

**DREAMING OF AN EIGHTH FIRE MUSEUM PRACTICE:
INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF
HISTORY AND TE PAPA**

BY

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Abstract

Museums and Indigenous peoples have long had a complicated relationship. Though this difficult relationship is well documented, the experiences of individual Indigenous museum practitioners have not been closely examined. Instead, the literature tends to focus on decolonising museums, collections management and repatriation, and museum practice more generally. Studies do not specifically engage with the experiences of individual Indigenous museum practitioners, nor do they delve too deeply into the question of what happens to their voices in museums. Through an exploration of the ways in which Indigenous museum practitioners' voices appear in the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) and Te Papa, this thesis addresses that gap in the literature. I ask about the connections between Indigenous voices in the museum and the experiences of contemporary Indigenous museum practitioners. Through a framework based on the Anishinaabe Seven Fires Prophecy, this research goes on to revise and expand the field of museum studies by asking what a different future might look like for Indigenous museum practitioners.

This research was conducted using qualitative methods. Semi-structured interviews explored questions about the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners and focused on the ways their voices appear in each museum, as well as their dreams and aspirations for the future of museums and museum practice. Interviews were supplemented with observational research in exhibition spaces. This research is theoretically grounded in critical Indigenous methodologies including Kaupapa Māori, and research as relations and reconciliation. I also employed autoethnography and ethnography to reflect my non-objective role in this research, and action research in order to reflect the research's forward-looking, change-making nature.

I found that Indigenous peoples see their voices appearing in front of house spaces via language, as well as objects and their arrangement. Their voices also influence the operation of these museums through their unique perspectives as Indigenous people. Though they are making differences in museums, Indigenous museum practitioners still have to fight to be heard in many instances. The most poignant finding is that their dreams have positive change-making potential. Based on their dreams, I make recommendations for changes to current professional practice in the sector and contribute academically to the museum studies and Indigenous studies research landscapes through the use of the Seven Fires Prophecy as a framework.

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Kichimìgwech Kichi-manido mìnwà nogoding
Gì wàmdamàng Kìzhap Kìzis gì binàbid.
Kichi-mìgwech gì mìzhyàng iw sa Bimàdziwin.
Kichi-mìgwech gì mìzhyàng Nigigòg
Wìdòkwishnàng dji namàyàng gwayak Jibmoseyàng.
Kichi-Mìgwech Kichi-manido kinagego.

Note on Language

Throughout this thesis I use te reo Māori and Anishinaabe words without providing their translations. Translations and definitions are provided in the glossary at the end of the thesis. Also, in New Zealand — especially in Wellington where I have been living for the duration of this research process — it is common for people to use te reo Māori words in everyday speech and that is how I have written this thesis. As such, I have generally not italicised Indigenous words.

I have additionally chosen to refer to New Zealand as: Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Aotearoa/New Zealand throughout this thesis. Each of these is used differently, with Aotearoa referring to the Māori side of the country (the pre-European nation), and New Zealand referring to the colonial state. When I refer to Aotearoa/New Zealand, it is a reflection of both of these sides of the country (as well as the presence of all other peoples who now live here). This choice is explained further in chapter 3. Finally, I have chosen to write the names of European explorers without capitalisation. This is to avoid honouring their names, as their actions and legacies have harmed countless Indigenous peoples.

Acronyms

CMH	Canadian Museum of History
CMC	Canadian Museum of Civilization (former name of the Canadian Museum of History)
CHH	Canada History Hall
CWM	Canadian War Museum
GSC	Geological Survey of Canada
NGC	National Gallery of Canada
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
IRS	Indian Residential Schools
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
GLAM	Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums
BNA	British North America
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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All images were taken by and are owned by me, unless otherwise stated and cited.

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Figure 1

Prologue

On summer mornings when I was a child my dad would wake up at 6AM when the lake was still and glassy. He'd put on the coffee maker, its quiet bubbling filling our camper with white noise. Once the coffee was brewing, he'd step outside into the cold morning and pull our canoe down to the lakeshore. By now it was 6:15, the coffee was brewed and poured into a travel cup, and he'd pack his coffee and a single serve bottle of orange juice. Around this time, I'd wake up, groggy and confused, but aware that I didn't want my dad to leave without me. He'd load me into the canoe along with his coffee and my juice, and the only noise would be our breathing and the sound of the paddle and bow pushing through the water.

Often, I'd find myself lulled back to sleep by the lapping water and gentle sway of the canoe. When I look back at those memories, what stands out is that my Algonquin ancestors — inventors of this style of canoe — would have experienced their own versions of these mornings. This was the same lake in which my three times great grandfather, Matthew Bernard launched the world's largest birch bark canoe — commissioned by the National Museum of Canada

(which later became the Canadian Museum of History). Centuries of ancestors were supported by the same water in the same lake, they felt the freedom of gliding across its glassy surface.

In our world and time, we often see the water as a dead thing or a resource to be used and extracted. However, to Indigenous peoples the life that is inherent to water has always been entrenched in our language and our ways of being. Robin Wall Kimmerer explains “English doesn’t give us many tools for incorporations respect for animacy. In English you are either a human or a thing” (2013, 56). That is to say, more broadly, through a western ontological perspective, as represented by the English language, we are disconnected from the world. The water, from an Anishinaabe perspective is a woman who carried me, cradled me, and comforted me. Unfortunately, the connection to this living being is not represented in a western ontology.

I have chosen to start this thesis with this story because it is where I find questions about the state of the world today. The water so graciously, and without asking for anything in return, nurtured me and supported me, and because of her generosity I have a lifelong bond with her, my dad, and the land on which my ancestors lived. This leads me to ask many questions: where have we come from, where are we now, where are we going, and where might we go if we listen to our ancestors and Indigenous ontologies? How do we look at the world through Indigenous ontologies? How do we support Indigenous museum practitioners in ways that lift up their voices and, subsequently, Indigenous ontological perspectives?

Introduction

Growing up in Canada's capital, Ottawa, I spent many school field trips, long weekends, and family outings at the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) (then the Canadian Museum of Civilization). A replica of a 36 foot birch bark canoe constructed by my three times great grandfather sat above the museum's ticket desk, and the original canoe was tucked away in the museum's collection stores in the adjacent building. The older I got, the more I questioned the presence of that canoe, as the first object one saw upon entering the CMH, what did it actually say about the museum's priorities, and moreover what did it say about me and my family?

When I was eleven, I applied to the CMH's youth advisory committee. My father and I crafted my application based on his knowledge of the Canadian Federal Government, in order to give me the best chances of being selected. My application told the story of that birch bark canoe, reminded whoever was reading the application that my family was already part of the museum's story, and of my pre-existing connection to the museum through the experiences of my ancestor. I was one of fourteen kids with a successful application, and I was brought in monthly as part of a focus group which helped the CMH redevelop their Children's Museum. I remember the group being overwhelmingly white or white-passing and I remember feeling like the museum wasn't particularly interested in my experience as an Indigenous child in Canada. We made Irish soda bread and gave feedback on the proposed layout of the redeveloped exhibition, we tested public programming concepts, and talked about what we'd like to see in the dress-up area of the children's museum. We did not discuss how to better represent Indigenous people in Canada, nor did we discuss the kinds of stories someone like me or my cousins might find relatable.

In 2018, I took on two short-term research contracts at the CMH, at the time I was preparing to move away from Canada and to start my PhD research. One of the collections I was working with was a two-million-dollar acquisition of ice hockey (and specifically, Toronto Maple Leafs) paraphernalia. The stories I was telling through my research reflected the multitudes of Canadian stories. One focused on an Indigenous hockey player and as an Indigenous person, I was naturally drawn to that story. I saw myself reflected in it, and moreover, I saw an opportunity to tell an Indigenous story in a space where the museum could

easily miss such an opportunity. My unique voice as an Indigenous museum practitioner is now reflected in the museum's research and it now has the power to tell an Indigenous story.

These are all stories about my experience at one national museum, they reflect my experience in a contemporary institution, one that might speak to the current, or Seventh Fire, state of national museums in Canada. In an Anishinaabe worldview we are the Seventh generation, the ones tasked with carrying the sparks of the Eighth Fire and finding ways, through our practices, to light that utopian Eighth Fire and to usher in a different kind of world (Kimmerer 2013). These ideas come from the Grandfather teachings, or the Seven Fires Prophecy which is an Anishinaabe teaching which marks eras in our histories (and futures) and teaches us about our responsibilities in this world (Kimmerer 2013; Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn: Culture).

Throughout this thesis it will become clear that my research has been shaped by the Seven Fires Prophecy, with my understandings of today's museum practice representing the Seventh Generation, and my suggestions for the future representing the lighting of an Eighth Fire. The teachings that go along with the Seven Fires also shaped this work, with them providing an ethical backing for my choices, which will be further explored in the research design and methodology section.

This thesis asks: what is the experience of Indigenous museum practitioners at two national museums in the Seventh Generation, and what might an Eighth Fire museum, and museum practice, look like? The research is also focused on two secondary questions:

1. Where do the voices of Indigenous museum practitioners appear in the museum?
2. What can these instances of Indigenous voice communicate about the experience of Indigenous museum practitioners?

In addressing these questions, I sought to better understand the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners at two national museums: the CMH and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa).

In the following sections and chapters I review literature from museum studies, Indigenous studies and related fields in order to situate my research in these landscapes of academic theory and professional practice. I then outline my research design, the theoretical and

methodological grounding for my research, along with identifying and explaining the research methods I chose to use for data collection. This thesis will then be divided into two main sections: the Seventh Fire and Sparks of the Eighth Fire. The Seventh Fire section is structured as follows: it begins with a Canadian-focused background chapter which provides contextual information on my CMH case study, followed by the CMH case study itself. This is then mirrored with my Aotearoa/New Zealand case study, with the use of a separate background chapter focusing on the New Zealand context, followed by my Te Papa case study. The aim of these chapters is to show the current experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners in each of these countries through the discussion of where Indigenous voices and languages appear in each museum. The Seventh Fire section closes with a chapter that analyses and discusses the case studies in relation to one another and highlights the ways in which museums and museum practice are or are not working for Indigenous peoples. The second, smaller part of this thesis is the “Sparks of the Eighth Fire” section, this is made up of two chapters: a discussion of dreaming, and an imagining of what future museums might look like in an Eighth Fire world, as well as a conclusion.

Literature review

Walking into the Indigenous galleries in the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) in 2017 in Ottawa, Ontario, I was confronted with the presence of Inuktitut written in its syllabics on a large panel. This was a striking moment and it made me realise that until then, I hadn’t really noticed Indigenous languages and voices, or lack thereof, in any of the galleries, libraries, archives or museums (GLAMs) that I had ever visited.

What I experienced in the new NGC galleries was a number of settler paintings, sculptures etc. that feature Indigenous people, juxtaposed with actual Indigenous art and, perhaps more personally significant, the inclusion of Indigenous language. This puts both forms of art in the same space but privileges the Indigenous art by making it seem more ‘authentic,’ and it inserts Indigenous voices (i.e. Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, ontologies) visually through art, and language through labelling. This, I argue, is the importance of Indigenous voices being prominent in the museum, to assert contemporary presence and authority over our stories and our objects.

With museums and galleries like the NGC, and the CMH's new *Canada History Hall* (CHH), along with Te Papa's commitment to include more Indigenous voices, there is hope for a future where the relationship between Indigenous peoples and museums will be changed for the better. More than that, these examples have led me to question whether this seemingly global change is a measure of the presence and perhaps the effectiveness of the voices of Indigenous museum practitioners working within cultural institutions. Based on these observations, I have centred this thesis in contemporary museum practice, rather than museum theory and history, the history of anthropology or ethnographic collections, or display. This thesis is not about curation, nor is it an exploration of policy or legislation. I focus on Indigenous museum practice more broadly, and its relation to Indigenous voices in museums.

Museum and heritage studies is an interdisciplinary field which both draws from and owes its existence to related subjects like history, art, science, anthropology, and Indigenous studies (Corsane 2005; McClellan 2007, 566; Knell, MacLeod and Watson 2007; MacDonald 2010; Carbonell 2012). Museum studies can be described as "a model of interdisciplinarity and intellectual vitality" (McClellan 2007, 566), meaning that, like many other fields, it can be understood to exist in relation to other disciplines and is informed by their theories and methods.

The field is most easily understood when broken into four major and general categories: theory, practice, media and transformations, and these categories are covered in depth in the *International Handbooks of Museum Studies* (2015). These four categories could be viewed as subfields of sorts, however I prefer not to view them this way as I understand categories like theory and transformation as related to and intertwined with the other categories. Theory and practice, for example, are intrinsically linked and therefore cannot be understood alone (MacDonald 2006; Marstine 2006; Shelton 2013; McCarthy 2015).

Theory, though often treated as a separate dimension of museum studies and museum practice, is the umbrella under which we find elements of the current field such as research on what the contemporary museum at work is or can be, or the application of theoretical lenses to understand the purpose of museums. Museums and museology are often talked about as entities impacted by theories, whether cultural studies, post-colonial theory or other diverse sets of theoretical frameworks (Mason 2006; Message and Witcomb 2015). In this study, I view museum theory as a form of scaffolding which creates and, at times, controls understanding. In other words, it acts as a structure which frames the other categories of the field. The idea of

theory as a distinct category will not feature heavily in this thesis, rather it is used as a platform, though often in a subtle way, and a set of lenses that I use to understand museum practice. I also work through an Indigenous ontological lens (via the Seven Fires), which is not strictly theoretical as it crosses the boundary between theory and practice as it structures the real ways that Anishinaabe people live today and look to the future.

On the other hand, practice is the day-to-day ways of running museums, including collections, management, policy, education, programs, and practical elements of exhibit production and design (Sandell 2007; Davidson and Sibley 2011; McCarthy 2011; Jolles 2013; Norton-Westbrook 2015; Jeffery 2015; McCarthy 2015, Schorch and McCarthy 2019; Forster and von Bose 2019). It is informed by theory, and impacted by transformations, including those enacted by external forces, like broader political and social shifts, and other changes within the field. I discuss professional museum practice in depth in a later section, as it is the focus of this research. Finally, media is the section of museums that includes meaning making, communicating with audiences, display techniques within exhibitions, label writing, and areas like designing virtual museums and marketing (MacLeod 2005; Dornie 2006; MacDonald and Basu 2007; Knell 2011; Hughes 2015; Tymkiw 2018; Drotner, Parry and Schroder 2019).

Research in museum studies, I argue, is strongest when it situates itself at the intersection of all four categories, and makes use of interdisciplinary sources and literature. MacDonald writes “museum studies today recognize [...] the multiplicity and complexity of museums, and call for a correspondingly rich and multi-faceted range of perspectives and approaches to comprehend and provoke museums themselves” highlighting the complexity of this kind of research, and the need for a broad approach to museum studies research (2011, 2). Working across these categories opens doors to understanding how the more abstract theories can shape the way we actually run an institution. This research crosses the boundary between theory, practice and media and it pushes for transformations within the fields of museum studies and museum practice. I engage with theory through the analysis of museum studies literature and critique ideas that are well established, well connected to, and deeply entrenched in, the wider discipline. As previously noted, I address practice most prominently as it the crux of this research, seeking to make tangible change both ideologically and in daily operations.

Moreover, as I mentioned above, museum studies draws on other fields and its research is strongest when positioned in both its own theories and practices, and those of other fields. Due to

this, my research would not be complete without engaging with and framing it using other fields appropriate for this topic. For this reason, after considering the writing on museum practice, and exhibitions, the major field that I look to is Indigenous studies. As my topic focuses on the relationships between Indigenous peoples and museums, Indigenous studies is the best way to situate my work in relation to other fields in order to ensure it is robust, and to broaden its impact and relevance. More specifically, I engage with critical Indigenous studies which provides an excellent conceptual base with which to frame my ideas surrounding Indigenous museum practice, and which critically interrogates museum studies itself by centering Indigenous voices. The final sections of this literature review address the intersections of museum studies and Indigenous studies literature, looking at Indigenous museum practice, decolonisation and museums, and Indigenous languages in museums.

Research on Museum Practice: An overview

In order to contextualise my thesis within its main focus, the museum practice landscape, I begin with a necessary overview of its literature. Research on museum practice is an important part of museum studies as a field, it has often been viewed as the opposite of theory, however, recent work has challenged that (McCarthy 2015). Conal McCarthy uses the term “practice theory,” suggesting that rather than separating museum theory and museum practice we should seek to understand the theory of practice (2015, xlv-xlviii). This is exactly what this research does, combining museum theory with a study of museum practice.

Many works on museum practice discuss the roles of curators, and the growth and ongoing change of curatorship as a profession (Jolles 2013; Jeffery 2015; Norton-Westbrook 2015; Schorch and McCarthy 2019; Forster and von Bose 2019). Others cover topics such as: the new museology and its role in changing practice (Papadakēs 1991; Stam 2005; Davidson and Sibley 2011; McCall and Gray 2019); practices surrounding intangible objects and heritage(s) in museums and beyond (Dudley 2010; Alivizatou 2012; Shelton 2014, Mallon 2019) and practices surrounding cultures and/or minority groups who are not represented as frequently or wholly in museums (Labrum 2007; Sandell 2007; McCarthy 2011; Steorn 2012).

James Clifford writes that “[m]useum curating in nineteenth-century Europe was inseparable from the gathering, valuing and preservation of heritage—art and culture—in the context of bourgeois, national projects” (2019, 109). This type of curator operated from a deeply

colonial viewpoint, and in a time when museums worked for colonial gain (Abt 2010; Lonetree 2012; Onciul 2015; Clifford 2019). However, as Clifford points out, globalisation and decolonisation have changed curatorial practice and made it less centered on western (colonial) viewpoints (2019). He goes on to admit that even he “saw the work of the curator—whether aesthetic, ethnographic, or historical—as essentially conservative” (2019, 112). This understanding of curatorship raises questions about what a curator actually does in today’s museums, and what their main role is. In the case of my research, and as becomes clear in this section, the focus on ‘the curator’ as a concept is not specific enough to truly understand the views, and roles, of individuals in curatorial positions. The individual human beings in these roles change what the actual role is, and more specifically Indigenous voices can change what messages the museum sends and who those messages are directed at (McMaster 1992; McCarthy, Hakiwai and Schorch 2019; Onciul 2019, 159; Pitman 2021).

Similar to the work of Clifford (2019), Halona Norton-Westbrook’s chapter in *Museum Practice* (2015) discusses the changing roles of curators. Although her article is not an in-depth discussion of Indigenous peoples or other minority people, it still provides a view of the theory and practice landscapes surrounding curation. Through comparing past and current trends in museum curatorial practice she also provides some insight into methodological approaches to comparative studies. As a caveat, however, this piece focuses heavily on curatorial practice and at times reads as a critique, and while I use some elements of her methods (notably, interviews with museum practitioners) and her research on modern curatorial practice, I will not be critiquing curatorial skill in this research. What Norton-Westbrook’s work does show, however, is that curatorial (and presumably other museum) practice is always changing and my research’s goal of changing museum practice is arguably built into the profession.

Norton-Westbrook defines a traditional idea of a curator as “[...]a caretaker charged with the safekeeping of museum objects,” but goes on to explain that the modern curator is more than this, especially with the relatively new expectation that they engage with the public (2015, 341; Arnold 2015). Through interviews with curators from museums across the planet she demonstrates the themes that encompass diverse, modern curatorial practice. Two major themes are: increasing social responsibility, and shifting priorities to focus on visitors as much as objects (2015). Using one on one interviews, she seeks to find a definition of modern curatorship. She notes that many of her interviewees talked about the fact that museum theory and practice are

inseparable and cannot exist without one another (2015, 348-349). This is a useful observation from people who, it might be assumed, engage more with the practical in their daily work. The theory behind museum practice is exactly what I seek to understand, looking specifically at Indigenous experiences. By connecting these two elements, Norton-Westbrook sets a precedent for my research, in which I apply critical theoretical lenses to museum practice.

Another, and perhaps more significant theme that emerged from her interviews is that curators sometimes view their existence as defined by the society in which they exist. “Many [interviewees] observed that perceptions and expectations of curators have changed in sync with broader social changes [...] some called this ‘story telling,’” she writes (Norton-Westbrook 2015, 349). In other words, curators must now work to reflect the values of their societies more than ever, and to tell the stories that said society wants to hear. This observation shows the growing relationship between curators and the broader societies in which they work. It is especially relevant when applied to Indigenous issues within the museum and the task of curating Indigenous-centered exhibitions. By this logic, as the world and western societies move toward goals of reconciliation curators must also change their practice. I do, however, question the directionality of this relationship—to me it is likely that curators are influenced and in turn influence, meaning that when curators include Indigenous topics, languages and voices in exhibitions it may affect how those languages and voices are treated in other spheres of society. Norton-Westbrook also shows the in-built flexibility in definitions of curators’ roles, setting precedence for studies like mine that seek to change museum practice.

Ken Arnold’s chapter in *Museum Practice* (2015) supports Norton-Westbrook’s findings. He highlights similar influences on the roles of curators including the shift from a focus on objects to a more general approach that factors many more aspects of museums, changes in scholarship (notably the concept of the ‘new museology’), and social changes (2015, 318). Arnold, like Norton-Westbrook, goes into depth about the political roles of curators. Curators must now consider “[t]he question of how the power associated with collections, exhibitions, and museums should be distributed and exercised [...]” (2015, 328).

Perhaps more importantly, and more relevant in the case of this research, Arnold demonstrates through James Clifford’s essay “Museums as Contact Zones” (1997), which makes use of the term coined by Mary Louise Pratt (1991), that museums and their practitioners are facilitators of experiences, and encounters with different cultures and objects. Applying this idea

specifically to the relationship between Indigenous peoples and museums, Arnold clearly shows how the roles of curators are increasingly about balance. He writes that “[...] few [curators] have not re-thought the balance between intellectual and social imperatives for their work” (2015, 330). Historically, as Norton-Westbrook demonstrates, curators were keepers of objects and knowledge and I argue subsequently played a didactic role that thought it was creating objective institutions (Bergqvist 2016), but Arnold argues that this is changing and that the curator’s role is expanding (2015). This is supported by several museum studies researchers (Golding and Modest 2013; Simon 2014; Norton-Westbrook 2015; Morse 2018; Onciul 2019; Pegno and Brindza 2021). As implied above, part of this new role is social consciousness and representing more sections of society in museums. What is interesting in Arnold’s point about balance is that he notes that the role is no longer one of pure intellectualism, rather curators must answer to social expectations and constantly work to act ethically and in a socially responsible manner (2015, 330).

We now understand that interpretation and display choices influence, and at times control, the messages museums send and that curators play a role in the choices that lead to those messages (Karp and Lavine 1991; Norton-Westbrook 2015; Arnold 2015; Bergqvist 2016; Davidson and Pérez-Castellanos 2019; Pegno and Brindza 2021). Lee Davidson and Leticia Pérez-Castellanos state that “strategies of display” in museum exhibitions are not neutral (2019, 83) and this is supported by museums studies literature (Bennett 1995; Bennett 1998; MacDonald 1998). While these works are all relevant and provide key points of thought in their discussions of curatorship, its origins and its changing nature, they tend to focus on curators instead of museum practice more broadly, and do not specifically consider Indigenous museum practice. As I seek to understand the role of Indigenous voice and museum practice, I interviewed a wider range of practitioners. These include: external relations experts, curators, repatriation team members, directors and writers.

Ruth B. Phillips’ chapter in the book *Curatopia* (2019) implies the presence of varied museum practitioners in her discussion on how museum practice is shaped and reshaped by forces outside of the museum. She notes that the CMH in Gatineau, Quebec, had its mandate changed in 2013 by the Conservative party-led government in Canada (2019). The museum moved from a broader focus on Canada’s relationship with the world to a “more nationalist mandate which effectively moved it away from its historical focus on Indigenous peoples,

diasporic minority communities, and world cultures” (Phillips 2019, 144). Though not directly discussing practice, or exhibitions as related to Indigenous voices, this observation by Phillips makes an interesting point regarding the ways in which governments and societies can change or limit practitioners. Phillips does address the indigenisation of Canadian museums in her 2011 book *Museum Pieces*. In particular, she looks at indigenising exhibitions and collaborative curation (2011), this is more useful to this thesis as this book engages with Indigenous experiences and, through collaborative approaches, regardless of some critiques of those approaches, it expands the definition of a museum practitioner and reinforces the importance of connections between museums and their communities or broader societies (Phillips 2011). Collaborative museum practice is discussed in a later section of this literature review.

In their 2019 book, *Cosmopolitan Ambassadors: International exhibitions, cultural diplomacy and the polycentral museum*, Davidson and Pérez-Castellanos discuss a number of museum practitioners on an exhibition development team. This gives a broader picture of museum practice and includes the varied roles within a museum. Through their discussion of the international touring exhibition *E Tu Ake* from Te Papa they highlight not only situational and institution-specific practice, but provide insight into international museum practice. They suggest that despite differences in museum practice and priorities from institution to institution, there may nonetheless be “a cosmopolitan or intercultural approach to museum practice” (Davidson and Pérez-Castellanos 2019, 65). This idea of an intercultural approach, while it argues in favour of international and intercultural case studies, may also seem to argue in favour of colonial practices if not used carefully. A single intercultural approach might imply an assimilation of knowledge would be necessary. Instead, I argue that the value of knowledge sharing, and partnership is what is most useful in this work.

It is clear that museum practice is a complex section of the field of museum studies, which has probably not had as much scholarly attention as it should. What is demonstrated in the literature in general is that practice and theory are not separate, rather they are informed by one another. Further, the literature demonstrates that museum practice is informed by external pressures and norms which explains its constant change, as societies are in flux (Knell et al. 2007; McCarthy 2011; Arnold 2015; Norton-Westbrook 2015; Knell 2019). This research is supported by the changing nature of professional museum practice (Knell et al. 2007; McCarthy

2011; Arnold 2015; Norton-Westbrook 2015; Knell 2019) and makes use of this flexibility to argue for a new kind of Indigenous museum practice and tikanga.

Exhibition design and development

I have included this section of the literature review as this study originally focused largely on the external products (ie exhibitions and publications) put out by museums. In order to understand the conversations and experiences of my participants, it is imperative that one understands the process of designing and developing an exhibition. Exhibition design literature tends to focus on elements such as colour choice, label writing, fonts and sizes of spaces (MacLeod 2005; Dernie 2006; MacDonald and Basu 2007; Knell 2011; Hughes 2015; Tymkiw 2018). These elements are used to communicate both explicitly and implicitly with visitors and use human instincts and psychology to do so.

Museum displays, as we understand them today, took root in the late eighteenth century when private collections were being more commonly opened to public viewing (Hughes 2015, 10). These institutions promised growth of knowledge, understanding of the world, and “self-improvement” (10). While these goals are similar today, the modern drive for inclusivity and broad ideas like globalisation and decolonisation have changed the information that is on display and the way in which practitioners choose to create these displays (Sandell 2007; Watson 2007; Hughes 2015; Clifford 2019). The concepts of globalisation and decolonisation have broadened the scope of curatorial and exhibition practice, and as noted above, have strived for more representation of groups that have been previously underrepresented (Sandell 2007; Sandell and Nightingale 2013; Sandell 2017; Janes and Sandell 2019). These monolith concepts (globalisation and decolonisation), when unpacked, mean that the growing interconnectedness of the world (including the museum and heritage world) call for more equal representation and diversity, and they call for better treatment of Indigenous and people of colour.

Exhibitions in national museums are arguably their own category of display. The national museum is a space that dictates how a permanent or temporary exhibition will be designed and narrated (Boswell and Evans 1999; Knell et al. 2010; Knell 2011; Knell 2016). Simon Knell uses theatre terminology to explain the role of national museums and exhibitions hosted in them. He refers to “script and scenography [which] have been carefully constructed to permit a singular public performance, a singular manifestation of the nation rather than the nation found through

democratic negotiation” (Knell 2011, 7). He provides a useful analogy for understanding the ways in which national museums perform specific national narratives (2011, 7), unlike small museums that are not as closely tied to governments and national narratives, national museums play a role in the display and creation of a country’s heritage and its image to its citizens and visitors (7). In this research I look at national museums as a sort of “standard” setter for museum practice, though they admittedly do work differently (and often much more slowly) than other kinds of museums (Knell 2011).

A development from the last twenty-five years in museum exhibition practice is the inclusion of interactive elements (Caulton 1998; Parry 2010; Jasink, Faralli and Kruklidis 2017). This is visible in galleries, history museums etc. where interactives can give visitors different perspectives on works or histories (Brady 2011). The main theme that emerges throughout exhibition design literature is that exhibitions speak to visitors through language, but also through visual techniques and technologies, and stories told through both what is included in the exhibition, and what or who is not (McLean 1999).

Kathleen McLean’s 1999 article “Museum exhibitions and the dynamics of dialogue” looks in depth at the idea of “conversations” museums have with their visitors. Her article uses the terms “talking” and “listening” to structure a discussion of relationships between exhibitions, practitioners and visitors. She argues that the person who created the exhibition (or, sometimes the exhibition itself) does the talking, and the visitor does the listening (1999, 84). In an effort to increase “two way conversations” visitor studies research started to become more common and better developed in the 1990s (1999). This gives visitors the opportunity to tell their own stories about the exhibitions, and to share them with the practitioners. Visitors, as noted by McLean and Norton-Westbrook, are now a more active part of a conversation with museums (1999; 2015). This means that they may play a role in the museum’s practice and could, in a piece of research with a broader scope, be taken into deeper consideration. At its foundation, McLean’s “talking” and “listening” is, I argue, a discussion of media in museum exhibitions which highlights the negotiation between different professionals within the museum, which, as will become clear in my case studies, are often in conflict. As established above, design is a communicator of priorities and values, and what is included or excluded tells a story that is carefully laid out. For this reason, understanding exhibition design as a form of media, or as something that communicates, is useful. It is, however, important to reiterate that this thesis focuses on the

experiences of museum practitioners, so understanding exhibitions as media is only secondary to the main focus. This thesis looks at exhibitions but is not about exhibition design, nor does it look at visitor studies or the ways in which visitors respond to exhibition design.

McLean also explores intention in exhibition creation, and what the post-production exhibitions look like themselves. Museum “objects may be trophies of conquest, curious things from the natural world, masterpieces, or constructed environments, but embedded in their presentation is material evidence of the presenter's intentions and values” (McLean 1999, 83). In this statement she addresses the practice that is behind an exhibition and the effort to communicate by one practitioner or many practitioners. The exhibition, interpretation and design tell stories of their production, even though it is likely that most visitors can’t explicitly hear or see those stories (1999, 83). My research looks at both sides of the exhibition, the production and the product (though not the consumer, a.k.a. visitors or the general public), and, more importantly, the experiences of those who create exhibitions.

Exhibition design, it is important to understand, is not the same as exhibition development. It is simply a portion of this process, whereas development covers all the steps from the first idea to the closing of the exhibition. A number of scholars discuss the exhibition development process and make clear that it is complex and nuanced (Dean 1994; McLean 1999; MacDonald and Basu 2007; Wallach 2013; Young et al. 2015). David Dean compares museum exhibitions to the tip of the iceberg, the product of a massive amount of behind the scenes work that generally cannot be seen by visitors. Continuing a theme in museum exhibitions literature (Knell 2011; Young et al. 2015), Dean expresses the view that exhibitions are the face of museums, that they are “the principle public expressions of the heart of museums [...]” (1994, 8), that is to say, they can indicate the ideas, values and experiences of those working in the back of house.

As an indicator of the complexity of the process, Dean provides a timeline of the stages of exhibition development:

Stage 1	Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 4	
Idea gathering	Planning stage	Production stage	Operational stage	Terminating stage	Evaluation stage	Idea gathering
Conceptual Phase	Development Phase		Functional Phase		Assessment Phase	

(1994, 9)

While Dean’s breakdown of exhibition planning phases and stages are a useful start, they do not provide the space for consultation with Indigenous peoples, nor do they factor the kind of work Indigenous practitioners may need to do. This work could include saying a karakia, or having elders (kaumātua) come to the museum and advise on how best to display an object or what can and cannot be put on a label (McCarthy 2011, 105-109). But Dean’s phases of development do provide a glimpse into how museums operate in regards to exhibition development. What is largely unaddressed in this piece is *who* is following these steps? Dean does not factor in the human practitioner element which leads to the question: what happens to traditional exhibition development processes when Indigenous practitioners and voices are present? Additionally, how does the rigidity and bureaucracy of exhibitions development processes impact the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners?

In his more recent work, Dean provides an updated exhibition development model (2015). He approaches exhibition development through a project-management lens, arguing that “[d]eveloping and presenting an exhibition is an organizational project” (2015, 360). In this version of exhibition development he illustrates the complexity of museum practice and argues that all teams working on an exhibition, from curators, designers and conservators, to marketing and learning teams, must work together in order to meet objectives and create a successful project (2015, 361). In this work Dean illustrates something key to my research: the complexity

of behind-the scenes museum practice, in which the production of exhibits is a matter of negotiation, argument and even conflict (2015, 361).

Increasingly frequent in the field of exhibition development is the focus on social inclusion (Sandell 2007; Watson 2007; Sandell and Nightingale 2013; Lisney et al. 2013; Simon 2014). This movement for greater inclusion often focuses on providing engaging and equal experiences for people who have different levels of ability, including those with physical mobility disabilities, vision and hearing impairments and developmental differences (Sandell 2007; Parry 2010; Linsey et al. 2013). Taking these differences into account makes for a better experience for people to whom museums have not traditionally catered. I argue that trying to create inclusive and accessible exhibitions for a number of groups is evidence of a willingness to change for the better. While this literature is an indicator of promising progress in the museums field, the literature still leaves questions as to *who* is actually producing these more accessible exhibitions. Who is being called upon to find new, more accessible ways to communicate and engage with minority groups and what is their experience of working in museums?

Indigenous and Critical Indigenous Studies Literature

Before engaging with literature that discusses Indigenous peoples and museums, it is prudent to understand Indigenous studies as its own field. Indigenous studies is sometimes understood as a subset of anthropology, ethnology and history, as such there are published works, particularly anthropological and ethnological, spanning decades and even centuries that discuss the lives and practices of Indigenous peoples (Boas et al. 1966; Bruchac 2014). It is a vast field, with a major association (NAISA) and a large number of scholars (Maaka and Fleras 2005; Hokowhitu 2010; Driskill 2011; Usner 2014; Sillitoe 2015; Hokowhitu 2016; Lomawaima 2016; Madsen 2016; Moreton-Robinson 2016; Ka'ili 2017). In the twenty-first century Indigenous studies has begun to cover topics such as: defining and understanding Indigeneity and Indigenous identity (Maaka and Fleras 2005; Hokowhitu et al. 2010), the intersectional forces of oppression such as homophobia, socioeconomic disadvantages etc. that Indigenous people face (Driskill 2011), the incorporation of Indigenous studies into education (Phillips and Lampert 2005) and different Indigenous worldviews (Royal 2002).

In the case of my research, I have chosen to pull the majority of my framework from Critical Indigenous Studies (CIS), rather than Indigenous studies as a whole. While it could be

argued that it is important to outline Indigenous studies as a whole field before engaging with CIS, I have decided that the works which exist in CIS provides a more holistic and Indigenous-centred approach to my research. Indigenous studies as a field once relied on an ‘outsider’ view (Moreton-Robinson 2016) and as such it does not fully reflect the goals of this thesis. The goal of this research is to understand the roles and experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners, and to privilege their voices by having them guide the research and writing *with* (in a sense) rather than *about* them. By engaging with CIS I privilege Indigenous scholars and maintain this goal throughout the research.

CIS often challenges the ‘traditional’ practices of Indigenous studies. It does so as it “disrupts the certainty of disciplinary knowledges produced in the twentieth century, when the study of Indigenous peoples was largely the knowledge/power domain of non-Indigenous scholars” (Moreton-Robinson 2016, 3). Since the late 1980s a body of Indigenous scholars practicing CIS has emerged, making the field even less about studying the other and more about critical practice by and for Indigenous people (Hokowhitu 2016; Moreton-Robinson 2016, 3; Moreton-Robinson 2020; Hokowhitu 2020; Pihama 2020; Smith 2020; Tuhiwai Smith 2020; Turner 2020).

Daniel Heath Justice’s take on critical Indigenous studies is that it “is a relationship: complicated disorienting, delightful,” he goes on to say “[p]erhaps this is how work in the field might help us to realize the possibilities of a better world than the one we have inherited” (2016, 31). The idea of CIS as a relationship between Indigenous scholars and the field looks at the entirety of CIS through an Indigenous lens. As an Indigenous researcher I look at my topics and work as my relations, and understanding that they’re related to me keeps me respectful. In a sense, this thesis is an example of research practice in CIS, though it finds its theoretical footing more solidly in museum studies. Also, the potential forward-looking aspect of CIS supports my question of how we might light the Eighth Fire, which I discuss further below.

Brendan Hokowhitu takes part in critical Indigenous studies in his article “Monster” (2016). He looks at ‘traditional’ Indigenous studies’ role in the creation of the term ‘Indigenous’ and “the production of ‘indigenous’ ontologies” (2016, 93). In particular, he questions the “pan-indigenous movement,” (2016, 85) and its role in the creation of “generalizable Indigenous ontology and taxonomy,” (2016, 85) when the only thing many Indigenous cultures have in common is the pain caused by colonialism (2016). His outline of the creation of the concept of

“Indigenous” mirrors Paul Tapsell’s chapter in *Curatopia* in which he discusses the pre-Indigenous Vancouver, Canada (2019). Like Hokowhitu, Tapsell argues that the term or concept of “Indigenous” is a creation of colonialism. Hokowhitu’s commentary on pan-Indigeneity is useful for this thesis, as a reminder that while the colonial stories of Māori and Anishinaabe peoples are similar, we are different groups of people and there may be completely different frameworks and practices that work to address issues in museums. In other words, despite the fact that we (both communities) are grappling with shared experiences and trauma, we are still separate cultures and peoples.

Hokowhitu reminds us that there is a caveat to CIS: there is only so much that scholars can do from within colonial institutions (Hokowhitu 2016). The same caveat can be applied to Indigenous museum practitioners who actively fight to decolonise but can only do so much from within a museum. This is not to say that their voices do not matter or do not make change, rather that there is no perfect solution and no perfect practitioner. Hokowhitu asks “as Indigenous scholars employ the Western tradition of dissent to defect do we simultaneously enmesh ourselves further by corroborating the colonisers’ methods?” (2016, 85). This is a pertinent question for museum practitioners, and although it is entirely different from my question it is important to bear in mind as I undertake this research. How can Indigenous museum practitioners avoid reifying the colonial institutions and systems under which they have to work? At what point does their subversive work within museums stop being effective? CIS is currently the best option for subversive practice within Indigenous studies and that is why I use it in this thesis. Because I hope to subvert museums and museum practice by asking Indigenous museum practitioners what they would change, I look to CIS as an example of a subversive and disruptive literature and school of thought.

Indigenous studies and CIS are therefore useful for this study as they provide a platform for understanding the positions of Indigenous peoples in societies in general. This, when considering the power Indigenous people might have to transform museum practice, is a foundation for further examination of Indigenous peoples and museums.

Decolonisation Literature

The literature on decolonisation is vast (Smith 1997; Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Green 2002; Mohanty 2003; Laenui 2006; Sharma and Wright 2008; Hokowhitu 2010; Gordon 2020; Kiddle et al.

2020). In the case of this thesis, however, it is most relevant in establishing the importance of dreaming and progressing toward a world that is healthier and kinder to Indigenous peoples. Mercier writes “[l]ike colonisation, decolonisation is a huge and amorphous project” (2020, 46), highlighting the complexities of not only the concept but also the process of decolonisation. Mercier goes on to cite the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s definition of decolonisation: “the withdrawal from its former colonies of a colonial power; the acquisition of political or economic independence by such colonies” (2020, 47). When considering this definition, it’s hard to imagine that a museum could be decolonised. Museums are, in their foundation, colonial institutions (McCarthy 2007; McCarthy 2012; Phillips 2011; Lonetree 2012; Clifford 2019), there is no real pre-colonial museum (at least not the way we define museums) to which we can return, and this is therefore why I am hesitant to centre this thesis in more traditionally-defined decolonialism. In addition, the Oxford definition doesn’t actually mention Indigenous people, just the “colonies” and therefore is limited in its usefulness to this project because it seems to support settler colonial nations remaining just that – settler nations, just without the direct control from other countries. Mercier’s later definition of decolonisation, which applies to modern settler-colonial nations is perhaps a more useful way of thinking about the concept:

In the Aotearoa context and in many other settler states—such as Hawai’i, the mainland United States, Canada and Australia —decolonising does not mean the removal or withdrawal of colonial occupiers so much as a fundamental shift in the ideas, knowledges and value sets that underpin the systems which shape [these countries].

This definition acknowledges that decolonisation isn’t simple. It is not a process of simply removing the colonisers and their systems, as they are now intertwined inextricably within the nation’s history and people. Hokowhitu also questions the broad application of decolonisation as a solution to the traumas of colonialism (2010). He writes:

We must at least question the semantics of the project of ‘decolonisation’; what does that actually mean and, if we could ever define it, is it actually possible? I suggest a more worthy project is one of Indigenous existentialism, including discussions surrounding the

immediacy of Indigenous culture and stirring forms of cultural expression that occur at cultural borders (2010, 215).

In this statement Hokowhitu sums up my concerns with decolonisation as a concept.

Decolonisation is often too nebulous a concept, and it hints at some sort of pre-colonial past that we as a society might return to, when that is not really possible anymore. Instead, I argue in agreement with Hokowhitu, we need to look to the future, and seek growth from where we are now, and make changes based on our current practices and our relationships with other cultures.

Moreover, in its *Oxford English Dictionary* definition decolonisation is focused on the withdrawal of colonial influences and the return to old ways but this does not acknowledge the irrevocable changes caused by colonialism in the first place, including the losses of cultural knowledge and practices. “True decolonization is more than simply replacing indigenous or previously colonized people into the positions held by colonizers” (Laenui 2006, 154), instead there has to be some sort of foundational shift in the whole system. We need to find new ways of working and Hokowhitu’s statement suggests a more future-focused route in which the focus shifts from a return of old ways to the growth and continuation of current knowledge and practices, alongside the creation of new ways of being that take into account how colonialism has forced both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to interact and change.

This future-focused approach is what ultimately informs this research. In particular, the 2006 article by Poka Laenui acts as a guide in my approach to this research. Laenui created phases of decolonisation based on his lived experience as an Indigenous Hawaiian person, and based on and in response to Virgilio Enriques’ steps of colonisation (denial and withdrawal, destruction/eradication, denigration/belittlement/insult, surface accommodation/tokenism, and transformation/exploitation) (Enriques in Laenui 2006, 151) which set out a path not only towards the reclamation of Indigenous autonomy and cultural practices/identities but also to another kind of future. Laenui’s phases are as follows:

1. Rediscovery and recovery;
2. Mourning;
3. Dreaming;
4. Commitment; and

5. Action. (2006, 151)

He specifies that these phases “do not have clear demarcations between each other” (2006, 151) and that they can happen at the same time or at different times, depending on other contextual factors (2006, 151). Though these stages cannot be separated entirely, the one that is the most relevant to this research is dreaming. According to Laenui, dreaming is “the most crucial for decolonization” as it is when “the full panorama of possibilities are expressed, considered through debate, consultation and building dreams on further dreams which eventually becomes the flooring for the creation of a new social order” (2006, 154). Dreaming, therefore, is an active step toward change. In the case of my thesis this is the concept that drives me toward the Eighth Fire, that imagined (or dreamed) future where museums and museum practice might become safe spaces for Indigenous people, and museums might become spaces in which new practices and ideas can be created. Though this set of phases isn’t specifically created for museums, they are still relevant in advocating for changes in the ways that museums work. In the following section I explore the relationships between Indigenous peoples and museums, and I outline where decolonial literature and museum studies literature meet.

Where Indigenous and Museum Studies meet

As I seek to disrupt museums and museum practice, especially regarding their relationship with Indigenous people, it is important to establish where Indigenous studies and museum studies literatures intersect. In the following section I will outline the relationships between museums and Indigenous peoples in general, as they are discussed in the literature. I will then discuss decolonisation and museums, as a continuation of the discussion of general decolonisation literature in the previous section. Finally, I will outline Indigenous museum practice literature, and discuss the body of literature on Indigenous voices and on Indigenous languages in museums.

There is already a strong body of research related to Māori and museums (Butts 2007; Labrum 2007; McCarthy 2007; McCarthy 2011; McCarthy 2012; McCarthy 2014; McCarthy 2015; McCarthy 2016). Similarly, the literature covers relationships Indigenous peoples in Canada have with Canadian museums (Conaty 2003; Phillips 2011; Lonetree 2012; Onciul 2015; Phillips 2019; Tapsell 2019; Lonetree 2021), and the increasing relationships between the

decolonisation of museums and GLAM institutions and the Indigenous and tribal pursuit of self-governance and self-determination (Stanley 2007; Sleeper-Smith 2009; Lonetree 2012; Onciul 2015; Tapsell 2019; Lilley, Stratton and Callison 2021; Lonetree 2021). Museum studies literature also covers colonialism's impact upon museum practices and norms (Watson 2007; Simpson 2007; Boast 2011).

In a North American context, Amy Lonetree writes that the stories and perspectives of Indigenous people are not respected or privileged in many museums, even when the object or story is Indigenous in origin (2012). In contrast, she writes about the *Diba Jimooyung* exhibit in Saginaw Ojibwe territory (Great Lakes region), in which the structure of the exhibit makes use of Indigenous understandings of time and history (2012, 131). However, there is a gap in this body of research concerning the potential role of Indigenous practitioners and voices to change displays and exhibitions practice.

Ruth Phillips supports Lonetree's statement that Indigenous people are often relegated to the side stories of historical events in heritage practice (Lonetree 2012; Phillips 2019). Through her use of the Canadian War Museum's (CWM) presentation of the War of 1812 as a case study she discusses the ways in which museums and history or memory institutions ignore or bring forward Indigenous stories (Phillips 2019, 145). The War of 1812 was fought between the British who were settling in what is now Canada, and the relatively newly formed United States of America. The war is often talked about as a pointless war where nobody won or lost (Phillips 2019, 145), Phillips, however, points out that the massive losses suffered by First Nations people on both sides of this new (and arbitrary) border are often ignored (2019). The choice to commemorate the war in this somewhat celebratory way was due to a mandate from the Conservative federal government who "to general surprise [...] decided to position the War of 1812 as the first of a series of 'milestone' commemorations that would culminate in the 2017 celebration of Canada's 150th birthday as a federated nation" (2019, 145).

