations*, Discipline journal with Third Text publications, 2016.

¹⁶ [cite *Exhibiting Empire* conference here]

¹⁷ Revealing was the predominant number of casual museum staff at the procession and 'round table discussion' afterwards

¹⁸ Peter Stallybrass, 'Marx's Coat', in: XYZ, pp. 183-207.

understanding, to treat each other as private owners of those alienable objects, and by implication as independent individuals. But such a state of reciprocal independence has no existence in a primitive society based on property in common, whether such a society takes the form of a patriarchal family, an ancient Indian community, or a Peruvian Inca State.¹⁹

Mindful of Marx's adage, I began my presentation at the *Exhibiting Empire* conference in the British Museum with a spoken-word performance in which I carried a dogskin collected for the Tupaia coat, wrapped in black fabric, across the stage:

we return now to cloak. we proceed, to move, to proceed in cloth, cloaked, to proceed cloaked, to proceed masked, protected, to proceed in unison.
[stamp] to proceed. to proceed. to proceed in echo of each other, to proceed like this, to proceed like that, to proceed again. off stage, to proceed off land, to proceed on water, to proceed over border, to proceed past cape.
see, proceed, cloak. with your mana, cloak a mountain. cloak your ancestors. cloak strangers. cloak Empire. cloak danger. cloaked animal. cloaked institution. cloaking to clockbody. ringing life. cloaking death. ringing names.
[rattle] encloaking freedom. encloaked fascism. cloaking tears. cloaking lies. cloaking parody, cloaking curiosity. cloaking friendship. cloak of honour. cloaked skin. cloaked nakedness. cloaked sun
cloaked dance. cloaked time. cloak Tupaia
cloaked beings. cloaked ghosts. cloaked against the rain against the wind
cloaked from the beginning cloaked at the end. cloaked ten times. uncloaked.
recloaked. supercloaked. ubercloaked. cloaked. cloaked. cloaked. sound. cloaked voice
cloaked environment, health. cloaked clean ocean. choked the air: cloaked.
property: cloaked. worship: cloaked. justice: cloaked. repair: cloaked.
transparency: cloaked. power: cloaked. desire: cloaked. commodities: cloaked. fetishes:
cloaked. intentions: cloaked. dances: cloaked by the night. people cloaked by darkness.
fears cloaked by words. words cloaked by distance. language cloaked by lack. lack cloaked
by language. lack amplified by fear and cloaked in law. cloaked in treatise. cloaked in
ownership. cloaked in territory, cloaked in superiority, cloaked in authority.
cloak of illusion cloaked to protect

The ritual act of cloaking in the Pacific—to protect and make resonant the cloaked—is a key performative gesture in *Cook's New Clothes*. As the project's central piece of regalia, the dogskin cloak reflects how the cultural acts of cloaking and gifting in the Pacific persist beyond the archive in ongoing embodied practices; how the cloak itself shapes the movements of the cloaked. In the process it felt as though historical relations were transported and washed, moved from land to sea. The significance of the cloak rests in the absence of one in Cook's own collections of gifts received, and speculation over the cloak given by Maori to Tupaia, then appropriated by Banks when Tupaia passed away in Batavia, eventually finding its way to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.

In the film of the *First Procession for Tupaia*, a shorter version of this text is used as a voiceover in parts to give it a steer.²⁰ In that procession, the coat for Tupaia is ferried like a

¹⁹ Marx, *Das Kapital*, 62.

²⁰ <https://vimeo.com/298609717>

felled beast on a stake between two carriers, shrink-wrapped in plastic. Why, if it is so valuable, does the dogskin coat come in a vacuum sealed container, sealed off from contact with the museum? It is transported without touching any surfaces, but carried nevertheless to the boats to be present as a central object in the procession.

The most contentious part of *Cook's New Clothes* was the use of fur culled in Australia from wild dogs known as dingos. Dingos in Aboriginal and Maori cultures are highly sacred. The basis of 'Mozzie' artist Keren Ruki's work for years, she sources their coats from a trapper who catches dingos as part of an environmental program to protect other animals from them. The prospect of parading dingo fur in Greenwich, however, made the National Maritime Museum anxious. Situated in a London borough where dogs more aptly belong to the sacred domestic sphere of the bourgeois home, the museum feared it would cause public outrage in the *Daily Mail*. It explicitly banned dingo fur from museum property, despite being halfway through the project, in which the dingo cloak was already playing a critical part.