While it comes as no surprise that Indigenous peoples' suffering was ignored in the building of this national narrative, museum staff took a different approach to the War of 1812. The CWM curator who was responsible for the exhibition "decided to recount the war's history and rationale four times from the perspectives of the British, American, Canadian (settler and Indigenous) and Native American participants, giving each equal weight" (2019, 146). This choice is interesting as it privileged a wider set of narratives about an event. Moreover, this is an

example of a practitioner who shows the possibility of including Indigenous perspectives in museums as equal and valid histories. This also acts as an example of a museum practice being able to influence their institution's public offerings and to include more Indigenous voices and stories.

Phillips highlights that museums can sometimes be advocates for Indigenous stories, and that practitioners can make decisions during the development of exhibitions that make them more inclusive of Indigenous voices. Furthermore, it is interesting that a practitioner was interviewed after the exhibition was complete, and noted that his team was successful in receiving approval for a “multiplicity of ‘truth’” in a museum that has to deal with the opinions and rights of numerous stakeholders including veterans, the government and academics (2019, 146).

In the same chapter, Phillips uses two other case studies: the CMH and NGC (2019). In the former, she discusses the CMH's changing of the Canada Hall, which was part of the museum from its opening in 1989, to the *CHH* which was done for the Canada 150 celebrations (2019, 148). In the latter she highlights the struggle for Indigenous art to be celebrated and acknowledged. While both of these case studies address issues that are somewhat related to this research, I focus here on NGC because Phillips' discussion of it in her 2019 piece is more relevant to current museum practice and therefore to this research.

The NGC is one of Canada's national museums, as mandated under the museums act (1990). Phillips writes that “another kind of struggle has worked itself out over the past three decades at the National Gallery of Canada, as Indigenous artists have sought recognition as contemporary fine artists rather than producers of ethnographic artefacts” (2019, 151). This is not an isolated struggle, Indigenous people around the world have also had to fight for our art to be recognised as more than ethnography (Fisher 2012; McCarthy 2013). The struggle for recognition of Indigenous art, and the struggle of the gallery to reframe its exhibitions on art began in the early 1990s, just after its opening in its new building (Phillips 2019). In this new location, the exhibition *Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada* was the first to attempt portraying Indigenous art as fine art. The exhibition was successful, perhaps because of the Anishinaabe curator on the team, or because the Indigenous artists had more control over more aspects than usual, but either way it set a precedent for the gallery (Phillips 2019, 152). One of the more recent changes in the NGC is in the Indigenous art galleries which

were re-hung for Canada 150 in 2017 (*The New Canadian and Indigenous galleries open June 15th at the National Gallery of Canada*, 2017).

As part of the planning process for the new Canadian and Indigenous Galleries, the Gallery established two Indigenous Advisory Committees of curators, academics, knowledge-keepers and other recognized authorities to provide expertise and guidance on interpretation, display protocols and community engagement (*New Indigenous Galleries*, 2017).

The inclusion of Indigenous advisory committees, staff, and the NGC's effort to recognise the value and expertise of Indigenous peoples, is hopeful. It also creates an opportunity for furthering the relationship between Indigenous peoples and museums.

Given their similar colonial histories and recovery processes, Canada and New Zealand act as interesting counterparts when considering Indigenous peoples and museums. In the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, Te Papa emerges as the main case study. At its core it attempts to act as a 'bicultural' museum, with Māori and non-Māori as the two sides of this proverbial coin (McCarthy, 2011). Without engaging too deeply with the nuances of biculturalism (Schubert-McArthur 2019), or lack thereof, it provides me with a decent framework for understanding the goals of Te Papa with regards to its relationship with Māori people. A major difference between Te Papa and all of the Canadian national museums is the presence of a Kaihautū, a position that was created in 1995 (McCarthy 2011, 118). The management structure of the museum places the Kaihautū in a leadership position that is (in theory) equal in power to the CEO (2011, 118). This system is not perfect, however, and the Kaihautū may be put in charge of 'Māori' projects more often than the CEO, making their roles in the museum's governance hard to understand (2011, 199). Cliff Whiting, the first Kaihautū at Te Papa "[...] observed that most Māori staff still thought of the chief executive as the 'boss,' not the Kaihautū" (2011, 119).

Also significant to Māori relationships with Te Papa are the number of visible Māori staff. This is "[o]ne of the things that immediately strikes visitors [...]. Whether it is hearing Māori widely spoken around the building [...], it is immediately evident that this is a place where Māori culture is alive and well" (McCarthy 2011, 120). In addition to staffing and management which act to make Te Papa a better partner to Māori and other Indigenous peoples, the

exhibitions also play this role. In particular, *Mana Whenua* which is a permanent exhibition explores “the richness of Māori life and heritage through taonga [treasures], oral histories, and contemporary art works” (Mana Whenua). This exhibition was created with Māori communities, with the museum acting as a facilitator, and respecting that Māori people are the experts on their culture(s) (McCarthy 2007).

Recognising the differences between Canadian national museums’ practice regarding Indigenous peoples and Te Papa’s respective practices regarding Māori and Indigenous people creates a picture of potential changes to museum practice. Te Papa’s dual management is an excellent example of a way Indigenous voices might be included in the museum, and while (for a number of reasons) it cannot be mirrored exactly in Canada, something similar could be a real step forward which may indeed be taken at the CMH.

Decolonisation and Museums

Though decolonisation was discussed more broadly in an earlier section, the intersection between decolonial and museum studies literature must be highlighted. There are a number of texts that discuss the intersection between museums and decolonisation (Stanley 2007; Sleeper-Smith 2009; Lonetree 2012; Onciul 2015; Cavanagh and Veracini 2017; Tapsell 2019; Cairns 2020; Pitman 2021; Soares 2021). Onciul focuses largely on the roles that museums can play in the broader decolonisation effort (2015). Through case studies, she highlights how museums and exhibitions can promote decolonial ideas through inspiring pride in Indigenous identities and through sharing the impacts of colonialism (2015, 196). Though her work is important, and recognising the relationship that museums have with the societies in which they exist (ie their ability to influence and be influenced by social movements), this work is only partially relevant to this research. Decolonial theory acts more like a scaffold in my research, and as I am not asking how museums can support or be agents of decolonial discourse and action, it is limited in its application in my case. Onciul’s (2015) discussions of museums and their relationship with other fields and society more broadly is the most useful part of this study for my research, as it reflects the ways in which Indigenous people working in museums are affected by both the museum, its policies and the general society in which they live.

On the other hand, Lonetree’s book *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* focuses more on changing museums rather than the

role of museums in changing their societies (2012). This is more pertinent to this research as I seek to change museums (though I am, of course, aware of the relationships between museums and the wider societies in which they exist). Lonetree writes: “[a] decolonizing museum practice must involve assisting our communities in addressing the legacies of historical unresolved grief,” indicating that the role of museum practice should actually be a healing one. She reiterates this in a reflection on *Decolonizing Museums* writing:

Central to my analysis is exploring how museums can serve as sites of decolonization through honoring Indigenous knowledge and worldview, and by discussing the hard truths of colonization in exhibitions in an effort to move toward healing and understanding. This process of examining the hard truths also needs to include critical self-examination on the part of colonial institutions regarding their relationship with Indigenous tribal nations and communities in the past and present. (2021, 21)

This is, arguably, important for setting the scene for my research. Firstly because it advocates for museums to change and prioritise relationships with Indigenous people. Secondly because dreams and hope lift us, but we cannot begin to dream when we are still in a mourning period, museums, therefore need to take the first steps toward healing their relationships with Indigenous peoples and, more specifically, Indigenous museum practitioners. Decolonisation is not necessarily my preferred term, but the healing and change that comes with a decolonial outlook is important in understanding the power of Indigenous dreams. Cairns’ 2020 blog post on Te Papa’s website mirrors my hesitancy around the term decolonisation, admitting her: “[U]nease with the notion of decolonisation and the inherent danger for indigenous people in decol, where the coloniser remains at the centre of a process that is supposed to centre the colonised’ (2020). Speaking specifically about her work at Te Papa, she provides insight into how the term can be misused and become damaging for Indigenous peoples, rather than helping us. Cairns also echoes Hokowhitu’s scepticism about the notion (2010), instead offering the idea of Indigenisation or, “reMāorification,” a term coined by Moana Jackson (Cairns 2020). This is what I seek to do with this research, instead of returning museums to a pre-colonial past (which does not actually exist), this research advocates for innovation and making museums a more Indigenous or at least Indigenous-friendly place.

Indigenous Museum Practice

More important than literature on general museum practice or discussions on how that practice relates to Indigenous people, is the study of Indigenous museum practice itself. Connecting ideas around the general relationships between Indigenous peoples and museums with Indigenous museum practice is the concept of the contact zone, a term coined by Mary Louise Pratt in a conference paper delivered in 1991 (Pratt 1991). Contact zones, according to Pratt, are “social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world [...]” (1991, 34). James Clifford applies Pratt’s term to museums in his 1997 essay titled “Museums as Contact Zones,” giving the term a more active presence in the field. Clifford views contact zones, in the context of museum studies, as “the space of colonial encounters” (1997, 189). This is a key concept for this thesis, as I look at museum practice as one of these contact zones, wherein Indigenous people encounter and must ‘grapple’ with colonial cultures of collecting, display, and other museum practices. Those doing a large portion of that ‘grappling’, I argue, are Indigenous practitioners.

Perhaps more relevant to this thesis than the foundational works by Pratt and Clifford is the recent work of Bryony Onciul, who has created a new term, based on Clifford’s essay “Museums as contact zones” (1997). Onciul proposes the use of the term *engagement zone*, “which are conceptual, physical and temporal spaces in which participants interact in an unpredictable process of power negotiations” (2015, 72). Onciul’s discussion of power negotiations in *engagement zones* highlights an important discourse surrounding the institutional power of the museum. In the case of engagement, and Indigenous museum practice more broadly, one must always question the power relationships and whether the engagements or changes in practice are actually meaningful, or whether they provide agency. The museum is a colonial institution and, based on Hokowhitu’s point, is arguably the “home territory” of colonial view points, and therefore it holds power over the other parties in these engagements (2016).

Understanding literature surrounding Indigenous museum practice is especially relevant in the case of this thesis, since as is noted above, Indigenous practitioners play different roles from non-Indigenous practitioners due to differences in perspective and cultural traditional knowledge (Kreps 1998; McCarthy 2011). Christina Kreps has stated: “The recognition of

indigenous curatorial practices is another step toward the decolonization and democratization of museums and museum practice” (1998, 4). This is to say, recognising the differences in the ways in which different Indigenous museum practitioners work is, perhaps, central to changing museum practice in general.

Some sections of the writing on museum practice discuss how museums consult with Indigenous people in order to create respectful exhibitions (Menezes 1989). Generally, this sort of “consultant-Indigenous-practitioner” often relates to art and artists (McCarthy 2013; Scott 2017; Phillips 2019, 151-154; Nagam et al. 2020) though this literature does relate to my thesis, its tendency to focus on art and artists makes it less useful in framing my research on Indigenous museum practice more broadly. The consultant-Indigenous-practitioner is one of the first types of Indigenous museum practitioner that can be encountered in the field (Lonetree 2012). Amy Lonetree notes that “[t]oday Indigenous people are actively involved in making museums more open and community-relevant sites” (2012, 1). This observation is interesting as Lonetree is discussing Indigenous museum practitioners but is viewing them primarily as Indigenous community members and experts. She notes that this is a positive change that is most heavily reflected in exhibition spaces, which opens a gap for my research to compare the process undertaken by practitioners (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) with the exhibitions which may show how present Indigenous voices are in museums.

Bryoni Onciul’s 2019 chapter “Community engagement, Indigenous heritage and the complex figure of the curator: foe, facilitator, friend or forsaken” demonstrates the multifaceted nature of curatorship, and the ways in which curators are viewed. Through the history of museums and their links to colonialism she illustrates how the curator may be labelled as a foe from an Indigenous perspective, due to their association with the horrors of colonialism (2019, 161). She also engages with the idea of collaboration stating:

The refashioning of the curator as an engaged ‘facilitator’—providing access, collaboration, coproduction, and even repatriation – has enabled new relationships to be built between source communities and museums (2019, 162).

In this statement Onciul illustrates the importance of collaboration and partnerships, namely in including Indigenous voices (or other communities) in museum work. She goes on to outline the

ways in which curators are “friends” through their ability to build close relationships with Indigenous people and communities, and why they may be viewed as forsaken due association with old, colonial museology (2019). She defends the curator, saying that the profession is one that should be constantly renewed rather than forsaken. These perspectives on the concept of “the curator” are important to this research as they demonstrate the complexity of museum practice. While Onciul’s analysis provides insight into the relationship between Indigenous peoples and museums, it also presents as a simplified version of “the curator” which leaves a gap in terms of perspectives on curators as individuals or at least as members more specific communities or groups, it also leaves a gap as to the perception or experiences of museum practitioners more broadly. In this research, I take a wider approach to understanding museum practice, and though I do not engage with outsider perspectives on museum practice, I do engage with the ways in which Indigenous museum practitioners are treated and experience working for museums on a daily basis.

The themes of consultation and collaborative relationships continue throughout Lonetree’s book (2012), emphasising that museums often work in partnership with Indigenous people, rather than having Indigenous people as full-time, dedicated museum practitioners. Even the mission statement of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) discusses this “partner” approach: “In partnership with Native peoples and their allies, the National Museum of the American Indian fosters a richer shared human experience through a more informed understanding of Native peoples” (NMAI: Vision and Mission).

These collaborators often work to create exhibitions, and their work seems to remain mostly in the public side of museums. Te Papa, for example, hosts iwi-led exhibitions, giving Māori consultants and collaborators the space and resources to create and manage exhibitions that are representative of their lives and viewpoints (Schorch et al. 2016). However, while collaboration is a good step toward Indigenous museum practice, it is just a single step, and “[d]espite the positive assumptions, engagement has the potential to be both beneficial and detrimental” (Onciul 2015, 71). There are excellent examples of Māori and Torres Strait Islander practitioners who, when working within the institution, enact positive change for their peoples and their taonga/objects (Robinson and Barnard 2007; McCarthy 2011). This sort of collaborative work and the positive changes it seems to make is, as noted, a good first step. This

thesis, however, seeks to go beyond that and to advocate for a whole new kind of museum practice that centres itself in self-determination and cultural sovereignty.

Davidson and Pérez-Castellanos highlight the shared elements of museum practice across cultural, institutional and language divides through a case study that considers how practitioners from Te Papa and Museo Nacional de las Culturas worked together to bring the exhibition *E Tu Ake* to Mexico. They argue that common practices allowed staff from these museums to communicate through their language barrier (2019, 67). It should be noted that the institutions largely had differences in their professional practices and processes. This was not, however, a negative aspect of the partnership, as it allowed for sharing of knowledge (2019, 67).

Davidson and Pérez-Castellano make clear that divides in culture and language can be overcome in museums, through learning from one another. When applied to the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners, the work by Davidson and Pérez-Castellanos supports the notion that there is an opportunity to teach non-Indigenous practitioners and change museum practice in general. While these changes are not as simple as sharing and taking opportunities to learn, the ability of Te Papa and Museo Nacional de las Culturas to work together despite difference could open doors for more collaborations of this nature.

Moreover, the changing roles of museum curators have allowed Indigenous practitioners to work in ways that are more culturally appropriate (McCarthy 2011; Arnold 2015; Clifford 2019). James Clifford's discussion on curators, for example, leads him to the concept of caring. What becomes clear in this discussion is that caring is highly relational. He points out, "the idea of caring ceases to be a practice of protecting by enclosing and becomes a profoundly relational activity of crossing and translating" (2019, 112). The ideas of caring and of relationships with objects can be a way of understanding Indigenous museum practice. Māori collection managers, curators and other practitioners have a relation with the taonga in their museums (McCarthy 2011). These are not just objects, rather they are taonga, and they have living relationships (Schorch et al. 2016, 50) and they talk to those who can listen, harkening McLean's "talking" and "listening" (1999), but viewed through an Indigenous lens. Relationships with taonga or other Indigenous material heritage would likely be much less common without the presence of Indigenous practitioners. The figures of the Kaihautū and the kaitiaki at Te Papa seem to be role models of Indigenous museum practice (Schorch et al. 2016). These people are not consultants, nor are they collaborators, rather they are *practitioners* performing their Indigeneity and

traditional knowledges whilst embedded in the operations, management, and governance of the museum.

While it can certainly be argued that these Indigenous practitioners play significant and active roles in changing museum practices, the ideas put forward by Hokowhitu (2016) suggest that this situation is more nuanced than that. Hokowhitu's argument that CIS can only be so effective while working within colonial institutions applies to Indigenous practitioners within museums, another colonial institution. Indigenous presence in museums has existed since at least the early twentieth century (Scorch et al. 2016), however the agency that practitioners have is more important than ever. At Te Papa, Māori practitioners exercise their right to perform Māori culture and tikanga which results in better care of their ancestors (in the form of taonga) (Tamarapa 1996). The effect of Kaitiaki working in Te Papa is evident in the Māori collection, which is stored and "classified not only by typology but by tribal affiliation" (1996, 166), recognising the relationships those taonga have with people.

When Indigenous people work as museum practitioners it may give us agency and can affect not only museums, but also our communities. The first, and possibly obvious, benefit is that taonga are treated with respect and collections practice might change to be more representative of Indigenous voices and cultures. Robinson and Barnard found that "[t]he employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women as curators in major collecting institutions [...] had a significant impact on how Aboriginal women are represented in collections[...]" (2007, 39). This observation could, perhaps, be attributed to their voices and perspectives as Indigenous people being included in their practice. This might act as an argument in favour of supporting and giving positions to Indigenous practitioners. It also raises questions about whether the representation of Indigenous people in collections or museums in general reflects the power or effectiveness of Indigenous museum practice. Examples like these women provide precedent for my research, displaying that when Indigenous voices are present and listened to, change happens.

While it is evident that there are still many steps to take regarding the place of Indigenous practitioners in the museum, there are hopeful examples of Indigenous professionals working within institutions. For example, the exhibition development team on *E Tu Ake*, the international exhibition that was installed recently in Mexico, was almost entirely Māori (Davidson and Pérez-Castellanos 2019). Te Papa hosts iwi exhibitions (McCarthy 2011; Sciascia 2012; Schubert-

McArthur 2019), and the CMH runs a museum and heritage internship programme for Indigenous people hoping to begin or further a career in museums. The inclusion of Indigenous museum practitioners gives Indigenous people the possibility of our voices being heard, connections to our stories and objects, and may make representations more respectful and culturally accurate.

Indigenous voice in museums

Indigenous voice is a topic covered by a number of writers, and it feeds into understandings of language (Battiste 2000; Gough 2008; Brady 2011; Onciul 2015). The concept of voice itself can be broken into many categories including: sociological, communicator of value and presence, political, auditory speech or song produced by a human, and cultural (Couldry 2010). These are discussed by Nick Couldry in his book *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism* (2010). In terms of voice as discussed in relation to minority or oppressed groups, the literature that appears most often is centered in LGBTQ+ contexts where voice is defined by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle as “the embodied experience of the speaking subject” (2006, 12).

Paying closer attention to voice in museums and, more specifically Indigenous voice, Miranda J. Brady looks at the National Museum of the American Indian, the Chicago Field Museum and the CMH (2011). Informed by, and in some instances opposing, the work of Gough (2008) and Couldry (2010), she engages with Indigenous voice as it is “constituted in and constitutes Indigenous exhibition as well as its relationships with material form such as museum media” (Brady 2011, 204). She goes on to look at her case studies, all museums who have attempted to include Indigenous voice, analyzing the ways in which these attempts were made, and their effectiveness. While Brady provides important insights into Indigenous voice in museum exhibitions, she doesn’t consider the behind the scenes practice that led to the inclusion of Indigenous voices in her case studies, leaving questions about how decisions were made and why certain models of voice inclusion were used. This also leaves out the experiences of the Indigenous people who likely worked to have their voices or voices like theirs included. This is a gap which will be investigated further in my research.

Instead, I make use of Meagan Gough’s (2008) definition of voice in this section. Couldry’s discussion on the importance of voice and the way in which its presence indicates

value (2010) is interesting, however it considers voice and value in a more general sense, rather than being directly applied to Indigenous and museum contexts. On the other hand, Gough's definition covers a lot of Couldry's work while remaining centered in museology and Indigenous studies. Gough's definition of voice, for this thesis, provides the best all-round framework for my discussion of Indigenous museum practice. Gough writes:

The notion of "voice" manifests itself in numerous ways in [museums]. In one sense, voice signifies a desire for increased participation, input and control for Aboriginal people to make decisions that affect their lives. In a more specific context, it questions whose voice is used in museum representations of Aboriginal culture(s), as is illustrated through the construction and writing of museum texts, as well as schematic and display techniques utilized by museums. In terms of epistemology, the notion of voice serves to challenge the social constructs that impose value and meaning on an Aboriginal voice as necessarily existing within an ethnographic and historical past (Gough 2008, 222).

These "manifestations" of voice allow it to represent a contemporary Indigenous presence within the museum. Moreover, Gough highlights the communication of value through voice, in her case that the breaking of social constructs brings Indigenous voices into the contemporary, making them valuable in current museum exhibitions, instead of centering them in the ethnography, or history.

Though Gough takes a more general approach to her definition of Indigenous voice, this definition nonetheless helps frame the role of Indigenous museum practitioners. This interpretation of voice as an assertion of agency and a distinct perspective can be applied to a behind-the-scenes view of museums. Interestingly, Gough's definition hints at museum practice, but does not directly discuss how practice affects voice. As this research focuses on practice, it will make use of the agency that comes through voice as a way to understand how the work of Indigenous practitioners influences museums, and what this might say about their experiences.

Definitions of, and discussions on, Indigenous voice in the museum are interesting and useful, however, they only act as one indicator of the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners. Since this thesis asks about these experiences and through a secondary question of

how these practitioners see Indigenous voice appearing in museums, it is also relevant to discuss Indigenous languages in museums.

Indigenous languages in museums

An important part of voice is language, and it is one way that practitioners see their voices appearing in museums. Indigenous languages, more specifically can be understood as part of our cultures, ancestors and our material and intangible heritage (Lamb). As Lamb points out “Kōrero (narrative, story, to speak) cannot be separated from taonga under Kaupapa Māori (Māori ways of doing/knowledge). Language binds the object to its history, place and significance as taonga” (Lamb, 33). What Karina Lamb makes clear in this statement is the significance of the relationship between te reo Māori and taonga. Extending this to other Indigenous languages and their relationship with objects, this statement shows the necessity of Indigenous language in storytelling in museum and exhibition spaces.

Eileen Hooper-Greenhill writes that “although museums and galleries are fundamentally concerned with objects, these objects are always contextualised by words. Museums are in fact perhaps as much concerned with words as they are with objects” (1994, 115). In highlighting the connection between objects and language in the form of words, Hooper-Greenhill brings up the integral role of language in museum narratives and design. Through inclusion and omission of facts, language provides narratives and “worldviews,” which, in a museum, may be legitimised by the authority of the institution (1994, 123).

Language in museums comes in many forms, two of the most obvious forms are spoken and written words (Santana 2016). This section outlines the major literature on language and museums, and where my research fits within it. Importantly, I make a distinction between language in general and Indigenous languages. While language choice in museums in general is an issue of accessibility and diffusion of information (Serrell 2015), Indigenous languages reflect the voices of people who have different and often difficult relationships with museums and therefore the question of language becomes symbolic, and immensely powerful. Moreover, the presence of Indigenous languages in the museum tends to be new and, often, practitioners still have to fight to include them.

One of the most prevalent ways in which languages (broadly) are included in museums are labels. There is a large body of work on how to write museum labels (Kaye and Hubner

1980; Fienup-Riordan 1999; Serrell 2015; Derksen 2018). This includes numerous works by museum studies professionals on topics including writing clear labels, creating emotion and connection through labels, changing interpretations of objects and writing accessible and inclusive labels (Kaye and Hubner 1980; Fienup-Riordan 1999; Serrell 2015; Derksen 2018).

While they are one of the first places language appears in museums, the literature on labels tends to focus on accessibility and writing labels at a certain level of complexity, font choice, and selecting colours that are visually clear to ensure legibility and that they are understood by their audiences (Kaye and Hubner 1980; Serrell 2015). Moreover, Māori and Anishinaabe have not always used written languages, they are cultures that have oral traditions and as such use the Latin alphabet and do not have pre-colonial written languages (Horton, 2017). This means that audio language inclusion could be just as important, if not more, than written language, when it comes to some Indigenous languages.

There is a question of how Indigenous languages fit into museums and how practitioners view them. Often, museums are viewed as the keepers, carers and preservers of Indigenous objects and histories (Clifford 2019), and subsequently, Indigenous languages. It must be noted that Indigenous languages are contemporary, active and in flux. At a 2019 Indigenous studies conference that I attended, a presenter stated “we should have contemporary words because we’re contemporary people”, so in this statement they highlighted that neither Indigenous peoples, nor Indigenous languages are historical entities, rather we are (like all peoples) constantly growing and changing both individually and as larger cultural groups.

Helen Kelly-Holmes and Sari Pietikäinen discuss Indigenous language in exhibitions using the case study of Sami language in the Siida museum (2016). Kelly-Holmes and Pietikäinen argue that language serves three purposes in a museum:

First of all, language is a major resource for enabling access to the museum and for directing visitors around the display, and for management of visitors with an increasing range of different languages. Secondly, language is used for narrating the content of the museum and telling the story of Lapland's nature and Sámi culture. Thirdly, language itself is an object of display, as part of the content of the museum (2016, 29).

The understanding of language as a museum object itself is an important observation which shifts language, a generally nebulous concept, to a more tangible role. This nods to the that language, normally viewed as a communicator, becomes an object to be communicated about. Like most works cited in this research, Kelly-Holmes and Pietikäinen suggest the role of practitioners is to shape language as a maker of object narratives and as an object with its own narratives (2016, 26). The notion of language as an object is interesting as it then opens a possibility of viewing language as a taonga, an ancestor, or other relation. In doing so, we create a role that can only be filled by an Indigenous practitioner.

The body of literature surrounding Indigenous languages in museums is still growing. A main theme that emerges is the idea of language as an object, which becomes a useful way of understanding language throughout this thesis, as I look to the *presence* of the language itself, rather than specifically looking in detail at its content or effectiveness.

Conclusion: Gaps in the literature

Throughout the course of this literature review I have demonstrated the complexity of museum studies as a field. The research landscape in which I situate my work exists at an interdisciplinary crossroads, where museum practice, theory and media meet Indigenous studies, decolonial literature and CIS. This aligns my work with a number of authors (Gough 2008; Brady 2011; McCarthy 2011; Lonetree 2012; Norton-Westbrook 2015; Onciul 2015; Moreton-Robinson 2016; Clifford 2019; McCarthy 2019) but allows my research to have broader implications and to fill a gap in museum and Indigenous studies. It identifies a gap in the literature where there is a lack of discussion of Indigenous museum practitioners and, moreover, of how the presence of their voices (or lack thereof) in museums speaks to their experience of working in these institutions. My research asks: what is the experience of Indigenous museum practitioners in a Seventh Fire world? It does so by looking at instances of Indigenous voices appearing in exhibitions via Indigenous languages, objects, and design, and by seeking to gain a better understanding of how Indigenous voices are treated in the ‘back of house’ arena of current professional practice.

Museum practice, which includes work behind the scenes as well as museum work visible in the public domain ‘front of house’, including the exhibition development process, visual design, label writing, programming and more (Dean 1994; Arnold 2015; Dean 2015;

McCarthy 2015; Norton-Westbrook 2015), is the main area that I address within museum studies. With literature that discusses the relationship between theory and practice (McCarthy 2015), the changing role of the curator (Norton-Westbrook 2015; Clifford 2019), and the varied responsibilities of museum practitioners, I add to the current landscape through my research on the personal experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners, and by asking how museum practice might look in a more ideal world.

Research Design

This section sets out the methodological approaches which have been chosen, based on the literature review, and driven by my research questions, as the frameworks for developing and carrying out this research project. It answers the question: why was this research undertaken in this particular way? It also outlines who I interviewed and why. Beginning with a brief explanation of the evolution of my topic, I go on to discuss my approaches to this research. I then move onto the research methods I employed in order to gather and analyse data and, finally, I discuss the limitations of this research.

In the second part of this section, I outline Indigenous methodologies in general, including a closer look at Kaupapa Māori. Through this, I preface more specific frameworks through which I structured my research. In this section I lay out these frameworks, provide justification for my use of them, and make clear how they guided my research. Despite the wide range of potential methodological approaches (and in particular, Indigenous methods), and the new ones that seem to be continuously emerging, I narrowed my overall approach to only three key strategies that emerge from Indigenous-centred research, and critical Indigenous studies:

1. Relational research (Battiste and Henderson 2000; Anderson and Meshake 2019; Wilson et al. 2019);
2. Autoethnography and ethnography (Kreps 2003; Houston 2007; Denzin 2014; Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis 2015; Koot 2016; Shagrir 2016; Pensoneau-Conway 2017; Kwame Harrison 2018); and
3. Action research (Costello 2003; Somekh 2005; Greenwood and Levin 2007).

Evolution of my topic

My original topic focused heavily on Indigenous languages in museums, asking how their presence made space for Indigenous voices. While this topic was interesting, it proved to be methodologically unsound, in that there are very few ways to measure space-making broadly as it is essentially intangible. There was really no way, within the scope of a PhD, that I could have successfully carried out such a complex and intangible research project. It has since evolved to the current topic, investigating the current (Seventh Fire) experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners at two national museums, and asking what a different, Eighth Fire, museum practice might look like. The research now focuses on individual experiences and tells stories about the work of Indigenous museum practitioners through examples from both the back of house and front of house spaces at each museum. It seeks to understand personal experiences rather than focusing on policy or institutional practices. I have conducted qualitative observational research in museums in both Aotearoa/New Zealand and Canada exploring how Indigenous voices factor into current museum practice. Though my topic has shifted, my interview questions (outlined in a later section of this chapter) were thematically centred on language and exhibitions as they were written before the shift in topic. The participants and their responses organically shaped my new topic and I now view this project as a collaborative experience rather than a project completed by myself.

Research Design

This section outlines the groundings of this research, it lays out the perspective from which I am working and the literature which has informed my research. First it lays out Indigenous methodologies and Kaupapa Māori, then goes on to discuss one Indigenous methodology in depth (research as relation), and outlines the autoethnographic and ethnographic methods I also employed in this study. Finally, it outlines action research which reflects the forward looking, change-making goals of this research.

Indigenous Methodologies and Kaupapa Māori

As noted, my research framework is guided, in general, by Indigenous methodologies and worldviews based on the works of a number of researchers (Smith 1997; Tuhiwai Smith 1999;

Wilson 2001; Weber-Pillwax 2001; Denzin, Lincoln and Tuhiwai Smith 2008; Wilson 2008; Kovach 2010; Botha 2011; Mertens, Cram and Chilisa 2013; Moreton-Robinson 2016; Lilley 2018; Wilson and Hughes 2019). Shawn Wilson acknowledges that “Indigenist research” (2019, 333) has existed as long as Indigenous people have. In undertaking museum research as an Indigenous person hoping to privilege Indigenous voices, it is important to me that I understand the roots of my practice, and that I ensure my work is methodologically grounded in Indigenous ontologies.

A main element of Indigenous methodologies is acknowledging the expertise of Indigenous people(s) and trusting Indigenous knowledge(s) (Battiste 2007; Chilisa 2012; Mertens, Cram and Chilisa 2013; Wilson, Breen and Dupre 2019). This helps to honour Indigenous perspectives and privilege our voices. In a museum context this means Indigenous practitioners being honoured for their expertise in both their chosen field and in their own cultures. In my research, Indigenous knowledge takes a more implicit role, in which it acts as an ever-present guiding force and principles, with my actions and goals adhering to my community’s ways of life.

Moreover, by using Indigenous-centred research methods this project subverts traditional (western) methods, by “privileging [I]ndigenous values, attitudes and practices” (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). This attempts to claim power for Indigenous voices, and creates an inbuilt sense of the expertise of the people who participated in this project (including interviewees, ancestors, taonga, etc.). It is for this reason that one of the main Indigenous methodologies from which I draw inspiration is Kaupapa Māori. “The invigoration of Indigenous research around the world was greatly enriched by the 1999 publication of *Decolonising Methodologies*,” argue Mertens, Cram and Chilisa, (2013, 19). Kaupapa Māori is largely research undertaken by and for Māori, meaning that non-Māori researchers cannot fully take part (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). What this does is make an attempt to privilege Māori voices on Māori topics. It was first proposed by Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1997) and expanded upon by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999). The general principles of Kaupapa Māori research are that it:

1. is related to ‘being Māori’;
2. is connected to Māori philosophy and principles;

3. takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Māori, the importance of Māori language and culture, and;
 4. is concerned with ‘the struggle for autonomy over our own cultural well-being’.
- (Tuhiwai Smith 1999, 187)

These principles informed my research methods by reminding me that it is important to have constant awareness of how my research aligns with my cultural values. It pushed me to be mindful of the boundaries of my own cultural practices and performances, and to undertake this research as a member of a community first, and as a scholar second. While I am not Māori, Smith (1997) Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999) work was an inspiration for me as a researcher as they centre Indigenous voices and ways of being. Kaupapa Māori was a sort of jumping off point for my research design, and I made use of this Indigenous methodology, and its framing of research through customs and cultural knowledge, to develop my own framework. My Māori participants, it should also be noted, often work in a way that is in keeping with Kaupapa Māori methods and without a comprehension of this, I wouldn’t have been able to understand some of their perspectives and choices.

This thesis, inspired by Kaupapa Māori and other Indigenous methodologies, is guided by a set of principles based off of the Seven Fires Prophecy, sometimes known as the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers. As outlined in more depth in the introduction of this thesis, these are Anishinaabe understandings of our place in and across time, and how our heritage and culture has grown, retracted and changed. They are also teachings on pimadjiwowin, the traditional way to live according to Algonquin principles. While it is true that each fire represents a time in the history and future of the Anishinaabe, the Seven Fires represent more than time. They are sacred teachings about where we are and where we are going, they can only be fully understood through ceremony and Elder sharing (Culture, 2018). These teachings are part of a number of First Nations beliefs throughout Turtle Island (Kimmerer 2013).

The grandfather teachings provide a way of ensuring that this work follows Anishinaabe understandings of the world and knowledge, rather than “traditional” colonial methodologies. The teachings that go along with the story of the fires are:

- Honesty
- Humility
- Respect
- Courage
- Wisdom
- Love
- Truth

(Culture, 2018)

These are the principles through which I conducted my research. By adhering to them I sought to respect and privilege Algonquin ways and to centre Indigenous knowledge. This allowed me to have a set of principles that also ensured ethical and inclusive work by not only informing my research practices but also my behaviour in general. I sought to create research that considered the practices, values, autonomy and cultures of other Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and to work in ways that built relationships and ties between me and the participants.

Research as relation

In order to understand the concept of research as a relation, first I must acknowledge that as an Indigenous researcher I *am* a relationship, and this is because through Indigenous ontologies, “we are our relationships: to self, family, Nations (other peoples), our environment, ideas, ancestors, the cosmos, everything that IS” (Wilson 2019, 8). This is to say, as an Indigenous researcher I am not only influenced by my relationships but I am actually a product of them and without them I am not whole. In many Indigenous worldviews, including those of my people, everything is connected and without those connections or relationships we cannot exist (Battiste and Henderson 2000; Kimmerer 2013; Wilson 2019).

In *Research and Reconciliation* (2019) Wilson describes Indigenous, or in his case, “Indigenist” research as being “about who we are, how we know and engage with Knowledge, what we do as researchers, and the ways we enact relational accountability” (2019, 7). In this statement he places relationships as an intrinsic part of Indigenous research. He touches on the idea of Indigenous research as a practice in relationality, hinting at a whole set of those relationships, including: researcher-literature, researcher-subject, researcher-themselves,

researcher-their culture (2019). A theme from this that significantly impacted this research is the idea of “relational accountability”. Because our work, as Indigenous researchers, is highly relational, accountability is in-built, the research work is not conducted in spite of the relationship or the accountability to others, but because of it. “The methodology by which we gain new Knowledge is a process of strengthening or building our relationships[...]" (2019, 12) part of this process, therefore must be trust-building and accountability to the other parties in this relationship. This is in part why each of my in-person participants were offered food and were given a gift as an acknowledgement of our newly forming relationship. Gifting and reciprocity are in-built in the process of Indigenous relationship building (Kimmerer 2013) and through this practice I sought to solidify my relationships with the participants and show them that their gift of knowledge was appreciated and respected.

In the same vein, Kim Anderson and Rene Meshake discuss kinship (relations and relationships) in research through storytelling (2019). Through experiences with each other, Anderson defines research as reconciliation (or decolonisation) by saying that “co-researchers are good for each other” and goes on to add that research should “develop kinship” between its researchers, subjects, material, and more (2019, 252). My role as an Indigenous researcher, therefore, is a highly relational one. This not only helped me to create respectful research methods and habits, but reminded me that the relationships I was fortunate to build through my research are what truly matter. It also, as will become clear throughout the rest of this thesis, viewing them as relations influenced my understanding of my participants and ultimately helped me form the conclusions of this research. This research cannot exist without relationship building through talking face-to-face to practitioners, undertaking respectful fieldwork, and by viewing languages, objects and the literature I examine as ancestors with whom I have a connection and relationship.

Autoethnography and ethnography

As my research focuses on the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners, and I am an Indigenous museum practitioner, it makes sense to include autoethnography as one of my research methods. Though this study wasn't entirely conducted or written through autoethnography, it is still relevant as a methodological approach as it reflects the ways in which my personal experiences influence and direct this research. There are several works that discuss

autoethnographic methods (Houston 2007; Denzin 2014; Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis 2015; Pensoneau-Conway 2017). Jennifer Houston (2007) provides a closer overview of autoethnography and its link with Indigenous researchers and research. In her description and defence of autoethnography as a valid Indigenous research method, Houston outlines the importance of storytelling to Indigenous researchers (2007). Backed up by Koot (2016), she illustrates that autoethnography is a form of storytelling, and therefore it fits within Indigenous epistemologies. Tony E. Adams, Stacy Holman Jones, and Carolyn Ellis define autoethnography as:

A research method that:

- Uses a researcher's personal experience to describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences.
- Acknowledges and values a research's relationships with others.
- Uses a deep and careful self-reflection — typically referred to as “reflexivity” to name and interrogate the intersections between self and society, the particular and the general, the personal and the political.
- Shows “people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles.”
- Balances intellectual and methodological rigor, emotion, and creativity.
- Strives for social justice and to make life better. (Adams et al. 2015)

All six of the qualities of autoethnographic research proposed by Adams et al. align with the values and principles of Indigenous methods. They make it impossible to conduct your research without relationship-building, allow for personal experience to be valid as a form of data, and create a sort of feedback loop in which the researcher must be constantly aware of, and willing to question their position, views and assumptions. These guidelines also directly involve the researcher in the research in inextricable ways. In autoethnographic methods the researcher is part of the research itself, this means that my research has not been conducted objectively, rather it is imperative that it was not. This is to say that who I am as a researcher absolutely impacts this research, just like who museum practitioners are as people impacts their practice.

Autoethnography, therefore, provides a foundation for research through discussion, Indigenous ways of being and understanding, and through stories told by subjects and

researchers. Though I did, in a sense, write this thesis using autoethnography, with my own personal experiences as a museum practitioner heavily informing the research and data analysis, I also used ethnographic methods. There were times, especially when conducting my research at Te Papa, where I was more methodologically grounded in an ethnographic or observational approach than an autoethnographic one. That is to say, there were times when I was an outside observer rather than a participant.

Ethnography, unlike autoethnography, is observation and research conducted as an outsider of sorts (Kwame Harrison 2018). Traditionally, it was employed by anthropologists as a form of somewhat objective, observational research (Shagrir 2016), but it has since evolved and expanded and now has many definitions (Kwame Harrison 2018). According to Shagrir, ethnographic research:

[E]nables understanding of life forms and systems of thought and behaviour in different cultures, organizations, and social systems, both cultural and political as reflected in daily conversations and local events. Ethnography provides rich and wide-ranging insights into actual reality, ways of life, social interactions and peoples' perceptions as expressed by the actions and the surroundings in which they live. It enables seeing entire phenomena, understanding their complexity and significance, and making generalisations on human behaviour in general. (2018, 9-10)

This is exactly why it is relevant for my research, as I sought to gain an understanding of a wider picture. I was interested in the experiences of individuals and what they might say about the institutions or systems in which they work. Ethnography has also allowed me to make this research an exercise in story-telling, sharing the story of not only my experience but the complex, intertwined stories of Indigenous museum practitioners at the CMH and Te Papa. Ethnography is interested in the ways that things are, and the ways in which people experience the world or a particular phenomenon (Kwame Harrison 2018). In the specific case of museums:

The value of the ethnographic method lies in its reliance on 'participant observation,' or, the collection of data through first-hand observation. The culture in question, in this case,

is that of museums and museological behaviour observed in a wide range of national and cultural contexts (Kreps 2003, 5).

Though ethnographic (and autoethnographic) methods lend themselves to this research, they are largely focused on the contemporary moment. They are pertinent to my exploration of the current state of museum practice and the current experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners but they do not necessarily focus on the future. In order to support the change-making and future-focused nature of this research I have turned to action research.

Action Research

As an Indigenous museum practitioner conducting research on museum practice, I came to the realisation that action research is a relevant and helpful way to structure my work. Action research provides me with a framework that supports the change-making and forward-looking nature of this research. Though it doesn't necessarily tie directly to Indigenous methodologies, it acts as another framing tool for this work. Action research is variously defined, and through an examination of a number of definitions of this research method, it has been described by Costello, who writes that it:

- Is referred to variously as a term, process, enquiry, approach, flexible spiral process and as cyclic.
- It has a practical, problem-solving emphasis.
- It involves research systematic, critical reflection and action.
- It aims to improve educational practice.
- Action is undertaken to understand, evaluate and change.
- Research involves gathering and interpreting data, often on an aspect of teaching and learning.
- Critical reflection involves reviewing actions undertaken and planning future actions (2003, 5-6).

The emphasis on not only identifying issues but employing problem-solving, critical reflection, action and change is what makes action research a valuable method in undertaking my research.

Half of this thesis is based in the contemporary moment, but the other half is entirely focused on problem-solving and change making, when it imagines a new world (Eight Fire) and a new kind of museum where the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners are positive.

In the case of museum studies research, participatory action research is often applied (Tzbazi 2013). Action research “has long been associated with projects that aim to examine an issue from the perspectives of the community members that are affected by the issue and to place a critical gaze on institutions and their practices,” (2013, 157) which makes it relevant and useful in grounding my research as I seek to understand the issues faced specifically by Indigenous museum practitioners, and the changes they would like to see. It is critical for me to have a methodological grounding that recognises and supports the real, active, change-making potential of Indigenous dreams.

Conclusion

In addition to working within Indigenous perspectives, ways of researching, relationships in research, and my own sense of values (via autoethnography), the goal of this research is to change museum practice. By operating through this research design, I worked with, and not against this goal. My research methods, which will be described in the following section, were built on these general approaches and act as their practical realisation. Moreover, the varied Indigenous methods with which I engaged in this section justify the way in which I conducted my fieldwork (despite limitations), because I privileged Indigenous voices and expertise through my methods.

Research Methods

My research methods can be broken into the following sections:

- Case studies
- Semi-structured interviews
- Observational research

Case Studies

My data are centred on two case studies that have allowed me to narrow the focus of the research. They focus on an in-depth exploration of the experiences of Indigenous museum

practitioners working in museums during the Seventh Fire. Case studies are an effective way to undertake and structure my research due to their practical elements. This is even more relevant in the case of this thesis, as I centre myself in a museum practice landscape. Case studies use real-world examples to demonstrate larger theories (Yin 1981). Robert Yin writes that case studies are methods that can be used when “[a]n empirical inquiry must examine a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (98).

Based on this, it is clear that case studies are a suitable approach for this research, as I examine a contemporary phenomenon (museum practice) and case studies provide a structured way to go about this. Yin also notes that case studies “can be used to test theory” (1981, 101), this suggests the presence of theory even when research is practice-based, which, based on the discussion of “practice theory” by McCarthy (2015) makes case studies highly relevant in museum studies. Case studies can also lend themselves to ethnographic and autoethnographic research. In my case, as an Indigenous museum practitioner, I couldn’t help but be part of the case studies that I undertook, though I am still arguably writing this thesis from the perspective of an observer rather than a participant. I am part of Yin’s “phenomenon” in each of my case studies, simply based upon who I am (though I am more clearly part of the “phenomenon” at the CMH) (Houston 2007; Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis 2015; Koot 2016).

The two case studies I selected for this research were: The Canadian Museum of History (CHM) and The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa). I selected these case studies because they are similar institutions (national museums) and therefore maintain the strength and validity of the comparison. They also exist within settler colonial nations (colonised largely by the British) and are of a similar size and age, with both museums opening in their modern forms the late twentieth century (Vodden and Dyck 2005; McCarthy 2011).

I decided to focus on each of these museums in general, rather than one area of the museum as this allows for a better cross section of practitioners to be included. Moreover, it created the space for practitioners to tell me what they have worked on without feeling limited to talking about specific areas of the museum like exhibitions, or behind the scenes practice. This resulted in richer and unexpected data that has the potential to be more broadly applicable to other museums. It also makes clear that Indigenous voices can be present in sections of museum practice that are not necessarily Indigenous-focused, or are otherwise unexpected.

Interviews

The data collected for my case studies is largely made up of interviews with museum staff, with most of the questions focused on their exhibition development practice, and their practice around Indigenous languages. The interview questions were more focused on the front of house and on Indigenous languages as they were designed for a slightly different project, with earlier iterations of my topic focusing on language as a marker of voice. It is therefore serendipitous that the themes which emerged from my interviews tell the story that they do, and I have been compelled to shift my topic in order to honour my participants and the stories that mean something to them. In particular, the addition of a question about dreaming and aspirations, suggested by my advisor Awhina Tamarapa, has irrevocably altered this research.

Broadly, as a research method, conducting interviews was extremely rewarding as it is not simply about extracting data but learning from and building a relationship with the participants. Steinar Kvale writes “[t]he research interview is an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee” highlighting the relationship-building elements of interviews (2007, 2). As was discussed in earlier sections, relationships are an important factor in Indigenous research, meaning this research method fits well with my research topic. In addition, oral testimony from museum staff is in keeping with my choice to use Indigenous methodologies as this is a form of history-keeping used by First Nations people (Irwin and Miller 1997). In fact,

oral traditions of Aboriginal peoples include: storytelling, political discourse, song, prayer, teachings, gossip, and daily conversation. Oral traditions are the repositories of all knowledge and history for Aboriginal nations and communities from generation to generation. (Hanna 2000, 3)

Interviews have maintained my connection to Indigenous methods and helped me gain a picture of the current relationships between Indigenous peoples and museums in Canada and New Zealand respectively, at least from one side. The interviews conducted for this research were semi-structured, allowing for a freer flow of conversation and providing space for the practitioners being interviewed to share their own stories and thoughts. My aim was to guide the

conversation but not dictate it. In this way, I sought to give my participants agency and to acknowledge their expertise and experiences. Anne Galletta and William Cross suggest breaking a semi-structured interview into three segments:

1. The opening segment where the interviewer and interviewee develop a rapport, questions in this section are general and more conversational;
2. The middle segment where questions become more specific and aim to address specific parts of the research topic
3. The concluding segment where the conversation becomes more general and opens up to the possibility of reviewing what was said in the course of the interview, and to consider its theoretical implications, generally this is the segment where broader critical reflection takes place.

(2013, 46-51)

With this structure in mind, I used this set of draft questions (edited based on the participant I was interviewing at the time) to structure my interviews:

1. Could you please tell me your full name and your iwi affiliations/nation?

IF INDIGENOUS ASK QUESTIONS 2 AND 2a

2. Does your Indigenous heritage influence and/or direct your museum practice?
 - a. If so, then how does it influence your practice?

3. Do you speak any Indigenous languages?

IF YES – ask questions 4 and 5

IF NO – skip to 6

4. Can you tell me which one(s)?
5. How does this language, if at all, factor into your work?
6. Can you please describe your role and core responsibilities in the museum?
7. Can you talk about the exhibition development process at Te Papa/the CMH in terms of your involvement? Especially as a Māori/an Indigenous museum practitioner?

- a. At what step would you say the inclusion of Indigenous languages begins to be discussed and/or actioned? If actioned, can you give more specific examples or information on what this would look like?
8. Can you talk a bit about your personal role, if any, in the inclusion of Indigenous languages at the museum?
9. Have you worked on the inclusion of any Indigenous languages in specific exhibitions or specific sections of exhibitions? If so, can you elaborate?
10. Do you feel that you have the ability to influence the ways in which Indigenous languages are included in the museum's exhibitions?
11. How has the museum managed/worked with Indigenous languages in the past?
12. How do you feel your behind-the-scenes museum practice is reflected in the museum's permanent exhibitions?
 - a. Is this especially relevant to Indigenous language inclusion?
13. As a museum practitioner (and/or as an Indigenous person) what are some hopes or aspirations you have for Te Papa/the CMH or museums in general?
14. Do you have any further thoughts you'd like to share on the topics we've discussed?

In terms of the participants in my interviews, there were fifteen key practitioners who I intended to interview at both Te Papa and the CMH. Unfortunately, some were either unavailable or uncomfortable speaking about my topic. The experiences of Indigenous people in colonial institutions like national museums can be fraught and though I would have loved to speak to all fifteen practitioners on my initial list, I am cognizant of the issues within the field that prevented them from speaking with me. The following are the interviewees from each museum:

CMH:

1. Dean Oliver (Director, Research) — As a director Oliver was able to provide insight on Indigenous staffing, policies around Indigenous content and research, and the goals the CMH has for its future museum practice.
2. John Moses (at the time Supervisor, Repatriation) — Moses has worked in museums and heritage in Canada since the 1980s and provided a look back at the kinds of experiences he's had as an Indigenous museum practitioner over the last three decades. He was able

to provide a glimpse of what has and hasn't changed and where he sees the field going in the future.

3. Karen Ryan (Curator, Northern Canada) — Ryan curated an exhibition called *Death in the Ice: The mystery of the Franklin expedition (Death in the Ice)* which was heavily influenced by Inuit voices and she provided information on the process of bringing their voices into a travelling exhibition.
4. Gaëlle Mollen (Coordinator, RBC Indigenous Internship Program) — Mollen is Innu and works with the next generation of Indigenous museum practitioners and I was interested in her perspective on what an Eighth Fire museum might look like based on that experience.
5. Jonathan Lainey (former Curator, First Peoples) — Lainey represented the experience of an Indigenous curator at the museum and provided commentary on the different ways that Indigenous museum practitioners work, in particular he provided insight on the importance of relationships and personal networks to Indigenous museum practitioners.

Te Papa:

1. Arapata Hakiwai (Kaihautū) — as the person in the top co-management position at Te Papa (and specifically in a Māori role) Hakiwai was able to speak to Te Papa's priorities around hiring, policy and the general experiences of Māori staff.
2. Puawai Cairns (Director Audience and Insight) — Cairns' perspective as a former exhibition developer, former curator and director of Mātauranga Māori and current Director of Audience and Insight lent to a broader perspective on Te Papa and experiences of Māori staff across the museum.
3. Dougal Austin (Acting Director and Senior Curator Mātauranga Māori) — Austin has a long history with Te Papa and his perspective as an expert not only in his field but on the operations of Te Papa provided this research with a look at the realities of working for an institution like Te Papa.
4. Sean Mallon (Senior Curator, Pacific Histories and Cultures) — Mallon's perspective as a researcher in museum and heritage studies, coupled with his extensive curatorial experience provided unique insight. Mallon was also the only museum practitioner I

interviewed at Te Papa who isn't Māori and therefore he represents a look at some of the experiences of Sāmoan staff.

5. Matariki Williams (Curator, Mātauranga Māori) — Williams' experience as a Māori curator, especially as a young woman, over the last several years provided information and insight into the experience of wāhine Māori working in museum spaces. Her varied interests in art, heritage and storytelling factored into my choice to interview her.
6. Paora Tibble (Iwi Development Adviser) — Tibble was the former writer at Te Papa and as such could provide insight on the museum's use of te reo Māori over its history, and his current position as Iwi Development Adviser provided insight on the experiences of Māori staff who work with external stakeholders.
7. Ranea Aperahama (Māori writer) — Aperahama, as the current writer, provided a look at how Te Papa tells stories in te reo Māori and how Māori voices might be included throughout the museum via their language.
8. Huhana Smith (former Senior Curator Māori, currently Head of School, Whiti o Rehua School of Art, Massey University) — Smith has been involved with Te Papa throughout her career but also represented an outside perspective on what the museum (and museums broadly) can change in order to be better places for Indigenous people.

All of these practitioners were chosen for interviews because they represent a wide breadth of museum practitioners at each museum. They cover the following areas: curation, research, repatriation and object-related work, Indigenous relations (especially external) and other more specific roles related to Indigenous peoples. They provided a cross-section of museum practitioners and were a mix both Indigenous and non-Indigenous (though in the end 83% of the participants self-identify as Indigenous).

Observational research

In addition to case studies and interviews, I conducted some observational research in exhibition spaces in order to grasp how current museum exhibitions make use of Indigenous languages, objects and design to convey stories and to act as representatives of Indigenous voices.

Observational research is sometimes grouped into ethnographic research methods, as outlined in the previous section (Angrosino 2007), but it is also understood as a tool for capturing the non-

verbal (Angrosino 2007). In the case of museum exhibitions, the space can only speak to me via my own observations. My observational research largely took the form of visiting exhibitions, photographing objects and labels in order to keep track of those that were relevant and taking notes on areas where, after conducting interviews, I was able to see Indigenous voices coming through.

Though this research method is relatively self-explanatory, and at times secondary to the interviews I conducted, it did still inform my results. My case study at Te Papa was enriched by my observational research, and this is evident when that case is compared with CMH case study. The data collected at Te Papa was made richer by my ability to visit the museum spaces. The Te Papa case study is consequently slightly longer and more detailed (this is also due to other factors like having more participants at Te Papa).

The research process

My research was approved by the Human Ethics Committee in the first half of 2020 after some back and forth which will be described in the following section. Once I obtained ethical approval, I began the process of undertaking my fieldwork at Te Papa. I started with Te Papa as I was unable to travel (my fieldwork began just after the first lockdown, in 2020). I was hoping that I'd be able to complete my Te Papa fieldwork and reschedule my planned trip to Canada for later in the year or early 2021. Though this didn't happen, as the COVID-19 pandemic was much more serious than I originally anticipated, this was still a good choice as it allowed me to work through my interview questions with museum practitioners who I already knew (I had met some Te Papa participants through events like a hui, or by having coffees with them before I began my fieldwork), and who were more comfortable with my research topic than their Canadian counterparts and therefore more open with me.

Each participant was sent an email with two documents attached: the first was an explanation of my research and the second was an ethics form that explained their rights and how the data I collected through their interviews would be used and stored. Some participants requested that I send the interview questions in advance, and some were happy to receive them on the day of the interview. For their in-person interviews I met the Te Papa participants at the museum and we spoke in meeting rooms in Te Papa's back of house spaces. For my Zoom interviews, I called each participant from my house, so that only I was present, in order to

maintain their privacy if they decided to withdraw from the study (none of them did). Each interview began with a sort of informal chat, giving participants the opportunity to ask any questions about my research and to establish a relationship outside of the structure of the interview. I then asked them to sign the consent form if they were willing to participate (all of them were), and once the form was signed I asked them if they were ready for me to begin recording. For the in-person interviews consent forms were signed in hard copy and for the Zoom interviews the participants signed the forms and emailed them to me. Each interview was recorded on a digital recorder and on my iPhone's voice memo app as a backup, and I took some notes during the interview. The notes were mostly focused on emerging themes that would later help my analysis of the data. As a thank you, I gave each in-person participant a small medicine bundle of white sage, which came from the community museum in my home community of Pikwàkanagàn, and a \$20 book voucher. I sent the Zoom participants \$20 gift vouchers for bookstores, but unfortunately couldn't give them white sage.

Interviews lasted between thirty to sixty minutes and varied in detail. Some participants sent me further notes, comments and photographs after their interviews (or provided me with printed notes in-person). After conducting the interviews I re-listened to the recordings and transcribed any relevant quotes, these were shared with the participants and their ability to edit, delete quotes was reiterated, I also reminded them that they were still able to withdraw from the study if they wanted to. Some participants replied to these emails, the only changes that were requested were the correction of some typos, and editing their quotes to make them more concise (removing crutch words and phrases like "um" or "you know"). The quotes were put into an excel spreadsheet and organised under different themed headings, these headings were wide-ranging and didn't all end up in the finished product, but this process helped me to see where Indigenous voices appear in museums, as there were clear groupings of quotes under thematic headings like: objects, language, or relationships. Some of those headings have become sub-sections in my case study chapters.

Observational research, as noted above, was conducted throughout the process. I took photographs and read through labels in exhibition spaces at Te Papa. When I began the research I anticipated the observational research being a much larger part of my fieldwork, but in reality it was more supplemental as the photographs I took and data I collected in Te Papa are entirely informed by the interviews with museum practitioners.

Limitations

As this is a project that is confined to a relatively short word count and time period, it is necessarily limited. This section sets out the limitations of my research methodologically in an effort to be transparent about my results. Firstly, it sets out issues around limited timing and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it also outlines issues I faced as an Indigenous researcher and finally it addresses my scope and the limitations of my sample.

When I began this research I had a very well-planned out, if optimistic, research schedule. Originally, I had intended to conduct the first half of my fieldwork in Canada from May to August 2020. This fieldwork was to include in-person semi-structured interviews and visits to exhibitions at the CMH. The next step would be some initial data analysis, and some drafting of the first case study chapter(s). I then intended to conduct the New Zealand portion of my fieldwork, using the same methods, from September of 2020 through to February 2021.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, this entire plan was changed. Not only was my schedule altered, but so was my plan to conduct in-person visits and interviews in Canada. The CMH, one of my two case studies, has been closed to both staff and the public off and on since March 2020. New Zealand went into a hard lockdown on the 25th of March, 2020 at 11:59pm, which meant staying home for a minimum of four weeks, and effectively losing two months of fieldwork time. There was a further lockdown in August and September of 2021, which once again impacted my ability to collect in-person data and access research materials. This led me to pivot my research, focusing more on Te Papa as I was unable to do an equal amount of fieldwork at the CMH.

At the same time, I was in the process of applying for ethical approval for my fieldwork. On the 3rd of March, 2020 I submitted my human ethics application for the first time, it was reviewed by a committee member and on the 5th of March was returned to me for amendments before it would be submitted for review by the Human Ethics Committee (HEC). I completed the requested amendments and resubmitted the application on the 6th of March. On the 5th of May, 2020, the HEC reviewed my application and requested further changes. In the note requesting changes, the statements of my Indigenous heritage were put into quotes multiple times and in different contexts, making it seem like I had to prove my genealogy.

I have included this anecdote here as an indicator of the experiences of Indigenous academics and museum practitioners. I have first-hand experience of the kinds of critiques and doubts that get cast on Indigenous people, our identities, experiences and our work in our fields. This, as will become clear in the following chapters, is reflective of the experiences of many Indigenous museum practitioners and therefore felt not only relevant but essential to include in this thesis. As an Indigenous person, I feel it is my duty to work in ways that support and align with my culture, and to write or create outputs that are accessible to and respectful of Indigenous peoples and knowledge. Having to fight for the validity of not only my methods (which would have been no issue given that there does need to be theoretical grounding for the methods a researcher selects), but the validity of my very identity not only altered my timeline but made this research much harder to conduct in an Indigenous way. I felt the need to alter my methods to fit a westernised standard in order to receive the necessary ethical permissions. I do not argue that I was facing racism, at least not in an overt sense, but I do wonder if the heritages of pākehā or white researchers are questioned the same way. This limited me by causing lost time, and causing me to reconsider my methodological approach.

Finally, in order to conduct this research within a relatively short time frame and to maintain a manageable scope I chose to largely only interview Indigenous museum practitioners. This is because, for the sake of my topic, they were the most relevant voices. Choosing to interview mostly Indigenous museum practitioners fit within my methodological approach by privileging Indigenous voices. Through building on Linda Tuhiwai Smith's explanation of Kaupapa Māori, I sought to undertake Indigenous research by and for Indigenous people. Out of my 12 participants 10 identify as Indigenous, meaning that 83% of my participants represent the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners at two national museums. While I seek to privilege these voices, I do have to acknowledge the limitations of choosing this sample group (for lack of a better or more personal term).

Firstly, the smaller number of participants overall means that I could only capture some experiences in my discussion. While this is an area where I'd suggest further research, my small group of participants meant that—at least for the Aotearoa participants—I had the chance to develop a better set of relationships with these people. This is incredibly important to me as an Indigenous researcher, and aligns with my choice to view research as not only an act conducted by an individual but rather a collaborative, relationship-building process.

The second major limitation of focusing on mostly Indigenous practitioners is that I cannot necessarily apply my findings to museums (or the field) as a whole. The experiences of these practitioners, as will be made clear in this thesis, have many similarities and are useful for understanding Indigenous museum practice as it exists in the contemporary moment, but they are not necessarily useful for understanding museum practice as a whole. This limitation splits into two major issues: the first being that I have no way of knowing if Indigenous practitioners are the only ones who experience these issues, and therefore have no way of knowing if this is a strictly Indigenous problem; and secondly, I cannot offer general commentary on the state of museum practice as a whole.

While these limitations appear to leave gaps in my research, I argue that this is acceptable as my research does not seek to answer generalised questions about museum practice. Instead, it seeks to understand contemporary *Indigenous* museum practice, and to understand the individualised experiences of the practitioners who have participated in this study. It is also a future-focused project that seeks to imagine a different kind of museum practice through the eyes of Indigenous museum practitioners, not to focus entirely on contemporary museums and museum practice.

Conclusion

My research design was created to ensure that I could honour my Indigenous ontological approach while still conducting ‘valid’ research. By grounding this work in Indigenous methodologies like Kaupapa Māori (Tuhiwai Smith 1999), and research as relation (Meshake and Anderson 2019; Wilson 2019), I created a research design that supported my goal of privileging Indigenous peoples’ experiences and voices. The use of non-Indigenous-specific methods like autoethnography, ethnography also supported my personal role in this research. As someone who is part of the phenomenon that I was observing and researching, it was appropriate to employ these methods in some moments, as this allowed for storytelling and for my own opinions and personal experiences to inform the research and strengthen it. It also strengthened my ability to form relationships by removing any sense of objectivity and allowed me to bond with the participants as someone with similar experiences. Action research was also critical in the structuring of this research, it allowed me to pursue a project that is future-focused and that not only seeks to identify the issues of the current moment, but to offer solutions and change-

making ideas. The goal of this research is to imagine a future where Indigenous museum practitioners can work in Indigenous ways and be safe in doing so, and without action research I would not have been able to craft such a forward-looking and action-oriented study. The methods I employed (case studies, interviews and observation), despite their limitations (as listed in the previous section) also supported the goals of this research. They were the correct methods for gathering data and for gaining a better understanding of the current experiences and hopes and dreams of museum practitioners at the two case study museums. Now, having explained my research design, in the following chapters I present the data I collected, beginning with the CMH case study.

Section I: The Seventh Fire

Chapter 1

Canada and the Canadian Museum of History:

Background, History and Context

This chapter seeks to contextualise my first case study, the Canadian Museum of History (CMH). It provides a picture of the current situation in Canada, as a Seventh Fire nation and, more specifically, the CMH as a Seventh Fire institution. In the following sections I lay out a general picture of Canada as a nation including: the pre-colonial and post-contact histories of Canada; several documents relevant to the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada and our relationships with the Canadian government; the impacts of colonialism on Indigenous peoples; current demography of Indigenous peoples in the country; and the general state of Indigenous languages in Canada. I then provide a history of the CMH from its earliest inception to its modern building, and the land on which it sits, in order to trace a line from its roots to its current practice and to provide context for the institution in which my Canadian participants currently work.

Pre-Canada

Before the European invasion, and long before the creation of ‘Canada’ as a nation, the land that we, Indigenous people, call Turtle Island was home to diverse nations of Indigenous peoples (First Nations in Canada). In our understanding of how we came to be, Indigenous peoples have been on the land that is now called North America since time immemorial. In particular, stories tell of Sky Woman, or the first woman, who fell from the sky and landed on the watery planet below (Kimmerer 2013, 3-5). Sky woman brought seeds and plants with her, and when she landed in the water, the animals resolved to help her, as our story tells—a great turtle took it on itself to give the woman refuge, but the turtle couldn’t grow the plants, so the animals took turns diving to the bottom of the water to bring up dirt to make land for Sky Woman (2013, 3-5). Finally, Muskrat was successful and brought dirt up from the bottom, and when it was placed on the turtle’s back Turtle Island (North America) was formed (2013, 3-5). It’s on this land that

Canada now sits, and through this story some Indigenous people establish ourselves as having been on that land since it was formed.

Historians tend to divide pre-contact Canada into six main groups, organised geographically from east to west: Woodland First Nations, Iroquoian First Nations, Plains First Nations, Plateau First Nations, Pacific Coast First Nations and First Nations of the Mackenzie and Yukon River Basins (First Nations in Canada), I would also add Northern or Arctic Indigenous people to this list. Each of these groups had distinct social and political structures as well as lifestyles based on their particular geographical area (First Nations in Canada). Some were nomadic and others were more static (First Nations in Canada). Indigenous peoples in the Americas (for the sake of this section it is often better to look at the continent as a whole) were accomplished agriculturalists, who “domesticated a variety of plants and animals, including corn (maize), beans, squash, potatoes and other tubers, turkeys, llamas, and alpacas, as well as a variety of semidomesticated species of nut- and seed-bearing plants” (Barrington et al. 2014, 101).

Indigenous groups used complex governance structures, for example the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) democracy - in which tribal members had “universal voting rights (regardless of gender or property status), a separation of civil and military authority, and broad civil and economic rights” (Crawford 1994). Some groups were matrilineal and most focused on kinship models (Barrington et al. 2014). Barrington et al. write about North American Indigenous societies in general:

Socially, most indigenous polities emphasized the importance of extended families and corporate kin groups, matrilineal or bilateral kinship, little or no consideration of legitimacy or illegitimacy, households led by women or by women and men together, a concept of labour that recognized all work as work, highly expressive religious traditions, and cajoling and other nonviolent forms of discipline for children and adults.

Economically, native ideals emphasized communitarian principles, especially the sharing of use rights to land (for example, by definition, land was community, not private, property) and the self-sufficiency of the community or kin group, with wealthier households ensuring that poorer neighbours or kin were supplied with the basic necessities (2014, 105).

All this is to say, pre-colonialism Indigenous peoples in the Americas had complex, thriving communities with our own social structures. This is not to say that the common narrative of the “Noble Savage” or the “ecological Indian,” defined as “‘soft spoken’ people who reject ‘the white man’s laws and practises’ and remain loyal to ‘traditional land and water use patterns’” (Tallbear in Smithers 2015, 84) and is accurate, nor that there wasn’t conflict and strife. These concepts come from European opinions on Indigenous peoples in the Americas, which viewed Indigenous people as less civilised than Europeans but more “noble” in their understanding of and reverence for nature (Smithers 2015, 85).

Early Colonial Period

Colonisation of Canada is tied with the story of the colonisation of the rest of the North American continent. This is generally dated back to 1492 when Columbus made his first journey to the Americas (Library of Congress: 1492: an ongoing voyage). Though Columbus is spoken about as the first European to make it to North America, he was actually preceded by Norse explorers (Wallace 2021). Leif Erikson is widely believed to be the first European to land in North America, and “L’Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site [in Newfoundland] contains the excavated remains of a complete 11th-century Viking settlement, the earliest evidence of Europeans in North America” (UNESCO: L’Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site).

By the early 16th century, Europeans were creating “permanent” settlements in what would become Canada (Timeline: Colonization). Relations with Indigenous people in this period were largely tied to two things: the fur trade and missionary work (Morse 1969, 1). The first Jesuit missionaries arrived in what is now Canada in 1611 and went to work converting Indigenous people (Timeline: Colonization). Europeans in the Americas were interested in beaver pelts as they were naturally waterproof and made excellent material for hats back in Europe (Morse 1969, 1). The fur trade forged relationships between Indigenous people and Europeans as our canoes and knowledge of the land and river systems meant we could access areas Europeans might otherwise struggle to find or get to (Morse 1969).

The fur trade, along with general empire-building goals, pushed Europeans to move further and further west to claim lands and their resources (Morse 1969). In 1670 the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) was founded and “[t]he HBC established an English presence in the Northwest and a competitive route to the fur trade centred on Montréal” (Timeline:

Colonization). They brought with them diseases, foods and alcohol that Indigenous people were not used to, along with their ideas of “civility” (Timeline: Colonization). What is important to note is this east-to-west colonisation means that the linguistic and cultural diversity of Indigenous peoples living further to the west are better preserved than those in the east (though they suffered greatly nonetheless) (Timeline: Colonization).

In 1677 one of the first major treaties between Indigenous peoples and Europeans was signed. This was the:

Silver Covenant Chain Treaty:

This wampum treaty between Britain and the Haudenosaunee represented an open and honest communication between two peoples. Subsequent wampum treaties reinforce this idea, as well as the idea of mutual interest and peace. Such wampum treaties oblige the parties to help each other, in war if necessary, should they be asked. (Timeline: Colonization).

This marked the beginning of treaties between Indigenous people and Europeans in the Americas, it also represents an understanding for some, if not all, Indigenous people (even if it might have been one-sided) that Indigenous nations and European nations were equal and had their own diplomatic powers and rights (Timeline: Colonization).

Confederation and building ‘Canada’

‘Canada’ was passed back and forth between French and British control for the early colonial period, with the battle of the Plains of Abraham solidifying the British claim in 1759 (Buckner et al. 2012). Though Canada was not yet a country it was the name of two provinces (Upper and Lower Canada, which eventually became Ontario and Quebec and were named for the direction in which the Saint Lawrence river flowed) (Hall and Foot 2019). The Canadas operated as the economic and governance centre of the British colonies (in the Americas) —called British North America (BNA), that weren’t part of the United States (Hall and Foot 2019). In Canada, Confederation “refers to the process of federal union in which the British North American colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Province of Canada joined together to form the Dominion of Canada” (Waite et al. 2019). It was a slow process, with the last of the country’s

provinces and territories joining in 1999 (Nunavut) and with others joining through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Waite et al. 2019).

Building Canada as the nation we now recognise really began in the nineteenth century (Waite et al. 2019). For the sake of brevity in this thesis, I will focus on only the major events that led up to confederation. This is not to say that the formation of Canada as a nation was simple, rather its detailed story is not particularly relevant to this thesis. The idea of Canada as its own state was first properly discussed in 1839 by Lord Durham in the *Report on the Affairs of British North America*, which later became commonly known as the Durham Report (Waite et al. 2019). In this document, Durham proposed the unification of Upper and Lower Canada into a single state, which did happen in 1841 with the Act of Union, from which point both Upper and Lower Canada were governed by one body - the Province of Canada (Waite et al. 2019).

By the early 1860s, confederation was being discussed more seriously in Canada (Waite et al. 2019). This was “inspired in part by fears that BNA would be dominated and even annexed by the United States” with their ongoing civil war (Waite et al. 2019) and the unification of BNA into its own nation appeared to be a solution to these fears (2019). This was not unfounded, with the War of 1812 (discussed in literature review) in relatively recent memory, the idea of the United States seeking to annex parcels of BNA/Canadian land was a very real possibility. There were also economic reasons for the creation of Canada as a nation, with the massive changes wrought by the American Civil War, the free trade agreements between the two territories had ended and a new, unified colony would be better placed to create a new free trade agreement (Waite et al. 2019).

Despite all of this, the idea of a proper, unified country didn't seem to take hold until the Charlottetown conference (on Prince Edward Island) in 1864, when the Atlantic provinces also began to discuss some sort of unification (Waite et al. 2019). The Charlottetown conference was quickly followed by the Quebec conference during which “the delegates passed 72 Resolutions. These explicitly laid out the fundamental decisions made at Charlottetown, including a constitutional framework for a new country” (Waite et al. 2019). It was at this conference when the idea of federalism was really established in what would become Canada, with the ability for the massive land mass to act as one entity when necessary (2019). The final step to confederation was the London Conference, which

was the final stage of translating the 72 Resolutions of 1864 into legislation. The result was the *British North America Act, 1867* (now the *Constitution Act, 1867*). It was passed by the British Parliament and was signed by Queen Victoria on 29 March 1867. It was proclaimed into law on 1 July 1867 (Waite et al. 2019).

This is the moment that Canada still celebrates as its legal birth, though it did not include all thirteen provinces and territories that now make up Canada.

Through the whole story of Canada's journey to confederation there is a glaring absence: there are no Indigenous people mentioned. This is due to the fact that Indigenous peoples were not consulted in this process, though it was mostly taking place in their home (Waite et al. 2019). In fact, "Indigenous peoples were not invited to or represented at the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences" (Waite et al. 2019). This is not particularly shocking to anyone who has read any sort of colonial history, but it likely would have been shocking for Indigenous peoples in Canada at the time. This is because there were a number of agreements and legislative documents that were supposed to establish a nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous nations and Britain, including the Royal Proclamation of 1763 (Waite et al. 2019), as well as individual treaties like the wampum treaty mentioned earlier in this chapter. The Royal Proclamation of 1763, in particular;

reserved land west of the Appalachian Mountains for Aboriginal peoples and committed the Crown to negotiating agreements with Aboriginal peoples and to purchasing land used, occupied, and owned by Aboriginal peoples in advance of issuing rights to settlers and others, and to do so in public without coercion (Fenge and Aldridge 2015, xvii).

This means that forming a new country on this land and creating a new government should have included Indigenous people. Instead, a number of treaties (literally referred to as the "numbered treaties") were drawn and signed in the years following Canada's 1867 confederation (Starblanket 2019).

The Numbered Treaties, according to Starblanket, "play a foundational role in the story of Canadian nation-building" (2019, 444). They were "negotiated between 1871 and 1921" (2019, 444) and they were largely negotiated by the British with the goal of taking Indigenous

lands and expanding the British rule further into Canada's west (2019, 444). Starblanket notes that the "[t]reaties also represent important national symbols, recognized as playing a foundational role in the formation of a nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous peoples and European newcomers" (2019, 444). The numbered treaties brought in new lands to British North America, and it is not uncommon today to hear Indigenous people and non-Indigenous Canadians refer to themselves as treaty [#] people or from treaty [#] territory.

The final step, really, in the building of the Canada we know today took place in 1982 (Polk 2019). It was at this point when Canada as a nation gained full control over its constitution, when it was patriated (2019, 2). This is to say, the constitution was finally brought to Canada from the UK (where it had been signed at the London Conference in 1867) and a Charter of Rights and Freedoms was added to it (Polk 2019, 2). Entrenched in the Canadian constitution, the:

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society (Constitution Act 1982).

Though these rights and freedoms are legally entrenched in the Canadian constitution, it does not necessarily mean that every Canadian has the same experiences of the country. This, it goes without saying, is particularly true for Indigenous peoples. I can see a number of reasons for this, including the ongoing impacts of colonialism and the legislative documents that emerged from colonialism, like the Indian Act which will be discussed in the following section.

The Indian Act

The first version of The Indian Act was passed in 1876 and it dictated who was a legal "Indian," or, in other terms, who had legal Indigenous status in Canada (Indian Act 1985). It laid out the rights and freedoms and legal limitations of Indigenous people (First Nations, Inuit and Metis) in Canada (2020). It has been amended many times through its history, sometimes in favour of Indigenous rights and other times not (2020). The Indian Act relates to the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which was touched upon earlier in this chapter, though it is not the same legal document (2020). It is also the reason that legal documentation uses the term "Indian" to this day, even

though it is generally a term that is considered offensive in modern (at least the socially aware parts) Canada.

The last major amendment of the Indian Act took place in 1985. It is important, for the sake of this thesis, to understand the ways in which this piece of legislation impacts modern Indigenous people in Canada, and our ongoing experience of colonialism. The issue of the Indian Act is complex, some would argue for its abolishment, but this could lead to legal assimilation and loss of treaty rights, as the act does uphold these (Indian Act 1985). The act includes: the provision of reserves (crown land on which only status Indians can own property), determines who is a registered legal or status Indian (or other Indigenous person), it legally entrenches a paternalistic relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous people, where we are more wards of the state than our own people, it dictates our tax responsibilities, enfranchisement, and education (Indian Act 1985).

Residential Schools and the Sixties Scoop

Two of the most recent and major traumatic experiences for Indigenous peoples in Canada are the Indian Residential School system and the sixties scoop. Both of these were used as tools of systemic and forced assimilation of Indigenous people and, in particular, children by the Canadian government. For the sake of clarity, I will first outline the IRS system, then I will explain the sixties scoop. It should, however, be noted that these systems did exist simultaneously in the 20th century. It is important, in the context of this thesis, to understand both of these traumas as my interviewees discussed them and many have personally experienced these systems and their long-term impacts.

The Indian Residential Schools (IRS) system was an assimilationist project devised by the Canadian government, in partnership with Christian churches in Canada (Young 2015). It was created with the goal to “kill the Indian in the child” (Young 2015), in other words, to assimilate Indigenous children by forcing them to give up their cultural practices, Indigenous languages and any connection to their Indigenous identities in favour of white-European cultural practices and languages (Young 2015). This meant that they were punished for speaking their languages, and their relationships with family and other Indigenous peoples were heavily monitored and policed by those running the schools (Young 2015). This alone would have been a traumatic practice, but it was made worse by the rampant sexual, physical and psychological

abuse that was perpetrated by those who ran these schools against the children (Burrage et al. 2022). This system was started in the late 1860s, and through the rest of the nineteenth century and almost the entirety of the twentieth century Indigenous children were taken from their homes, families and communities and placed in these schools to be assimilated (Burrage et al. 2022). Children were stripped of their abilities to relate to their living family members and their ancestors, and as noted, were abused (Mosby 2013; Young 2015; Burrage et al. 2022). This abuse and alienation from community and kin has been correlated with high suicide rates and mental health issues amongst survivors and those experiencing intergenerational trauma from the IRS (Young 2015; Burrage et al. 2022).

The true horrors of these schools continue to emerge, with their records still being looked at and new information still coming to light. For example, in 2013, Canadian historian Ian Mosby published his shocking discovery of nutritional experiments being conducted in the 1940s and 1950s at some Manitoba residential schools (Mosby 2013). More recently, thousands of unmarked graves have been discovered on former IRS sites across Canada. In May of 2021 the remains of 215 children were discovered in an unmarked grave at a Kamloops IRS site (Stefanovich 2022) and since then more IRS sites have been investigated with at least 6,509 remains of children having been discovered (though this number is more of an estimate) as of September 2021 (Deer 2021). This trauma, it goes without saying, is still incredibly acute and raw. Indigenous people in Canada have personal connections to these losses and some of the lost children would still have been alive today if they had not been stolen by and murdered at these schools.

The last residential school closed in 1996 (NWAC) and through the duration of their existence it is estimated that at least 150,000 children were forced to attend (NWAC). In 2007 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was formed as part of the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*, with the goal of “[facilitating] reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities and all Canadians” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). The TRC spent years conducting research and speaking with over 6000 survivors and, after six years they published their reports (2015). The most commonly cited of these are the 94 Calls to Action, which set out tangible ways in which the government of Canada but also Canadians in general can act to strive for reconciliation (TRC: Calls to Action 2015). The call to action that is most relevant to this thesis is number 67:

We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [UNDRIP] and to make recommendations. (2015)

Since 2015 there has been some commitment to fulfilling this call to action, for example, “the Canadian Federal Government promised \$680,000 CAD to the Canadian Museums Association to use for re-working museum displays and labels, in collaboration with Indigenous people, and to include Indigenous perspectives in museums” (Wong 2019). From personal experience, referring to the TRC and UNDRIP is also a common practice among employees of the federal government and the GLAM sector in Canada.

The other relevant and major trauma faced by Indigenous peoples in the twentieth century was the sixties scoop. The sixties scoop “began in 1951, when amendments to the Indian Act gave the provinces jurisdiction over Indigenous child welfare where none existed federally and continued through the 1980s” (Fachinger 2019, 116). This resulted in the uplifting of children as an assimilationist tactic, achieved through removing Indigenous children from Indigenous environments (much in the way that residential schools were operating) and placing them under the care of white Canadians (Fachinger 2019). The sixties scoop has led to the loss of personal connections to Indigenous cultures and lineages and has essentially separated entire family lines from their Indigenous heritages (Fachinger 2019). Though we no longer connect it directly to the sixties scoop, the unnecessary uplifting of Indigenous children and mistreatment of them by the child welfare system continues today, with the number of Indigenous children in the child welfare system continuing to rise well into the twenty first century (Fachinger 2019, 116).

Moreover, even though the IRS system and the sixties scoop are historical events it is important to highlight that Canada is still an unsafe place for Indigenous peoples. In 2019 the report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released and called the rampant murders of Indigenous women and girls and lack of investigation by the RCMP and other police forces a genocide (2019, 5). Due to the dehumanisation of Indigenous people,

Indigenous women and girls are “12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than any other women in Canada. According to Statistics Canada, between 2001 and 2015, homicide rates for Indigenous women were nearly six times higher than for non-Indigenous women” (The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 2019).

There are also recent examples of attempted (or, unfortunately successful) land theft by the Canadian federal government and corporations, such as the Oka Crisis of 1990 in which a golf course was set to be built on Mohawk land and what began as a peaceful protest was escalated by non-Indigenous police and the Canadian military into a multi-month-long stand-off and occupation (de Bruin 2013). More recently, other protests against pipelines and other natural resource extraction have resulted in brutal treatment of Indigenous land and water protectors by the RCMP.

Current Demography of Indigenous people in Canada

Indigenous peoples in Canada, though incredibly diverse, have been somewhat lumped together in terms of demographics (Statistics on Indigenous People). For example, a commonly cited statistic is that as of 2016 Indigenous people made up 4.6% of the Canadian population, or 1,673,785 people in total (Statistics on Indigenous People), though this does not specify *who* exactly this portion of the population includes. This number is broken into three groups by Statistics Canada, based on the three official Indigenous groups in Canada: First Nations, Metis and Inuit, but does not offer further specificity within those groups.

Indigenous populations in Canada are fast-growing and tend to trend younger. “The average age of the Aboriginal population was 32.1 years in 2016—almost a decade younger than the non-Aboriginal population (40.9 years)” (Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census). This is important information in terms of museums’ abilities to tell relatable and engaging stories to, with and for Indigenous people. Moreover, it indicates the potential for increasing numbers of Indigenous professionals in all fields as there are just more of us and in terms of our populations, half of us are at an emerging professional age or younger. The growth of our populations is attributed to two factors: natural growth (i.e., longer life expectancies and high fertility) and more common self-identification (Aboriginal peoples in Canada). The uptick in self-identification is particularly interesting, given its potential to indicate less fear and stigma around identifying as Indigenous, whereas (speaking from personal and familial experience) in

the past identifying as Indigenous could be dangerous as it could result in children being taken away from families or other “social welfare” measures being used against Indigenous families.

There are more First Nations people in the Western provinces, with “over half of First Nations people living in British Columbia (17.7%), Alberta (14.0%), Manitoba (13.4%) and Saskatchewan (11.7%). By comparison, 30.3% of the non-Aboriginal population lived in the western provinces” (Aboriginal peoples in Canada). In the eastern provinces, however, there is still growth being documented in Indigenous communities, for example, the 2016 census showed that though only 7.5% of the First Nations population in Canada lived in Atlantic Canada, their population still more than doubled between 2006 and 2016 (Aboriginal peoples in Canada).

Métis, a demographic that is made up of a specific ethnic group who have mixed Indigenous and European heritage “with distinct traditions, culture and language” (Aboriginal peoples in Canada) live throughout Canada and are the most likely out of the three Indigenous groups in Canada to live in cities with two-thirds of their population living in urban centres (Aboriginal peoples in Canada). The Inuit population, on the other hand, are 72.8% based in Inuit Nunangat (in the arctic) with the largest Inuit populations outside of Inuit nunangat living in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, where the CMH is based (Aboriginal peoples in Canada).

Official languages and Indigenous languages

Canada, at the time of writing, has two official languages: English and French, as set out by the Official Languages Act (1985). This act sets out the fact that official federal documents must be written in both official languages, and this is visible in Canada’s national museums where all labels are bilingual (1985). Indigenous languages, however, are not part of this act. There is an Indigenous languages act (2019) in Canada, and its purpose is to:

- (a) support and promote the use of Indigenous languages, including Indigenous sign languages;
- (b) support the efforts of Indigenous peoples to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen Indigenous languages [...]
- (c) establish a framework to facilitate the effective exercise of the rights of Indigenous peoples that relate to Indigenous languages, including by way of agreements or arrangements referred to in sections 8 and 9;

- (d) establish measures to facilitate the provision of adequate, sustainable and long-term funding for the reclamation, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of Indigenous languages;
- (e) facilitate cooperation with provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous governments and other Indigenous governing bodies, Indigenous organizations and other entities in a manner consistent with the rights of Indigenous peoples and the powers and jurisdictions of Indigenous governing bodies and of the provinces and territories;
- (e.1) facilitate meaningful opportunities for Indigenous governments and other Indigenous governing bodies and Indigenous organizations to collaborate in policy development related to the implementation of this Act;
- (f) respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action numbers 13 to 15; and
- (g) contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as it relates to Indigenous language. (2019)

This act doesn't set out any legal requirement for Indigenous languages to appear in federal documents, rather it just seeks to protect Indigenous languages in a more general sense (Indigenous Languages Act 2019). One of the reasons why it's difficult to legislate the use of Indigenous languages is the sheer complexity of the languages themselves, the diverse languages that exist across the country and the high number of Indigenous languages in Canada. For context, Indigenous languages in the Americas are divided into language families including:

- Algonquian (or sometimes Anishinaabe) spans the eastern provinces of modern Canada into the eastern prairies, it is made up of six sub-language groups and more than 20 dialects;
- Dene (Athapaskan/Athabaskan/Athabaskan + Tlingit) spans "Canadian North and Alaska to the American southwest" (Asch and Filice 2021) and is made up of 18 sub-language groups;
- Eskimo-Aleut/Eskaleut spans the northern regions, including the Canadian north, Alaska, Greenland and Siberia, and is made up of two sub-language groups and nine dialects;

- Xaad Kil/Xaaydaa Kil/Haida, spans northern British Columbia, and Alaska, and is made up of two dialects in Canada;
- Iroquoian is spoken around the Great Lakes (across the Canada-US border) (Iroquoian Languages) and is made up of seven sub-language groups and multiple (unspecified) dialects;
- Ktunaxa/Kutenai/Kootenai spans “southeastern British Columbia, as well as in parts of Alberta, Idaho, Montana and Washington” (Walker 2018)
- Salishan, on the west coast is made up of twelve sub-languages and multiple (unspecified) dialects (Muckle 2014);
- Siouan, situated in the midwestern plains (across Canada-US border) includes four sub-language groups;
- Tsimshianic which is located in British Columbia is made up of four sub-language groups;
- Wakashan also found in British Columbia, is made up of five sub-language groups;
- Michif or Creole languages which are combinations of French and Indigenous languages. (Gallant 2022)



Figure 2 Map of Indigenous languages in Canada (Ball and Bernhardt 2008)

History of the Canadian Museum of History

Though the general history and demography of Canada is key to understanding the general context of the case study in the following chapter, it is also more specifically important to comprehend the way in which the CMH operates today, and how it, as an institution, is informed by its historical roots. In terms of periods in its history, I divide the CMH's founding and development into four major eras: 1832-1909, 1910-1968, 1969-1989, and post-1989. This is because the CMH in its current form largely kicked off in 1989, but the approximate 150-year period before this is also key to understanding its ideological grounding, as well as the ways in which the museum's collections were built.

In brief, the history of museums in Canada is tied to the history of colonialism (Harvey and Lammers 2016). The earliest forms of museums were collections used for education which were held by churches in Quebec and the Maritime provinces during the eighteenth century, which were the earliest parts of Canada to be colonised (Harvey and Lammers 2016). In 1831 the first more modern Canadian museum opened in Niagara Falls (Harvey and Lammers 2016). Within the next decade, as will be further outlined in the following sections, the Geological Survey of Canada was beginning to form and was beginning its collecting, this would eventually become the collections of multiple Canadian national museums (About: Our History). This outline, although brief, seeks to situate the CMH in the broader history of museums in Canada, and the following is a more in-depth exploration of the CMH's history.

1832-1910

The CMH's earliest roots pre-date Canada's 1867 confederation. In terms of its founding, the earliest significant date in the museum's history is cited as 1832, when "[t]he York Literary and Philosophical Society [petitioned] the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada to fund investigation of the province's geology, mineralogy and natural history" (About: History Timeline). By 1851, the Geological Survey of the province of Canada was formed and its director, William Edmund Logan had begun curatorial work, like creating a geological exhibition on Canada for the Great Exhibition in London (About: History Timeline). Logan was also responsible for expanding the geological survey's mandate, broadening it to include natural history (About: History Timeline). Around this time Logan also began advocating for the

collection of some “human history material” (About History Timeline). Around 1852 Logan began to recommend the creation of a museum to store and display the geological survey’s collection and in 1856 “[t]he Province of Canada [passed] an act which, among other things, [enabled] the GSC to establish a Geological Museum open to the public” (About: History Timeline). This was really the first version of the CMH.

In the decade following the opening of the Geological Museum, the institution became increasingly interested in ethnology collections and began hosting ethnological exhibitions (About: History Timeline). In 1862, the first of these ethnological exhibitions opened and is described by the CMH’s website as “a single display case containing First Peoples stone implements, stone pipes, and a few fragments of pottery” (About: History Timeline). In 1877 the survey’s “official mandate [was expanded] to include the study of modern flora and fauna, as well as ancient human history, traditions, languages and current living conditions in undeveloped parts of the country” (About: History Timeline).

This mandate shift was when we began to see the museum moving toward its current form, where it became a history (social) museum that focused on Indigenous topics as well as, more broadly, Canadian histories (About: History Timeline). This was also where the paternalistic roots of the museum really showed themselves, the GSC was established as an act of preservation for geological, natural and human history and as such sought to collect Indigenous objects and stories, through the lens that they were under threat of being lost (About: History Timeline). This suggests that at its foundation, the GSC, and by association the CMH were/are based on the idea that Indigenous people were/are disappearing or assimilating to the degree that our history must be collected and preserved as quickly as possible before it was lost.

The move toward a more social science-based mandate focused largely on anthropology and ethnology in this period (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 19). With the founding of the Royal Society of Canada in 1882, the museum moved further into a mandate to collect “specimens for a Canadian museum of archives, ethnology, archaeology and natural history” (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 19). This mandate shift brought in new scholarly partnerships, including the contracting of well-known anthropologist Franz Boas in 1888 (2005, 19). Boas was hired to collect anthropological and ethnographic material from the northwest of Canada on behalf of the Royal Society (and GSC) throughout the late 1880s (2005, 19). This push toward collecting ethnographic material, particularly from the west coast where the Haida and other Coast Salish

people live, contributed large amounts of material to the collections that still seem to influence the CMH today, with the modern museum's *Grand Hall* containing a number of totem poles and other northwest coastal objects.

1910 - 1981

Through extensive lobbying by members of the GSC and Royal Society, and through the general political, industrial and scholarly interest and concern over what to do with the survey's collections, a new museum building was finally funded in 1901 (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 24). By the early 20th century, the GSC had received a dedicated museum building (which still stands in Ottawa) (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 24; About: History Timeline). The Victoria Memorial Museum Building (VMMB) opened its doors to the public in 1911, serving as the first long term display of the GSC's collections (Vodden and Dyck 2005). The building itself went on to have a rich history, during which it served as the GSC's museum building, Canadian parliament (briefly), and in modern times the Canadian Museum of Nature, which was also formed from the work of the GSC (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 24). This was the first long term location of the GSC in Ottawa, Ontario as previously it had been based in Montreal, Quebec (Vodden and Dyck 2005).

During this time, the Royal Society and GSC continued to grow their First Nations collections, seeking to represent a broader set of "culture areas" relating to Indigenous people in Canada (About: History Timeline). This push was so intense that the museum was becoming increasingly "congested" (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 32) and was outgrowing its purpose-built museum. It seems that the focus still remained on the northwest coast and the arctic at this time, with a major arctic expedition being funded and happening between 1913 and 1916 (About: History Timeline). Much like the earlier prioritisation of ethnographic material from the northwest coast, this interest in the Arctic is still visible in the museum today, with large portions of the new museum's exhibitions including objects from the Arctic (Vodden and Dyck 2005).