In response I took the prohibitions, rules and emails I received from the museum as instructions for the performance, and as ethnographic data to be archived and turned into a repertoire of acts of institutional disobedience (leading on from ethnographic conceptualism as a form of institutional critique).²¹ This is much more easily said than done; the process of decolonization is thwarted at every step. On another occasion (in July 2018), the Maritime Museum advised that we would 'need to wear safety vests during your performance ... to cross the road'—to which the *Cook's New Clothes* collaborative responded: we take this prescribed and ugly florescent vest that signifies the official security, the work force in Europe (as well as the labouring Indigenous body building infrastructure in the Pacific, and more recently the labour rights of protestors in France), and weave it into a Pacific style cloak. The aesthetics of health and safety culture in Britain has taken the life that dwells in accident and risk, and turned it into administrative labour to be outsourced. The vests became the materially abject refuse of the cloaks, for which florescent standard-bearing mounts were made, to hold them processional banners (Fig. 3).

'We are treated like feral animals,' says one of the filmmakers I invited into the museum to do camerawork on the project. A structure so imperial it needs the insertion of feral artists to affirm the pristine edifice as a separate order. Disobedience is produced by staunch resistance and assertion of 'the artefact', of the Queen's House within the museum. Artistic voices had been invited to be heard, but within the imperial envelope of the museum, it was also often made clear that the valuable artefact was the architecture. As a result, the artists were repeatedly halted in their process and reminded that the historical artefact must never be compromised and everything is subordinate to it.²² This produces a devaluation of the living and of contemporary art, which the project directly addressed by foregrounding precisely these, 'turning' (in the words of Julia Binter) 'the way history is narrated in the museum upside down'.²³

The law of respecting museum prohibitions becomes part of the choreography. Just as the king was naked and no one was allowed to say so, the Cook commemoration lays bare

²¹ Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll, 'Fight the dragon long, the dragon you become: Performing Viewers in the Graffiti Monument', *Laboratorium*, 2 (2013) 101-127.

²² Cite Steve Gibbs text.

²³ Julia Binter, *Cook's New Clothes* participant comment. See also Binter, Julia, *Beyond Exhibiting the Experience of Empire? Competing Chronotopes in the Museum*, *Third Text*, 2019 (forthcoming).

legacies of colonialism centred on this colonial hero. The limitations set by the institution amass in the gaps between the silo departments of education, art and research. Each department's programme runs separate workshops and activities with the same Pacific community simultaneously. The burden of representation on this community is high, but the responsibility for delivery in the museum is distributed. This leads to convenient lapses in responsibility from its departments when requests for visa letters, filming permissions, oversight of research in museum collections, and support with event planning are onerous. Press and marketing departments also play conspicuously powerful roles in attempting to sell us our own images, and hiring out museum spaces to corporate events at the same times that they have promised them to us. To minimize the exposure of our procession for Tupaia, they omit it from the museum's website and list of events. When the Guardian reporter Jack Lattimore tweeted about it supportively as a protest of the Cook commemoration in London, I swiftly received an email from the museum with a long policy attached that effectively prohibits me from speaking to the press and mentioning the museum's name. It hopes thereby to avoid all reviews, traumatised by critics' successful takedown some years ago of its exhibition on the Atlantic slave trade, amplified by media coverage.

From this perspective, *Cook's New Clothes* reads like a reparatory measure, the criticality of which was treated with suspicion by the institution that had itself chosen to do the work of compensation. The lack of Pacific community voices in the Pacific Gallery needed to be redressed. Yet in contrast to the monumental representation of imperial wealth—the very form that *Cook's New Clothes* sought to question for the Cook commemoration—the museum struggled to see any value in them and our outputs. Its agents subjected the formats of performance art, socially engaged practices and relational aesthetics, including workshops, discussion forums, mobile and ephemeral contemporary art practices to constant reporting and managerial interference in the budget. Being unable to afford to do things that the institution did not deem valuable provided another way to shut down certain activities; by neglecting to budget for catering at meetings with indigenous people, let alone invite them to the prestigious private viewing of the gallery to which they had contributed. Instead, the latter event was catered in an ornate 'nature' theme to compliment the 'traditional' Pacific dances performed by barely-clad women, all of which stood in stark contrast to donors in suits. Former curator at Blacktown Arts Center in Sydney, Paschal Berry recently commented on how this arts institution had to completely rethink its catering to accommodate communities of colour. This was accomplished, in the first instance, by allowing for more diverse sources of food to enter the museum. But in Greenwich, a contract with Benugo precluded indigenous people from bringing offerings of fruit and flowers to Tupaia as they wished. Not only did the museum discursively construe the dingo skins as a health risk, but just before the gallery opening and procession, the Conservation department required us to freeze everything we ordered or brought from Australia, even the wool—a policy it did not extend to the woolen pullovers worn by British visitors to the Pacific gallery. Only after gaining permission to freeze our objects in entirety were we allowed to proceed.