All this eventually led to the creation of the National Museum of Canada on January 5, 1927 (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 40). At this point, the museum started to operate more like a modern-day museum, in terms of its departments and outputs. It began publishing its research, continued its collecting and exhibitions and, in the early 1930s, despite the financial insecurity of the Depression, it began its public outreach programmes (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 41). By 1935

public outreach was its own division within the museum and its goals were cited as “to further the Museum’s role as an educational institution and to overcome the ‘barrier of distance’ by bringing the wealth of the Museum to people all across the country” (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 42).

During WWII, the museum closed most of its exhibitions, maintaining only its ground floor shows, meanwhile the Topographical Survey took over a floor of the building to support war efforts (About: History Timeline). The museum continued to welcome visitors to its open exhibitions throughout the war, but only reopened the other exhibitions in 1947 (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 54). Due to its survival of the war the museum was well positioned in the early 1950s to network and align itself with newly formed heritage groups like the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), establishing itself not only within Canada but also on the world stage (Vodden and Dyck 2005). With this success, the museum continued its growth, hiring more full time permanent and contract staff (2005, 56), and adding to its collections. Its growth meant that the one National Museum (both organisation and building) was rapidly becoming too narrow in size and mandate to fit the collections (2005, 58). As such, the national museum was split up in 1956 into two branches: human history and natural history (2005, 58). Around this time, the Canadian War museum was also incorporated into the National museum, and the VMMB was given over to the two new branches when the national gallery and the geological survey moved out in 1959-1960 (2005, 58). Finally, the national museum (and its subsidiary branches) had the space to further expand.

Museum practice in Canada was furthered in 1967, when the *Indians of Canada Pavilion* opened as part of Canada’s centennial celebrations. This influential exhibition is described by Sherry Brydon:

Inside the pavilion, visitors were confronted with the abstention of Canadian peoples from the general celebration and with the message that for these peoples the century since Confederation had been one of repression, loss, and deterioration in lifestyle. In contrast to earlier exhibitions, the installations affirmed the contemporary value of cultural difference and the survival of traditional values and beliefs in the face of great odds (2011, 27).

This exhibition was ground-breaking for that reason, including contemporary Indigenous perspectives rather than relying solely on historical portrayals of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The exhibition “refuted the venerable doctrine of progress through assimilation inscribed by official government policy, academic texts, and museum displays” (Brydon 2011, 28). This exhibition is mentioned here because it inspires museum practice today, and is arguably part of the history of the CMH, in terms of the narratives that Canadian national museums rely on today. It is also an early example of Indigenous curatorial and museum practice in Canada with Indigenous peoples representing themselves rather than having a story told about them (Brydon 2011). Moreover, in the following chapters participants cite this exhibition as a ground-breaking moment and as an inspiration for their contemporary museum practice.

By 1968, the operations of the museum were undergoing another change. The National Museums of Canada Corporation was set up at this point, with the mandate to “administer Canada’s national museums” (About: History Timeline) and:

The National Museum [was] transferred to the National Museums of Canada Corporation under the Department of the Secretary of State. The Museum’s Human History Branch [became] the National Museum of Man; the Natural History Branch [became] the National Museum of Natural Sciences, and the Science and Technology Branch [became] the National Museum of Science and Technology. William E. Taylor [was] the first Director of the National Museum of Man. (About: History Timeline)

These museums formed in 1968 are still the National museums we have today (About: History Timeline). With slight changes, of course, to their mandates and names. The story of the National Museum of Man, for the contextual sake of this thesis, is the story that I will continue to follow.

1982-1989

In 1982 “plans [were] unveiled for the construction of new buildings for the National Museum of Man and the National Gallery of Canada” (About: History Timeline). At this point, the museum was really shaping up to be what it is today. By 1983, the first director of the museum in its

modern form, George MacDonald, was appointed and he became instrumental in the development of what we now know as the Canadian Museum of History (About: History Timeline). In 1986, under MacDonald's leadership the museum changed its name to the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Vodden and Dyck 2005, 65). This change in name reflected not only the changing social times, with the patriation of Canada's constitution in 1982 (Polk 2019) and the subsequent shift to a broader focus on rights and freedoms within the country, but also reflected the change in mandate and goals for the museum. No longer was the museum focused on 'Man' in a broad sense, but now it looked to represent the accomplishments of humans through time, hence the use of the word 'civilization'. Though the connotations of the word civilization are somewhat questionable today, i.e., the use of the concept to forcefully assimilate Indigenous peoples, or to determine which groups are worthy of respect etc., the name change did clearly reflect the shifting nature of the museum. In 1995 George MacDonald wrote:

The country's official multiculturalism and an entire overhaul of the Canadian Museum of Civilization's (CMC) exhibitions, programmes and policies during the last decade-in preparation for the move to a new building (opened in 1989)-have facilitated that museum's adoption of principles of the New Museology, with its emphasis on democratization and empowerment.

In this quote, MacDonald highlights the foundational ideas about museum practice in the CMH's modern form. The explicit mention of the New Museology establishes MacDonald's interest (at the time, at least) in a new kind of museum practice that had the capacity to represent the multitudinous nature of Canada. The vision for Canada's national museums, at this point, seemed to be very future-focused, though still arguably very Eurocentric. With the ideas of the New Museology driving it, in June 1989 the new Canadian Museum of Civilization opened its doors to the public.

1989-Now

From its opening in 1989 through to 2013 the CMH operated under the name "Canadian Museum of Civilization." This changed in 2013 when the government of Canada began its preparations for the 150th anniversary of confederation (About: History Timeline). At this point,

the museum changed its name to the Canadian Museum of history and its mandate changed to focus on Canadian-specific stories (About).

This shift did not necessarily mean that the whole museum was altered in 2013, with many of the permanent exhibitions remaining unchanged even in 2022. The main change was the new *Canada History Hall (CHH)*, which is the museum's flagship exhibition that takes visitors through the history of Canada from pre-contact to modern times, which opened in 2017 (About: History Timeline).

Mandate, important documents and current structure

The current (post-2013) mandate of the CMH as set in the Museums Act 1990 is:

To enhance Canadians' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of events, experiences, people and objects that reflect and have shaped Canada's history and identity, and also to enhance their awareness of world history and cultures. (1990)

The Museums Act also establishes the modern CMH's powers, limitations and responsibilities as the following:

Capacity and powers

- 9 (1) In furtherance of its purpose, the Canadian Museum of History has, subject to this Act, the capacity of a natural person and, elsewhere than in Quebec, the rights, powers and privileges of a natural person. In particular, the Canadian Museum of History may
 - (a) collect objects of historical or cultural interest and other museum material;
 - (b) maintain its collection by preservation, conservation or restoration or the establishment of records or documentation;
 - (c) sell, exchange, give away, destroy or otherwise dispose of museum material in its collection and use any revenue obtained from that disposal to further its collection;
 - (d) lend or borrow museum material on long- or short-term loan;

- (e) organize, sponsor, arrange for or participate in travelling exhibitions, in Canada and internationally, of museum material in its collection and from other sources;
- (f) undertake or sponsor any research related to its purpose or to museology, and communicate the results of that research;
- (g) provide facilities to permit qualified individuals to use or study its collection;
- (h) promote knowledge and disseminate information related to its purpose, throughout Canada and internationally, by any appropriate means of education and communication;
- (i) establish and foster liaison with other organizations that have a purpose similar to its own;
- (j) share the expertise of its staff by undertaking or sponsoring training and apprenticeship programs that relate to its purpose;
- (k) provide or arrange for professional and technical services to other organizations that have a purpose similar to its own;
- (l) acquire property by gift, bequest or otherwise, hold that property in trust or otherwise and expend, invest, administer and dispose of that property;
- (m) develop, operate and maintain branches or exhibition centres;
- (n) operate restaurants, lounges, parking facilities, shops and other facilities for the use of the public;
- (o) lease or otherwise make available any of its facilities to other persons; and
- (p) charge for goods, services and admission and use the revenue so obtained for its own purposes.

- Restriction

(2) The Canadian Museum of History may deal with property only in accordance with the terms on which it was acquired or is held.

- Support

(3) The Canadian Museum of History may support other museums or organizations that have a purpose that is complementary to its own by administering programs that

- (a) provide online content; and

- (b) support the development of online content, including by providing financial assistance.

(Museums Act 1990)

Governance

The CMH has a multi-level governance structure, headed by a President and Chief Executive Officer (one position). As of early 2022, the acting President and CEO is Caroline Dromaguet, and she works in a team of three corporate officers whose roles fall within the museum's Executive Management team. The President and CEO "is accountable for the day-to-day administration of the corporation's performance, its long-term viability and the achievement of its objectives" (Annual Report 2020-2021, 98). The governance structure also includes a board of trustees, who are responsible for both the CMH and the Canadian War Museum, as they're unified under one corporation (Annual Report 2020-2021). In 2020-2021 the board was made up of eleven members, and was Chaired by Carole Beaulieu (Annual Report 2020-2021, 90). Of the eleven board members, none self-identify as Indigenous in their biographies, though there is one member whose work (both academic and grassroots) focuses heavily on Indigenous topics (Annual Report 2020-2021, 92-96).

Under this executive level there are a number of teams, the one that is most relevant to this thesis is the Research Team. This team comprises four smaller teams: contemporary Canada and the world, First Peoples and early Canada, repatriation and Indigenous relations, and collections management and conservation. This team is led by a Director of Research, who, at the time of writing, is Dean Oliver. Oliver manages at least 26 curators, repatriation experts, Indigenous relations staff, and collections managers/conservators.

The physical building

The CMH's building is a purpose-built building that opened to the public in 1989. Designed by Douglas Cardinal, a First Nations and Métis architect from Alberta, Canada, the museum's modern building was created to represent a relationship with Canada's diverse landscapes and Indigenous cultures (Phillips 2011; Written in Stone). According to an architectural tour published on the CMH's website "CMC [CMH] symbolizes a Pan-Canadian landscape - Canada

at the end of the Ice Age - and evokes Native longhouses, earth lodges, and igloos” (Written in Stone) Cardinal himself stated “[o]ur buildings must be part of nature, must flow out of the land; the landscape must weave in and out of them so that, even in the harshness of winter, we are not deprived of our closeness with nature”(Written in Stone). Cardinal seems to have achieved this with the CMH’s building as it flows in a way that mirrors the river whose banks it occupies.

Cardinal’s voice is clear in this building, and his values as an Indigenous architect are embedded in the very structure of the institution. The museum building itself is a national treasure. Cardinal argues:

The Museum was conceived as a work of art. As such, we are required to preserve its artistic integrity as a sculptural representation of the people of Canada and the dramatic landscape they inhabit. The Museum itself and its shape aspired to be a symbol of an evolving organic nationhood, to enshrine the diverse cultures of Canada. It has been recognized as a Canadian icon, receiving national and international recognition. (Cardinal in Laberge 2015)

In addition to the building being an artefact itself, the museum’s choice to hire an Indigenous architect communicates some prioritisation of our stories right from the inception of its modern form. Though we cannot ignore the fact that it was founded on paternalistic and colonial principles in its geological survey days, the building itself tells a story of the shift toward more Indigenous perspectives.

The building has four floors open to the public, which makes up approximately 25,000 square metres of exhibition space (About the Museum). The curatorial and other back of house staff work on site but in a separate building with a separate entrance, directly across from the main museum’s entrance. There are five permanent exhibitions on the floor: the *Canada History Hall*

(CHH), the *Canadian Children's Museum*, the *First Peoples Hall*, the *Grand Hall* and the *Canadian Stamp Collection* (Museum Guide 2022).



Figure 3

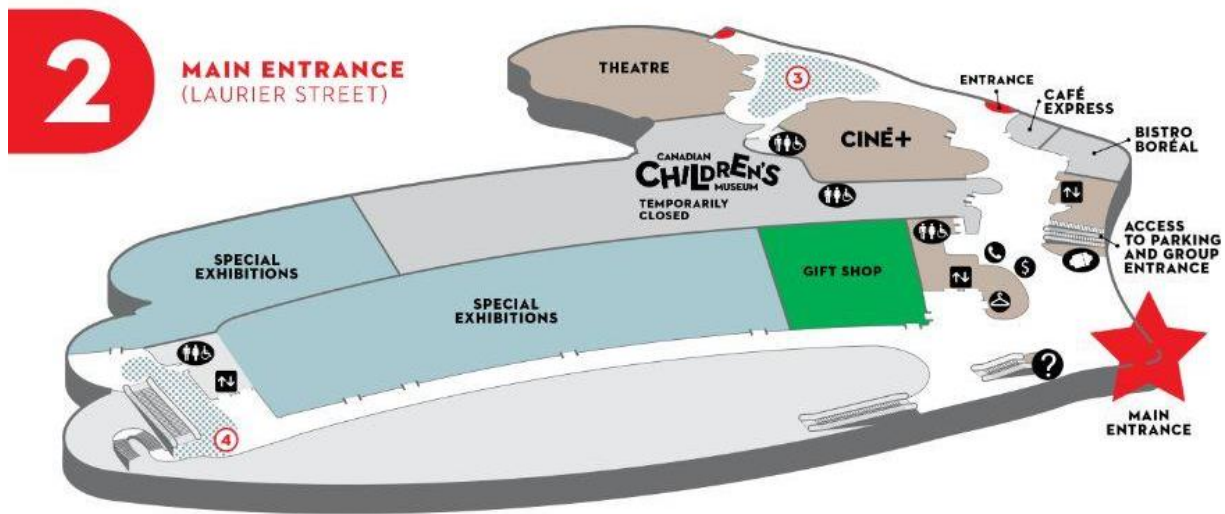


Figure 4

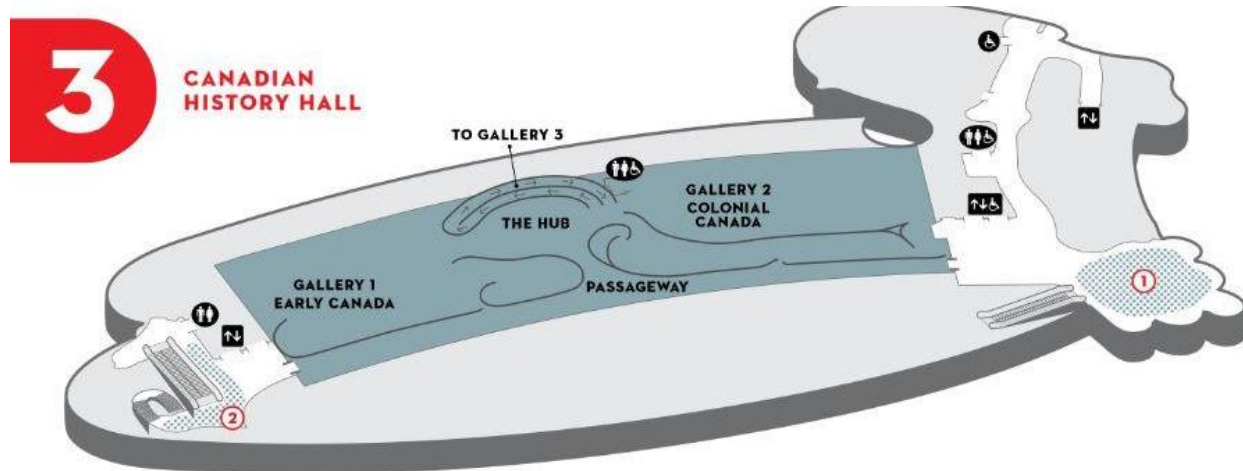


Figure 5

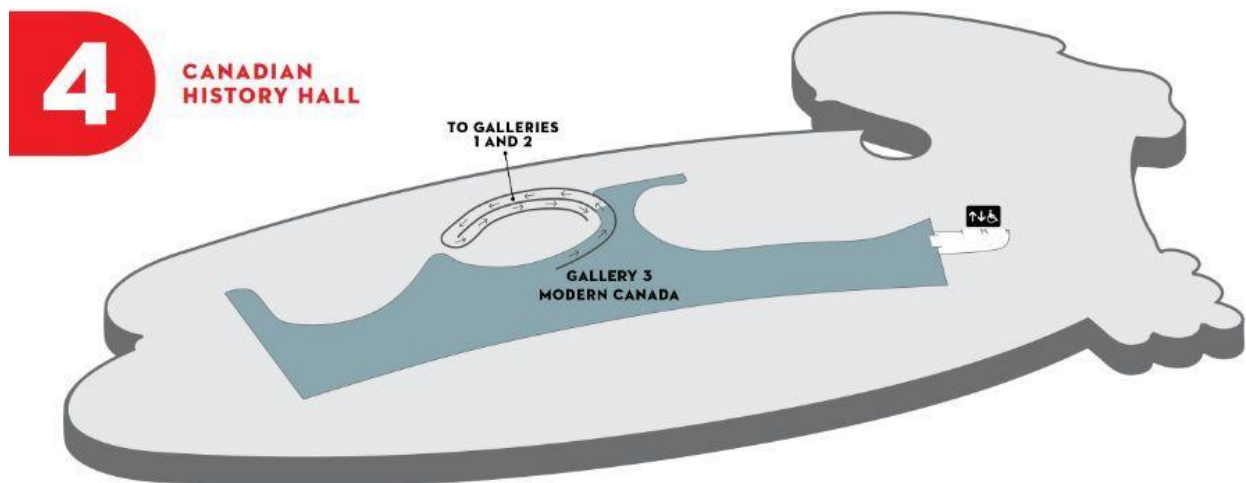


Figure 6

Where it sits geographically

In order to understand the geographical story of the modern CMH, it is important to first understand who the Algonquin are. Otherwise known as Omàmiwinini, “the Algonquin are Indigenous peoples in Canada, whose home communities are located in western Quebec and adjacent Ontario, centring on the Ottawa River and its tributaries” (Black and Parrott 2021). We are members of a larger linguistic and cultural group (Anishinaabe) and are related to, though not the same as, the Ojibwe and Cree cousins to the west (Black and Parrott 2021). Our territory sits to the east of the Ojibwe and Cree and to the northwest of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois (Black and Parrott 2021).

Prior to colonialism, our communities centred themselves on the Ottawa river, whose actual name is Kitchissippi (meaning Great River in Anishinaabemowin) (Coburn and Moore 2022, 8). We lived in birch bark structures called wigwams which lent themselves to semi-nomadic lives (Black and Parrott 2021). We spoke a dialect of Anishinaabemowin, like our neighbours to the west and far east, and we did not use a written language (Black and Parrott 2021). Our histories were passed down orally and as such, story was and is an important element in our culture (2018). We:

lived in communities comprised of related patrilineal clans [...]. Clans were represented by animal totems such as Crane, Wolf, Bear, Loon and many others. The communities were egalitarian, with leadership provided by respected elders and heads of clans. [...]

Today, we live in relatively small communities on reserves and with many of us living off reserve and in urban centres like Ottawa or Toronto.

As noted, the modern museum, which was opened in 1989 sits on the banks of the Kitchissippi. The CMH sits on the Quebec side of Kitchissippi and its *Grand Hall*, as pictured on the map above (with one wall made entirely of curved windows) looks directly out and across the river at the site of Canada’s parliament buildings. The parliament buildings sit above the museum, elevated on parliament hill, and with a cliff face between them, the river and the CMH. This acts as a reminder not only of the museum’s connection to nature and to the landscape in

which it sits (as set out by Cardinal's design) but it also may remind visitors that the seat of the Canadian government quite literally looks down on them.

The physical location of the museum tells its own story and is contextually extremely important to this thesis. The museum is on unceded Algonquin territory, with the Quebec side being the traditional home of Kitiganzibi. As such, the traditional language of this land is an Algonquin dialect of Anishinaabemowin. This information is key when considering the ways in which languages are used in the museum, as will be discussed by my participants in the following chapters. The acknowledgement of land and its continued and traditional Indigenous inhabitants is key to creating a more Indigenous way of running a museum. Moreover, acknowledging the Algonquin traditional landowners may lead to some solutions to the question of how we create a more Indigenous or Eighth Fire museum practice.

CMH's Research strategy

The CMH's research and, subsequently, exhibitions are dictated by their research strategy document. This document, which is publicly accessible, was created in 2013, at the same time as the mandate change. It sets out the research priorities of the CMH and is the first joint research strategy for the CMH and the Canadian War Museum. According to its executive summary it:

[P]rovides a clear, flexible framework to guide research activities at both museums over a ten-year period. It was developed after broad internal and external consultation. It was also developed in consideration of the essential role played by research – now, and in the past – in the lives and prospects of both museums as unique, irreplaceable stewards of the country's past.

In the framework the plan for research falls into three categories (each with sets of subcategories): "A. Meaning and Memory," "B. First Peoples," and "C. Compromise and Conflict" (2013). Within each of these categories are sets of areas of interest in terms of the CMH and CWM's research work.

Under "Meaning and Memory" the focus remains on contemporary Canada, with an eye to the past. The sub themes here support the contemporary grounding of the category and are as follows:

- **Museological Leadership:** In this subtheme the research seeks to “deepen and share museological knowledge, research, and best practices.” (Research Strategy 2013) This theme is practice-focused and importantly acknowledges the impact that the CMH’s practice has on other institutions and its ability (alongside other national museums) to impact museum practice more broadly in Canada. This sub theme centres itself on three practical objectives:
 1. A transparent research policy
 2. Early, flexible creative development of key projects.
 3. Expertise in visitor encounters with exhibitions and new media (Research Strategy 2013).
- **Memory and Commemoration:** This sub theme was added to the document with the knowledge that 2013 marked the beginning of a series of important commemorative moments for Canada (Research Strategy 2013) These included major WWI commemorations (for example the 100th anniversary of Vimmy Ridge, the 100th anniversary of armistice) and the celebration of Canada’s 150th anniversary of confederation. This theme seems to have been developed as a part of the CMH and CWM’s roles in national narrative or script writing, and that is reflected in its three practical objectives:
 1. The 150th anniversary of Confederation.
 2. The First World War (100th) and Second World War (75th) anniversaries.
 3. Using selected commemorations to explore concepts of myth, memory, and nation. (2013)
- **Contemporary Canada:** The goal of this sub theme is to document Canadian history and the Canadian experience as it happens. It focuses on the current moment, in which Canada (like the rest of the world) is undergoing major social, environmental and political change. It looks to social media and other newer forms of media as a way to understand these changes. This sub theme is interested in the everyday lives and experiences of Canadians. It has the following practical objectives:
 1. Chart the personal impact of social movements and public policies.
 2. Document the evolution of national identity since the 1940s.
 3. Explore the realities of contemporary life for Canada’s First Peoples. (2013)

Under theme B “First Peoples” the research strategy

[R]ecognizes the centrality of First Peoples to Canada’s past, present, and future, and promises to broaden and deepen research in this area. Specifically, it encompasses the multiplicity of Aboriginal narratives and accomplishments, and the nature of lived experience and encounters, with particular emphasis on Canada’s Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. (2013, 5)

This theme covers a vast number of distinct Indigenous groups, seeking to represent Indigenous experiences both historically and in a contemporary sense. It is underpinned by two sub themes:

- The Changing North: This theme focuses specifically on the north and northern Indigenous peoples. It seeks to document and better understand the cultural, political, social and environmental impacts of the rapidly changing north. It is its own theme because in terms of demographics, the north is Canada’s fastest growing and changing population (2013, 9). This theme also ties into the CMH’s vast northern collections, which stem from the early arctic expeditions undertaken by the geological survey. Its three practical objectives are:
 1. Enhance or develop local partnerships.
 2. Explore the regional impact of federal governmental initiatives.
 3. Examine changes in traditional knowledge and cultural practices (2013, 9).
- Aboriginal Histories: This sub theme focuses on the rest of sub-arctic Canada. It seeks to explore the histories of Indigenous peoples throughout the country, and to reflect the impact that Indigenous people have had and continue to have on the Canadian identity. It centralises Indigenous histories in this sense. This is arguably the area of the research strategy that is most relevant to my research. It lays out the museum’s responsibilities and priorities around Indigenous voices and includes objectives like weaving Indigenous stories into broader “Canadian” histories (2013, 10). It also acknowledges and seeks to respectfully explore difficult histories relating to colonialism and its impacts. Its four practical objectives are:
 1. Represent Aboriginal histories and cultures within broader Canadian narratives.
 2. Explore inter-cultural engagement and its continuing impacts.

3. Broaden understanding of Aboriginal history before European contact.
4. Deepen efforts to support First Peoples stewardship. (2013, 10)

Finally, under theme C: Compromise and Conflict, the research strategy encourages the expansion of projects that focus on changes and major moments (including difficult ones) in the shaping of Canada. This theme is fairly contemporary in focus, though it does comprise World Wars, and other military conflicts, along with “[p]opulation movements, including immigration [...], patterns of power, political engagement, the land, community building, and economics” (Research Strategy 2013, 5).

This theme comprises four sub themes:

- **Power and Politics:** this sub theme focuses on politics and its shaping of Canada. It spans both museums fairly evenly, with war being so closely related to politics, and the CMH’s broader focus on Canadian history. It “includes not only the rise of the modern Canadian state, but also traditional structures of governance and authority in Indigenous societies, grassroots movements, collective action, and the history of political participation” (2013, 11). It is underpinned by three practical objectives:
 1. Depicting the evolution of Canadian democracy.
 2. Exploring multiple concepts of political power, influence and nationalism.
 3. Documenting Canadian efforts in support of global security. (2013, 11)
- **Population Movements and Settlements:** this theme explores not only stories of immigration to Canada, but also the movement of people within Canada. It looks at the ways in which ideas and relationships evolve through the movement of people. It has three practical objectives:
 1. Deepening the knowledge of First Peoples movements and adaptations.
 2. Documenting and preserving migration narratives.
 3. Exploring the impact of war and conflict on population movements. (2013, 12)
- **Canada and the World:** under this theme the museums seek to explore how broader global movements and events impact Canadian identities and history. It aims to show how internationally significant events relate to Canadian lives and how, in turn, Canadians influence the broader international community. It has four practical objectives:

1. World civilizations.
2. Decisive encounters.
3. The international history of Canada. (2013, 13)
4. Bringing Canadian stories to the world.

The sheer number of themes and practical objectives laid out by the research strategy seem to suggest that the CMH and Canadian War Museum have a desire to tell diverse stories. Though they always come back to the core priority of including Canadian stories and voices as set out by the CMH's mandate, the strategy does allow for very broad storytelling.

In terms of Indigenous stories, there appears to be quite a lot of space in the strategy. Each of the three themes mention Indigenous people and our stories in some form, setting up the fact that there is an institutional interest in telling these stories, at least on paper. Indigenous stories and voices are further cemented in the "Framework for Indigenous Relations" document, which is an internal document that was created for CMH employees in 2020. This document is heavily discussed in the forthcoming chapter by Dean Oliver, the Director of Research at the CMH. I have been given access to this document by Oliver and it lays out the priorities for expanding the CMH's relationships with Indigenous people. The framework sets out three strategic priorities: A. Access, B. Engagement, and C. Knowledge (2020).

The first priority, "A. Access," acknowledges the importance of material culture to Indigenous peoples and the importance of providing easy access to relevant objects for Indigenous people. It sets out four objectives:

1. Streamlining access to collections.
2. Prioritizing Indigenous languages.
3. Incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing.
4. Making collections available in Indigenous communities. (2020, 4)

The second priority, "B. Engagement," establishes the importance of having Indigenous voices in the museum and telling stories with Indigenous people, rather than simply telling stories *about* Indigenous people. It seeks to "ensure increased opportunities for Indigenous voices and

curation, extended engagement for exhibitions and programs, and consultation about collections” (2020, 15). It sets out three main objectives:

1. Establishing meaningful consultation.
2. Developing protocols.
3. Creating networks. (2020, 4)

The third priority is “C: Knowledge” and it acknowledges the role that museums can and should play in the reclamation of Indigenous knowledges. It is informed by the TRC report which sets out the roles museums can have in reconciliation, including improving cultural competency and awareness alongside promoting Indigenous knowledge. It has four main objectives:

1. Increasing cultural awareness.
2. Hiring and the retention of Indigenous staff.
3. Respecting Indigenous voices.
4. Creating innovative training opportunities. (2020, 4)

This document is still relatively new, but, as will become evident in the following chapter, the CMH is making some strides to make the museum a better and more engaging place for Indigenous peoples. Theme C: Knowledge is particularly interesting to me, in relation to this research, as it touches on the concept of Indigenous voices and staffing. Hiring Indigenous people and providing work environments in which we are safe and in which we’re comfortable enough to continue working is essential to achieving the CMH’s other objectives as set out in the framework.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have provided context for my CMH case study. The history of Canada as a nation, and the current status of Indigenous peoples and languages in Canada continue to impact the CMH. The information contained within this background chapter situates my case study in the ongoing story of the CMH, and provides some insight into the experiences and historical events that my participants will discuss in the following chapter. Having established

the general histories of Canada and the CMH, I now move on to my case study chapter, in which I focus on the personal experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners at the CMH, in its Seventh Fire form.

Chapter 2

Canadian Museum of History Case Study

In this chapter I lay out my findings from five interviews which I conducted with Indigenous and non-Indigenous museum practitioners at the CMH. Rather than focusing on language as the lone source of voice, I use the concept as a much broader term. Voice, in the case of this thesis, becomes a broad term, sometimes synonymous with perspective, or influence (Gough 2008). Voice can represent the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners and in the context of this thesis, that is what actually interests me. The interviews I conducted at the CMH provided me with insight on the experiences of real museum practitioners and subsequently gave me a picture of what a Seventh Fire museum looks like in Canada. This, as will be laid out in this chapter, is what matters in this research. The contemporary context of museum practice, and the current version of the CMH are a jumping off point, and in later chapters of this thesis will be used as a platform for dreaming of a different kind of institution in the future.

In conducting my fieldwork at the CMH I sought to determine the places where the voices of Indigenous museum practitioners, or, sometimes voices of other Indigenous peoples, come through in the front of house spaces of the museum. This case study pushed me to widen my lens slightly, and to incorporate instances of other Indigenous voices into my findings. This happened for a number of reasons, including the lack of Indigenous staff on the curatorial or research teams at the CMH, and the hesitation I met with when attempting to speak to Indigenous practitioners. Through the data I was able to collect I discovered that the places in which Indigenous voices appear in the CMH's in the front of house spaces fall into two main categories: Indigenous voices through language, which is voice appearing in places where written or spoken words are accessible; and non-language based examples, primarily via objects and display.

I also discovered that, from the perspectives of the Indigenous museum practitioners with whom I spoke, the museum's back of house spaces are just as dynamic in terms of the discussion of the inclusion of Indigenous voices in the museum. Namely, Indigenous museum practitioners

see their voices appearing in their abilities to build relationships with Indigenous people external to the museum. This, as will be further discussed in this chapter, influences the museum's front of house in terms of the acquisition of objects for exhibitions, but also in terms of these relationships influencing the museum's practices on the whole.

Indigenous voices through language

One of the most easily observed forms that Indigenous voices take in the museum is through language. This is not only because language is one of the first ways in which voice tends to be characterised or conceived of (Gough 2008; Couldry 2010; Brady 2011), but also because it is highly visible in museums. Admittedly, the inclusion of Indigenous languages in Canadian museums is not without its complexities. As discussed in this thesis' background chapter, there are numerous Indigenous languages and dialects in Canada and therefore selecting the "correct" language to use is complex.

In order to discuss Indigenous languages in Canada, I must first acknowledge the legacy of colonialism and its assimilationist agenda. Due to these factors, the number of Indigenous language speakers in Canada is much lower than one would hope. Some languages have been lost entirely, and others are on the brink of extinction. One interviewee, John Moses (Supervisor, Repatriation), summed up this loss:

Despite my best efforts right now to retain and regain the language myself, ultimately I would have to say that my Mohawk language skills are what the Canadian state had determined they would be. That's an outcome of the generations of a single family being raised in a residential school, the loss of language.

This does not, however, mean that there is no effort to revitalise Indigenous languages and absolutely does not preclude their appearance in exhibitions.

Additionally, as alluded to above, the high number of diverse Indigenous languages across the country means that the inclusion of all those languages at once would be impossible, at least in terms of traditional museology (Serrell 2015). Standard museological practice advocates for short, concise labels that do not fill up entire walls, as visitors will simply not engage with that much text (2015). This does not mean that there are no efforts being made to

include more Indigenous languages in exhibitions and publicly available material by the Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) museum practitioners at the CMH. In fact, as I expected when I started this research, I've found that language is one of the most obvious ways that Indigenous voices appear in the museum's public spaces. At the CMH it seems that language appears in two main ways: written language on labels, and audio.

In the following section I will discuss the ways that Indigenous voices appear through language, based on the conversations I've had with museum practitioners at the CMH, I will highlight the areas where the participants describe language appearing more frequently, and I will further discuss the complexities and logistical challenges (both perceived and real) of including Indigenous languages in Canadian national museums.

Labels

Written language in museums, or voice “signified through museum texts, a variation on the sonic sense of voice” as Brady (2011, 204) describes it, is visible throughout museums. We see written language in pamphlets, directional signage, titles and labels. At the CMH, all written material is provided in a minimum of French and English as per the Official Languages Act 1985.

Indigenous languages, however, do not seem to appear particularly frequently in the CMH.

Gaëlle Mollen, an Innu practitioner at the CMH spoke about the number of languages that the museum offers on informational pamphlets. Mollen shared that “you can go to the museum and have a pamphlet in, I think, six different languages, or have greetings in French and English and all different languages, but there was never a greeting in Anishinaabemowin.”

Many of the Canadian participants explained that exhibitions are generally limited to two languages, sometimes due to trying to comply with standard museological practice, sometimes due to other logistical issues like the lack of translators. Jonathan Lainey, former curator of First Peoples Histories at the CMH and a member of the Huron Wendat Nation, echoed his colleagues' sentiments on the lack of language. He also explained, logistically, “if you add a third language then your walls will become covered by words and it's not necessarily what you want.” Lainey went on to discuss other issues with Indigenous language labels, including reiterating questions around which Indigenous language would be most appropriate to use in particular instances. Overall, the lack of written Indigenous languages in exhibition spaces

sometimes comes from lack of resources, time or institutional ability to commit to a single version of a story. Lainey explained:

When you work in a big institution like this - trying to represent all of the people from all of Canada - you need to make decisions and sometimes those decisions will be 'ok you have to stick to the two official languages for the panels because there's no way we can please everyone.'

This, for me, was disheartening to hear. As a First Nations Canadian I would hope to see more support for Indigenous museum practitioners. More than that, when it comes to prioritising Indigenous voices and languages over standard museological practice, I would hope to see some bravery on the part of the institution. The museum could be allocating resources to hiring Indigenous language speakers, and, quite frankly, the bar is so low that including any Indigenous language would be better than nothing. There are, for example, Anishinaabemowin speakers from the region (Omamiwinini Pimadjowin) who could be hired by the museum to provide label writing or public programming based on the language.

This sort of avoidance of complexity and bucking museological tradition seemed to be a main theme in my interviews at the CMH. Dean Oliver, Director of Research, for example, noted that when the museum attempted a trilingual exhibition (three European languages) the labels turned out "horribly". The logistical issues with this project meant that curatorial teams were unable to decide what to cut, what information was the most valuable and how to balance design constraints with the desire to include enough information. Despite this, Oliver said:

In practical terms, there's no reason why we can't [have multilingual labels] but there is an impact and it needs to be decided early. There is a design visual accessibility impact that can be quite substantial. And the more of your content that's delivered visually, the more difficult it's going to be, but it also maps onto other things, including the legibility and the listener, notably of audio-visual components, of various kinds. And the simple things like how many buttons, or how many activation devices are there [...] how long does one take to listen to something? [What's] the availability of translators? I mean,

there are design implications, but none of them insurmountable in any way, shape or form.

The failure of one project shouldn't necessarily preclude trying to curate multilingual exhibitions in the future. Within the curatorial and research team I see a drive to include more Indigenous languages, but I do see larger institutional issues preventing them from achieving this. Oliver also spoke about a 250 word limit on labels (in each official language, so 500 words total), which seems to reflect the idea of keeping labels as short as possible. Beverly Serrell, for example provides a table of the best label lengths based on the type of label one is writing (2015).

Regardless of the logistical challenges the museum practitioners at the CMH are working to change. Nearly all of my participants spoke about ways in which the museum is trying to include more written Indigenous languages. Generally, these efforts fall into two main categories of language use/inclusion:

1. Language inclusion for educational purposes; and
2. Finding ways to use Indigenous languages in the correct ways.

It seems that the first priority when it comes to using Indigenous languages in the CMH is to use them in a way that teaches the Canadian public about those languages. With the current state of Indigenous languages broadly across Canada, I can understand why the CMH would see itself first and foremost as an educator and preserver of these languages. This is not only a continuation of one of the CMH's original roles - to collect and preserve a "vanishing race" (Vodden and Dyck 2005; Smith 2016; About: History Timeline), but it also is an act of reconciliation as laid out in the TRC report/94 recommendations (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). The revitalisation of Indigenous languages in Canada is only just beginning and therefore the museum is well placed to be part of the re-education process if it so desires.

The presence of Inuktitut (Inuit language) in the exhibition *Death in the Ice* as discussed by Curator Karen Ryan is a key example of the ways in which the CMH can step into this educator role. She explained that the use of Inuktitut was as much about highlighting the Inuit role in the exhibition's story as it was about educating the public. She explained:

One of the words that we fought to have included in the exhibition is Inuk. Inuit is plural, Inuk is singular and so to say “an Inuit man” is not correct, it should be “an Inuk man.” [...] You know, we used a word, we defined it - “a singular verb for one person,” or whatever. And then we just moved through the rest of the exhibition with the assumption that people understood it [...] and that is a way for people to learn and be more aware. I mean, that's part of what exhibitions do, is make people more aware of things.

Ryan makes clear that Indigenous languages are an important part of storytelling in the CMH, at least in her museum practice. This gives exhibitions more depth in terms of the dissemination of information and though it is not a label entirely written in an Indigenous language it is a way to, in a sense, subvert the limitations of traditional museum practice. Including Indigenous languages in the museum doesn't necessarily have to mean putting massive blocks of text on exhibition walls. By including words like Inuk in a label, the language gets the chance to appear in an exhibition where it might otherwise have been left out. This is not to say that this is a perfect solution, but bringing in Indigenous languages and voices for the sake of education is another avenue to have them appear in the museum and I argue that this is a good step forward for the CMH's museum practice.

Given the complexities of written language in the CMH, it is also useful to look at the voices of Indigenous people that have been added to exhibitions through non-Indigenous language on labels. Though this digresses slightly from the point of this section, I would argue that it is important to acknowledge Indigenous voices wherever they appear in the museum and therefore relevant here. As will be discussed later in this chapter, one of the unique abilities of Indigenous museum practitioners (at least from my experience) is to get permission from Indigenous communities to tell particular stories through particular means. For example, Jonathan Lainey was able to get a sacred feather on loan to the CMH which now appears in the *CHH* with a quote from its late owner. The words of Elijah Harper, a prominent Indigenous MP and activist, are a part of a section of the *CHH* on modern Indigenous protest. Looking at those words, I see two Indigenous voices, those of Harper and Lainey, despite the words being in French and English rather than in an Indigenous language. Harper's literal words are used in the exhibition because of Lainey's voice. This is an instance of one Indigenous voice working to lift

up another, and shows that Indigenous voices in spoken or written forms, do not have to appear in an Indigenous language in order to be valid. They are still representations of Indigenous presence and influence on the museum.

Audio

As established in the previous section, Indigenous languages and their use in the museum can be a sensitive subject. Their lack of presence in the museum may not always be an indicator of a lack of effort, but instead a lack of resources as well as the ongoing legacy of colonialism. That being said, there are still some examples of Indigenous languages appearing in the CMH's exhibitions. Indigenous languages seem to appear much more frequently in audio form at the CMH, this is particularly interesting as many Indigenous languages in Canada don't have their own alphabets and therefore one might argue that audio is a much more "Indigenous" form in which to encounter many of these languages.

Curator Karen Ryan, for example, made sure that Inuktitut (Inuit language) was an unavoidable part of the *Death in the Ice* exhibition She explained:

Right in the beginning [of the exhibition] we had a cone that restricted the sound but visitors, as they were walking by could hear Inuktitut. So we didn't translate it, we didn't tell you what it was about, it was just to get people to hear what Inuktitut sounds like.

This placed Inuktitut as both an object in the exhibition (albeit one without interpretation), but also as a sort of environment-builder in the space. The audio recordings of the language asserted the presence of Indigenous voices while also, in some ways, limiting them to a more theatrical tool for environment-building. This is not to say that Ryan saw these recordings, or the language, as less important than any of the other objects in the space, but that they served a dual purpose in the exhibition. Ryan also described the listening stations throughout the exhibition, where visitors could listen to interviews with experts, many of whom spoke Inuktitut. Instead of translating the interviews or transcribing them into one of Canada's official languages, the audio played in its original version with subtitles. Ryan's work on this exhibition meant that literal Indigenous voices were heard in the space, alongside the more nebulous or conceptual elements of voice that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Another key point in the museum's front of house where people hear Indigenous languages is in the *CHH*. The entrance to the *CHH* is the end of a long hallway, as you step into the first section of the exhibition you encounter an animation called "Origins." This animation tells the creation stories of the land that is now known as North America. These stories are told on a loop by six Indigenous people in six different Indigenous languages. These voices are what call you into the gallery space. These voices are in this entryway as a symbol of the diversity of Indigenous peoples and voices from across the land that is now known as Canada. It is a symbolic commitment, of sorts, to the first peoples of the land and their knowledge of Turtle Island/North America via their voices. Interestingly, none of the museum practitioners with whom I spoke for this research actually talked about this space. This struck me as odd, as I would argue that this is one of the best examples of Indigenous voice and languages in the CMH, with numerous cultures being represented. It is also one of the newest additions to the museum, with the *CHH* only having opened in 2017. This leads me to question what, exactly, is happening in the back of house at the CMH that this video does not come to mind immediately as a key example of the kind of work the CMH is doing to include more Indigenous languages and voices. Perhaps this was simply because they didn't work on the video so didn't feel comfortable discussing or highlighting it as an example of Indigenous voices or languages.

In the case of audio, we see literal Indigenous voices becoming parts of the storytelling in exhibitions. This may not necessarily centre those voices but it is clear to me that audio stations are one of the central ways that the CMH brings in Indigenous language, and subsequently voices. It should be noted that these audio sections may not always include Indigenous language. For example, the person speaking may not know their Indigenous language, but I argue, as with written words that this can nonetheless be an instance of an Indigenous voice if the speaker is telling their own story from their own perspective. This is where the concepts of language and voice diverge and where it becomes clear that they are not always intrinsically tied.

Jonathan Lainey spoke to me about a series of recordings throughout the *CHH* in which a Blackfoot man named Yellow Wings speaks about his culture and experiences as an Indigenous person in Canada. This audio is entirely spoken in English, Lainey explained that if Yellow Wings wanted to record these interviews in an Indigenous language, he would likely have been supported, but the use of English doesn't, by any means, invalidate the presence of his voice in the *CHH*.

As noted, audio seems to be the form in which the CMH is most comfortable including or engaging with Indigenous languages. Perhaps this is because it is the least likely to create controversy - with the non-standardised ways of writing some Indigenous languages not causing complications for the museums. But it is also perhaps easier than advocating for a proverbial “wall of text” given that the museum is already legally obligated to provide all written labels in French and English. Is audio, maybe, a way to subvert museological (and, in this, case governmental) standards?

Limitations of language as voice

As referenced in the beginning of this section, there are a number of limitations or complications that the CMH contends with in terms of Indigenous language use. These range from relatively easy to solve (e.g. finding a translator for a known language) to much more complex and difficult to solve issues (e.g. a language that has very few speakers). Nearly all of the Canadian museum practitioners that I spoke with noted this, and these complexities may account for (some of) the lack of languages that we see in the CMH.

Gaëlle Mollen, whose background is in anthropology and Indigenous languages, was the only practitioner I spoke to who is fluent in an Indigenous language. This means that though there are Indigenous museum practitioners at the CMH, they may not be able to write labels or lead tours in their Indigenous language. It should be noted that this is by no fault of their own, rather, as I mentioned in the introduction of this section, they are the product of generations of people who were subject to colonial schooling and assimilationist systems. Moreover, this does not limit their ability to bring Indigenous voices into the museum. That is to say, their voices as Indigenous people are not tied inherently to language.

An issue that may also arise in terms of including Indigenous languages, especially when relying on Indigenous museum practitioners, is the possibility of tokenism. Generally, in terms of the conversations I had with practitioners at the CMH, they seem to be cautious about sharing how they feel personally about the museum or its issues, as they are highly identifiable within the museum (being one of just a few Indigenous museum practitioners). They seem to be even more hesitant to discuss whether they are called upon to do more work simply because of their cultural grounding or lived experiences, but given the nature of working in a colonial institution as one of the only Indigenous people, it is likely that they are asked to do extra work. As

someone who has worked in the field, being asked to do extra work due to my Indigenous heritage has been a common experience, so it would not be a surprise to me if these practitioners hadn't also experienced this issue. When considering the inclusion of more Indigenous voices via language, therefore, one must be conscious that this could lead to an increased workload for those already working at the museum rather than an increase in resources and Indigenous staff.

Indigenous voices through objects

When one views an object in a museum it may not immediately seem like an example of voice. However, I argue, based on the conversations I've had with my interviewees, that objects can be powerful markers of the influence that museum practitioners have. Many objects represent hidden conversations about which stories we value. Of my five participants at the CMH, three work or worked either as curators, or in roles that are specifically related to collections. All three of these practitioners spoke about the addition of objects into exhibitions that either reflect their voices as Indigenous museum practitioners or the voices of other Indigenous peoples.

Jonathan Lainey spoke to me about his role in curating a section of the *CHH*. He was hired during the process of creating this new marquee exhibition, which opened in 2017 as a part of the Canada 150 celebration, and this became his first major project in the position. Through our conversation, Lainey revealed a number of occasions where the presence of certain objects in the CMH's exhibitions reflect his voice as an Indigenous museum practitioner. One such example was the inclusion of a real wampum belt. Wampum belts are documentary tools made from shells (often used as currency by the Haudenosaunee), and they can reflect status (Runde 2010). Wampum belts are how some of the earliest treaties in the Americas were documented, including the 1677 Silver Covenant Chain Treaty (Timeline: Colonization). In trying to display a wampum belt, Lainey ran into some hesitancy from the museum's higher management, he shared:

I'm a wampum belt expert and now when it's time to talk about wampum belts or display them in a national exhibition I met resistance. Managers, directors were saying 'no, we cannot, we've been told we should not' [but] I wanted to display a real wampum belt so again I used my personal network [...] I called Wendake where I'm from [...] and I said, 'hey we have a chance to display a real wampum belt - Wendat wampum belt in the

Canadian History Hall - do you accept?' [...] they finally accepted, so to me it was like a victory because I was able to display a real wampum belt in this exhibition [...] So it's another way by which I think I was able to have - I don't know, an input.

In this action, Lainey's voice and the voice of his Wendat ancestors were made parts of the *CHH*, without his input this would not have been possible and it is very likely that a replica wampum belt would have been used instead. There is something to be said for the use of 'real' objects versus replicas, especially in terms of Indigenous voice, the replica could feasibly be made by anyone but the original objects were made by Indigenous people and therefore those people are more present in the exhibition, via the object's history and production.

As discussed earlier, Lainey also managed to acquire a marquee object for the *CHH*: a feather worn by Elijah Harper, a prominent Indigenous politician, known for his opposition to the Meech Lake Accord due to its lack of consultation with Indigenous people (Bergman 1990). This object brings in the voice of an Indigenous activist who took a stand to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and, once again would have been a story that might not have made it into the *CHH* without Lainey's voice or perspective. Lainey worked to acquire this object through his family connections, and was able to get access to the feather and permission to display it from the late Mr. Harper's wife.

Both of these acquisitions are incredible, and are still on display in the *CHH*. Lainey's unique position as an Indigenous museum practitioner, and more specifically as a Wendat person, are the only reasons why these objects are in the *CHH*. The nuance of this must be acknowledged, as to me it is an indicator of both "positive" and "negative" aspects of the experience of a particular Indigenous museum practitioner. While Lainey's unique knowledge was clearly recognised (and he even spoke about the idea that he may have been hired because he is a wampum expert) and that is a 'positive,' he was also called upon to do extra work. For example, to get the Elijah Harper feather he had to call on his family network to help him and had to work to form relationships outside of his other, daily tasks.

As an Indigenous person who has worked in the heritage sector, I am aware that this part of museum practice feels natural. I have often called upon my family or other personal networks in order to be able to tell the kinds of stories that I believe are important and while this is my choice, and other non-Indigenous practitioners might also be using their networks in this way,

over time the kind of extra work that this involves becomes exhausting. It is a form of emotional work to call on one's relations and without institutional support in the form of resources (financial but also emotional support, namely) this can lead to a form of burn out. Moreover, it relies on the relational practices of Indigenous peoples without compensating all of our kin for their work. Though Lainey was hesitant to say anything bad about the CMH, I did get the sense that things like having a wampum belt in the *CHH* were a much larger effort than he let on.

Similarly, the voice of John Moses, former Supervisor of Repatriation at the CMH also appears in the *CHH* in the form of an object. In his case, part of Moses' family story (and his own personal story, by association) is told through a rattle in a section of the *CHH* which centres on the Indian Residential Schools system. Moses' father and aunt were taken to one such school in the 1940s. Moses explains:

There's a single photograph that was taken of [my father] and his sister during the course of one of their monthly visiting sessions - in 1943 I think it was, and there was a rattle that the kids had made and used in secret.[...] That was pretty well the only artefact or heirloom that my father retained from his own childhood years and that photograph and that rattle are currently on long term loan at the museum of history and they appear on display within the *Canadian History Hall*.

Including these objects in the *CHH* Moses' own voice, and the voices of his father and aunt, they become in control of telling their versions of a story that is relatable to nearly all Indigenous people in Canada. The personal element of this is, I argue, incredibly important and the opportunity for Moses to tell such a story through his own family's experience is a clear example of how his Indigenous voice appears in the FOH spaces of the CMH. Moses didn't actually share the story of how his father's rattle and photograph ended up in the *CHH* but I do wonder what the personal or emotional toll of this would have been. Though I would argue that having these objects in the museum tell an important story and could be healing for Moses and other Indigenous peoples for whom the IRS system is/was a very traumatic and personal experience, I also question the kind of work that Moses might have had to do to get this story told. Should Indigenous people have to offer their trauma to the museum in order to have Indigenous voices be present and to have Indigenous stories told?

The use of objects to represent Indigenous voices is also practiced by non-Indigenous museum practitioners. For example, Curator Karen Ryan used Inuit objects in the *Death in the Ice* exhibition as a way to remind visitors of the Inuit involvement in the story. Ryan explained “our starting point [for the *Death in the Ice* show] was always the Inuit perspective as well as the, kind of the more traditional European view of what happened.” In order to ensure that the Inuit part of the story was clear, she opened the exhibition with two main objects (or sets of objects): seal skin clothing and a kayak. Both of these are emblematic of Inuit culture and immediately communicated to the visitors that this was also an Indigenous story. Though Ryan does not identify as Indigenous, she was able to bring in Indigenous voice through these objects, highlighting the multitudinous nature of the exhibitions’ story. By placing the objects in an unmissable position in the beginning of the exhibition she led with Indigenous voices.



Figure 7 Inuit seal skin clothing in the entrance of the *Death in the Ice* exhibition (photo courtesy of Karen Ryan)

These examples act as evidence of the ways in which Indigenous voices do appear in exhibitions. They show how perspectives can be shared through objects, in other words, how objects can be representatives of voice. They are also all evidence of the effort that is being made at the CMH to include more Indigenous stories and perspectives in exhibitions. The efforts being made, however, are matched with shortcomings. The CMH's collections are rich in objects relating to Indigenous histories, and they are used in many exhibitions. The museum, though, still tends to focus on including these objects only when the exhibition is related to Indigenous stories. As a museum with a mandate which centres their work on Canadian history (Canadian Museum of History: About) it seems to me that their view on when and where to include Indigenous objects is narrow.

Indigenous objects, and subsequently Indigenous voices and knowledge(s), are often only brought into exhibitions that focus directly on Indigenous topics. For example, though it was a new take on the story, the *Death in the Ice* exhibition included Inuit objects to highlight the direct Inuit involvement in the story. Indigenous objects (or other voices) do not, however, frequently appear in spaces where the topic lacks an obvious link to Indigenous stories. Lainey former curator of First Peoples Histories, spoke about the relative newness of the idea of ,including Indigenous perspectives and knowledges in exhibitions that don't necessarily focus on Indigenous topics. He seemed excited at the idea, and the possibility of other exhibitions including more Indigenous knowledges. Lainey shared:

I'm seeing it at the moment, there's another exhibition that is being developed at the McCord [Museum] and it's not at all related to Indigenous people but curators and managers, they're trying to include some Indigenous content and not only Indigenous content but they're trying to contact Indigenous people of today to ask them about what they think about it or what is the story of your nation related to that place? So there's a real wish and efforts that are being made at the moment to include all of these voices and perspectives in exhibitions, and I think it's great.

There's still a long way to go in this capacity, for example, a mind-set shift would allow the museum to see that any exhibition or story being told about Canada almost certainly relates to

Indigenous folks, even if indirectly. Indigenous people have lived in what is now Canada for the entire time that the country has existed and well before, therefore our history has always been there alongside other Canadian histories.

An example of the CMH including Indigenous voices in an exhibition that's not necessarily "Indigenous-focused" is the *Hockey* exhibition, a temporary show which was curated by Jenny Ellison and Jennifer Anderson in 2015 and was on show from March to October of 2017 (Canadian Museum of History: Hockey). This show could have focused on the wealthy, predominantly white world of professional hockey, or even Olympic hockey in Canada but instead it looked at the sport through a much wider lens (Bilodeau 2017). This included photographs of Indigenous people playing hockey at IRSes and the contract of George Armstrong, one of the first Indigenous National Hockey League (NHL) players. Curators of this show were able to weave Indigenous narratives into a non-Indigenous focused show without it being tokenistic, as the exhibition sought to represent the diversity of Canadian identities and their connections with the sport of hockey (Bilodeau 2017).

Front of house spaces evidently offer a look at the ways in which the CMH incorporates Indigenous voices. They are sites of contestation, and when you're privy to the stories of what it took to have those languages or objects in the exhibition spaces they tell complex stories about Indigenous voices in the museum. The front of house, however, is somewhat a proverbial "tip of the iceberg" in terms of Indigenous voices in the museum. In the following section I will explore the non-front of house specific areas in which Indigenous voices appear in the CMH.

Indigenous voices in other museum spaces

Other places where we see the voices of Indigenous museum practitioners appearing is in spaces that aren't necessarily related to exhibitions or strictly front of house spaces. The theme of relationship building came up throughout my conversations with museum practitioners at the CMH. Generally, the ways in which my interviewees spoke about relationships centred on their unique positions as Indigenous people in the CMH.

Mollen, for example, is able to speak Inuktitut with Inuit visitors and stakeholders. When I asked about the ways in which her ability to speak Inuktitut influences her museum practice, she explained: "I think me speaking Innu at a national museum - sometimes - helps with situations where there's any Innu members or any groups that are visiting and that I can go talk

to them.” Moreover, she explained that her grounding in Inuit culture is a major part of who she is as a museum practitioner. She is able to build relationships with Inuit visitors and stakeholders in an Indigenous way, rather than the museum approaching them as a colonial institution. While Mollen’s ability to speak an Indigenous language, and to relate to Indigenous people because she is herself Indigenous is a good thing, I worry that for practitioners like her this can very quickly become a way to get overworked. Mollen’s voice is incredibly important in the museum, but being asked to form relationships with visiting groups of Inuit is not actually part of her role as the RBC Indigenous Internship Coordinator. This is not to say that Mollen is *choosing* to overwork herself nor that she is to blame in any sense for this, but that Indigenous people can become tokenised very quickly in institutions like the CMH when they have the ability to speak their languages or they have the sorts of relationship-building skills that Mollen does. Mollen’s story highlights the need for the museum to hire more Indigenous practitioners like her, and to support them in relationship-building roles, rather than asking other museum practitioners to do more than they are paid to do.

Similarly, my interviews showed that Indigenous museum practitioners have the ability to make people feel included, when they are given the resources and the institution trusts their expertise. Jonathan Lainey, for example, used his voice and his work as a curator to make an Indigenous committee member feel included, and his voice was also a representative of other Indigenous voices. Despite being challenged on his curatorial choices, he was able to write labels that clearly represented Indigenous voices. Lainey explained:

[W]e had an Indigenous committee that read all the texts [for the *CHH*] but there was another general committee of historians of authors or scholars and these people were non-Indigenous so, general population, and one of them said this section that I curated was completely biased towards Indigenous perspectives. So to me it was not - to me it was to say ‘hey good job Jonathan, you did well’ you know? It was proof that I was able to convey these perspectives into the hall, so it was a compliment.

This is an example of an instance where the museum supported Lainey’s voice in some capacity. He was able to feel confident in his choice, despite the committee member’s challenge. He went on to tell me:

The other example is before the opening of the [CHH] we had visits from groups of people. So we invited people from Kitigan Zibi to pre-visit the hall before the opening. And one of the participants - she said, you know she read the texts on the walls - she was so happily surprised that she said 'oh my god, they let you write this on the wall?' because it's a national institution, because of government control - all of that. So she was surprised [...] so to me it was proof that we were able to make these Indigenous perspectives on Canadian history known, visible and heard.

In this story Lainey's experience of being a museum practitioner at the CMH is one that is entirely relational. In writing these texts he was able to tell the kind of story that Indigenous people want to see in the national museum and subsequently build relationships with Indigenous visitors. Though he did not specify what the labels actually said, his work at the museum clearly made an impact. This indicates that there is room at the museum for Indigenous people to tell our stories and perhaps to do so in more direct and honest ways, despite some pushback. This can only happen, however, if there are Indigenous people on staff at the museum.

Staffing levels and hiring practices

In terms of the pool of potential interviewees at the CMH, I was limited to just five self-identifying Indigenous museum practitioners. Of those five people I only managed to speak to three. Dean Oliver, being the Director of Research, manages or managed all of the practitioners with whom I spoke and he shared some of the CMH's staffing statistics in our interview:

Four of the 24 people in the core, curatorial rank are Indigenous. [...] So of the 40 [people on my team there's four out of 40 who are declared. So, at roughly 10% that tracks - it tracks national numbers for us. It's still too low. And there are others, other areas, none of the archeologists for example, are Indigenous, and that is an area in which we hope to recruit.

As of the 2016 census, Indigenous peoples made up 4.9% of the Canadian population and is one of the fastest growing populations in Canada ([Stats Can](#)). In my interview with Oliver, I asked

specifically whether there is a policy around hiring Indigenous people for Indigenous roles. Without something like this, or at least a strong institutional commitment to hiring more Indigenous people, there will be few Indigenous voices in the museum. Oliver shared that “the preference for hiring Indigenous people for Indigenous roles [...] is extremely high.” There are also roles for which Indigenous candidates are given preference, which seems like a start. Oliver went on to explain that often, when there are no suitable Indigenous candidates for a role, they will pause the search and repost the position opening at a later date. Oliver continued:

Of course there are areas of - in particular, in the curatorial domain, like if we have a curator of Indigenous experiences, for example [...], and it would be simply inconceivable for us to hire anyone other than an Indigenous curator for that role. There are others which historically in the museum have been filled for many decades by non-Indigenous people.

In reflecting upon the data gathered from interviews conducted with CHM staff, I would argue that the museum is making a start, in terms of its hiring practices. Generally, as was communicated to me by my participants, there are simply not enough Indigenous people on staff who are able to be in all of the right rooms at the right times, so the push to hire more Indigenous people is promising. Without the presence of these people, we cannot expect Indigenous voices to be present within the museum.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners in Canada come together to tell stories of what it is like to be an Indigenous person working in a Seventh Fire museum. Though not all the interviewees mentioned in this chapter have the same experiences, there are still themes which run through the interviews. Indigenous voices, for example, seem to appear most prevalently in the CMH’s front of house spaces through two means: language and objects. Language tends to be more obvious as Indigenous voices often appear in audio form, whether in recorded interviews or in other audio forms like performances or retellings of creation stories, and they are harder to avoid. In terms of language, though it still seems like the museum is paralyzed slightly. Due to the complexity of Indigenous languages in Canada and the sheer

number of those languages, there are too many perceived options. This creates the risk for the museum to get it wrong and that fear therefore stops them from trying to get it right.

Objects, on the other hand, requires more awareness of museums in order to see the presence of Indigenous voices. Objects do not necessarily immediately trigger an association with voice, but knowing the stories of acquisitions of objects like Elijah Harper's feather, a real wampum belt or a family heirloom in the form of a rattle and photograph, the presence of Indigenous voices becomes much clearer. Even objects, though, seem to present some nearly insurmountable challenges for the museum, with complexities in provenance causing the museum to shy away from including real Indigenous objects, indicating, perhaps, some fear of reawakening colonial traumas and having to deal with historic, problematic collecting practices. This is supported by the story Jonathan Lainey told about the wampum, where the museum was so nervous about incorrectly identifying the provenance of given objects and subsequently insulting Indigenous peoples that it was willing to give up on having a real wampum belt and instead use a model/reproduction of one.

Indigenous voices also appear and influence the museum's practice as a whole. With them finding ways to change the museum's priorities. Indigenous voices are present in the museum's external relationships, and the storytelling, curatorial, and relationship building work undertaken by the Indigenous museum practitioners at the CMH cannot be ignored.

Another theme that emerged is the acknowledgment, from Indigenous and non-Indigenous museum practitioners alike, that the museum still has a long way to come in terms of the inclusion of Indigenous voices. The lack of voices in the back of house and on the museum's permanent staff means that diverse Indigenous voices are still lacking in the museum's public offerings. More than this, though, the lack of Indigenous staff and networks at the museum means that the experience of Indigenous museum practitioners is one of having to constantly advocate for their voices to be listened to, as there is nobody else around to do this sort of work. The staff themselves echo this, with Dean Oliver, Director of Research, saying that the museum is in constant need of improving its numbers and hiring more Indigenous staff. Another staff member highlighted the lack of sensitivity and cultural awareness training for museum staff:

I feel like there's not a lot of cultural awareness at [the CMH] and we've started this year to do that by having online classes on the history of Indigenous people. But I feel like

being a national museum, that's something that could be more there. [...] I don't think there's enough done in terms of like having our voices, having our perspectives [heard] and I think it's all starting because there's not a lot of Indigenous people in the higher - like board of trustees I think there's one Indigenous [person] or has a lot of interest in Indigenous stuff but I feel like not having any Indigenous people in the higher management, it's something that I feel makes changing complicated.

The consensus appears to be that the way things *are* is not good enough, and even though efforts are constantly being made to improve the museum and its operations, this leads me to question what “good enough” might actually look like. What is clear, however, is that there is still trepidation in Canada when it comes to discussing Indigenous experiences in museums, and as such, topics like this one are considered controversial. The existence of the disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous experiences in these institutions is certainly acknowledged but that does not necessarily equate to action. The CMH is well placed now to begin shifting its policies to make the museum a more Indigenous place in terms of the voices it supports and shares, its policies and its staffing practices. This is a beginning point for the CMH, and though it is not ‘good enough’ now, that doesn’t preclude a version of the museum in which Indigenous peoples feel safe and their voices are heard and seen with much higher frequency.

It is important to note that the issues faced by the CMH are not necessarily a problem with the institution itself, rather the larger social landscape in which it exists. Being an organisation within the federal government of Canada means that it must meet certain obligations and standards of practice laid out by the government and subsequently things like including more Indigenous languages in exhibitions may fall through the cracks. Regardless, this signals the need for major changes if museum practice in Canada is to move forward, especially in terms of Indigenous museum practice. This might signal the need for the Government of Canada as a whole to place more priority and emphasis on augmenting the number of Indigenous languages in its institutions and departments, and to improve the experiences of its Indigenous employees. There are some efforts being made to work within this system to foster change, for example the Indigenous Framework developed by Dean Oliver (Director of Research) and Nadja Roby (Manager, Repatriation and Indigenous Relations), as highlighted in the previous chapter, the increased Indigenous content in the *CHH*, and the apparent desire to hire more Indigenous

people and to increase the number of voices that may have an impact on the museum's FOH and other external offerings. Another effort being made by the CMH to increase Indigenous presence in museums more broadly is the RBC Indigenous Internship Program which seeks to train Indigenous peoples in museum operations and subsequently encourages the training of a further generation of Indigenous museum practitioners.

The CMH is a complex case, with a number of efforts being made to improve the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners, but also Indigenous visitors. The museum is combatting a long, colonial history and each of these steps chips away at some form of broader change. In this chapter I have analysed and discussed the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners at the CMH—as best I could given the low participation in my research from staff—and they have provided me with an understanding of the ways in which the CMH operates in its current form. What is hopeful is the willingness I see in the staff to demand, and action change from the wider institution. The CMH does not operate in a vacuum and like many museums it is influenced by the work of other, similar institutions. The CMH needs an example of what a museum with more Indigenous involvement could look like. With this in mind, I have looked to Te Papa, seeking to learn how a national museum that is (theoretically) co-run by Māori and pākehā differs from the situation in Canada, and how the voices of Māori practitioners appear in the museum's front of house or external offerings, and its back-of-house practices.

Chapter 3

Aotearoa New Zealand and Te Papa

Background, History and Context

This chapter, much like Chapter 2, sets out the context for the case study that follows. In it I outline the history of Aotearoa and New Zealand, which I have separated semantically as Aotearoa, to me, represents the non-European human history of this land and the name New Zealand reflects the ways in which colonialism completely changed the lives of Māori. When I choose to use New Zealand over Aotearoa it is not a snub to a Māori name for this land, rather it is an acknowledgment that European governments and historical moments are not necessarily representative of Māori experiences and therefore do not represent Aotearoa. Following the outline of Aotearoa and New Zealand's general histories, I provide some statistical information on te reo Māori usage, and demographics of Māori in Aotearoa. In order to contextually situate the modern museum, which I discuss in the following case study chapter, this chapter goes on to more specifically outline the history of The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), its current mandate and structure, as well as several documents which directly influence the work done by the museum.

Aotearoa

It would be wrong to start the story of Aotearoa without first telling the story of Ranginui and Papatūānuku. Though this story, and the one of Māui which I have also included in this section, might seem to be 'just a myth' to some western eyes, it is actually an origin story and helps me to situate this research. It is more than a myth; it is a way of grounding this thesis in Māori ontologies and that is important for this research as Māori (and other Indigenous) voices are what I seek to lift up. They are the voices that this research seeks to not only listen to, but to better understand. The story of Ranginui and Papatūānuku also does appear in the interviews in the following section, making it extremely relevant to this research. According to scholar Ranginui Walker, the story of Ranginui and Papatūānuku is:

In the beginning, there was only Te Kore, the great void and emptiness of space. [...]Te Po, [was] the second state of existence [...] Te Kore and Te Po [...] signify the emptiness and darkness of the mind. Because there was no light, there was no knowledge. The reason for this state of affairs was the self-generation during Te Kore of the primeval pair Ranginui and Papatūānuku. They were the first cause preventing light from entering the world because of their close marital embrace. The procreative powers of Rangi and Papa brought into being their sons, Tanemahuta, Tangaroa, Tawhirimatea, Tumatauenga, Haumiatiketike and Rongomatane. The sons, living in a world of darkness between the bodies of Ranginui and Papatūānuku, plotted against their parents to let light into the world. They concluded that their plight [...] could be alleviated only by separating their parents, so that Ranginui would become the sky father above them and Papatūānuku would remain with them as their earth mother. The task of separating earth and sky was accomplished by Tanemahuta [...] the separation brought into being Te Aomarama, the world of light (1990, 11-13).

This is an abbreviated version of this story, but it illustrates the roots of Māori ontological understandings of how this earth came to be. The other Māori story that is significant to this thesis is the story of Māui. For Māori, the land that is Aotearoa is actually bound to the story of Māui, who is a prominent personality in stories from across Oceania (Zhang-Czirakova 2013). He is a demigod who is a descendent of Tāne and the goddess Hineahuone (Walker 1990; Zhang Czirakova 2013). His mother, Taranga, discarded him into the sea, but he was washed ashore and did not drown (Walker 1990). The story of Aotearoa goes that Māui caught an enormous fish on his hook and with his strength he pulled it up, and that fish became part of the land we now know as Aotearoa. The north island, called Te Ika a Māui is the fish that Māui pulled up from the ocean, and the South Island — Te Waipounamu (and sometimes te waka a Māui) — is Māui's boat (Anderson 2015, 9-10).

The story of the human settlement of Aotearoa is part of the larger story of the Pacific, and the navigation skills of Pacific Islanders (Te Ara: Māori Peoples of New Zealand 2006). “Around 1200 BC migration into Remote Oceania began. [...] Carrying with them domesticated plants and animals, to sustain settlement in their new island homes” (2006, 11). Aotearoa, being so far from anywhere else, “was the last substantial landmass to be reached” (2006, 10). Though

it is still up for debate, evidence suggests that Māori arrived and settled in Aotearoa sometime between 1250 and 1300 CE at the latest (2006, 33). One of the most well-known Pacific explorers of the early settlement period is Kupe, he is often credited with being the first oceanic explorer to reach Aotearoa (Walker 1990, 34-35; Anderson 2015, 42).

What we do know for certain is that Māori were in Aotearoa well before Europeans and they had (and still do have) rich traditions and cultural practices (Walker 1990; Anderson et al. 2015). Not only did the technological prowess of Oceanic navigators allow them to cross thousands of kilometres, but they also had the means for expansion of their territories across the Pacific because they travelled in waka that were loaded with cargo and supplies for settlement (Walker 1990, 25).

Māori, broadly, are storytellers much like Indigenous peoples around the world, and their histories have traditionally been passed down orally (Anderson et al. 2015). There is also a connection with the natural world inherent to their cultures, with ancestral lines (whakapapa) including animals as well as people (1990, 52). Also, like Indigenous peoples around the world, Māori divide themselves into a number of iwi (tribes) that have territory throughout Aotearoa, these iwi whakapapa (trace themselves genealogically) to specific ancestors who arrived on the early waka voyages, though as mentioned above, some trace themselves to other versions of arrivals that have to do more with the natural world (Anderson et al. 2015, 51). For example, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu and Kāi Tahu all recognise Paikea, the whale rider, as an important ancestor (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu: Manawa Kāi Tahu Ko te Waiata a Paikea mō Ruatapu).

Māori organised themselves into chiefdoms and social hierarchies which were structured on “genealogical proximity to a particular line of descent determined relative seniority, or precedence, by applying rules of seniority to relationships between individuals, families or other groups” (Anderson et al. 2015, 87). Relationships, and kinship, therefore were (and continue to be) extremely important within Māori society in terms of social order and everyday practices (2015). Before Europeans arrived, Māori populations ranged between 80,000-150,000 people across the two islands (Anderson 2015, 106).



Figure 8 Map of iwi in Aotearoa (Te Ara).

New Zealand

As previously noted, I have divided the general history section of this chapter into two parts as I want to reflect the differences between pre- and post-colonial eras. This section, therefore, will focus on the events that lead New Zealand to become New Zealand, and how those processes impacted the first people of Aotearoa.

The history of New Zealand, as a settler colonial state, begins with abel tasman. In 1642 tasman was the first European to ‘discover’ the country (Moon 2019) though Māori had been in Aotearoa for at least 800 years at this point (Walker 1990; Anderson et al. 2015). He mapped parts of New Zealand’s coastlines but did not settle, instead he left shortly after his arrival and Europeans didn’t settle in New Zealand until the eighteenth century (Anderson et al. 2015; Moon 2019). Tasman and his crew did encounter some Māori around Taitapu (Golden Bay, at the top of the South Island, near Farewell Split) but this interaction was entirely on the water as tasman didn’t actually land in New Zealand (Anne Salmond 2014; Anderson et al. 2015, 117-118). It was, however, due to tasman’s voyage that Europeans were aware of the existence of this land, and of Māori. Tasman’s maps and other documentation from his 1642 voyage were used by james cook when he arrived in New Zealand in 1769 (Moon 2019, 255). Tasman’s voyage not only provided cook with maps, but also some idea of how Māori would respond to his arrival.

Much like in Canada, the early interactions between Māori and Europeans were largely based on trade and resource extraction. Whereas Canada had the fur trade, in New Zealand these resources were timber and whaling (2016, 391). While in New Zealand, cook documented the land’s natural resources and as such kicked off a number of resource-based industries like sealing and logging (Walker 1990, 78). By the 1790s seal hunters and loggers were operating on both islands and by the turn of the 19th century the whaling industry was also in operation, drawing in colonisers from “France, America, Norway, Spain, and the East India Company” who sought to capitalise on New Zealand’s natural wealth (Walker 1990, 78). At this point, according to Richard Hill, “Māori numbered up to 100,000 and were dispersed throughout all parts of Aotearoa, predominantly in the North Island” (2016, 391). Some Māori traded with Europeans “supplying ships with pork, potatoes, sweetcorn, fish and cargoes of flax and timber” (Walker 1990, 78). Missionaries were also a means through which Māori interacted with Europeans. The first missionaries arrived in 1814, when “Samuel Marsden arrived in the Bay of Islands to introduce Christianity into New Zealand” (Walker 1990, 79). Missionaries traded tools and

weapons with Māori for food and were largely reliant on Māori support for their survival (1990, 79).

Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand – He Whakaputanga

In 1835, a group of thirty-four Māori Chiefs gathered to sign He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirene which was “a serious attempt to inaugurate a system of government by and for Māori” (Binney, O’Malley and Ward 2015, 187). This was one of the first legally-bound Māori expressions of nationhood and sovereignty (2015). Some chiefs who signed He Whakaputanga later refused to sign the Treaty of Waitangi, with the 1835 document already acting as the pre-existing legal backing for their sovereignty as chiefs, making the Treaty of Waitangi seem redundant (Binney, O’Malley and Ward 2015).

Treaty of Waitangi

By the late 1830s, the English interests in New Zealand were being threatened by the French presence at Akaroa (Walker 1990) and they therefore saw the need for a stronger legal claim to the land. It is because of this that the Treaty of Waitangi was hastily drawn up and signed in 1840 (Walker 1990; Anderson 2015). The Treaty of Waitangi or Te Tiriti o Waitangi is New Zealand’s founding document and is still commemorated across New Zealand every February on Waitangi Day. The treaty solidified New Zealand as a British colony (McCarthy 2011, 7) and subsequently thwarted potential French claims (Walker 1990).

The treaty is not, however, just one document. Firstly, there was a te reo Māori version and English ones, which meant that certain distinctions and terms used were differently in each version and the official versions of the signed treaty did not match each other (Walker 1990, 91). Moreover, the haste with which the treaty was drafted led to a number of signatures from the South Island only being added after its official signature on February 6th, 1840, which might well be taken as an insult to the iwi from the South Island (Walker 1990, 97). More than that, there were a number of copies of the treaty being taken to different regions for signing, Walker explains that the treaty was written and revised (then translated) by a number of people, including the Lieutenant-Governor William Hobson, James Busby and a missionary called Henry Williams (along with his son) (The Treaty in Brief), and “[t]he outcome of these combined

efforts was four English versions and a translation into Māori which matched none of them” (1990, 90).

One of the major differences is in the English version “[t]he purpose of the Treaty [...] was the cession of chiefly sovereignty over New Zealand to the Queen of England,” (Walker 1990, 91) but in the Māori version this was not made clear. In the Māori version, this article translates back to English to mean:

The Chiefs of the Confederation, and all the Chiefs not in that Confederation, cede absolutely to the Queen of England forever the complete Governance of their lands (1990, 91).

This is a major difference, with the word “governance” reflecting a level of control but not ownership of the lands. Even the use of “their lands” in this article suggests the continued recognition that this land is Māori land and does not belong to the queen or any other European interests. Whether this was an innocent translation error or something more insidious, the outcome is the same: the Treaty and Te Tiriti are two different documents with different consequences.

Though this section is brief, the most important takeaway is that the treaty is a living document, its interpretation is complex due to the complexities in its different versions and translations. The treaty is not a settled, stagnant, or singular document and therefore there is room for diverse interpretations and understandings of its clauses.

History of Te Papa

Much like their Canadian counterparts, the history of museums in New Zealand is tied to the history of colonialism in the country. According to Te Ara:

The first four major museums were founded in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin in the 1850s and 1860s. They all focused on natural history, particularly geology (Story: Museums).

These first museums were established during the New Zealand wars, and arguably mark the more permanent establishment of British society in New Zealand. Museums, it seems, were part of establishing cities in New Zealand, as the locations of these early museums are still some of

the country's urban centres. In the following section I will outline the history of Te Papa in depth, with some reference to the museums landscape in New Zealand in general. Te Papa's history is a long one, dating back to the early days of New Zealand's existence. Its entire history is relevant to understanding the modern museum, though its more recent history is most relevant. The following section will give an overview of Te Papa's early roots and will be divided into eras from 1865 through to the modern museum's opening, with special focus on the late 1980s to 1998 when the modern museum was in the process of being built and opened.

1865-1945

Te Papa dates its roots to 1865, when the Colonial Museum was opened in Wellington. Like many other museums of its time, notably the collections that would become the CMH and other Canadian national museums (Vodden and Dyck 2005), the Colonial Museum was "initially concerned with natural history and closely connected with private societies" (McCarthy 2011, 30). These societies were generally composed of wealthy, educated men who were also involved in collecting (2011, 30). At this point in its history, this version of Te Papa was very much like European museums (continuations of cabinets of curiosity) whose goals were really to show off colonial exploits and wealth via curiosities and Māori taonga were treated like curios (Sheehy 2006; McCarthy 2007; McCarthy 2011; McCarthy 2018). Te Papa even states:

The museum's first director, Sir James Hector, prioritised scientific collections but also acquired a range of other items, often by donation. These included prints and paintings, ethnographic 'curiosities', and items of antiquity (Our History).

This extremely Eurocentric approach to collecting and viewing Māori taonga meant that the relationship that the Colonial Museum (and subsequently Te Papa) had with Māori was complex from the very beginning (McCarthy 2011; Schubert-McArthur 2019; Cairns et al.2020).

What is also important to note is that at the same time as the museum was opened, the New Zealand wars were ongoing, seeing Māori have to fight (and being killed by Europeans) to protect their homes and cultures. In addition, the Colonial Museum was opened the same year that Wellington became the capital of New Zealand and is arguably part of the British claim to both the North and the South Islands. Te Papa's roots, therefore, were not formed in a vacuum,

and the process to get from this earliest version of the institution to the modern museum would have to reckon with those roots (Henare 2005; McCarthy 2018; Schubert-McArthur 2019).

By the 1890s, the Colonial Museum had supposedly fallen “behind the times,” according to the British Museums Association and was facing the issue of having to appeal to twentieth century audiences (Our History). The need for the museum to take a different approach was clear, and with global rise of nationalism changing the museum to a much more New Zealand-focused institution likely seemed to be the most sensible solution. As such, “[i]n 1907, the Colonial Museum was renamed the Dominion Museum and took on a broader national focus” (Our History). This shift happened at the same time as New Zealand’s achievement of Dominion status in 1907 (McCarthy 2011, 32).

Around this time, the institution’s collecting focus was also shifting (McCarthy 2011). Much like other colonial museums, the Dominion Museum took it on itself to collect Māori material culture as a practice in preservation, under the same logic as those in North America: that Indigenous peoples were dying out (McCarthy 2011; Smith 2016). These new collecting practices would bring in many of the Māori taonga that are in the museum’s collections today, as the Dominion Museum was a direct precursor to Te Papa (2011). Though the collecting practices had shifted toward Māori taonga, “there were no Māori staff working in museums and few Māori visitors, and generally museums reflected the interests and perspectives of the dominant colonial culture” (McCarthy 2011, 33). Māori did have some relationships with the museum in the early 20th century, but largely this was focused on finding ways to access their cultures and taonga in order to revitalise cultural knowledge that had been lost due to colonialism over the last century (McCarthy 2011, 33).

The interest in culture and heritage continued through the twentieth century in New Zealand. World War One was a foundational moment for the nation, in terms of its identity, and as such the preservation of a national heritage (including natural history, Māori taonga, and art) remained part of the nation’s practices. The 1920s were particularly busy, with the post-war boom allowing for a number of New Zealand-themed exhibitions in both New Zealand and the UK (McCarthy 2011, 34). The decade also saw a number of ethnographic studies in the country and some of which were supported by Māori leaders (McCarthy 2011; McCarthy et al. 2017; Salmond et al. 2021). In particular, the involvement of Apirana Ngata in the museum’s ethnographic studies and activities led to him being on the museum’s board, and the creation of a

“Māori representative” position that would continue to exist after Ngata’s involvement (McCarthy 2011, 35).

By the 1930s, the Dominion Museum was joined by the National Art Gallery and the National War Memorial with the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Act 1930 (Our history; McCarthy 2011, 34). By 1936 the Dominion Museum and the National Art Gallery had their own building (McCarthy 2011). The museum, much like the CMH at this time (Vodden and Dyck 2005) began to value its role as an educator as well as a repository (Our History; McCarthy 2011, 34). This arguably would have changed its role in the Wellington community, potentially making it more of a hub for the city and visitors to the nation’s capital.

1970s-1998

One of the most major events of the 1970s in terms of Te Papa’s timeline was the Dominion Museum’s name change to the National Museum. This name change reflected the changing status of New Zealand as a nation, rather than as a subsidiary of Britain, and opened the door for a further name change in the following years.

By the early 1980s, the museum’s building was becoming far too small and was limiting its ability to acquire more collections and to display them, especially given the shifting standards of museum practice in this era (Our History). In addition, “[t]he museum, although much loved by visitors, no longer represented its increasingly diverse community” (Our History). That is to say, the museum now had a much broader audience to serve and therefore needed to change its practices. Plans to create a new National Museum (building and in mandate) began in the late 80s when “the government established the Project Development Board to canvass opinion and set the scene for a new national museum” (Our History). This would lead to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992 which legally established not only a new name for the National Museum, but also set out new goals for the institution (Our History; McCarthy 2011; McCarthy 2018; Schubert-McArthur 2019). This change “demonstrated a shift to represent New Zealand’s culturally diverse society and reach a broader audience” (Our History), and,

Under the Act, Te Papa would:

- unite the National Museum and National Art Gallery as one entity
- unite the collections of the two institutions so that New Zealand's stories could be told -in an interdisciplinary way
- be a partnership between Tangata Whenua (Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand) and Tangata Tiriti (people in New Zealand by right of the Treaty of Waitangi)
- speak with authority
- represent and appeal to New Zealand's increasingly diverse society
- be a place for discussion, debate, involvement, and celebration
- link the past, present, and future (Our History)

Two years following the Act, construction on the new museum's building began on Wellington's waterfront. Key figures in this portion of Te Papa's history are Cliff Whiting who was the first Kaihautū, and Ken Gorbey who was the Director of the Museum Project 1992-1999 (Schubert McArthur 2019). Both Whiting and Gorbey were vocal supporters of a new bicultural museum which committed to a partnership between Māori and pākehā/non-Māori (tauiwi) and that would tell stories about New Zealand as a whole (2019). With Whiting and Gorbey at the helm, the new National Museum—now the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa—opened its doors to the public on the 14th of February, 1998.

The modern building

In its modern form Te Papa's building is an exhibition in itself. It was built over the course of four years, with it being ready well in time for the museum's 1998 opening (Our Building). It has 36,000 square metres of display/public floor space across six floors (Our Building). As mentioned, one of the museum's exhibitions is the building itself, with the "Quake Breaker" section of the museum being a small exhibition just outside the museum's main entrance (Quake Breaker). In this space, visitors can see the base isolator technology that protects the building in the event of earthquakes, this space also connects the museum to the earth and to the land on which it sits (though in this case it acknowledges the presence of nature and the movements of the earth, but not necessarily tangata whenua, or the people) (Quake Breaker).

In terms of architecture, and like the CMH discussed in chapter two, Te Papa's design is heavily symbolic. Te Papa was designed to be "a building that reflected New Zealand's history and evolving identity" (Our building), one that reflected the museum's emphasis on biculturalism, and as such it was designed around "faces" that tell different parts of Aotearoa/New Zealand's story. Those faces are:

North: Māori face

The museum's north face overlooks the harbour. Its bluff-like walls embrace nature – the sea, hills, and sky. Here, on Level 4, sits Te Marae, named Rongomaraeroa.

Rongomaraeroa welcomes visitors from New Zealand and around the world, and leads them on to Māori exhibition areas.

South: Pākehā (European) face

The museum's south face greets the city with its vibrantly coloured panels. Its grid-like spaces reflect the patterns of European settlement. (Our Building)

There is also an area called "The space between" which is:

A central wedge [which] divides and unites Te Papa's north and south faces –natural and urban, Māori and Pākehā. Here, the exhibition Treaty of Waitangi: Signs of a Nation, Level 4, explores the Treaty of Waitangi – the nation's founding document.

The building physically tells a story of treaty partnership, and the bicultural ideals on which Te Papa was founded.

Te Papa has a number of exhibitions on at any given time, though there are some major and longer-term exhibitions or main sections of the museum worth noting. These are:

- Level 2: *Te Taiao/Nature* and *Gallipoli: the Scale of Our War*
- Level 3: *Whangai Whenua Ahi Ka/Blood Earth Fire*

- Level 4: *Toi/Art* (also on level 5), *Mana Whenua*, *Iwi Gallery*, *Rongomaraeroa (Te Marae)*, *Te Tiriti o Waitangi: Nga Tohu Kotahitanga*, *Tangata o le Moana*, and other social history exhibitions.
- Level 6: Viewing Terrace (outdoors)



Figure 9

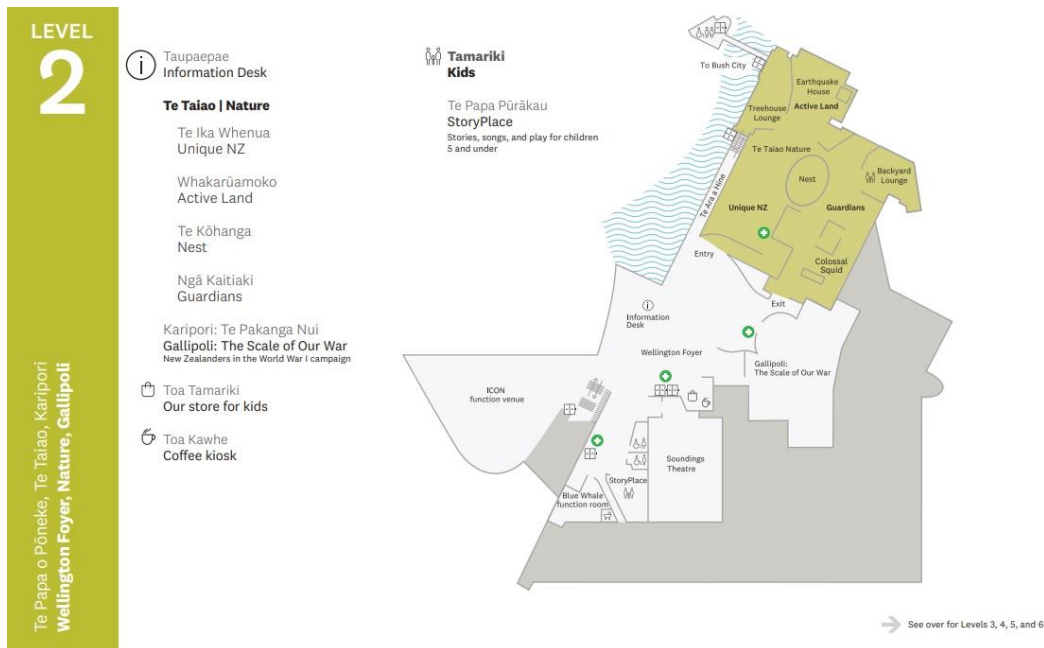


Figure 10

Each of these sections, as is clear on the maps, include a number of smaller exhibitions or sections that tell their own unique stories. What is interesting about Te Papa is that it serves as a sort of generalist national museum, with social history, natural history, Māori stories, art etc. all being explored in the same building. This is interesting given that many other countries, like Canada, for instance, separate each of these topics into their own national museums (Government of Canada: National Museums). This, to me, is an indication of the country's size but also Te Papa's understanding of the ways in which these diverse topics are interrelated and come together to tell the country's story.

Mandate, vision and policy

In terms of a mandate, Te Papa presents two main statements. The first is their legislative purpose, as set out by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992. This states that the museum:

- [S]hall provide a forum in which the nation may present, explore, and preserve both the heritage of its cultures and knowledge of the natural environment in order better—
- (a) to understand and treasure the past; and
 - (b) to enrich the present; and
 - (c) to meet the challenges of the future (1992).

This broad statement is accompanied and complemented by the museum's vision, which they have published on their website. The website states:

Te Papa's vision for the future is to change hearts, minds, and lives. Our role is to be a forum for the nation to present, explore, and preserve the heritage of its cultures and knowledge of the natural environment (Te Papa: What We Do).

Moreover, based on their Statement of Intent, Te Papa actively seeks to have a role in helping with the revitalisation of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori for all of New Zealand (Statement of Intent 2020). This is part of one of the museum's "intended outcomes" in its statement of intent

for 2020-2024, this particular outcome states that it aims to be part of a future with a “[f]lourishing Māori identity and culture” (Statement of Intent 2020, 11).

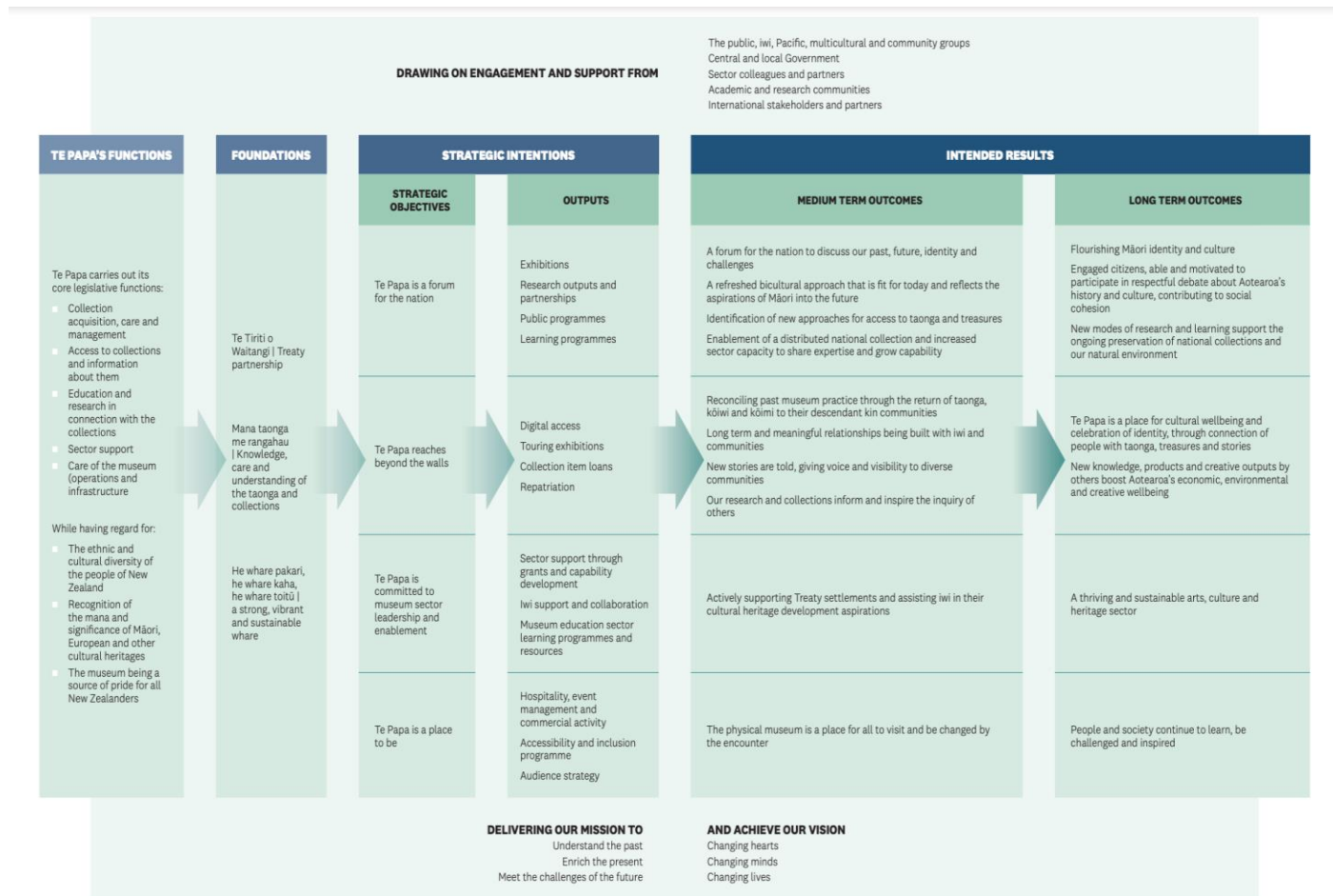


Figure 14 Te Papa's statement of intent (Statement of Intent 2020).