The dreaded 'health and safety' is always a way to say 'NO, no no no'. The amount of control over museum grounds extended to neighbouring real estate. We had initially conceived (and diligently planned for) the processional performance to take place on axis with the museum's view to the water, but the grounds management refused to open the necessary gates for it to do so. Despite overcompensating with twenty fluoro vests, hoisted high and acting as a traffic stop, crossing the road again served as an excuse.

This account is a condensation of a stack of 410 emails between the museum and myself. While running this administrative parlay, I began to reflect on infrastructural activism. I decided on a method that takes limitations as productive measures for which, rather than taking the ban on materials as a stop to the project, instead makes it central to thinking about how the repressive forces of an institution work in a distributed lack of responsibility and interest. The institution protects itself through an indirect, impersonal form of ignoring the requests of those wanting to engage in decolonising the museum.

PROCESSION

Standing on Devil's Point in Plymouth, with a group of people, moved, as we look out to sea. We are in the place from where the *Endeavour* left, and there is a sense of departure to a history in need of healing. This performing and witnessing together on site, on the very spot—with all its attendant senses of origin, colonial power and pain—makes it moving. It is not an experience of viewing a representation, as the curator Tom Trevor says, but is the process itself, enacting decolonisation. This essay traces this process of coming full circle, via the museum to the failure of utopias sought, which was the larger framing context of The Atlantic Project in Plymouth.²⁴

Insert Figure 5 - Tupaia's Map and Figure 6 - Cook's New Clothes in The Atlantic 250 years on from the 'First Voyage' of James Cook to the Pacific, *Cook's New Clothes: Processions for Tupaia* (Fig. 5) marks the occasion in September 1768 when botanist Joseph Banks and artist Solander boarded Cook's ship, the *Endeavour*, in Plymouth, through a two-part procession on the banks of the rivers Thames and Tamar. A film and the collateral of these events were then installed in the vast bowels of the Melville Building in the port of Plymouth from which they departed England for the Pacific. The halls of this naval store, from which the supplies that stocked the *Endeavour* have long since been removed, are now saturated in the unwholesome smell of toxic maritime storehouse. In the installation, we amplified the raw emptiness of the first two rooms with a sound installation of howling dingos, composed by Jessyca Hutchens. In the third room, a Captain's coat made of their fur hangs from a gallows four meters up (Fig. 6). In the fourth and final main hall a black box cinema plays the film of the Thames segment of the procession along with the collateral objects carried in the processions (Fig. 7).

During the procession a spectral body appears by the water, is cloaked and leads the crowd that has assembled. With offerings for Tupaia, they are led on board the *waka* (canoes) skippered by three crews of Pacific rowers with whom the ghost travels. Paying homage to Tupaia's aptitude for mapmaking and navigational prowess,²⁵ each site the expedition visits is carefully chosen, and the ground prepared with drawings by artist Nikolaus Gansterer, mapping the journey on which his ghost takes them. Almost everyone is playing an instrument made of trash from recycled plastics. Salvador Brown sings mourning songs in Maori. All is washed by the constant rain. There is catharsis at the end of these stations on the procession on which actions are performed by Kirill Burlov, Ruby Hoette, Gansterer,

²⁴ Sophie Ruigrok, 'The Atlantic Project: Excavating Plymouth's Failed Utopias', *Frieze*, 9 October, 2018. <https://frieze.com/article/atlantic-project-excavating-plymouths-failed-utopias> (Accessed Feb 8, 2019). See also: <https://www.theatlantic.org/khadija-von-zinnenburg-carroll-and-keren-ruki> (Accessed Feb 8, 2019).

²⁵ Tupaia's cartographic and navigational prowess have been the subject of recent scholarship by Lars Eckstein and Anja Schwarz; [Lars Eckstein, op. cit.](#)

Mo'ong, Ruki, myself and others. Fellow travellers walk between us, drawn by the music and the ghost of Tupaia.