Management

In terms of national museums, Te Papa has a very interesting executive leadership team and management structure (Organisation Structure). It is not headed by one single person, rather (and in keeping with its desired emphasis on biculturalism) it has a dual management system led by: a Kaihautū, which is a Māori position and a Tumu Whakarae (Chief Executive) (McCarthy 2011; Schubert-McArthur 2019). The position of Kaihautū is what is particularly interesting and relevant to this research because it attempts to solidify shared leadership between a guaranteed Māori leader and another leader (pākehā or otherwise). Despite the Kaihautū acting in a co-leadership role, it still has not necessarily solved the issue of the lack of representation of Māori in museum leadership, and often the Kaihautū (as will be discussed in the next chapter) finds themselves focusing on Māori specific work instead of bringing mātauranga Māori to other areas of the museum. For example:

Te Taru White (Kaihautū from 2000-07) [...] saw the Kaihautū position as a laudable attempt to give expression to the idea of partnership, but considered that 'when push came to shove' there was a gap between this verbal equality and the structural power behind it (McCarthy 2011, 119).

Though this position is good for optics, in terms of supporting treaty partnerships and in promoting Māori voices, it is not without nuance and complexities. Even at the highest-level Māori are still fighting to be heard in Te Papa.

The executive team also includes a number of directors and officers: Director Ngā Manu Atarau (Communities, Repatriation, and Sector Development); Chief Finance and Operations Officer; Director Collections and Research; Director Audience and Insight; Director Museum and Commercial Services; and Director Strategy and Performance. Of these eight positions (including Kaihautū and CE) three are currently held by Māori. As with the CMH, the executive team at Te Papa works closely with a board. The Te Papa board is chaired by Hon. Dame Fran Wilde and is composed of seven other members, three of whom are Māori as of 2022. It is worth noting, however, that there is no guaranteed representation of tangata whenua on Te Papa's board, meaning that there are no guaranteed seats for Māori (though the museum is likely aware

that not having Māori on the board would be a poor choice for their external relationships) (Schubert-McArthur 2019, 46).

Other teams at Te Papa which are particularly relevant to this research are the Mātauranga Māori team, the writing team and the National Services Te Paerangi team. These teams work on a number of fronts to build relationships with Māori and to tell Māori stories. The Mātauranga Māori team is a group of curators who specialise in Māori knowledge (mātauranga) and who work with other curatorial teams to incorporate Māori voices into exhibitions across Te Papa. The writing team, or really the one Māori writer, is also extremely important to know about as he is the reason so much te reo Māori appears in Te Papa's exhibitions. The National Services team represents Te Papa in a number of regions across New Zealand and the team includes two Iwi Development Advisers who work with iwi to create their own museums and memory institutions, as well as facilitate relationships between Māori and Te Papa, though this is not solely undertaken by the two people in these roles, as the team is almost half Māori (National Services Te Paerangi). The National Services team also works with the Karanga Aotearoa repatriation programme. What will become clear in the following chapter is that the teams at Te Papa do not seem to work in a siloed capacity, at least in terms of the relationships that seem to exist between different curatorial teams and between curators and the people who work on the museum's external relationships.



Updated Feb 2020

**MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND
TE PAPA TONGAREWA
High Level Management Structure**

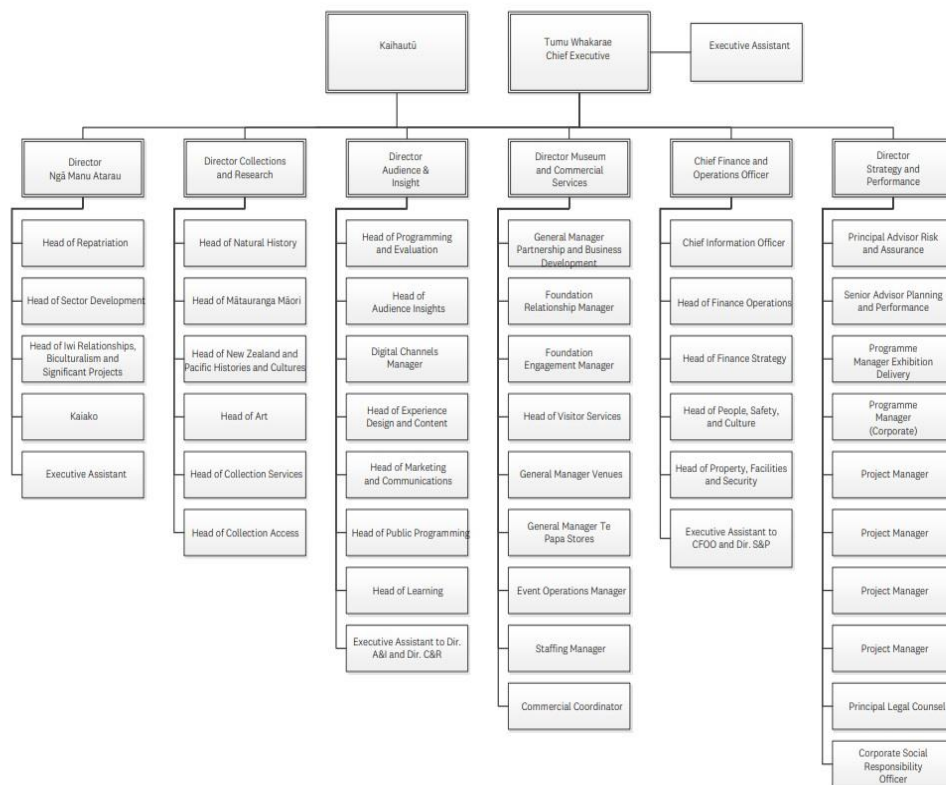


Figure 15 Te Papa's management structure (Te Papa)

Indigenous content in the museum

Te Papa really centres itself on biculturalism and on its relationships with iwi (Schubert-McArthur 2019). This is particularly clear in its rotating iwi exhibitions, the design of the building, and the presence of the Marae on the fourth floor. The museum's exhibitions also weave Māori stories into them, as will be discussed in the following chapter, particularly with the newest exhibition: *Te Taiao*. This doesn't necessarily mean that Māori voices are always represented, but that the museum's foundational principles do try to make space for them.

One way that Te Papa works to include more Māori voices and content is via the iwi Gallery or iwi exhibitions. This space is reserved for iwi who work in partnership with Te Papa to put on exhibitions that tell their stories, how they want them told (Schubert-McArthur 2019). These exhibitions change every few years, usually with a tenure of about two to three years per iwi/exhibition (McCarthy 2011, 137). The iwi exhibition that ran for the majority of the duration of this research was *Ko Rongowhakaata: Ruku i te Pō, Ruku i te Ao/The Story of Light and Shadow* which told the story of an iwi from Tairāwhiti or Gisborne. This show was made up of carvings, videos, and more of Rongowhakaata people and it celebrated ancestors as well as current artists (Past Exhibitions).

The value of iwi exhibitions is clear, it allows Māori to tell their own stories without them necessarily having to work for the museum or having to meet western standards of what a museum practitioner should look like. These exhibitions can also bring in new visitors who come to the national museum to see their taonga on display and to see their stories being told. The process of creating these exhibitions can be difficult, with curators at Te Papa having to work in different ways from their usual practice (Schubert-McArthur 2019, 50). Regardless:

[d]eveloping an iwi exhibition not only gives a particular iwi the opportunity to showcase themselves and establish a partnership with TP, but it also means that two representatives of that iwi become part of TP's staff as they take up residency for the duration of the exhibition (Schubert McArthur 2019, 51).

This means that not only do these exhibitions bring in Māori voices and stories that might not otherwise appear in the museum, but they actually lead to the expansion of Māori museum practitioners at Te Papa with the iwi members taking up residency.

Other relevant exhibitions:

There are several frequently referenced exhibitions that show the ways in which Te Papa's museum practice has evolved through its history. These exhibitions are brought up as sort of “bar setting” tools, in that their innovations have set up new standards of practice for the museum. The main exhibitions that are mentioned are: *Te Māori*, and *Whales/Tohorā*. These exhibitions set the bars for future shows at Te Papa, *Te Māori*, which opened in 1986, for example:

Represented a critical moment, when New Zealand began to shrug off its identity as a British colony and imagine itself as part of the Pacific. Unlike any exhibition preceding it, in *Te Māori* taonga were interpreted as ancestors, challenging notions that they represented primitivism, artefacts or natural history. At the centre of this revolution was Māori co-curator Hirini (Sidney) Mead (Te Ara: Story: Māori and museums – ngā whare taonga)

According to McCarthy, “*Te Maori* was one of the high points of a period of decolonisation” (McCarthy 2011, 55) and it reflected the changes that were happening in Aotearoa/New Zealand's broader society, as “indigenous social development overlapped with the exhibition's development (2011, 55).

Whales/Tohorā, on the other hand, was a more recent exhibition which toured the world between 2008 and 2019 and incorporated mātauranga Māori alongside western science in order to honour the connections that Māori and other Pacific peoples have with whales. Following this show, the development of exhibitions at Te Papa, like *Te Taiao* also discuss natural history and the natural world through both a Māori perspective and a westernised perspective, holding both as equally valid approaches to understanding the natural world (Whales Tohorā).

Relevant documents, policy and legislation

The Treaty of Waitangi is still actively used in New Zealand as it is what establishes the legal relationship between Māori and the crown. In the context of Te Papa, the treaty outlines its relationships with Māori and it is one of the museum's foundational principles/documents (Statement of Intent 2020). It sets out Te Papa's role as a treaty partner with Māori (but also between Māori and pākehā) and, as will become clear in the following chapter, pushes (or at least *should* push) the museum to constantly reconsider and be willing to change its role in New Zealand as a treaty organisation.

One major policy at Te Papa that informs its practice, in particular as it relates to Māori objects and stories, is the Mana Taonga policy. As discussed by Schorch, McCarthy and Hakiwai:

[As a policy,] Mana taonga is a modern Māori articulation of customary concepts informing museum practice at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa). Māori staff see this concept as having relevance not just for their work looking after Māori collections but for museum collections and communities everywhere.

Concept developer Karl Johnstone argues that mana taonga, a specific response to Te Papa's situation based on Māori traditions, has the potential to transform the basic tenets of museology itself (2016, 51).

The main points of the Mana Taonga policy at Te Papa are:

- Te Papa is central in laying the foundation for Māori participation and involvement;
- Mana Taonga was developed through consultation with iwi;
- Mana Taonga recognises the spiritual and cultural connections of taonga with the people;
- The rights of iwi to Te Marae o Te Papa Tongarewa is in equality to all other iwi;
- These rights accord to iwi the mana to care for their taonga, speak for them, and determine their use by Māori (Eria 2018).

Another document which informs daily practice at Te Papa, and in particular, the work of some of my participants in the following chapter is the Wai 262 claim. This 2011 Tribunal claim has direct ties to protecting Māori cultural identity and practices, though it is sometimes also understood as the “indigenous flora and fauna and cultural and intellectual property claim” (Ka Mua) which not only connects the natural world to Māori cultural practices but also seeks to protect that relationship (Waitangi Tribunal). “The aspiration of the claim firmly asserts ‘Māori control over things Māori’. The claim essentially seeks to restore ‘tino rangatiratanga’ (Māori authority and self-determination) of the whānau, hapū and iwi of Aotearoa over our ‘taonga’ (those things and values which we treasure, both intangible and tangible)” (Waitangi Tribunal).

New Zealand Wars and Land Confiscations

A series of wars defined early European colonisation and settlement in New Zealand, and the experience of that trauma for Māori. These wars are sometimes referred to as the “New Zealand Wars” and spanned from 1845-1872 (Vincent O’Malley 2019, 9), though some may also include the Musket Wars of the early 19th century in that group. The Musket Wars were a series of conflicts from 1815 to the 1840s which were “attributed to the introduction of the musket” (Anderson 2015, 149). These conflicts were largely between iwi and the increased efficiency of killing provided by muskets meant that they were bloody and caused the loss of many lives. These conflicts, though not strictly considered part of the New Zealand Wars, show the ways in which European tools and ways of life irrevocably altered Māori lives, though that is not to say that guns replaced all traditional weapons for Māori (Anderson 2015, 150).

O’Malley states that the New Zealand Wars “profoundly shaped the course and direction of [New Zealand’s] history” (2019, 9). These wars were not one large war, really, but a series of conflicts over the defense of land and sovereignty fought between the crown and Māori (O’Malley 2019), though even that statement lacks nuance given that Māori fought on both sides (O’Malley 2019). Some Māori who fought alongside the Europeans were called: “‘loyalists’, ‘friendlies’, ‘Queenites’ or kūpapa, [and they] did so in pursuit of their own tribal imperatives” (2019, 11). Much like other Indigenous peoples facing colonisation, Māori were fighting to survive as peoples and as such had to make tough choices and in the case of these conflicts, Māori had no choice but to take a side, with the crown considering anyone who claimed neutrality to be an enemy (O’Malley 2019).

The New Zealand Wars were made up of nine main conflicts, mostly divided by region. These are: the Northern War 1845-46; Central New Zealand: Wairau, Wellington and Whanganui; the Taranaki War 1860-61 and 1863-64; the Waikato War 1863-64; the War at Tauranga; Pai Marire and the West Coast campaigns 1864-66; the East Coast Wars 1865-66; Titokowaru's campaign 1868-69; and the Pursuit of Te Kooti 1868-72 (O'Malley 2019). The results of these wars, notwithstanding the incredible loss of life that we will never have a complete record of (O'Malley 2019), was the loss of Māori land. Tragically, the crown's punishment for Māori fighting to protect their homes was to confiscate lands. This meant that:

More than three million acres of land was confiscated under the New Zealand Settlements Act of 1863 at Waikato, Taranaki, Tauranga, Eastern Bay of Plenty and Mōhaka–Waikare. Other lands, subject to a unique confiscation regime in the East Coast area, were also taken or 'ceded' at Tūranga, Wairoa and Waikaremoana. Māori who did not fight against the Crown were promised that their lands would be protected. That did not happen. Confiscation was applied indiscriminately across entire regions (O'Malley 2019, 239).

This was the final blow to Māori in terms of the British taking 'legal' control of the lands and the governance of New Zealand. The intense years of fighting "tipped the scales" in favour of the British through their decimation of Māori populations (O'Malley 2019). "By 1865 full responsibility for governing the colony had passed to the New Zealand Parliament," writes O'Malley, "and although four Māori members were admitted after 1868, they were hugely outnumbered by the seventy-two Pākehā members" (O'Malley 2019, 242). This section is necessarily limited in its exploration of the New Zealand wars and their impact on Māori and New Zealand. But the loss of people arguably always leads to the loss of knowledge and culture and coupled with the loss of lands and connections to ancestral homes, they not only were a political blow for Māori but also a huge loss in terms of traditional knowledge.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century

By the late nineteenth century Europeans were living in New Zealand in large numbers and Māori populations were declining (Binney and O'Malley 2015, 280). Like their counterparts in

other settler colonial nations, pākehā settlers saw themselves as rightful occupants of this land and often viewed Māori as a problem to be dealt with. Assimilation was one way to do just that (Binney and O'Malley 2015, 280). The Kīngitanga movement, “founded in 1858 with the aim of uniting Māori under a single sovereign” was already in full operation at this point (and still exists today), though it was impacted by the Waikato wars in the 1860s (Te Ara: Story: Kīngitanga – the Māori King movement).

[The government would] hold out the promise of support for tribal autonomy at the village level. But it would also pressure Māori to assimilate, forsaking social and cultural distinction. And settler politicians of all persuasions would intensify their insistence that all ‘unused’ Māori land be developed, even if that meant its ownership should change in the process (Binney and O'Malley 2015, 280).

By 1867 Māori populations had dropped to under fifty thousand (Binney and O'Malley 2015, 285) and the Māori leaders of the time were facing questions around how they would maintain autonomy and their culture.

By the 1890s, many had come to the conclusion that they could not expect parliament to seriously address their concerns [...] at the same time, leaders were emerging from the Māori parliament – Te Kotahitanga o te Tiriti o Waitangi, established in 1892 (Binney and O'Malley 2015, 281).

The Kīngitanga and Kotahitanga movements were/are significant in re-establishing a clear desire from Māori to maintain sovereignty and political (and social) autonomy. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries they were instrumental in demonstrations and political actions that sought to “create an equality of status by establishing an effective Māori voice” (Binney and O'Malley 2015, 288).

The early twentieth century was also a period for building national identity for New Zealand, in particular via the World War One. The horrific battles at Gallipoli fought by New Zealand and Australia are often treated as a major foundational moment in the country's history (Te Ara: Story: First World War). Māori fought alongside pākehā in WWI (though they weren't

necessarily treated equally) and over three hundred Māori men died in service (Binney and O'Malley 2015, 303).

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a time of loss for Māori, due to the impacts of colonialism (2015) they had lost massive swathes of their lands, and their political and social sovereignty and cultural knowledge(s) (2015) “but Māori leaders were still active in mainstream political life, their voices still heard” (2015, 307).

Mid-century-late 1990s

By the middle of the century Māori were increasingly moving from the regions into New Zealand's cities (Harris and Williams 2015, 343). According to Harris and Williams, “between 1936 and 1945, the percentage of Māori living in urban areas more than doubled from 11.2 to 26 per cent. In 1966, when Māori migration peaked, 62 per cent of the Māori population lived in urban centres” (2015, 343). This migration meant that Māori and pākehā were no longer living in separate communities and instead were living and working alongside each other in much higher numbers than ever before. This led to not only new ways of life in New Zealand's urban centres but also changing culture for Māori, especially youth (2015). “Eventually the Department of Māori Affairs formalised a relocation programme and introduced ‘pepper-potting’ policies that aimed to intersperse Māori families in predominantly pākehā neighbourhoods and so increase the chances of integration taking hold in Māori homes” (2015, 344).

By the late 1960s and early 1970s Māori across NZ were campaigning for better supports and for language and land rights, among other general rights to autonomy more broadly (Harris and Williams 2015). A series of protests and movements sprang up at this time, fuelled by previous decades of activism. “Armed with strident analyses of autonomy, self-determination, sovereignty, mana Motuhake and rangatiratanga,” argue Harris and Williams, “Māori would challenge the state as they had before, setting their sights more and more on the Tiriti o Waitangi promise of rangatiratanga” (2015, 359). This period is when Māori began to be heard by the government and they were able to leverage their knowledge and higher numbers in urban centres in order to organise. One major cause Māori were fighting for in this period was having te reo Māori added to school curriculums, and in 1972 Nga Tamatoa and the te reo Māori Society (at Victoria University of Wellington) presented a petition with over thirty thousand signatures “to Parliament on the day they declared Māori Language Day, 14 September 1972” (2015, 359).

Māori Language Day eventually became Māori Language Week (Te Wiki o te reo Māori), which is an annual event that still happens annually (History of the Māori Language). In 1975 the Māori Land March took place to protest the theft of Māori land and the lack of protections from further theft. The march's slogan was "not one more acre" and the marchers began their demonstration on the northern tip of the North Island (Cape Rēinga) and marched south to Wellington. Harris and Williams point out that "[t]he march signalled a marking out of a Māori bottom line and a determination to hold on to what little land Māori had left" (2015, 360).

This was all happening at the same time as the new Treaty of Waitangi Act was passed (1975), forming the Waitangi Tribunal. According to the Tribunal's website:

The Waitangi Tribunal [...] it makes recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to legislation, policies, actions or omissions of the Crown that are alleged to breach the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi [...] The role of the Tribunal is set out in section 5 of the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 and includes:

- inquiring into and making recommendations on well-founded claims
- examining and reporting on proposed legislation, if it is referred to the Tribunal by the House of Representatives or a Minister of the Crown
- making recommendations or determinations about certain Crown forest land, railways land, state-owned enterprise land, and land transferred to educational institutions. (Waitangi Tribunal: About).

One of the events in New Zealand's history that the Waitangi Tribunal was involved in was the occupation at Takaparawhā or Bastion Point (Harris and Williams 2015). This was a protest which took place over the course of 506 days in 1977 and 1978 and has "come to symbolise Māori land issues" (Te Ara: Story: Auckland places). The occupation was an example of the long-standing historical injustices and land theft perpetrated by the New Zealand government and the general lack of respect for Māori rights. The occupation ended with over 200 arrests by police who were armed with batons (Harris and Williams 2015, 362). The Tribunal was brought in after the end of the occupation, when one of the protest leaders:

Joe Hawke initiated a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal. The resulting Tribunal report concluded that the Crown had breached the Treaty when it failed to ensure Ngāti Whātua retained a proper reserve in tribal ownership and when it compulsorily acquired the land at Ōrākei and evicted the people from Ōkahu Bay [...] The issue, in the Tribunal's view, was not simply one of compensating for land and resources taken but of re-establishing Ngāti Whātua on their ancestral land with a secure economic base (Harris and Williams 2015, 362-363).

This was an example of how the newly established Waitangi Tribunal could support Māori land claims and work as a protective body for Māori rights, though it does require that someone file a claim. In the latter half of the twentieth century Māori increasingly fought to reclaim their rights and cultural practices. There was an increasing push for policy that supported Māori interests, with a focus on self-determination (Harris and Williams 2015, 370). By the 1980s the renaissance of Māori practices, and in particular te reo Māori was growing, with “the establishment of kōhanga reo, Māori-language pre-schools, in 1982” (Harris and Williams 2015, 370). This change in policy and growing access to te reo Māori and other cultural services meant that by the 1990s the perception of being Māori was beginning to shift. It was less dangerous for Māori to be themselves as there was now more value placed on their cultural knowledge and practices (2015). This is not to say that racism and anti-Māori beliefs among pākehā disappeared, but that Māori were able to have more pride in their identities among a broader New Zealand society. The 1990s is also when more Māori scholars began publishing formative texts, like Ranginui Walker's 1990 book and Linda Tuhiwai's *Decolonizing Methodologies* in 1999, both of which inspired further generations of Māori and Indigenous scholars.

Official languages and Indigenous languages in New Zealand

New Zealand officially (i.e., legislatively) only has two official languages: te reo Māori and New Zealand sign language (Our Languages - Ō Tātou Reo). English, though the most widely spoken language in the country (approximately 95%), isn't actually an official language (2018 Census totals by topic: National highlights). Te Reo Māori, on the other hand, is established as a protected and legislatively official language in New Zealand by the Māori Language Act which has the purpose of declaring: “the Māori language to be an official language of New Zealand, to

confer the right to speak Māori in certain legal proceedings, and to establish Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori” (1987).

This was not an easy legislative win for Māori. Like the experience of many other Indigenous peoples around the world, Māori experienced colonial attempts to destroy and eliminate their language and the reclamation of it is a major and ongoing ideological but also personal win against the forces of colonisation. In 1972, as mentioned above, activists presented a petition to parliament that called for te reo Māori to be taught in schools, this petition led to the legislation of te reo Māori as an official language. It is also responsible for the existence of te wiki o te reo Māori which is an annual week dedicated to te reo Māori and the increased use of the language by Māori and pākehā alike.

Though I would argue this is generally a good thing for te reo Māori, in terms of preservation and the growth of speakers, it does mean that there is now a “crown” version of the language which can sometimes oversimplify it. The “crown” version of te reo Māori is dictated by Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Māori, a government organisation who “are focused upon promoting te reo as a living language and an ordinary means of communication (Te Taura Whiri: Our Story).” Te Taura Whiri have a guide to best practices for translating te reo, and they have a guide which standardises te reo Māori spellings and grammar for government organisations.

Demography of Māori in NZ

In New Zealand the Māori population makes up 17.1% of the national population, which translates to about 875,300 people (StatsNZ: 2018 Census totals by topic; StatsNZ: Māori population estimates: At 30 June 2021). This population is relatively young in the 2021 data, with the median ages of Māori sitting at around 25-27 (depending on gender identification) years old, compared with non-Māori who are 36-38 (also depending on gender identification) years old (StatsNZ: Māori population estimates). Māori are also a fast-growing population compared with their pākehā counterparts, growing 2.4% in the June 2021 year, compared with non-Māori populations only growing 0.6% (StatsNZ: Māori population estimates).

In terms of language, Māori have a fairly high percentage of te reo speakers, with approximately one in five Māori adults reporting that they can speak te reo in 2020 (StatsNZ: Māori population estimates). This number does not account for those who reported being able to understand te reo with some proficiency, which was closer to one third of Māori adults (StatsNZ:

Māori population estimates). The te reo speaking population is also more concentrated in younger and older age groups, with “Māori people aged between 15–24 years and those over 55 appeared to be among the most likely to speak te reo Māori at least fairly well” (StatsNZ: Māori population estimates). These age groups make sense when considering the country’s history, with young people being given more chances to learn the language in school more recently as social and governmental priorities around Māori rights and te reo Māori have shifted, and those who learned from older family members who had grown up speaking te reo.

Conclusion

Through an exploration of Aotearoa and New Zealand’s histories, I have provided a contextual grounding of the case study in the following chapter. Aotearoa/New Zealand is a nuanced place, where the colonial history has led to different life experiences for Māori and tauiwi and as such the histories I provided are necessary for understanding the individual experiences of Māori (and Pacific) museum practitioners. Their lives in a Seventh Fire or contemporary world are impacted by these histories and the traumas (and victories) of their ancestors stay with them.

I have also demonstrated that Te Papa is a complex institution through a look at its history and foundational policies. With its attempts at bicultural management, it acts as an example of what a museum could be, but through an in-depth look at its history it becomes clear that like many museums around the world, Te Papa still must contend with its colonial roots. Documents and legislation like the Treaty of Waitangi (and Te Tiriti), Te Papa’s Mana Taonga policy, and the Wai 262 claim all factor into the ways in which Indigenous museum practitioners work at Te Papa. Their experiences are informed by these histories and documents, and as such this chapter acts to contextualise the following Te Papa case study chapter.

Chapter 4

Te Papa Case Study

When I came to Aotearoa/New Zealand I had high expectations, I thought that perhaps I was moving to a utopia for Indigenous people and Indigenous languages. I have since spent many hours at Te Papa, wandering through its exhibitions, looking at it through the eyes of both a museum studies researcher and as a visitor. While, realistically, I don't believe that any museum is perfect — Te Papa included — I do think that Te Papa does offer some insights that are relevant to advancing museum practice, and in particular, the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners. Through speaking with Māori and Pacific museum practitioners, my experience of Te Papa changed, suddenly an overlay of meaning appeared, and the places where Indigenous voices appear in the museum became clearer. Through these voices, and examples of when, where and how they appear in the museum, I was able to better understand the experiences of Māori and Indigenous museum practitioners at Te Papa, as it currently operates. This was a more poignant and overt shift in my understanding of the museum, when compared with Canada, because I was there in person and because of my comparative lack of understanding of Te Papa's operations at the beginning of this research.

Much like at the CMH, at Te Papa I see Indigenous voices in the labels, the directional signage, and other places where language appears in a conventional way, but I also see it in the objects chosen, and where they're currently living in exhibition spaces. What has also become clear through my fieldwork at Te Papa is that there is no way to be entirely or consistently sure where Indigenous voice comes through. As established in the previous chapter, Indigenous voices in the museum are nuanced and complex and therefore in some instances it's easier to tell, for example a grammatically correct title, but other times it may not be clear at all. Labels, for example, could be excellent representatives of Indigenous voices in front of house spaces, if they're bilingual and written for a te reo Māori reader or speaker. If, on the other hand, they're simply direct translations of the English text, then it becomes less likely that there is the voice of an Indigenous practitioner coming through. These instances seem to come up with more frequency at Te Papa, whether due to the general presence of more Indigenous people and

languages or for other, less obvious reasons. By comparison, in Canada, voice is often more of a shotgun principle, it's either clearly present or clearly missing, rather than being more of a grey area. This difference will become clear as this chapter unfolds, and will be discussed more in depth in the following chapter.

In this thesis I ask: what are the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners in modern day Canada and New Zealand, and how might those experiences change in an Eighth Fire world? The main way I have sought to answer this question is through better understanding Indigenous voices in the museum, and like the CMH, the areas in which Indigenous (or in this case Māori) voices appear in Te Papa is often indicative of the experience of Māori practitioners at the museum. In seeking to answer this question, through understanding Indigenous voices, I have found a number of intricate, nuanced ways that practitioners see their voices and power within the museum. This chapter will discuss the ways in which the voices of Māori and Pacific museum practitioners appear at Te Papa. First I look at language as a form of voice, focusing on titles and labels. I then discuss the ways in which objects and their arrangement can constitute forms of voice, and I highlight a number of key examples of this throughout Te Papa's exhibitions. I conclude with an analysis of Te Papa's hiring practices, policies and governance, as this provides a more holistic picture of the museum's current or Seventh Fire operations.

Indigenous voices through language

The bureaucracy of a large, government funded museum means that there are policies that need following and certain practices that can sometimes be rigidly imposed (Young et al. 2015). In the field of museum studies there are numerous guides to label writing for audiences (Kaye and Hubner 1980; Fienup-Riordan 1999; Serrell 2015; Derksen 2018), as referenced in the literature review of this thesis. These suggestions range from the physical production and mounting of labels (Kaye and Hubner 1980, 40-41) to word length and reading difficulty levels for accessibility (Serrell 2015) to making labels inclusive and respectful of minority groups (Serrell 2015; Derksen 2018). The rigidity of label writing can sometimes mean that Indigenous voices are stifled in favour of making labels short or saving space or money. That is to say, conforming to "standard" museological practice(s) can cause museums to prioritise voices and languages that aren't Indigenous. At Te Papa, labels tend to be written via something called parallel writing, which is a form of interpreting labels rather than directly translating them. Te reo Māori labels

are not the same as the English labels in many cases, and sometimes this means they tell entirely different stories about particular objects or topics. Māori writer Ranea Aperahama explained: “to take something from a western perspective and to turn it back around you can have translation — which is word for word — or you interpret or whakamāori and whakamāori means to make the world Māori or everything Māori so there's a difference in terms of translation and interpretation.”

Interestingly, at Te Papa we see language and voice appearing more often in writing, rather than in audio. This differs greatly from the ways in which Indigenous languages appear in the CMH and could potentially indicate a difference in the ways the museums operate, and the ways in which Indigenous peoples are treated in New Zealand and Canada respectively. At Te Papa, at a first glance, written forms of te reo Māori are present almost everywhere you look, from directional signage to exhibition labels. Arapata Hakiwai, Kaihautū at Te Papa, explained “te reo Māori [...] we’ve always acknowledged that at Te Papa it’s our national taonga, we’ve always had a Māori — te reo Māori language policy here.” Te Papa benefits from being a newer museum, and as such has had a bicultural and post-tribunal foundation that can make it easier to argue for more Māori representation and more te reo Māori in the museum. Te Papa was also founded in its current form during the earlier stages of the Māori renaissance, meaning it was pertinent to build in tikanga and mātauranga Māori (including te reo Māori) into the foundation of the museum. It also was able to be more representative of an idealistic version of New Zealand, in which Māori and pākehā work as actual partners. This does not, however, mean that it is a utopia as I expected it to be when I came to New Zealand, Te Papa still has its blind spots and faults. In the following sections, I will establish the current experiences of museum practitioners at Te Papa and lay out their views on Indigenous voices as they appear through language in the museum. Firstly through titles, then more broadly through other labels and textual mediums.

Titles

The complexities of representing Indigenous voices through language are clearly visible in titles at Te Papa. Through my fieldwork at Te Papa I’ve realized that titles can be a marker of how Indigenous voices appear (or don’t) in exhibition texts. Exhibition titles at Te Papa appear in both te reo Māori and English, and are sometimes excellent examples of parallel writing or

interpretation rather than direct translation. In other words, to readers of both languages, they provide an extra layer of storytelling. Titles can also be places of contestation in the museum, and can represent some of the complexities of behind the scenes relationships and conversations between Māori and non-Māori practitioners. There is a sort of push and pull that appears to go on behind the scenes when it comes to titles, there seems to be an especially complex relationship between using te reo Māori correctly and marketing priorities. Matariki Williams — at the time a Mātauranga Māori curator at Te Papa — explained: “when it comes to like the titles of exhibits, often they do say quite different things and I love that about the way we approach language here.” Williams’ point about the diversity of stories that titles contain at Te Papa shows just how complex they are.

“Title” as a label subcategory is arguably the most self-explanatory, Beverly Serrell describes them as the labels that tell the visitor the name of the exhibition, they’re meant to be the first label a visitor will see when they visit an exhibition (2015, 32). Although simple in terms of their purpose, when I look at titles through the lens of Indigenous voices they become a much more complex and nuanced part of exhibitions. They’re not only directional signage or a tool to “enable visitors to decide whether they are interested enough in the subject matter to enter [the exhibition],” (Serrell 2015, 32) but they can also set the tone for an exhibition space, or, they represent the push and pull of the behind the scenes, if you have the background knowledge or insider information to be able pick up on that. The level of complexity that seemingly simple titles of exhibitions can carry was expressed through interviews with Kaitiaki (curators) and other Indigenous museum practitioners at Te Papa.

For example, in kōrero with Matariki Williams we discussed the idea that titles can tell a number of stories. In particular, we spoke about the titles of two exhibitions at Te Papa: *Toi Art* and *Te Taiao Nature*.

Me: I remember last time we talked we talked a little bit about titles [...] I think we were talking about how it’s *Toi Art* and that isn’t grammatically correct?

Williams: No, yeah, which is why you’ll see it’s *Te Taiao*, but originally that was going to be *Taiao Nature* because it’s one word and one word but it was a real push from our senior Māori writer to be like ‘that’s incorrect in te reo Māori ’ so that became *Te Taiao*. But unfortunately, for *Toi Art*, the branding’s already... the horse has bolted on that one.

Williams' point was echoed by other practitioners, including former Director of Mātauranga Māori Puawai Cairns who explained:

About two or three years ago I got them to change the name of our natural history exhibition downstairs which is now called *Te Taiao*. It used to be called taiao but with te reo a noun doesn't usually exist on its own.[...] Usually you have a te, a he, ko, so they go with the actual noun so it had been expressed by the Māori writer early in the piece that no 'taiao' isn't correct, neither is *Toi Art*, and I hadn't heard that he'd already said 'no it should be *Te Taiao*' you know the exhibitions team went 'ah well it's too late now, it's ok we've seen other institutions use Māori words without the particle' [...] I had to help them with the graphic identity for the title signage for the entrance way and I was like 'why is it taiao? Why didn't you put *Te Taiao*?' [and they told me] 'Ah well the Māori writer said that but there were arguments against it.' and [I asked] 'who [...] said?' So I was head of Mātauranga Māori at the time so I pulled the team together, got one of the directors and I said 'I wanna change the title and put it back to *Te Taiao*' and he [...] was like 'ah that's gonna cost about a thousand dollars' and I was like 'who cares? This is supposed to be the place where people can trust what we say'.

Ranea Aperahama, the writer mentioned in Cairns' story, also spoke about titles. He told me the same story about the process of choosing the title of *Te Taiao*. Aperahama told me:

So I raised the point about this: the Māori language has been anglicized. [...] You want to shorten it for marketing reasons you know: snappy, quick, catchy [but] saying 'taiao nature' [...] it's unnatural to me, I wouldn't say 'I'm going to taiao' if I said that in Māori I wouldn't say that, I'd say: 'I'm going to the taiao' — 'haere ki te taiao,' not 'haere ki taiao.' So it's unnatural to me, it's anglicizing the language.

The difference between *Toi Art* and *Te Taiao Nature* is not just a few letters. The difference and real issue here is there is one title where Māori voices were heard and another where they were passed over in favour of marketing, design or financial priorities. It's also indicative of the

experience of practitioners like Aperahama, who is an expert in te reo Māori, despite this, his knowledge was initially ignored in favour of making the exhibition's title look tidy or good on marketing materials. The current prioritisation of getting the title right in English but not necessarily in te reo Māori indicates a lack of commitment from the museum but likely also the broader society to learning te reo Māori properly. In order to learn and respect a language, one must also understand the context and culture of the language, and anglicising the language, as Aperahama puts it, indicates that that comprehension is currently lacking in New Zealand.

The complexity of Indigenous voices in the museum is made clear in this example. Having a title in both te reo Māori and English might be viewed as an obvious and immediate instance of Indigenous voices in the front of house at Te Papa, and certainly that is what I thought when I first visited Te Papa, but it's clear that this issue is more complex. As an absolute baseline, Indigenous languages should be used correctly, and when they aren't it can very quickly become an example of tokenism and a lack of Indigenous voices being heard.



Figure 16 Te Taiao's entryway and title.

Figure 17 Toi Art entryway and title.

Williams also spoke about titles, in her case it was in the context of an art exhibition she co-curated with Rebecca Rice, an art curator at Te Papa. Contrary to the issues encountered with *Toi Art* and *Te Taiao*, Williams' experience with this exhibition and its title was generally positive. The exhibition consists of a series of portraits arranged on a gallery wall in Te Papa's *Toi Art* section. The exhibition itself will be discussed in more depth in a later section of this chapter. However, it would be remiss to ignore the titles of this particular exhibition as they are representative of what it looks like when Māori voices are present and listened to. Williams spoke about the translation of the titles:

It's called *Encounters*. But then in Māori it's called *Ngā Tai Whakarongorua* which to me translates as, two tides coming together. But whakarongorua is like having to listen to two tides at the same time and they may be telling you different things. Because what we wanted in that exhibition is for people to see the collision between — uh, during that early settlement period and prior to that — between Māori and Europeans. One of the threads anyway. But yeah, using the title to reiterate a theme in that, from the exhibition that isn't evident in the English name of it.

To me, this is a clear example of Indigenous voices appearing in the museum and, perhaps more significantly, represents Williams' experience working on this exhibition as a Māori curator. She spoke in our interview about this being a positive experience for her, and that is reflected in the storytelling and nuanced ways in which the exhibition was titled. Moreover, without the presence of an Indigenous museum practitioner (Williams) the depth of meaning that is contained in the title might not exist. The unique voice of Williams as a Māori curator is, to me, incredibly important and present in this exhibition. Moreover, based on the way Williams spoke about this show, it seems that she also sees her voice and Māori voice(s) in it. These sorts of experiences speak as much about the current state of museum practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand as the less positive ones had by Cairns and Aperahama. They form a picture of a national museum that is trying to change and grow, but also has to contend with its embedded practices and perhaps some complacency around rethinking those practices.

In the same vein, Aperahama told me about the subtitles in *Te Taiao* and the complexity of interpreting them rather than translating them directly from English to te reo Māori. The

focus, in writing the main subtitles he discussed, was to make the narrative of the exhibition easier for Māori to connect and engage with. By interpreting rather than translating, Aperahama was able to weave Māori world views into the exhibition and tell a story about the land that connects to Māori stories about Aotearoa. The two main titles he discussed were “Unique New Zealand/Te Ika Whenua” and “Mahitahi” in the first section, and in the entrance of *Te Taiao*, respectively.

When asked to translate “Unique New Zealand” Aperahama questioned the idea of New Zealand being unique. “‘What New Zealand?’ [...] So I’m travelling back in time and I’m thinking ‘what would this land have been without humans?’” Through his cultural knowledge and questioning of colonial views of land Aperahama landed on *Te Ika a Maui*, and in this title he captured an Indigenous understanding, specifically his as a Māori person, of this land. One that acknowledges the living, breathing nature of the land and one that incorporates Māori knowledge. Aperahama explained that he didn’t want to just translate the title word for word, instead wanted to capture something much more culturally relevant and potentially meaningful for those reading and understanding the te reo Māori labels. He shared “so coming up with a name for ‘unique New Zealand’ I coulda said ‘Aotearoa Take Take’ so Aotearoa meaning New Zealand, take take meaning original or unique.” In deciding against a direct translation he made the title more relevant to Māori and his own perspective on the exhibition’s topic. This choice is also indicative of Aperahama’s comfort with subverting expectations when writing Māori labels, though this often seems to lead to extra work for him (for example, he spoke about having to create new terms for taxonomy) it is a way for him to exercise his power within the museum to tell Māori stories. His voice represents not only his perspective and knowledge, but also indicates that even though the experience of being Māori staff in a colonial institution isn’t always a safe space, and that he isn’t always listened to (i.e. with the title of *Te Taiao*) he does have some comfort with going against the status quo, which is interestingly supported by Kaihautū Arapata Hakiwai’s stance that he doesn’t want Te Papa to blindly follow standard museological practice.

Other Labels

When Aperahama spoke to me about the complexities of translating labels he described writing Māori labels as time traveling. Knowing this, the presence of not just his voice but also the voices of Māori from across time and across Aotearoa appear in many of Te Papa’s labels. He

told me “when I’m looking at something from today I’ll use a certain way of expressing that a ‘today Māori speaker’ would possibly understand.” That is to say, Aperahama works to write te reo Māori labels that situate readers in a particular time period but also works to make them accessible to modern te reo speakers. He said:

So if I’m writing something for the now time, it’ll be framed around [modern te reo Māori], if it’s written around a time — you know 1800s, 1700s then the language will reflect that. It becomes more archaic sounding or it becomes more metaphorical.

Aperahama’s take on time travelling through language is grounded in his ontological understanding of time and his connection to those who came before him, but also to those who will come after him. In this, he represents a Seventh Fire museum practitioner, lighting and carrying sparks for future generations by not only revitalising older forms of te reo Māori but also writing them into labels and publicly accessible spaces for other Māori to see.

Aperahama also spoke in depth about writing the Māori labels in *Te Taiao Nature*. One example in the *Whakarūaumoko Active Land* section, actually resulted in him creating new te reo Māori terms in order to encompass scientific concepts and mātauranga Māori. Aperahama described an example of this process:

I would sit there and go “what’s the ahi?” ahi means fire, “ka means condensed,” [...] “what’s the ahitapu?” ahi tapu — sacred. There’s already, in our tradition or korero, these words. I was looking more there — it’s really good crossing over from te ao Māori to western science.

This practice of creating new terms is an example of Aperahama’s ability within modern-day Te Papa to contribute to the active growth of the language and potentially create new cultural relations to objects and stories through his work. New words, arguably, have the power to create new connections and knowledges. Aperahama also walked me through *Te Taiao* and explained his thinking around some of the labels. We spent quite a bit of time talking about one label in particular in the *Ngā Kaitiaki Guardians* section of the exhibition. This label is in the *Tāne Tokorangi Climate Converters* section, which is a small walled section in the middle of *Ngā*

Kaitiaki where visitors can make pledges in the fight against climate change, and their pledges are projected on the walls of the room in the form of birds. The English label for *Climate Converters* called: *Create a Carbon 0 NZ*, encourages people to “work together to keep sea-level rise and drought away” and to make a pledge. The te reo Māori label, on the other hand, incorporates mātauranga Māori by talking about the story of Papatūānuku, Ranginui and their son Tāne. Aperahama explained that the label was written to show Māori that they need to help Tāne hold apart his parents in order to keep the world safe and to keep us from falling back into darkness. In writing about climate change through this story, Aperahama is able to bring in his voice and to use it to make concepts like climate change more culturally relevant and accessible to Māori. This isn’t to say that Māori don’t already understand climate change (obviously Māori are as aware as anyone else), or that the English labels aren’t well-written, rather it shows that Aperahama’s work provides another, culturally-bound and relevant avenue for Māori to engage with the topic.

Paora Tibble, who was the Māori writer at Te Papa for seven years, also spoke to me about writing labels in accessible language, whether in te reo Māori or not. Tibble explained:

When Te Papa was opened or established it was determined that we would have a writing team, and the core role of the writing team was to make the text on the walls or audio or wherever — palatable for Joe Bloggs, just for normal people coming off the street.[...] And actually there were times when I’d be translating [and] I couldn’t understand the English. And that was one of the keys to Te Papa, was making it accessible, making our taonga accessible.

If labels aren’t written in accessible language then visitors, whether they speak te reo Māori or English wouldn’t be able to engage with them. Subsequently, the voices of Māori and Indigenous practitioners would be more likely to get lost in the confusion.

There are, also, plenty of examples of non-parallel writing in Te Papa. For example, the directional signage, such as toilet signs, COVID-19 social distancing signage, floor labels, and signs explaining to visitors that there are no photos allowed in the *Mana Whenua* exhibition. These, I argue, are not examples of Indigenous voices in the museum, instead they’re representing a broader government voice (COVID signs, especially) and a much less personal

voice. These sorts of signs aren't really *for* Māori, nor are they about Māori people or their voices. They don't tell any sort of story about the experiences of Māori (or non- Māori) practitioners at the museums but it is worth noting that this sort of signage might have a different role somewhere like Canada. This is because there is currently so little in terms of written Indigenous languages at the CMH and its Canadian counterparts that *any* form of written Indigenous language would be meaningful at this point in its development. This nuance was not immediately noticeable to me as a non te reo Māori speaker it's much harder for me to recognise these differences, and as a Canadian the presence of Indigenous languages in the museum in general was so impressive to me at first that I didn't consider *how* they were being used. Once it was pointed out, however, it became clear to me just how differently the two types of language work in Te Papa. To me, it comes down to storytelling, one (interpretation) tells stories through Māori voices and eyes, and the other just uses the language to convey information that is directly translated from English. One is living and breathing, almost with a life of its own and the other is much more stagnant and "official."

Space constraints on multilingual labels

Almost all eight of the museum practitioners that I interviewed at Te Papa spoke about the concept of "real estate" or space on labels, and the struggle to fit two languages and, often, two stories into a limited space. Space priorities on labels at Te Papa can vary based on the kind of label, Puawai Cairns explained:

You've got the high level signage, usually banners, title signage, entry signage, your first descriptor, and then you drop down into more signage that's in the exhibitions so you're looking at things like unique graphics, segmental signage and then you go down to labels and object rails. So at the high level those usually are bilingual because there's more real estate so you're using less words because you want stuff people can read in 30 seconds and they're usually side by side: English, Māori . So at that point there's usually no quibbling, it's when you come down to the lower level when it comes down to the grainier stuff especially object labels because you've got less real estate, that's where usually the fighting happens.

Sean Mallon, a curator in the Pacific Cultures team at Te Papa spoke about the trilingual labels in the temporary exhibition *Tatau: Samoan tattooing and photography* that he curated:

I was surprised because I hadn't worked on a show for a while that they were going to give so much space to the languages but I was really grateful for the opportunity to push that [...] But you know it goes in the face of a whole lot of standard museology around label lengths and 'books on walls' but also shows you how museums are political and it becomes a statement more of Te Papa's commitment to language and Indigenous peoples.

Mallon illustrates some openness on Te Papa's part to adding Indigenous languages even if it's not necessarily "best practice" in the field. The trilingual sections that Mallon references were mostly the introductory material for the exhibition, however, and all three languages only appeared together on the "higher level" labels. While the use of trilingual labels appears to be an excellent step for the inclusion of Indigenous languages, it does not necessarily indicate a major swing in the prioritisation of label space or "real estate" as noted by Cairns.

Much like we know that there are politics of display in museums (Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Bennett 1995; Hooper-Greenhill 1995; Bennett 1998) labels are also a site of political intersections and can convey meanings beyond the face-value information they offer (Bennett 1998, 22). The first time I visited Te Papa, for example, was to visit the temporary *Terracotta Warriors* exhibition. I was completely astonished to see labels not only in English and Māori but also in a Chinese language (I'm unsure if it was Mandarin or Cantonese). Prior to this I had thought it would be completely impossible to have trilingual exhibitions. This is evidence of the pervasiveness of the standard rules and practices in the museological field, even with a critical eye and a willingness to shirk some of the constraints of "standard practice" it is hard to break out of the mindset that too much text on the wall is bad. For example, in her 2015 book, Beverly Serrell writes that "[m]ultilingual labels should not be considered casually, because they add twice (or three times) the number of words to an exhibition. Multilingual labels are also costly to write, design and produce" (2015, 106).

Despite this being common practice in the field, in our interview Kaihautū Arapata Hakiwai explained to me that Te Papa isn't interested in following "standard" museological practice just for the sake of fitting in. Instead, he recognised the unique position of Te Papa to

create its own form of practice. I argue that the new form of museum practice that Hakiwai spoke about is one that would view Indigenous voices as necessary and would value the inclusion of them throughout the museum. Hakiwai's perspective appears to be future focused, though he understands the reasons why museums have operated the way they have, he doesn't advocate for the blind continuation of these practices moving forward. Making Indigenous languages a priority on labels, even if it would mean more words on the wall than is standard, is something I see fitting into Te Papa's ever-progressing museum practice. To me, it could go beyond tokenism. In this comfort with the possibility of going against standard museum practice, at Te Papa I see a step towards a future where what's important is making the histories, objects, science and more accessible to Māori. This is not to say that Te Papa is the only museum that sees the importance of multilingual labels. It is, however, an example of what multilingual museums could look like and provides a snapshot of how these labels work in a Seventh Fire world, under current pressures from the wider field. It's a willingness to subvert, which is a great first step toward the Eighth Fire.

Education

Language at Te Papa is also sometimes used as an educational tool. Though this was not heavily discussed by my participants, I feel it is worth noting. Indigenous voices at Te Papa do seem to appear in instances where there is an opportunity to revitalise and educate others on Māori culture. In the case of language, Te Papa tries to make their knowledge accessible and to help Māori hold onto and revitalise their language.

For example, Williams spoke about the ways in which labels can be used as educational tools at Te Papa:

So one way that [making labels educational] happens is if we have, you know our kind of two language, our bilingual interpretation but certain words are swapped so that you can see 'ah' I think one of them is talking about 'I'm pākaru at the moment' and in Māori it would say 'ki te broken ahau' so if you swap those words over you can see that pākaru and broken are the word equivalents of each other and then you've got the whole sentence structure around those two swapped words.

What's interesting to me in this, is that not only do labels appear in both languages in these cases and represent Māori voices in that capacity, but they also act as tools for visitors to see the connections between the two labels. I would argue that these sorts of labels do represent a form of Māori voice as they represent the desire for reclamation and revitalisation of te reo Māori. They're reflective of the current state of te reo in New Zealand, as it's still in its renaissance/revitalisation period. Hakiwai spoke about Te Papa's desire to be part of the revitalisation movement. He explained "what we want to do —and this is the aspiration going forward—is to ask the question "How can we play a far greater role in the revitalisation of te reo Māori for our nation?"

Indigenous voices through Objects and Arrangement

While language (written or spoken) is a very clear example of Indigenous voice, there are other ways in which the voices of Māori and Pacific practitioners come through at Te Papa. In this section I discuss how, as with the CMH, objects and their arrangement are actually ways that the voices of Indigenous museum practitioners end up in Te Papa. At Te Papa, a number of my participants spoke about objects that they either acquired for the museum or that they had a hand in arranging in a way that told a unique and Māori (or Pacific) story. Dougal Austin, head of the Mātauranga Māori team explained: "we choose taonga to tell a story." This isn't always an easy process, Austin went on to speak about the complexity of choosing taonga to tell particular stories to represent diverse Māori perspectives: "you wouldn't get [taonga] all from one place or one iwi. You'd try to have a bit of spread, you'd probably also [have] the male and the female representation. That's those considerations, all that sort of thing."

Puawai Cairns explained that her collecting practice —while she was still a curator — was a way in which she inserted her voice and other Māori voices into Te Papa's exhibitions and collections. She gave two main examples: the first was a (fictional) gang patch on a jacket from the film *Once Were Warriors*, and the other was a uniform from Te Wānanga O Aotearoa.

The jacket was displayed in the *Kei te Kairauhi: 21 Ngā Taonga Curators' Choice: 21 Things* exhibition from December 2019 to June 2021. Cairns explained:

[T]hat was one of the last things I collected before I moved out of curation [...] I'd been working for a long time to get gang patches in the collection, that didn't really work but

as part of that process I got [the *Once Were Warriors*] patch. [I] bought it in an auction [it] used to belong to Riwia Brown who was one of the producers on *Once Were Warriors* and [...] it became the hero piece of one of the exhibitions that's on the floor.

What's interesting with this particular taonga is that Cairns was able to subvert the institution's reluctance to collect gang-related objects by collecting a patch that was significant nationally because of the film's success. This taonga also represented a section of Aotearoa/New Zealand that the museum wasn't necessarily comfortable highlighting. Gangs are a reality (as in most countries) and Cairns was able to reflect that through her collecting.

Cairns was also able to bring in the voices of the creators who worked on the film, and in particular the voice of the woman who made the patch. She told me:

[I] got in contact with Riwia brown saying 'I've got your jacket! I bought it on auction,' [...] she told us who designed the jacket and then one of the history curators [...] went and found that Māori woman who was the costume mistress of that movie and she got a huge surprise that her work was now in Te Papa. We managed to reconcile her name and her tribal affiliation with the jacket and sent out some public communications identifying her and how special it was that we now knew who she was and what she'd done to design it. I followed a Facebook trail where all of her family had shared the post like 'auntie! You're so amazing oh my god' so all of a sudden this piece of her life became highly visible to her family. And yeah, when you see a Māori woman getting celebrated it's a good thing eh, so those are the times when I really like it.

In this case, not only was Cairns able to bring in her own voice in terms of her collecting priorities and having objects tell Māori stories, she was also able to bring in the voice of another Māori woman. This is a powerful example, to me, of the ways in which Māori voices in the museum can and do make it a nicer place for other Māori to visit, and the diverse ways in which this is achieved.



Figure 18 Once Were Warriors jacket and patch that Puawai Cairns acquired, on display at Te Papa in 2021.

Another object that Cairns spoke about was part of a uniform from Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. She told me the story of the acquisition and display of this taonga:

I managed to collect a very humble tracksuit from Te Wānanga o Aotearoa for an exhibition I was working on called *Uniformity*. [It's] not very valuable, but it told this great story about a Māori organisation using pastoral care to look after students [...] it told a really fabulous story.[...] So I managed to find and bring it in and when [it was] on display I would go up and watch that exhibition, watch people milling around it and see whenever a Wānanga student would stop and go 'ah look hey!' All of a sudden a piece of their life is on the floor right next to uniforms, you know very posh uniforms that belong to the governor general and a Victoria cross winner, they saw themselves. So that was one of the first kind of like 'ooo drug rush' [moments].

For Cairns, the story of this taonga seemed to be a clear instance of her voice impacting the experience of Māori visitors (and others who connected to that taonga), by making Te Papa's collections better or more personally relevant to them. What's contained in both of these stories about Cairns' acquisition work is her active ability as a Māori museum practitioner to bring in objects which tell uniquely Māori stories. Without practitioners like her in the museum, some of these stories would never be told and people would feel less represented by the national museum. Te Papa needs the voices and work of practitioners like Cairns in order to tell Māori stories in Māori ways.

Curator Matariki Williams, in the same vein, spoke about the arrangement of portraits in the *Encounters Ngā tai Whakarongorua* section of *Toi Art* at Te Papa. The wall is painted a striking, darker red, a shade that's reminiscent of the walls of the Louvre or another European museum and has an arrangement of portraits. The style of display, at first glance, reads as antiquated to anyone who has some sense of museum practice but it's actually a clever play on this older, European style of display. As previously mentioned, Williams co-curated this exhibition with Rebecca Rice, and in our discussion she explained the significance of the arrangement of these portraits. She told me:

My role became more about having input in how we arrange things and you know being cognizant of tikanga and the way in which Māori tīpuna who were depicted in these historical portraits, like being cognizant of their arrangement of where they are in relation to one another.

Williams went on to say:

There's a portrait of Poedua [Poetua] who was a Tahitian princess who was taken by Cook and his crew during one of their visits to Tahiti and the wall started with her [...] and there's a portrait of Cook himself on the wall, and I was very much not keen on this depiction or interpretation of history starting with Cook, which is why I pulled out a taonga onto the flank wall. So the two flanking walls have single objects on them.

Williams explained that the objects on the flanking walls were specifically chosen to open and close the story on this particular gallery wall. The opening object, "a pūtātara, that has a known history that dates back to the 1600s" represents the lives of Māori before Europeans arrived in Aotearoa. Since a pūtātara was or is sometimes used to signal the start of a "battle or [that] change is coming," in the exhibition, it represents the arrival of new people (not necessarily just Europeans). The taonga on the other flanking wall is a portrait of a Māori woman, the history or provenance of the painting has been lost but, as Williams said the portrait is there to

[S]how that we go from this history of like very strong connection, knowing your whakapapa and where you're from, [and then] all of this change happens and you end with this [thing] where it's like 'we don't know who this woman is' and that is because of all of this stuff that happened in between, [...] but she's still a very proud looking woman.

Williams' story shows that taonga can tell really pertinent stories, if we know how to interpret them. This story is also an instance of her voice, as a Māori museum practitioner, influencing and appearing in the museum through objects and their arrangement.



Figure 19 Pūtātara on the flanking wall in Ngā Tai Whakarongorua.



Figure 20 Portrait of an unknown Māori woman on the flanking wall in Ngā Tai Whakarongorua.



Figure 21 Middle section of Ngā Tai Whakarongorua.

Similarly, the arrangement of taonga in the first section of *Te Taiao* reflects a Māori viewpoint on the land that is now Aotearoa or New Zealand. When we walked through the exhibition together, Aperahama explained that if you look at it through his eyes or through Indigenous ontological perspectives, you can see that it opens with the “original iwi” of the land. That is to say, the arrangement of native species shows the original tribes of this land: birds, sea life, plants, and insects are arranged into groups on the walls, and through the eyes of Aperahama, this shows them arranged into their iwi. If they can recognise what they’re seeing, walking into the exhibition to see these displays of the first iwi of the land immediately situates a visitor in pre-human Aotearoa and honours the relationship Māori have with the land and with animals.

This arrangement is also an example of the incorporation of mātauranga Māori into exhibitions that don’t necessarily have to reflect Māori viewpoints. That is to say, Te Papa could have chosen to present a western science-only exhibition, but with Aperahama working as a writer and with a Māori curator on the project, mātauranga Māori has been woven throughout the exhibition through taonga, their arrangement and their stories. The arrangement of these taonga doesn’t simply reflect western biology and animal classifications, but also Aperahama’s unique perspective as a Māori museum practitioner. In fact, *Te Taiao* is filled with taonga that represent Māori voices. When Aperahama walked me through the exhibition, he highlighted two specific taonga: the Aotea stone at the entrance, and a replica of Maui’s toki or adze.

The Aotea stone, which comes from Mahitahi on the South Island, is the first taonga visitors encounter when they enter *Te Taiao*. This stone is from the place where it is believed that Māui first stepped onto the land that we now call Aotearoa/New Zealand. But more than that, it represents Māori voices and perspectives on natural history and science. According to Aperahama, the stone represents mahi tahi, or working together. It also sets the tone for the exhibition by establishing the idea of working together and highlighting relationships between Māori and the land. Aperahama was particularly interested in highlighting this taonga, as it seemed that, to him, this was the basis for a majority of his thinking when he wrote the te reo Māori labels for the exhibition. He was keen to maintain a strong connection to mātauranga Māori throughout the show, and this taonga seemed to be a source of inspiration for that. His voice is tied to this taonga as clearly as it is to the labels he’s written as it gives insight into his

thinking and personal perspective. Additionally, this taonga is a touch object and this, to me, acts as a tool to get visitors to physically and mentally engage with Māori voices and stories.

The replica of Maui's toki is the second object visitors see in *Te Taiao*. This piece is accompanied by an animation of Maui's silhouette interacting with Aotearoa's native animals and plants. It, again, shows the exhibition's commitment to mātauranga Māori, and the stories that explain the land. The toki represents the first arrival of a voyager (Māui), and Māori and Pacific connection to that first arrival. Again, this object reminds visitors of Māori voices and mātauranga Māori. It continues to set the scene for the exhibition, and it makes clear that this show isn't just western science, but also Māori knowledge.

Where language and taonga meet

It's important to note that language, in the case of Te Papa, cannot always be separated from taonga. Interpretation, rather than translation, is also an important part of respecting taonga and their mana. Language used around taonga, according to Māori writer Ranea Aperahama and curator Matariki Williams, needs to be relevant to their time periods and to the knowledge that they contain. For example, when writing labels for taonga Aperahama explained the difficulty of properly labelling a taonga in English, and using the right dialect of te reo Māori for that taonga because:

That's its original language and its perspective, you know? So it's very hard to translate into English because the concepts — you have to come from that place — and then within the mother tongue you can sense and understand what it is, but how do I explain that in English?

A particularly pertinent example of the way language and taonga are connected was explained by Williams. She spoke about working with Aperahama after reading Nathan "Mudyi" Sentance's piece on the "maker unknown" label (or similar phrases) that gets used in documenting museum collections. Sentance writes:

I used to discuss missionaries' papers and their usefulness in regards to First Nations family history as part of my work. Unfortunately, this usually led to me discussing the

missionaries themselves. This was hard to avoid as the collection would be named after missionaries and the descriptive information available mostly related to them. But, I hated it. Mainly, because it centred a non-Indigenous person in a story about First Nations people (Maker unknown and the decentring First Nations People 2017).

This is to say that the colonial roots of museum (and other GLAM) collections mean that the creator and the history of taonga often get lost. In this piece Sentence advocates for the re-centring of First Nations and Indigenous voices in the storytelling around these collections. For Māori, in particular, the mana of taonga plays an important role in the ways in which they are treated in museums and their collections (Schorch and Hakiwai 2014; McCarthy et al. 2018). This is to say, taonga have their own spirits and are their own entities, which counters the western way of understanding objects as inanimate. Williams related to Sentence's work and it changed her perspective on taonga at Te Papa. She told me:

I remember sending that to [...] Ranea at that point just to be like 'can we think of a different way to say 'maker unknown' 'or 'artist unknown'?' and in te reo Māori we say 'tē,' which means — tē with the macron over the E is a negator —it's like 'we don't know.' Yeah, but even then [...] there's no noun in that, so it's not saying *who* doesn't know, it's just like not known. Yeah and I know that Ranea's kept thinking about that as well [...] just wanting to [...] move that conversation onward and give the taonga a little bit more agency in terms of that — where that lack of knowledge lies, because what I said [...] is despite the fact that we don't know who that was made by that doesn't mean the taonga itself doesn't know. You know? The deficit of knowledge doesn't lie with the taonga, it lies with us.

Another example is the Te iwi o-papa stone in *Te Taiao* which continues the exhibition's theme of connecting to and incorporating mātauranga Māori. The label for this stone is actually only written in te reo Māori. Aperahama explained to me that the stone has its own whakapapa and that to him, it is an ancestor. This further highlights the ways in which mātauranga Māori and, specifically, understandings of the lives of taonga factor into the everyday work of Māori museum practitioners. Aperahama's voice as a Māori museum practitioner is clearly present in

this taonga and its label as he is telling a story that matters to him and Māori. If this taonga had been labelled in English it may not have been possible to explain the Māori concepts and therefore wouldn't have been as effective. Unfortunately, this sort of labelling in solely te reo Māori is rare, and though it is heartening to see that Aperahama had the ability and space to include this te reo-only label, it doesn't necessarily reflect a commitment from the museum to any sort of change outside of that one moment/label.

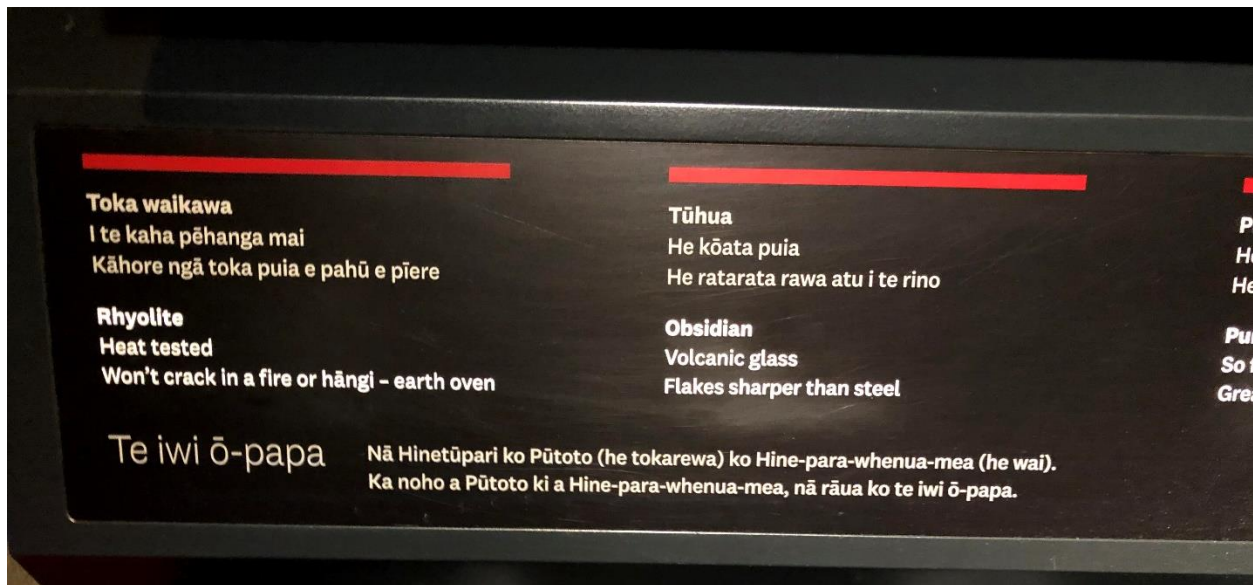


Figure 22 Te iwi ō-papa stone's te reo Māori-only label in Te Taiao

Using sensitive and relevant language, whether it's in te reo Māori or English, to describe taonga means that the taonga is better respected. This not only acknowledges its creators, but also the mana of the taonga itself. In doing so, I argue that Māori practitioners are working in a way that follows their tikanga, and their voices are making a visible difference both in terms of language that's used in the museum and the way that taonga are displayed and treated.

Hiring practices, policy, governance and external relationships

In order to understand some of the experience of the Indigenous museum practitioners at Te Papa, I had to also understand its structure and hiring practices. Te Papa's specific Mātauranga Māori curatorial team, for example, could indicate that there's already some priority to have Māori practitioners in the institution, as these curators have to have knowledge of tikanga and Māori ontologies in order to succeed in the role. Te Papa also structures itself as a bicultural

museum, which Kaihautū Hakiwai explained: “[one of] the foundational pillars if you like of this museum was that it had to be different, and the difference was it had to be bicultural.”

This structure doesn’t necessarily mean that Te Papa is perfect, but it does seem to be a good ideological starting point. Huhana Smith explained:

When it comes to the bicultural structure of Te Papa I know things have been strengthened, but I also know Te Papa is a very intensely hierarchical institution and I think in some respects that needs to shift in order to enable a deeper cohesiveness, or a deeper interface between the systems of understanding.

The structure does suggest some commitment to make sure that Māori voices are present and valued in the institution but as Smith notes, there’s still room for improvement. One area in which the bicultural structure of Te Papa is clear is the role of Kaihautū, currently this position is held by Arapata Hakiwai. Hakiwai explained that the Kaihautū is named for the “person in the waka who actually gives the call” and provides direction to the rowers. Hakiwai shared that at Te Papa the Kaihautū is “the cultural leadership” but that this responsibility is “shared with our CEO, we both share that.” This system isn’t perfect, but it does seem to be important in terms of ensuring that Māori voices are heard. Hakiwai continued “[w]e’re just sort of working that out because in an ideal world we should both be accountable to that and this is one of the decisions for the — is when we’re looking at a bicultural museum should [moving toward biculturalism] be left only to Māori to do?”

Regardless, Te Papa needs Māori on staff in order to strive for biculturalism. When I spoke to Hakiwai, I asked if Te Papa has a specific policy around hiring Māori (or other Indigenous) people for Māori-centred (or Indigenous-centred) roles. Hakiwai said:

Not in particular, but having said that it’s an area of focus, that we want to absolutely increase Māori capability. We want to recognise the Māori competencies, of te reo Māori, tikanga, and value that. And [...] — an important part of that is that we have strong Māori capability at our national museum. If we didn’t, we wouldn’t be able to do what we do and Māori — Māoridom out there would be saying ‘oh Te Papa you espouse this but you’ve got no Māori staff.’

As noted, Te Papa has a specific Māori writer position. This position means that there is a dedicated person on staff who can write labels in te reo Māori and is able to (at least sometimes) find ways to weave in Māori voices and knowledge. This position is admittedly possible due to te reo Māori being one language (though there are many dialects) but that does not mean it's less valuable in terms of the writer's ability to include Māori voice(s).

External Relationships

Te Papa does seem to value its external relationships quite highly. They have development advisers across the country including Iwi Development Advisers. Paora Tibble, who is currently an Iwi Development Adviser works with iwi on projects including their own cultural centres, and on matters like repatriation. Tibble explained that his role's "core responsibilities is engaging with iwi, hapū, whanau and kaitiaki taonga. Also engaging with museums in other communities who wish to develop a relationship with iwi, hapū, whanau — Māori basically." This role, therefore not only helps iwi to access Te Papa but works to build relationships that help Māori across the country to have access to their taonga in other museums. This also could be seen as Te Papa's attempt to expand its idea of museum practice. These sorts of whare taonga or other sorts of museum/memory institutions support different kinds of museum practice and practitioners who can work outside of Te Papa's limitations (as it has to cater to a much wider audience) and work more directly with and for Māori.

Hakiwai spoke about Te Papa's emphasis on building external relationships with Māori:

The local iwi here are really really important, they've supported Te Papa for the last — well, way before we even opened through blessing the sites, coming to all the pōwhiri. So we're actually strengthening the relationship now and so we've met with both of the local iwi and said we want to do that, and look forward to, you know, actually helping them more in their own cultural heritage initiatives. So one of the iwi, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, are looking at establishing their own cultural centre or whare taonga so we'll help them there.

Te Papa, as previously discussed, hosts iwi exhibitions where iwi can tell their own stories.

Hakiwai told me that Te Papa has:

had eight iwi exhibitions here since we've opened. With a tenure of at least two and a half years so that's been great and that is, I suppose, one of those key pillars of the creation of this museum: to ensure that there's Māori participation in our national museum and what better way than to have a tribe in house? We have two of the elders who become — who are ambassadors for the iwi but also part of Te Papa's whānau. So they share their knowledge and wisdom with us and they also represent their exhibition and their iwi here

The last iwi exhibition was *Ko Rongowhakaata: Ruku i te Pō, Ruku i te Ao/ Ko Rongowhakaata: The Story of Light and Shadow* which ran for most of the duration of this research, from 2017 through to 2022 (Past Exhibitions). This exhibition (and the other iwi exhibitions of the past) are examples of the ways in which Te Papa's partnerships with iwi across New Zealand can lead to Māori voices appearing in the museum. The iwi members work alongside Te Papa's staff to create these shows, and in doing so, I argue, they become museum practitioners themselves. Though not many of my interviewees spoke about the iwi exhibitions, I think they are still worth noting when talking about Te Papa's museum practice and in particular Indigenous museum practice. To me, this is a clear space in which Māori voices appear at Te Papa, as the exhibition centres around the stories that iwi want to tell.

Conclusion

I came to New Zealand hoping to find some sort of utopia for Indigenous people. Naively, I wanted to visit another country with an equally complex and traumatic history of colonialism and find that, somehow, museums in New Zealand had found a way to work with Indigenous peoples and respect our voices. I sought to learn about the operations of Te Papa in an effort to change the ways in which the CMH works. What I found was an equally complex museum with its own sets of problems, and many problems which mirrored the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners in Canada. Much like the CMH, through my fieldwork at Te Papa I was able to learn about the ways in which Indigenous voices do (and do not) appear in the museum, and what that says about the experience of the people who work in this institution. At Te Papa we see a lot of te reo Māori, but not all instances of the language appearing in the museum are

representative of Indigenous voices and, in fact, sometimes they represent a disregard for real Māori voices. For example, the title of *Toi Art* shows that sometimes simply including an Indigenous language isn't enough, or the sorts of directly translated directional signage used throughout the museum show that the meaning behind the words is often much more important than the simple presence of the words themselves.

One could argue that we do see Māori and Indigenous voices more frequently at Te Papa, when compared with the CMH, but that does not necessarily mean the way the institution operates is any better or worse than the CMH. Te Papa benefits from a co-management structure and higher Māori staffing levels—which will be discussed further in the following chapter—and this means that Indigenous voices are able to make it through to the front of house more frequently. This does not, however, mean that the experience of working in Te Papa is inherently better than working in any other colonial institution or museum.

The places where we *do* see Māori and Indigenous voices appear at Te Papa are through the use of te reo Māori and other non-European languages in exhibition spaces as titles, on labels and for educational purposes. Māori voices also frequently appear in the form of objects and their arrangement in the museum, often in exhibitions that aren't necessarily Māori-centred in their topics. Perhaps the most important area in which Māori voices appear is through the museum's external relationship building practices, where having an Iwi Development Adviser (Tibble) who speaks te reo Māori means that his community is better served.

This is all, of course, a limited picture of how Te Papa operates. These are the instances where Māori and Pacific voices do appear, rather than the ones where they're left out. The practitioners I spoke with at Te Papa also told me about numerous instances where they were left out of a conversation, or when they tried to interject, their voices were ignored or challenged (e.g. *Te Taiao* and *Toi Art*, or a reluctance to collect gang-related taonga). In the Seventh Fire version of Te Papa, we see the ongoing struggle for change, and for the recognition of Māori voices. Canada can still learn from Te Papa, its practice of parallel writing, for example could be a way to tell Indigenous stories at the CMH through not only an Indigenous language, but also through some form of intervention in English or French which reinterprets the labels in exhibitions through an Indigenous lens. The dual management of Te Papa and in particular the position of the Kaihautū also provides a way forward for museums like the CMH, in terms of designing a more equitable management structure (even if only ideologically). Te Papa, though

an example of a different style of museum management, is clearly not a utopia. The ways in which it works are still centred in a somewhat colonial structure and that is hard to break out of, despite the best efforts of its Māori staff and some of its management. In the following chapter, I will describe, compare and contrast the ways in which the two case study museums work in their modern forms, and the ways in which Indigenous museum practitioners experience working for these institutions.

Chapter 5

Seventh Fire Analysis and Discussion

In keeping with my Anishinaabe-inspired framework, this chapter seeks to analyse and discuss museums and museum practice in a Seventh Fire world, or, what *is*. That is to say, the way that things are currently working at the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) and Te Papa, and what that says about the current state of Indigenous museum practice in these museums. Also, more broadly, what that might say about the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners and the state of Indigenous museum practice in general (across the world). In this chapter, I analyse and discuss these topics using examples drawn from the interviews with Indigenous museum practitioners (and two non-Indigenous museum practitioners) to highlight the similarities and differences between the CMH and Te Papa, and I discuss what they might mean about museums currently. My analysis and discussion will centre on four main headings: Indigenous languages, Indigenous voices and content, governance and management, and external relationships. All of this will then feed into a broader discussion of the ways in which working within colonial institutions can impact Indigenous people, and subsequently their abilities to express themselves and have their voices heard.

Indigenous languages in the museum

One of the most commonly mentioned struggles for Indigenous museum practitioners at the CMH and Te Papa was finding the ability to advocate for space on labels and in exhibitions for Indigenous languages, and subsequently Indigenous voices. Cairns, to reiterate, noted that “it’s when you come down to the lower level [labels], when it comes down to the grainier stuff — especially object labels — because you’ve got less real estate that’s where usually the fighting happens.” She was echoed by Dean Oliver, Director of Research, in Canada who noted that “in practical terms, there’s no reason why we can’t [have multilingual labels] but there is an impact and it needs to be decided early. [...] And the more of your content that’s delivered visually, the more difficult it’s going to be.” What’s interesting in these discussions is the contextual differences between each institution. At the CMH there are already two languages on every sign (French and English), in compliance with Canada’s Official Languages Act (1985), whereas at

Te Papa that is not a mandated practice and at times only English appears on the labels. Could this, perhaps, be a loophole that Te Papa's staff could use to advocate for more te reo Māori-only labels, given that they're less bound to a particular set of rules around which languages must be included? This has led me to question what the discussions that are happening at both museums in terms of space on labels are actually about. If one museum can consistently have two languages (albeit colonial ones) on their labels, but the other is worried about adding a second language then is the conversation actually about language at all or is it a reflection of a more complex issue around Indigenous languages in particular? Are these discussions, perhaps, really about whether Indigenous languages and, subsequently, Indigenous voices are valued enough in museums? Would English or French sections be left off a label in favour of making space for Indigenous languages the way that Indigenous languages are sometimes left off? This wouldn't currently be possible in Canada, given the legal requirements to have both French and English at all times, but that doesn't mean that Te Papa can't take a stand on this issue. The legislative backing of these two colonial museums complicate the ways in which Indigenous languages can be/are treated in the museum, and as such the presence (or lack thereof) of Indigenous languages in the museum is tied to the wider priorities of each nations' government.

One excellent illustration of this sort of conversation are the titles *Toi Art* and *Te Taiao*, as discussed in chapter four. In this case, Te Papa was willing to ignore grammatical rules of te reo Māori in favour of space, money and marketing priorities (mostly based in aesthetics, it seems). With *Toi Art* the decision was made to run with the grammatically incorrect title, much to the disappointment of the practitioners with whom I spoke. Indicating that in this instance, the museum was willing to prioritise aesthetics over Māori voices and te reo Māori. On the other hand, when challenged by both Ranea Aperahama (the Māori writer, an expert in te reo Māori) and Puawai Cairns (at the time the head of Mātauranga Māori) the exhibition team on *Te Taiao* cited the extra cost of adding in the "Te" to the exhibition title as a barrier. Cairns explained, as is quoted in chapter four, that she had to fight for the title of *Te Taiao* to be grammatically correct in te reo Māori, alongside Aperahama (a fluent speaker of te reo Māori whose job it is to write Māori labels).

If the English title was grammatically incorrect would the pākehā members of the team have had to advocate so strongly for their language? Eventually the title was corrected, but only after two Indigenous people had to fight to have their voices heard. If the experience of simply

ensuring that Indigenous languages are used properly is so difficult then what does that actually say about the way Indigenous voices are treated in the museum? This isn't always the case though, even with strong voices like those of Cairns and Aperahama advocating for te reo Māori, the museum has sometimes chosen to go with incorrect uses of the language. This was the case with *Toi Art* which Cairns told me; "I wanted to change *Toi Art* cause that should be *Ngā Toi* not just *toi* — they always like that crisp 'three letters and three letters'[it's] design defining language." In an institution where Indigenous voices are respected and listened to, these conversations likely wouldn't have had to happen in the ways that they did. Aperahama's expertise would have been respected and he would have been listened to immediately when he explained that the English version of the title was incorrect.

To me, this is an example of the power imbalance that exists within museums (not just Te Papa) where the pākehā or non-Indigenous majority is able to make decisions that might negatively impact the experience of Indigenous practitioners and visitors, without having to put a lot of thought into the impact of those decisions. This is arguably indicative of the wider state of Indigenous rights in this Seventh Fire world, where there is some effort being made to include our voices and languages by the non-Indigenous populations, but they're not necessarily doing so in the correct or most thought-out way. Having Indigenous languages appear incorrectly in the museum doesn't actually do anything to advance Indigenous rights or improve our experiences, instead it very likely does the opposite by tokenising us and forcing the few Indigenous people on staff at these institutions to do extra work in order to get it right for their communities. This comes down to a number of factors, but the current "minority" status of Indigenous practitioners in museums means that there are simply fewer voices to advocate for us, and as such those few voices get called upon to do much more work. If, in the case of Cairns' and Aperahama's experiences with these exhibition titles, there had been a much more Māori presence on the exhibition team, there may not have been the need to have these conversations at all, because the team would have prioritised writing a Māori title that made sense.

Indigenous voices, in the form of language, also seem to get relegated to second spaces in the museum. By second spaces I mean to say, spaces that take an extra step for visitors to see or interact with. Many of the practitioners spoke about digital labels or other digital tools as a solution for the lack of space on labels. Curator Sean Mallon, for example, said "it would be quite good to see what other opportunities technology brings, while language represents a

culture, [...] I still think there's a lot of work to do in the museum setting to build the presence [of Indigenous languages]." Though this would likely lead to the inclusion of more languages, and would offer freedoms that analogue labels cannot, I question whether digital labels in Indigenous languages would really represent Indigenous voices. If these languages are in secondary spaces, i.e. scrolling on a computer or tablet, versus reading a panel of text on the wall, would they be as accessible as the English or French labels? If museums are moving toward digital tools in general, then I agree that it is a solution for space constraints. However, I argue that there needs to be caution around presenting tools that require visitors to engage with labels in Indigenous languages on a different platform from the European-language labels as a solution, largely because it risks the languages becoming secondary to the readily available wall texts.

All this is not to say that these institutions aren't looking to incorporate more Indigenous voices in exhibition spaces and other public offerings via Indigenous languages. As with this whole thesis, nuance is key in understanding the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners in these institutions. Each museum is making efforts to incorporate more Indigenous languages (and voices), though they are working in different ways. It is also impossible to fully discuss the ways in which Indigenous voices appear in museums, and the experience of Indigenous museum practitioners without acknowledging that each museum is a product of their wider social, political and historical contexts. Te Papa, for example, frequently uses bilingual (and sometimes trilingual) labels as introductory texts, with te reo Māori labels presented first (left to right or top to bottom) and on otherwise equal footing with their English labels. The CMH doesn't yet have the capacity to have full labels in Indigenous languages but is trying to incorporate more Indigenous words and place names in order to reflect the living, dynamic nature of Indigenous cultures and languages in Canada. The CMH does, however, seem to be paralyzed when it comes to the process of adding in more Indigenous languages with one practitioner explaining "when you work in a big institution like [the CMH], trying to represent all of the people from all of Canada you need to make decisions, and sometimes decisions will be 'ok you have to stick to the two official languages' for the panels because there's no way we can please everyone."

The difference between the two museums isn't simply that one values Indigenous languages more than the other, rather they are contending with very different contexts in relation to Indigenous languages. In Aotearoa/New Zealand there is a much larger push for the revitalisation of te reo Māori and because (unlike some Indigenous languages in Canada) it

hasn't been entirely lost, the language is better set up to make a recovery. Hakiwai, for example, said:

I think it's a matter of time before [te reo Māori] becomes compulsory, obviously there's been a lot of the initiative from our Te Taura Whiri last year, our Māori language commission, about getting one million speakers [by 2040][...] I think the time will come to acknowledge that it's actually an integral part of who we are as a nation.

For reference, one million te reo Māori speakers in New Zealand would equal about one fifth or one sixth (depending on population growth in the next two decades) of the country's total population. In order to reach such a proportion in Canada, there would need to be close to eight million Indigenous language speakers. Though the revitalisation efforts haven't been without their struggles due to the loss of certain knowledge in the language, the reluctance of some pākehā to learn the language (who would have to be part of that one million), the goal of having one million te reo speakers by 2040 is still much more within reach than having a similar number or proportion of Indigenous language speakers in Canada. This is reflected in the ways in which the national museums in each country work with Indigenous languages. Te Papa seems to see itself as an integral part of that revitalisation of language but the CMH has not yet begun to really think in this way (possibly due to the general lack of prioritisation of Indigenous languages by the federal government of Canada). Canada does have an Indigenous Languages Act (2019), but instead of being action-focused it is much more preservation focused and tied to protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples to learn and use our languages (Indigenous Languages Act 2019).

Indigenous content and voices

In this section I will discuss the idea that Indigenous-focused exhibitions don't need to be the only place where we have Indigenous content or voices. Acknowledging the diversity of Indigenous experiences is important, even in exhibitions not directly related to us. This, I argue, is important on a number of levels including showing the museum's support of Indigenous stories and perspectives to visitors, and supporting the voices and work of the Indigenous museum practitioners at these institutions. At Te Papa, we see this happening a lot more, especially in terms of the redone or newer exhibitions like *Te Taiao*. The CMH, however, is

lagging behind in this in some ways. The new(er) *Canada History Hall (CHH)* does include a lot more Indigenous content than its predecessor, possibly due to the presence of more Indigenous museum practitioners who worked on that show, but is still more broadly focused on waves of immigration and other foundational moments for Canada. The CMH, however, is still limited by its comparatively narrow mandate. Unlike Te Papa, which is the sole national museum for New Zealand, the CMH is Canada's specific history museum and as such its exhibitions have to tell historically-based stories rather than being able to host broader exhibitions on topics like art, natural history, immigration, science and technology, etc. (these are all covered by its national museum counterparts which are dotted around the city of Ottawa and throughout Canada). The stories Te Papa can tell are broader, then, with its scope being wider and this is one reason we might see more Indigenous content across the board in the museum, when compared to the CMH. It is not, however, an excuse, as the CMH is meant to tell a story of a whole nation's past, one with which Indigenous people have always been involved.

What does it mean for Indigenous museum practitioners to mostly have their voices heard or included in exhibitions that are Indigenous focused? I argue that limiting the areas in which Indigenous content is included in a national museum communicates to these practitioners that their voices are likely only valued in certain moments. How can museums expect to be a safe space for Indigenous people to work if the voices or stories of those practitioners seem only to appear in very specific and perhaps even convenient moments? When the voices of Indigenous museum practitioners do appear in exhibitions, are they reflections of a positive experience or are these people being exploited in some form for their knowledge (because they're only asked to contribute this knowledge when it's convenient)?

The Indigenous museum practitioners with whom I spoke expressed the hope for the inclusion of Indigenous voices and content in all exhibitions almost across the board. It is likely, based on this, that their experience of working for institutions like Te Papa and the CMH would be improved by these museums prioritising Indigenous knowledge(s). This would likely require a shift in how the museums actually work, given that each museum has their own particular mandate and the ways in which their research and curatorial teams are divided reflect the current way subjects are broken up in different exhibitions throughout the museum (Canadian Museum of history: Research 2022; Te Papa: Our Curatorial Teams). Moreover, including Indigenous voices and content in non-Indigenous-specific exhibitions is complex as it could border on

tokenism in some instances. So, how do we strike a balance? How do museums bring in Indigenous content without it seeming like an add-on or last minute thought? Surely the more Indigenous people who work on a given show and the more Indigenous museum practitioners who work in the museums in general, the less tokenism we'll see? This means hiring Indigenous people in roles that aren't necessarily specific Indigenous roles and having our voices throughout the museums' general operations in order to ensure that they *cannot* be missed. Indigenous peoples know our own ontologies, and we know when/what's appropriate to share, museums must therefore let us tell our own stories in our own voices.

Governance and management

As hinted at in the previous section, one of the biggest blockages that Indigenous museum practitioners face is the fact that there are simply not enough Indigenous people working in museums. This was one of the most consistently discussed issues as articulated by my participants at both museums, suggesting that this very likely does impact their experience as museum practitioners on a daily basis. Working within an institution as a minority professional means having to work much harder to be heard and often means working in capacities that aren't necessarily part of the practitioners' job descriptions. For example, Ranea Aperahama talked about how much demand there is on him from the museum explaining: "I'm the only Māori writer so I'm a bit of an octopus and have to multitask a lot which is challenging at times." Similarly, in Canada, Mollen's ability to speak Inuktitut means that she's asked to step out of her main role as the RBC Indigenous Internship Coordinator in order to greet visitors in their Indigenous language, which undoubtedly makes Innu visitors feel more at ease, but is more demand on Mollen as a museum practitioner.

Generally, Te Papa has more Māori and Indigenous staff than the CMH, but this does not mean that they're a majority or even equal to their pākehā/non-Indigenous colleagues. The CMH, on the other hand, only has about four permanent Indigenous-identifying staff on the research team, making up only about 10% of the team. At Te Papa, the practitioners seemed fairly comfortable discussing issues and grievances about the museum's operations, especially in reference to te reo Māori and the ways in which Indigenous voices are treated in the museum. Consistently, they shared their personal opinions and experiences, regardless of how those opinions and experiences painted the organisation more broadly. On the other hand, the

Canadian participants were much more cautious. They made sure to express any opinions as solely theirs and to distance their discussions with me from their broader opinions on the organisation, with one person even asking if they could be anonymous in my findings before they said something critical. The difference between Te Papa and the CMH here is stark, the sense of precarity that I felt with Canadian participants did not appear to exist at Te Papa. But why?

Staff at Te Papa seemed to be much more established in their careers, with some participants having worked for the museum for decades, whereas at the CMH many of the staff members with whom I spoke were either no longer working for the museum or were just beginning their careers. This does not even account for the people with whom I didn't get to speak. In addition, the reluctance from CMH staff to speak with me seems to indicate some trepidation around my research topic. Though I am simply interested in their experiences as Indigenous people working in a museum, it is understandable that practitioners at the beginning of their careers would be anxious about discussing any potentially 'controversial' topics. This experience has led me to ask why there aren't more senior Indigenous museum practitioners in Canada. We know that colonialism has long lasting effects (and colonialism, as a practice, continues), and perhaps this is one of them. The museum as a colonial space seems to have only recently become one that Indigenous people are more frequently entering in Canada and therefore their voices aren't necessarily backed by previous generations like they seem to more frequently be in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

We know that relationships, kinship and networks are really important for indigenous people (Kimmerer 2013; Anderson and Meshake 2019; Wilson 2019). In order to thrive we need the support of kinship bonds and ancestral practices, however, with limited staffing and limited Indigenous people in higher management positions, museums just don't seem have those networks set up yet. In Canada, the lack of Indigenous governance higher up in the museum means that that's not necessarily being set up or encouraged the way it is at Te Papa with the Kaihautū and Māori board members. Though Te Papa is not without its problems, and in fact has been criticised for not ensuring mana whenua representation on its board (Tapsell 2019), the dual management model it uses could be a useful example for the CMH. What is clear is that without fostering better relationships between higher management and other staff and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous museum practitioners, we will likely never see Indigenous

voices and stories properly acknowledged in these museums. To me, this is no different in the two case study museums and throughout my research it has come out clearly that without relationships and networks, Indigenous museum practitioners aren't able to reach their full potential. This is not to say that Indigenous museum practitioners aren't doing their best, and aren't accomplishing changes, however museums would likely be a much healthier place for Indigenous people if the institutions put more value in and emphasis on relationships with and for Indigenous peoples.

What I found through my fieldwork at the CMH and Te Papa is that Indigenous museum practitioners speak about their work today as setting up the path toward a different kind of future. Through the understanding of their roles in a long line of museum practitioners, they view themselves as one step toward change, and as such, they act in a relational way. Ontologically, this resonates with Anishinaabe and other Indigenous cultures as we view ourselves as borrowing the land from our descendants, everything we do is based on the understanding that we are part of a long line of both ancestors and descendants. Based on my interviews, this is true of both museums, suggesting that museum practice for Indigenous people needs to be relational because that is the way in which Indigenous museum practitioners are already working. Practitioners call on their kin for input in exhibitions, like Curator Jonathan Lainey and John Moses (Supervisor, Repatriation) who brought in objects and stories through their personal networks. Or they form new relationships via their practice, like Puawai Cairns acquiring the *Once Were Warriors* jacket and patch and building a relationship with the family of the woman who made the patch. This all leads to the question: how do we set up these relational networks in order to support Indigenous ways of working, and what would the museum look like with those networks in place?

Isolation sickness

All of the above leads here for this section in which I outline isolation sickness, a phenomenon experienced by the participants at both museums. This is a result of the lack of Indigenous voices being heard, but also the lack of Indigenous staff in general and the deeply entrenched colonial roots of museums as institutions. The colonial aspect is especially acute at the CMH and Te Papa, as they are national museums in settler colonial nations. The way things are now, through

the museum practice that has developed and grown throughout the Seventh Fire era, is not working for Indigenous people, and is often working *against* Indigenous people in harmful ways.

As an Indigenous person, a major part of building my career and working in non-Indigenous organisations has been dealing with tokenism. My expertise as an Indigenous person is often valued differently, being called upon whenever it's convenient for the broader organisation. I am not alone in these experiences, and museums are not immune to tokenism. Throughout my interviews with museum practitioners in both New Zealand and Canada the theme of tokenism, being the only one in the room, and “isolation sickness” (Cairns 2020) emerged as a theme from the interviews.

Puawai Cairns explains this tokenism and the ills it can cause to Indigenous practitioners, writing in a 2020 blog post on Te Papa's website:

There is a phenomenon I have also observed which I've nicknamed isolation sickness, where single Māori are brought into teams of non-Māori for specially created positions usually to help with cultural awareness – a panacea for all things culturally ignorant – and they become the person who has to not only become the 'native Wikipedia' for that team, and do their own job, but accommodate micro-aggressions, structural racism, and operate in isolation from a wider sense of connected Māori community within the organisation. (2020)

This is a particularly poignant term when considered in relation to my research. It is a clear representative of how much Indigenous people have to fight for our voices to be heard. Moreover, it shows that Indigenous voices appearing in museums isn't always good enough for Indigenous people, since it can exploit the sense of duty many of us feel to make things good or better for other Indigenous people.