The procession was a format I chose because it straddles both funerary and political march.²⁶ Because processions act as community-building performances both personal and political nature, with the funerary assembly on one hand, and state commemoration on the other.²⁷ Processions all share similarities within this form, and in *Cook's New Clothes*, they are adapted to represent the funeral of Tupaia and the commemoration of the *Endeavour*. This dual-purpose functions like figure and shadow: Cook and Tupaia at either extremes of the historical record, one extremely visible and the other almost entirely erased. Depending on where one observes the commemoration from, the importance of Tupaia and of Cook changes. Whether viewed from Pacific or European vantage points, the procession embodies both in all of its ambivalence. Carrying forms of historical pain and mourning, held in the absent bodies and the still present colonial histories—the procession is a movement that unfolds without defined ends. As it gathers its own momentum, those swept along with it find they are, days later, still processing. As one participant put it, the dead we commemorate walk back into our lives through our dreams and imaginations. As we stand on Devil's Point again, together, we imagine the boat as it left the naval supply yards, full. Filled with stock that would be depleted, materially and morally, over the coming years.

The task of commemorating the problematic set of endeavours within this voyage—and the one of finding and colonising new lands in particular is loaded by a search for new stories that give agency, rather than producing more of the bronze dead weight of Cook monuments from another time and place. Quite the opposite of bronze monuments, performance is an art form that can be mobilised for social action.²⁸ Those who joined in the procession might be changed by the collective action. Without having to see or understand everything that was happening, the mass of people demonstrating togetherness felt included in a ritual and returned afterwards to tell me which experiences moved them.²⁹ Similar to public protests, processions create a sense of solidarity with like minds, in embodied and emotional ways. Ours also drew many people on the street: some asked who had died,³⁰ and we could begin to tell little known histories of the Pacific.

POSTSCRIPT

Taking on the persistent Cook critically, we did not want to repeat the rituals of the past in these commemorations. Taking Tony Horwitz's flabbergasting, but plausible subversion and

²⁶ The procession was originally design theorist Ruby Hoette's idea for *Cook's New Clothes*.

²⁷ I am grateful to Ludovica Fales for making this observation.

²⁸ Performance Studies and the anthropology of performance have mined this productive porous boundary between social action and performance in many texts including: ... See Katerina Tieawa, in: Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll and Jesse Shipley, *Penang, Failure at 5 O'Clock*, Video, 15:53 mins, Malaysia, 2018. <https://vimeo.com/286726291> (Accessed Feb 8, 2019).

²⁹ Participants' quotes are published in *Cook's New Clothes*' edited collection (forthcoming, Autumn 2018).

³⁰ To two Chinese tourists, for example, the form of commemoration of the dead was immediately apparent.

assimilation of even the most potent index of colonialism into American pop culture as our departure, there is the potential for healing laughter almost everywhere:

Like most Americans I grew up knowing almost nothing of Captain Cook except what I learned in fifth-grade geography class. Though I didn't realize it at the time, I also absorbed his adventures through episodes of *Star Trek*. [...] It wasn't until years later that I realized how much [it] echoed a true story. Captain James Cook: Captain James Kirk. The *Endeavour*; the *Enterprise*. Cook, the Yorkshire farm boy, writing in his journal that he'd sailed 'farther than any man has been before'. Kirk, the Iowa farm boy, keeping his own log about boldly going 'where no man has gone before!'. Cook rowed jolly boats ashore, accompanied by his naturalist, his surgeon, and musket-toting, red-jacketed marines. Kirk beamed down to planets with the science officer Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy, and phaser-wielding, red-jerseyed 'expendables'. Both captains also set out—at least in theory—to discover and describe new lands, rather than to conquer or convert.³¹

The historical records skip a beat, stories get mashed up, one era fashions itself on another. These historical anachronisms show the unexpected and absurd moves that cultural appropriation make.

Captain Cook Cook Cook Cook Cook Cook Cook Cook Cook Kirk Kirk Kirk Kirk Kirk Kirk Kirk Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk Cook Kirk?

³¹ Tony Horwitz, *Cook. Die Entdeckung eines Entdeckers*, (Hamburg: mareverlag, 2004), 14–15. On the Postcolonial critique of *Star Trek* see Katja Kanzler, “‘A Cuchi Moya!’ Star Trek’s Native Americans, in: *American Studies Journal*’, Nr. 49, 2007, www.asjournal.org/49-2007/star-treks-native-americans/ (Accessed Feb 8, 2019).



Figure 8