When we spoke, Cairns elaborated on the concept of isolation sickness in the museum, and explained that it's not just something that happens on an individual level, but actually can be viewed as isolation within the larger institution. She said:

Even though I was in a team [of other Māori practitioners] I still found careers in museums lonely, just because you're surrounded by Māori sometimes doesn't actually

mean you do have that sense of connectedness. [...] So I think sometimes there is a bit of a beguiling quality that, you know, if I'm sitting in with a quite a lot of my own people it'll be ok, but sometimes it's not that because the system hasn't been set up to help you — to actually get that sense of whakawhanaungatanga or that connection with each other.

Cairns isn't alone in this experience. Over and over again in my fieldwork I heard stories about Indigenous museum practitioners being the only Indigenous voices in the room. I found that isolation sickness, as a phenomenon, happens at both museums. Almost all of the practitioners I spoke with told me about it in one way or another. Some were asked directly if they had ever felt like the only Indigenous person in the room, and others happened to tell stories where it became clear that they had experienced isolation sickness. For some, standing up and speaking up seemed to come more naturally than it did for others. Curator Matariki Williams, for example, spoke about being the only Māori voice in the room, and how the Mātauranga Māori staff can sometimes get stretched thin across Te Papa's behind the scenes operations. She shared that Mātauranga Māori staff:

Need to be at these [meetings] and if you are going to be the single Māori in the room — as hard as it is to always have to be the 'wait a second' person — you have to, you have a duty to all the other Māori staff who are not in that room to put your hand up or raise your voice or any of those kind of things.

Examples of isolation sickness discussed by my participants ranged from feeling like the only Indigenous person in the room to recognising the mental (and sometimes physical) health impacts of trying to work and thrive as an Indigenous in a museum. Even though the CMH and Te Papa are relatively new institutions in terms of museums, and they have tried to incorporate Indigenous voices in their structures through roles like the Kaihautū, I argue that in their current forms, they're still colonial institutions. They are, therefore, at their core, often unhealthy places for Indigenous people. This doesn't mean that museums are inherently and eternally flawed or unsafe for Indigenous people, just that a fundamental shift seems necessary in order to make them safe spaces.

For example, when asked if he's ever felt like the only Indigenous voice in the room in his career in the GLAM sector, John Moses told me:

On any given day at CMH there's got be at least 400 people in the building, between permanent staff and people who are there in terms in contracts or people who are visiting interns or research fellows and everything else like that. And, you know, the number of people on the permanent staff who are themselves Indigenous — really and truly I don't think it ever exceeded more than eight or a dozen people in my own experience and it roughly remains at that level, so that was my experience of working at [the] CMH in the 80s, 90s and into the post year 2000.

In this statement Moses highlights the difficulty of literally being the only Indigenous voice in the room. As was touched on in the CMH case study chapter, there is almost no chance for Indigenous voices to appear throughout the museum if there are so few Indigenous people who actually work within the institution. With so few Indigenous museum practitioners on staff who can feel duty bound to advocate for other Indigenous people who aren't "in the room", it seems like a given that people would start to feel an extra level of stress or isolation. Moses' experience across decades in the field of museums and heritage in Canada also speaks to the lack of Indigenous voices woven into the CMH's history, as he has had the experience of being the *only* Indigenous staff member at some organisations that he has worked for in the field. The CMH only opened in its current form in 1989 and, according to the interviewees, has never had a significant number of Indigenous people on staff in that time. This is not to say that the museum doesn't want to hire more Indigenous people, in fact, from personal experience, they seem to be actively prioritising hiring and supporting Indigenous museum practitioners.

This situation is further complicated when considering that not everyone is comfortable speaking up. Williams spoke about this, noting that: "it is hard because introverts can't necessarily [speak up when they're the only ones there] people who are afraid of confrontation can't necessarily do that, and yeah, people who struggle to articulate themselves can't necessarily do that." She was echoed by Dougal Austin, head of the Mātauranga Māori team, who said:

[Speaking up is] not easy and I suppose it depends on personality — but I'm not hugely pushy either — but at the end of the day you've all gotta work together and you wanna maintain that positive energy which is creativity and all those sorts of things. You don't wanna be the big spoiler in the room. You do have to push back but I think at the right times, yeah.

Being so isolated on an institutional level makes Indigenous museum practitioners have to do more emotional work than their non-Indigenous counterparts, especially when speaking up or being vocal in these sorts of situations isn't necessarily in their nature. Indigenous practitioners, it seems, are called upon far too frequently in Seventh Fire museums to do this sort of emotional labour, without the acknowledgment that many of us aren't gregarious or particularly comfortable being the only advocate for Indigenous peoples in the room.

In some cases, museum practitioners aren't comfortable speaking up because there is a lack (perceived or real) of understanding of or sensitivity to Indigenous cultures. Participants talked about not feeling like there is enough cultural awareness within their museums, leaving them feeling unsafe or uncomfortable expressing their thoughts and knowledge. The lack of cultural training for staff (non-Indigenous), to me, is a major issue within museums, especially in Canada. Often, it seems like museums only provide Indigenous sensitivity training when it becomes absolutely necessary, and having only one course that employees can take part in, as is currently the case at the CMH, means that even the training that is provided is extremely limited. Moreover, with a one-off training session I am concerned that this would lead to less change within any given institution (and in this case, the CMH) and instead it might become an exercise in box-ticking. From personal experience, I can say that it's relatively easy to get government staff to take an online course for an afternoon and to complete a few quizzes to prove they've read the slide deck, but does this actually lead to a fundamental shift in how they understand their Indigenous colleagues? How, therefore, can we create a form of Indigenous-centred cultural awareness and sensitivity training for museums like the CMH that avoid such tokenistic traps? This further leads me to question, how can Indigenous voices be heard in spaces where they're not recognised or valued on an institutional level? Participants also tied this lack of sensitivity training to the lack of Indigenous people (and subsequently voices) in higher levels of management. At the CMH, for example, one participant explained that the lack of Indigenous

people on the board makes it hard to advocate for and achieve institutional change. The people in positions of power just aren't currently focused on improving the organisation for Indigenous people.

Though there are some Indigenous people who are working in managerial roles at the CMH, there simply aren't enough and they don't seem to have the resources or time to advocate for more training throughout the museum. At Te Papa, Hakiwai echoed this sentiment, highlighting the necessity of having Indigenous representation throughout the whole management/governance structure of the museum:

Depending on who the new board of trustees are, they carry their own philosophies I think it's an issue for Aotearoa, no doubt for Canada and others because they — to be a bicultural museum, in my mind, you have to have the governance that actually represents and can actually mirror and affirm those principles — if you don't, well then you're going to have areas of tension.

The question of whether Indigenous museum practitioners will be listened to by management or even their colleagues, who are theoretically on equal footing, is another layer of complexity on top of this issue, which is not unique to one museum. In fact, practitioners at both museums spoke about feeling worried about what they could and couldn't get away with having in exhibitions, collections or other public-facing materials. Cairns' story about the pushback that she faced when she wanted to collect gang-related objects, for example, meant that she had to find ways to subvert the institutional opposition to a particular kind of collecting. Though she wasn't being listened to when she argued that gangs are a part of history that is relevant to not only Māori but New Zealand in general, she managed to find a way to represent this group nonetheless. This, however, may have required a lot of extra work on her part, as she did not necessarily have the support of the institution in her collecting practice. Though she was successful in using her collecting practice to subvert the museum's ideas of what is and isn't appropriate to acquire, and she was able to bring in the story and voice of the wāhine Māori artist who made the patch and jacket, I still worry about the emotional toll on Cairns as a person because she had to work so much harder to tell these valuable stories.

Similarly, when the title for *Te Taiao* was being discussed, Ranea Aperahama was not being listened to when he said that calling the exhibition “taiao” was grammatically incorrect, despite his expertise in te reo Māori, as the museum’s Māori writer. It was only when another Māori staff member (Cairns) also spoke up that this change was made. In this case, their voices were only listened to when there was more than one Māori museum practitioner saying the same thing. The issue here is that when Indigenous staff are few and far between, their voices can get bulldozed and they can become vulnerable to burnout and sickness. However, when there are more Māori (or other Indigenous people) in the room, to the point where they are no longer a “minority” it becomes much harder to ignore them and, arguably, that’s when we see the most change. When Aperahama and Cairns used their voices together, they were listened to. Therefore we need more Indigenous staff in museums to support each other and in order to see more Indigenous voices appearing throughout museums.

Other practitioners felt that there might not be much point in speaking up because they felt unlikely to be heard. They felt the need to assimilate to the dominant work culture of their institution and not speak up for fear of coming across as insolent or otherwise unprofessional. There was also a sense that they felt that, often, speaking out can seem futile as the (generally non-Indigenous) people on management levels weren’t likely to listen to them. Some participants were careful to say that it’s not necessarily the fault of management that they don’t feel heard. However, I do argue that this feeling does (at least in part) come down to *who* is in power and the essentially or persistently colonial nature of a museum as an institution. If the management structure of an institution was built on an Indigenous framework or at the very least if there were a large portion of people in higher up roles at a museum it would provide better support for Indigenous staff and would likely lead to their voices being heard more frequently. Though this is admittedly only speculation since at the moment many museums, for example the CMH, don’t have many Indigenous people in leadership positions.

Why does it end up this way? Why should it fall to the single Māori or Indigenous practitioner in the room to speak up or to remind the other (non-Indigenous) practitioners that they have a duty to their treaty partners and to the diverse populations of the nations they seek to tell stories about? And perhaps most significantly, what does this say about the experience of being an Indigenous museum practitioner? The most obvious answer is that there just simply aren’t enough Māori and Indigenous museum practitioners. As I have written about in the

preceding chapters, it's impossible to have diverse Indigenous voices appearing throughout the museum when there are only a few Indigenous people working in that museum. Though it is not necessarily as simple as that, the impact of the lack of Indigenous staffing on the subsequent lack of Indigenous voices in the proverbial room cannot be denied. What is also at play here is the way in which these museums (and, I would argue) museums as a whole were set up from their inception. They are products of colonial collecting mandates, as demonstrated in the background chapters, and that cannot be ignored when attempting to understand the experiences of modern Indigenous people who now work within these institutions.

Conclusion

The museum or GLAM sector seems to have a big problem in both Canada and New Zealand. As it stands, and despite the efforts to advance museum practice at both the CMH and Te Papa, there are major issues to be reckoned with. There is a current lack of Indigenous languages, voices and content throughout both museums, and perhaps more worryingly, there is a lack of institutional emphasis on building relationships with Indigenous peoples (in a way that's actually healthy for Indigenous peoples, and is Indigenous-directed), and the governance structures are too colonial to allow for Indigenous peoples to truly thrive. As I argued throughout this chapter, there simply are not enough Indigenous people being hired and valued in their spaces and that is making the Indigenous people who *are* there have to take on more work. This is subsequently contributing to the ways in which the colonial institution that is a museum negatively impacts them.

This is not to say that it will be eternally impossible for Indigenous people to thrive in museums, and that museums like the CMH and Te Papa aren't trying to make changes, rather the point I am making is that, in a Seventh Fire world, the field itself does not seem to be set up to value Indigenous voices. As colonial institutions, museums value western education, publishing records, the ability to present to audiences at conferences, and often, the ability to win over donors and other supporters of the institution. These are not necessarily routes that are accessible to Indigenous people because western education has frequently excluded (at best) and mistreated and harmed (at worst) Indigenous folks and it is not a safe space for us (Fontaine 2016; Pihama and Lee-Morgan 2019). These measures of potential success in the field need to be broadened if we are to see more Indigenous museum practitioners, and to have fewer Indigenous people being made unwell by colonial institutions. This would entail a shift in the values of museums in terms

of hiring, where they prioritise Indigenous traditional knowledge and lived experience as highly (or in some cases more) as western education, but also in terms of the ways in which the organizations work on a daily basis. The institutions need to be accessible and safe places in order to stop isolating Indigenous staff.

It's not necessarily all doom and gloom, however. Thanks to the work of Cairns, we do have a name for this issue, and therefore an easier way to talk about it more and to seek solutions for it. Critical Indigenous studies scholars like Brendan Hokowhitu might say that this is not something that can be fixed from the inside out, and while I do agree with that, I would also say that there are still ways to make these environments safer and healthier for Indigenous people from the inside out (2016). The isolation that Indigenous museum practitioners feel across the board is an issue, however, for the ways in which their voices are treated. It goes without saying that if someone is unwell due to the ways in which the organisation works — and makes them work — then they will be less likely to have the energy and ability to advocate for their voices. This leads me to question, though, if Indigenous museum practitioners *should* have to advocate for their voices in such a way. If the institution valued their voices as a standard practice, then it wouldn't have to be an energy-draining experience for them to push through. How can these museum practitioners move the field forward to a version where they're heard and their voices feel valued when they have to work so hard for small wins like a correct title or including a real wampum belt in an exhibition?

Through the discussion of both the broader issues like lack of networks and Indigenous content, and the specific issue of isolation sickness faced by Indigenous museum practitioners, I have come to one pressing question. Is it worth it for Indigenous people to work in a field like this? Given the deep colonial roots of museums as a concept, but also of museum practice (e.g. the ways in which we preserve or treat objects, labelling practices etc.) will these institutions ever be a safe space for Indigenous people? This is not to say that the industry of museums and heritage isn't an important field for Indigenous people to study, rather the point I'm getting at is that it may not be possible to light the Eighth Fire from within our current situation. Museums, therefore, may need to exist in an entirely different form in order to be safe places for Indigenous peoples.

While I did not start this research asking how we can decolonise museums, and in fact I attempted at first to avoid the concept of decolonisation entirely, it has become a necessary part

of my thinking. In the process of conducting my research it has become clear that the decolonisation or indigenisation of museum practice is actually what I want to understand when I look at Indigenous voices and, more specifically, the voices of Indigenous museum practitioners. The way I seek to measure the presence of the voices of Indigenous museum practitioners is by looking at how they appear in each museum. More than that though, this research has caused me to view Indigenous voices in museums as a subversion of colonial museum practice. That is to say, Indigenous voices, I argue, are part of decolonising or changing museums and claiming space for Indigenous stories and knowledges. In the following section of this thesis I explore questions about and potential pathways through which we might move forward to that Eighth Generation. In particular, the ways in which Indigenous museum practitioners dream will offer insight into how we might light, or at least create sparks of the Eighth Fire.

Section II: Sparks of the Eighth Fire

Chapter 6: Dreaming the Eighth Fire

Through my interviews I came to realise that a major indicator of the state of Indigenous museum practice, and Indigenous voices in museums were the dreams of Indigenous museum practitioners. The ways in which museum practitioners at the CMH and Te Papa dream, as I explain in this chapter, are entirely different in their scope and depth. They represent the starting point for dreams in their respective countries, with their differences reflecting the broader state of museum practice and Indigenous rights or experiences in each country. As such, in this chapter I argue that the way these practitioners dream is an indicator of the differences (and similarities) between the ways that CMH and Te Papa operate, and the societies or other external forces that shape them. I also explore the way the participants envision future museum practice, which will inform my conclusions in the following chapter.

Dreams and Decolonisation: An alternative path to the Eighth Fire

Though, as I have stated, decolonisation has become pertinent and essential to address in this thesis, I propose an alternative to decolonial discourse based on the 2006 article by Poka Laenui as referenced in the literature review in this thesis. Instead of focusing on decolonisation as a whole, I argue that dreaming of a future outside of our current colonial structures that is not necessarily focused on the past (as the term ‘decolonisation’ can sometimes insinuate). In other words, dreaming an Eighth Fire future, is more productive and relevant to my research. Laenui’s proposed set of phases of decolonisation are:

- 1) Rediscovery and Recovery
- 2) Mourning
- 3) Dreaming
- 4) Commitment and
- 5) Action. (2006, 151)

Based on this, I look to the dreams of Indigenous museum practitioners for a path to the future. The second to last question that I asked in each interview was some version of “as an Indigenous museum practitioner, what are some hopes or aspirations you have for the inclusion of

Indigenous languages in the museum?” Without knowing at the time that dreaming was one of Laenui’s stages, the question became increasingly important and pertinent to my research. Without dreams and hopes there are no reasons to keep moving forward. To be entirely honest, when I started conducting my fieldwork, this question felt like a bit of a throwaway, a space for the participants to feel heard and to share their thoughts on where the field could go, but as I did more and more interviews it became clear that this question would become a chapter of its own. In fact, the dreams of Indigenous museum practitioners have become the whole *raison d’être* for me in this work. I see their hopes, and through this research I have sought to move us closer to the realisation of those dreams. Moreover, I feel that in my question about dreams I see the true differences and similarities between the CMH and Te Papa, and subsequently between Canada and New Zealand.

To reiterate, I am particularly drawn to the concept of dreaming because it is already embedded in Anishinaabe ontologies, it is what we do when we talk about the Eighth Fire. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the Seven Fires of the prophecy are a framing of time and significant events. According to Johnson (2015) the fires coincide with the migration of Anishinaabe across the eastern parts of Turtle Island (North America) and toward the central and western parts (2015, 9). For example, “[t]he Fourth Fire details the arrival of European settlers to North America and foretold that the future of the Anishinaabe people would depend on whether the newcomers wore the face of brotherhood or the face of death” (2015, 9).

In her 2013 book, Robin Wall Kimmerer writes that the “sacred purpose” of the Seventh Generation is “to walk back along the red road of our ancestors’ path and to gather up all the fragments that lay scattered along the trail” (pp 367-368). This, to me, is reminiscent of Laenui’s first stage “Recovery and Rediscovery” and suggests that culturally we, as Anishinaabe, understand that there is a long road ahead of us in terms of rebuilding. We are not, however, excluded from dreaming at any point in this recovery, as dreams have been woven throughout our histories and cultures by Grandmother Spider (which is one of our teachings). It is the role of the people of the Seventh Fire to carry sparks and one day to light the Eighth. This is the Anishinaabe version of dreaming, as when the Eighth Fire is lit, the world will be in harmony, the world will begin to operate in “a way that honours All Our Relations” (Kelly, 2021). That is to say, all living beings will be respected and honoured, and more than that, they will thrive. This idea of a future in which Indigenous cultures are revitalised and thriving is, in terms of dreaming,

where I find myself on solid ground. As an Anishinaabe person I have heard stories of the Eighth Fire, the final step in the Seven Fires Prophecy or teaching and to me it is the most tangible form of dream that I have come across.

Dreaming, according to Laenui, is the most important phase, where people begin to see possibilities for different futures. Laenui is careful to note that this does not mean “simply replacing indigenous or previously colonized people into the positions held by colonizers” (2006, 153) but rather is creating a new way of operating in the world. Imagining a museum with an Indigenous CE or CEO, for example, would not be dreaming of true decolonisation as it would simply be putting an Indigenous person in an otherwise extremely colonial position. On the other hand, does having the position of a Kaihautū, as Te Papa does, begin to create dreams of a new way to operate? Does this position and the dream of ones like it at other museums signal change, or is it still a form of replacing? In one way of viewing the position, it certainly dreams of an Eighth Fire organisational structure, in that it’s a dream of partnership and unity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as the museum’s leadership. However, on the other hand, is it still in practice a Māori take on a western role, and subsequently structure? How much does having a Kaihautū or a role like the Kaihautū actually change the colonial nature of traditional, western museum structures? Hakiwai himself discussed the fact that his role focuses largely on Māori staff, content and taonga and while that’s not a bad thing, his pākehā counterpart’s role often seems to be much broader. I wouldn’t say that this necessarily devalues the role of Kaihautū, nor the change it’s made for staff at Te Papa, rather it seems like just the beginning of change and an early but still somewhat small (in terms of broader impact) spark of an Eighth Fire museum practice and structure. These early sparks are all significant, as I argue that dreams build on each other and change builds on change. The work of the first or early dreamers, to me, is to inspire further dreams.

In this section I will discuss the dreams that my participants shared with me, both at the CMH and at Te Papa. I will then highlight their similarities and differences, and, based on the contexts in which they exist, I will discuss potential reasons why these museum practitioners are dreaming in the ways that they’re dreaming, and what stories this can tell about the Seventh Fire world, and subsequently about how we might light the Eighth Fire.

CMH Dreams

Unfortunately, only three of my five participants at the CMH identify as Indigenous, since this section is largely interested in the dreams of Indigenous people I will only discuss their dreams in depth. This section, therefore, will be shorter than I originally intended, but is nonetheless important to this thesis. I will outline the dreams that John Moses (Supervisor, Repatriation), Jonathan Lainey (former curator of First Peoples Histories) and Gaëlle Mollen (Coordinator, RBC Indigenous Internship program) shared with me. Interestingly, the dreams discussed range from a desire to see any Indigenous languages anywhere and at all in the museum, all the way to a standalone national Indigenous museum. The scopes of these dreams speak to the experiences had by these practitioners, and their particular areas of interest. In this section I will outline, in detail, their dreams, as organised under the following two headings:

1. Indigenous content (broadly and in terms of Indigenous languages);
2. Consultation and relationship building with Indigenous people and communities;

Indigenous Content

All three of the Indigenous museum practitioners from the CMH spoke about this concept, at least in some capacity. As is a theme in this thesis, it does seem to centre around the lack of Indigenous voices in the institution and, subsequently, how difficult it is to advocate for Indigenous content. The constant issue with having few Indigenous staff is a lack of voices in the proverbial (or literal) room, and a limited ability to ensure that those voices are heard and included when or if they are present. It is simply impossible to have Indigenous voices and respectful Indigenous content in the museum without Indigenous museum practitioners. To me, this research shows that this is a directly causal relationship and the only real solution is to have more Indigenous people in the museum, working on daily operations.

When asked about his dreams for Indigenous languages, voices and stories in museums like the CMH Jonathan Lainey explained “I think I’m confident that the CMH but also other institutions [...] will make sure to include more and more Indigenous content but also Indigenous perspectives.” He went on to share that the museum where he is currently working, for example, was working on an exhibition centred on a non-Indigenous topic but that the museum wanted to find ways to weave Indigenous voices into that show nonetheless. This goes further, however, in

Lainey's mind. He sees the broader potential for the involvement of Indigenous community members in curation and in deciding what content is relevant to a given exhibition. Stepping outside of the museum's own staff and bringing in a new kind of museum practitioner and subsequently opening the door to and supporting a new kind of museum practice as a whole.

While this dream, for Lainey, is an ideal view on the future (and he sees this sort of work starting now) it isn't without complications. Firstly because museums have to have some system to determine what content is relevant in a particular exhibition, otherwise they risk tokenism at best or in much worse circumstances, including information that is not meant to be shared widely or is insulting to Indigenous peoples. Secondly because they need the kinds of relationships with Indigenous communities that allow them to bring in those external voices and institutions have to be careful who they ask to make the decisions around which Indigenous voices or content should appear in a particular exhibition. The question here, then, is how do museums ensure that Indigenous content is included in a meaningful way? Currently, this seems like a difficult proposition due to the relative novelty of weaving Indigenous stories and voices into exhibitions that aren't necessarily Indigenous-focused. The difficulty of this relatively new practice highlights the lack of institutional knowledge around how to meaningfully (regardless of what that looks like) include Indigenous content. Museum practice, it seems, is currently in need of a new way of operating so that this knowledge becomes a key part of the institution's daily operations. This is what an Eighth Fire museum practice, or, more broadly, museum could be.

Similarly to Lainey, Mollen's dreams around Indigenous content in the CMH were an idea of where to start. Broadly, she felt "just having more language presence in the museum would also be really nice." She told me that one of her dreams "is for every time we do an exhibition [...] it would be so much nicer to have it in the three languages: in French, in English and in Anishinaabemowin." Her reasoning for this was the museum's location on Algonquin Anishinaabe territory. To her, if there was going to be just one Indigenous language in the CMH it should represent the land and the people who are connected to that land. Mollen continued:

Before becoming the coordinator [of the RBC Indigenous Internship Program] I was working as a hostess and I would find it funny because you know, the museum is advertised — you can still go to the museum and still have a pamphlet in I think six different languages or having greetings in French and English and all different languages,

but there was never greeting in Anishinaabemowin. So I would find it funny, you know you can say hi in I don't know which language — Italian, Portuguese — but there is no hello in Algonquin, or Mohawk or any Indigenous languages.

She also spoke about a dream of hers to have basic informational material in at least a few Indigenous languages. For example, “pamphlets in maybe Cree, Inuktituk and Anishinaabemowin [...] having at least [...] a few options just in terms of Indigenous language representation inside of the museum.” Mollen's dreams, in terms of Indigenous content at the CMH are specific, and very practical in nature. Looking at her dreams through Laenui's stages of decolonisation, it's clear that what she's advocating for in these specific dreams spans across all the stages. She's asking for commitment and action from the CMH in terms of more frequently and broadly representing Indigenous languages which, I argue, is important for supporting the dreams of other Indigenous people who could finally see themselves represented through their language(s).

Moreover, as a First Nations person who has spent a lot of time at the CMH I can say that this dream is extremely relatable and important to me on a personal level. Seeing Anishinaabemowin, my traditional language, in pamphlets, labels, and other exhibition (or general) materials would feel like a huge leap forward in terms of the CMH's museum practice. Mollen's awareness of the realities of working in a colonial institution means that she's able to find ways to dream of a future where the CMH as a specific institution can operate in a way that is better for Indigenous people. At this stage, it seems to me that having Indigenous languages in the museum is as much about taking a symbolic stance and step toward an Eighth Fire world, in which Indigenous languages appear regularly in the museum, as it is about making the museum more accessible to Indigenous visitors or staff. It doesn't necessarily matter that Indigenous languages aren't widely spoken in Canada or that many would come into the museum and see their language but be unable to read it, rather the “spark” of the Eighth Fire contained in dreams like Mollen's is a commitment to action. In other words, a commitment to a museum practice where it is standard to include at least one of these Indigenous languages.

John Moses, contrary to Lainey and Mollen's relatively site-specific and exhibition-specific dreams around Indigenous content, dreams of a stand-alone Indigenous museum. In this, he calls for a new kind of museum practice with different, Indigenous-centred priorities. Moses

explained: “really and truly the time has come for a separate, standalone national Indigenous museum in Canada.” In this he sees the potential for a national institution where Indigenous people are the main practitioners, the structure is based on Indigenous ontologies and ways of being, and the daily operations are such that all the exhibitions and content are interwoven with diverse Indigenous voices. Moses explained:

What I’m proposing is not to take away from any [other institutions] but to have a separate, fully independent, national Indigenous museum that, from my perspective, would actually be modelled after the spirit and intent of the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67. Which was not a physically large venue but was run from the top down by Indigenous experts on Indigenous issues and talking about [...] Canada both in historical and contemporary terms from an Indigenous perspective.

Though Moses references an exhibition from Canada’s centennial celebrations in 1967 (well over fifty years ago when I’m writing), this sort of institution still does not exist. An Indigenous-specific national museum would mean incorporating incredibly diverse ontologies and would require Indigenous people from across Canada to become museum practitioners in one form or another. This does not mean that there is a need for Indigenous people to necessarily be educated in a traditional western sense, rather traditional knowledge should become as valued, if not more, as university or colonial education in an institution like the one Moses proposes. This dream speaks to a more diverse future museum practice. One that I’d argue would very likely fit into an Eighth Fire world. It doesn’t advocate for an ending or stopping of current practices, rather it calls for an expansion or creation, and an acceptance of new ways of working. It advocates for an alternate kind of museum practice that is based on Indigenous ontologies but doesn’t necessarily rule out other kinds of museum practice. It also acknowledges the nuance of a world in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous histories aren’t really separate anymore, the interconnectedness of Indigenous and non-Indigenous histories in Canada mean that we can’t exclude one without losing part of another history.

In other words, in Moses' dream I see the desire for a unique Indigenous museum practice. One that does not rely on Western ideas of what a memory institution should be, rather one that is dynamic and entirely framed by diverse Indigenous beliefs. This leads to the need for

better, broader-reaching and deeper relationships between Indigenous peoples, museums, individual practitioners and other stakeholders. In the following section, I will outline the dreams of one Canadian practitioner whose dreams brought up the need for relationships and for the support of museums in building and maintaining those relationships.

Consultation and relationship building

Though only one out of the three Indigenous participants from the CMH spoke about relationships, it does feel important to include in this section. Jonathan Lainey told me that in terms of the inclusion of Indigenous content in museums, the complexity “is finding the interlocutors, who do you contact? Who will be your expert? Who do you work with? [...] [T]hat’s the main issue museums are facing right now, developing and maintaining relationships [with Indigenous people]” Improved consultation and relationship building was discussed by Lainey who explained that through the creation of past exhibitions, like the *Canada History Hall*, the CMH has set the current bar for its practice in terms of consultation with Indigenous communities. Within the Government of Canada, “consultation” is a somewhat complex term, with “duty to consult” being used as a legal term in some cases. An overview of this legal term is:

First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada:

1. have unique rights that are guaranteed under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Section 35 recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of Indigenous peoples.
2. As a way to protect these rights, the doctrine of the duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate Indigenous groups, was developed by Canadian courts. (Brideau 2019)

In my experience, both through working across four departments of the Government of Canada and as a First Nations person, this does not necessarily guarantee that consultation is sufficient. That is to say, often the duty to consult may lead to box-ticking rather than in-depth consultation with a given Indigenous community, family or person. This is why we need dreams to imagine other ways to build and maintain relationships, because this process needs to be more than

consultation. Those involved in these relationships deserve to have a deeper relationship that allows for building understandings of each other's' needs and worldviews.

It seemed that what Lainey is referring to in his dream, however, is that sort of more in-depth and thought-out consultation. He explained:

At the CMH what they do is they will make sure [...] to consult with the First Peoples that are concerned by the subjects that will be in the exhibitions. So that will be a one to one consultation with one community, one nation — or with individuals. It depends on the subject. [...] for example you must know William Commanda — Elder William Commanda from Kitigan Zibi? So we wanted to include a section on him so in this case we did not work with the community at Kitigan Zibi but we worked directly with the family [...].

This kind of consultation and relationship building is a step toward Lainey's dream. With the consultation being focused less on bureaucratic box-ticking and more on actual relationships. The museum could have consulted with Kitigan Zibi broadly (through something impersonal like a survey, which in my experience, does happen) but instead they sought out the relevant family. Not only does this acknowledge Indigenous individuals and particular families, but it also is a way to avoid the colonial practice of homogenising Indigenous peoples into one broad group. In terms of his dreams around this, Lainey hopes to see a continuation of this practice. He spoke about wanting the CMH and other museums to prioritise this sort of consultation that is personalised and seeks to build relationships with Indigenous people in order to ensure that their stories are being told respectfully.

Currently, the greatest barriers to this sort of relationship building are the lack of resources and time, and COVID-19. Lainey emphasised the issues caused by COVID-19:

I know what I would need to do [to build better relationships] but the thing is I cannot do it. And what I would need to do is go on site, meet with [Indigenous people], tell them who I am, why I do this, where I'm coming from, and ask them how we can collaborate. But my main issue is COVID/coronavirus. I can't meet with people and I know sending emails is not enough, I know that's not how you develop relationships.

Relationships and kinship are incredibly important in many Indigenous communities, but the ways we do this are often place-based or at least require meeting in-person (Wilson 2019). This doesn't necessarily mean the museum that Lainey currently works for (the McCord in Montreal) wouldn't support him travelling to Indigenous communities in a non-COVID context. However this sort of barrier is something that he still dreams of overcoming and this, to me, reflects a deep desire to maintain a connection between his museum practice and his lived experience as an Indigenous person. Lainey's dream of more collaboration and consultation through better and more numerous relationships is future-focused. He sees the groundwork being laid now and understands it to be just as important as the future work and changes that will happen. This dream seeks to light the Eighth Fire through partnership and unity, though not through sameness. Lainey's dream represents the understanding that what we dream now will propel the dreams of future generations. In the case of museums' relationships with Indigenous peoples, Lainey's dream seeks to establish a world in which we'd see institutions supporting and prioritising kinship-building practices like the in-person meetings that Lainey describes.

Te Papa Dreams

At Te Papa I managed to speak with eight Indigenous museum practitioners, their dreams are broad and, to me, represent the hope that these museum practitioners have for the future of museums. They mostly centre their dreams on larger scale changes, like a complete overhaul of current museum practice, rather than smaller or incremental changes. Their dreams fall under the following headings:

1. Indigenous content and languages;
2. More relationship building and more in-depth relationships with Māori; and
3. An overhaul: Seeking a new Indigenous museology.

Indigenous content and language(s)

Generally, the museum practitioners from Te Papa dream of more representation and acknowledgement of Māori (and Pacific) knowledge and stories. Though the ways in which these dreams were articulated varied, it is a common theme throughout all of the interviews.

Dreams about Indigenous content range from the general inclusion of more languages, to exhibitions exclusively curated and written for Māori. Curator Matariki Williams, for example, dreams of a new way of writing and storytelling in the museum that focuses on non-Māori audiences while it celebrates mātauranga Māori in its diverse forms. This new style of storytelling would seek to put Māori voices at the fore, but would subvert Te Papa's current practice of writing for Māori. Williams told me:

We have always said we will cater to Māori audiences first and foremost, and then everyone else can just like also learn if they do, but I think the way in which that idea will mature is if we go 'I want every single visitor to this country to know that their presence in Aotearoa has in some way been shaped by Māori' which is quite a challenge to how we have thought.

In the same vein, Williams also dreams of more commitment from the museum in terms of telling difficult stories. In her eyes, the museum's role going forward, would be to make sure that pākehā audiences know "what has happened to Māori because the reality is, most don't. Most do not understand that their mere presence in this land is because something has happened to Māori."

Another theme that emerged around Indigenous content is the dream of a constant increase in and betterment of Te Papa's inclusion of Indigenous languages. This, for some interviewees, like Huhana Smith, also extended to languages beyond te reo Māori. Smith argued for a more diverse representation of languages:

Whether it be Gaelic or French or Chinese or Japanese you know [when spoken] before English is spoken, privilege the other cultural context before the coloniser's voice is heard. So that's a really nice way of acknowledging a slight shift in powerbase which kinda helps propagate that respect for Māori and cultural diversity.

Smith's point about privileging other voices before the colonial voice interests me as a dream. It advocates for more space to be made in general for different ontologies and voices, and that could look like more Indigenous voices in the museum. On the other hand, it could be a very

complicated and exclusionary process to privilege all other languages before English, as English is spoken widely in New Zealand and is currently (though not legally entrenched) looked as an official language. Regardless of the complexity of this dream in reality, though, I argue that the point here is signalling more ideological and power-related shifts in daily operations through language use and content. Smith's argument is particularly interesting to me as it suggests that, in this dream, language is as symbolically powerful as it is literally powerful, this mirrors the symbolic power of language in Mollen's dream in an earlier section of this chapter. The relationship between language and thought is well represented in psychology literature (Lund 2003) and therefore this dream leads me to imagine a cyclical relationship between the museum's practice (thinking and action) and its ideological groundings in terms of language. Is shifting away from English as the default language one of the first sparks of lighting the Eighth Fire? This is not to say that English should be entirely abolished as it is a valid language, just that its pervasiveness might currently be an insidious/unobvious tool for holding colonial power and blocking change from happening.

Smith's dream of more diverse use of language was similarly discussed by curator Sean Mallon. Mallon explained:

I think [the trilingual labelling in] *Tatau* was a step in the right direction but [...] there've been a number of initiatives at Te Papa that have experimented with use of language, in the *Tangata o le Moana* space we've got a language braille which could definitely be improved in terms of its design and concept but you know that's going onto 15 years old if not older.

Mallon's dream recognises the foundational work that's already been done at Te Papa in terms of language diversity. The *Tatau* exhibition, which he curated, included trilingual labelling and that told a story not only about the exhibition content itself, but about Te Papa's commitment to Pacific stories alongside Māori or pākehā stories. If multilingual exhibitions like *Tatau* become more common, would this, as Smith argues, signal a shift in power?

Mallon's dream concerning the inclusion of more language also went into specifics of how this could be accomplished. With an eye to the future, Mallon argued that technology should be a tool that museums use in order to include more languages and voices. To him,

technology such as digital labels has the potential to present languages on equal footing, and to make the ways in which languages are used more engaging. Engagement, in this case, is a keyword. How do museums include Indigenous languages in a way that leaves an impression on visitors? According to Mallon, “it's one thing to put 200 words on the wall in an Indigenous language but does it really mean that much?” Without engagement, is the presence of more Indigenous languages just a tokenistic gesture? If so, then how do we, under an Eighth Fire museum practice, find ways to include and celebrate the diversity of Indigenous languages in engaging ways? Mallon told me:

If you put 200 words in English [on a label] it doesn't mean people are reading it. So I think having language on the label is one thing but a lot more work needs to be done around engaging people with language and texts regardless of what the language is, because people don't read every label so there's got to be other ways to engage them, and I think the book on the wall argument still stands. Nothing bores me more than going to a show where it's all photographs and text. I'd rather see real objects, hear people speak the language, and watch short clips. I think we can do a lot better at engaging people with languages, rather than having them passively presented.

The idea of passivity that's expressed in this quote speaks very clearly, to me, about the ways in which museums have been traditionally run. We know that the notion that visitors are “educated elite” people viewing a cabinet of curiosity-style exhibition is long dead (Knell 2011). No longer are people going to museums to just look and read, instead of engaging (Simon 2010). Instead, we need accessible exhibitions that encourage people to develop their own connections with stories, objects, and the museum (and its practitioners) itself (Simon 2010). Language is an important facet of this, though I would argue that what Mallon's said could and should be applied even more broadly in museums of the future.

Two practitioners, for example, dreamed of exhibitions entirely in te reo Māori. Dougal Austin, explained:

I've been at [Te Papa] for 25 years now—but we haven't done a proper te reo Māori exhibition yet, and I think “why haven't we done one?” and you know, with the revival

and the revitalisation of our reo, I'd like us to do that. I think as the national museum here we should be telling that story.

When I asked Austin if he thought that Te Papa could be setting an example for smaller museums in Aotearoa/New Zealand he agreed. As the national museum, Te Papa has an opportunity now to light sparks of the Eighth Fire and share those sparks with other institutions that may not otherwise have as much space, or the resources or support to make changes in their practice. Austin's dream of full te reo Māori exhibitions was similarly discussed by Smith. She described:

Exhibitions only in te reo Māori [that] are solely sorted for Indigenous language learners. There, solely sorted as resources for kura, you know from kohanga reo right through. Rangatahi stories in Māori by fluent Māori teenagers, you know stories that are coming from teenagers in Indigenous languages in museums. Get them talking about some of the difficult problems we face, what are their aspirations? What are their fears?

In this dream Smith is also advocating for more Māori participation at the museum, which will be discussed further in a later section, when discussing the dreams of Puawai Cairns. Smith's dream suggests the need for not only a new kind of more collaborative museum practice, but a new kind of museum practitioner — or at least a much broader definition of who is a museum practitioner. The Māori youth to whom she refers, could arguably be called museum practitioners as their voices and perspectives would influence the museum and the experience of its visitors.

Where these two dreams differ is that for Austin, the full te reo Māori exhibition is a show of a shift in practice, focused on te reo Māori speakers and his vision includes setting a bar for future museum practice. Smith, on the other hand, sees full te reo Māori exhibitions as an opportunity for more language revitalisation, and as ways for more Māori youth to learn and use the language. These dreams are equally valuable, and are interesting in their difference in perspective on the same outcome. To me, this shows the diverse value of including more of the language and in prioritising Te Reo Māori. The outcomes of a shift in museum practice and the education and revitalisation around te reo Māori are different, but they could come from the same choices at the museum.

Language, when used thoughtfully also has the power to situate stories, taonga and ideas in time and in places. Aperahama shared:

When I'm looking at something I'm looking at it today, I'm looking at it through the eyes of my mother and father, I'm looking at it through the eyes of my grandparents, I'm looking at it through the eyes of the generations before and then understanding that each [of those] generations were influenced by certain policy, laws of the time and then looking deeper into what was their understanding of these certain things.

Throughout the interview, Aperahama spoke about the diversity of te reo Māori through not only its current diverse dialects, but also its historical dialects. In a museum where Indigenous voices are heard, that diversity needs to be acknowledged in some way. Though he didn't frame this point specifically as a dream or hope for the future, he did speak about his own practice and how the museum can always be improving in terms of the ways in which it represents te reo Māori. He made the point that:

We have to understand that our language is in a state of recovery. It's in a state of rebuilding and so there's so many things missing in the picture, so you have the world moving at such a pace but the Indigenous peoples pace it's trying to rebuild at the same time trying to keep up with the pace of the world.

What Aperahama highlights in this quote is that the path toward more representation of Māori and Indigenous voices and stories is not a simple one. There are the devastating impacts of colonialism to contend with, and though dreaming is a powerful tool for combating colonization's impacts, it is still a long road. Tibble, succinctly offered a solution to the lack of Indigenous voices and content in museums when he said he dreams of: "[h]aving more people who can speak Māori in our museums. Having more people who can think Māori."

More relationship building and more in-depth relationships with Māori

As alluded to throughout many of the dreams of Māori and Indigenous practitioners, another area of focus in the dreams of museum practitioners at Te Papa was the desire to see better and more

relationship building. This includes and extends beyond the kinds of relationships the museum already has with iwi through the iwi exhibitions, or other external relationships, to fostering a better relationship between Māori and non-Māori staff, and creating new kinds of external relationships. Some interviewees' dreams presented ways in which these relationships might be expanded, and others focused on the kinds of relationships and the outcomes from those relationships that they would like to see in the future.

Arapata Hakiwai, for example, dreams of ways in which Te Papa's relationships with iwi and individual Māori (but also, more broadly, Indigenous people in other parts of the world) might be expanded. He spoke extensively about his dream of more and better repatriation, and the ways in which that process can foster trust and relationships. This already exists, to some extent as Hakiwai explained: "we actually work closely with first nations throughout the world in the repatriation programme, [...] and we need that because museums throughout the world are different beasts." Through these relationships, Te Papa bridges the differences between institutions and can foster better relationships with Māori by bringing home ancestors. Relationships, to Hakiwai, seem to be intertwined. That is to say, there seems to be a process happening where fostering better relationships in one facet of the museum's work also improves (or at least improves the potential for) other relationships.

Hakiwai also dreams of forming better relationships with Māori and Indigenous people so that when their languages or stories appear in the museum, they appear in a more meaningful way, i.e. in a way that feels right to Māori. In Hakiwai's words, when Indigenous languages appear in the museum, "we're not just doing it for the sake that we have a policy to put the reo there, but that there's actually [...] a relationship basis to it and there's a purpose for it and [...] that's certainly our desire there to form greater relationships with first nations." This dream is one that asks how relationships can improve the museum, it looks at the outcomes of better relationships and how the museum and its practice might benefit from tighter bonds with Māori. This differs from Hakiwai's other dream around relationship building, as the repatriation-related one is more focussed on *how* those relationships might be formed as much as what they can do for Māori or Indigenous people, and the museum.

Cairns' dreams also touched on this, she dreams of a museum where Māori people and views are a major and unavoidable part of its daily operations. This requires relationship building, and in order to create spaces for this, it would require Te Papa to become increasingly

accessible to Māori audiences. This mirrors the previous section, where it is clear that there is a continued need for more Māori and Indigenous content and languages in the museum. If Te Papa tells relatable stories in relatable ways, there is a strong chance that its relationships with Māori (both externally and internally, with staff) would improve. This is also a theme in Smith's dream, where she advocates for more Māori voices (especially youth) in the museum, telling their stories in their own ways. If the museum reaches out to the people and iwi with whom it already has relationships for projects like this, it would potentially mean the expansion of those relationships. Relationships beget relationships, in this case.

One of the ways in which Te Papa is currently trying to build relationships is through their "National Services Te Paerangi" (NSTP) team. This is a team of advisers based in communities around Aotearoa whose roles are to work with communities to help them manage their heritage and their relationships with Te Papa. Tibble, who was an Iwi Development Adviser at the time of our interview on the NSTP team, works directly with iwi and sees the need for more people in roles like his. He told me:

One of my blue sky ideas would be: my role, if we had these around the country. Some areas have museum advisers. [...] There's odd ones around but usually they're pākehā and they find they're good at working with their own communities but — I will go do a workshop with them and the point I try to drive is 'hey, don't forget this [Māori] part of your community. They are you too. Whether you realise it or not. Might be hard to connect with them but give it a go, it's worth it.'

With more advisers in the community, relationships would likely grow and deepen. This would be an excellent step toward a more partnership-based model of working with iwi for Te Papa. Tibble's dream is action-based in its view of concrete ways in which the future can be improved for Indigenous museum practitioners, and Indigenous museum visitors.

An overhaul: Seeking a new Indigenous museology

One of the most irreverent, but still very telling responses to my question about dreams for the future of Te Papa came from Puawai Cairns. Cairns joked that she wished Te Papa had been built in Gisborne. Though I am aware that she meant this as a joke, it does speak to the ideological

state of Te Papa and of museums in general, and the relationship between these institutions and the locations in which they exist. She explained:

When Te Matatini was here [in 2019], basically the whole of Wellington was filled with thousands and thousands of Māori people walking [around] it was probably the most fun I've had in Wellington [...] just seeing the number of Māori people that were in this museum and in the streets — I remember going “aw this is amazing! This is what would happen if Te Papa was in Gisborne” [...]

That is to say, Cairns dreams of Te Papa serving a much more Māori community. If the museum was based somewhere like Gisborne, whereas as of 2018 the population was 52.9% Māori (StatsNZ: Place Summaries 2018) as compared with Wellington where in the same year Māori only made up 14.3% of the population, it would mean that the museum's target audience would have to change. Arguably, this would also lead to a shift in practice, where mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori were prioritised more often in order to better engage with a more Māori audience and location. Cairns continued:

I think that's what I want, more Māori participation, attendance and demand of Te Papa as an audience, but equally I want to see it corresponded with more Māori in here not just working in the Māori roles but working across this place where we are here to such an extent that we stop becoming the other.

In short, Cairns advocates in these statements, for ideologically moving Te Papa to a more Māori place, where the stories told and the ways in which those stories are told are Māori. This mirrors Tibble's dream for the museum to have more people on staff and around “who can think Māori.” As a start, as Cairns' and Smith's visions offer, this could look like stories that come from Māori people rather than stories that are simply *about* Māori people. To me, this is a future-focused expansion on what's seen through iwi exhibitions. These shows hand over some of Te Papa's resources and space to iwi so they can tell their own stories in their own ways. I'd argue that in the future, and under Cairns' vision, this would be less and less bound to traditional

museological space and practices and would expand beyond what we currently recognise as museum practice.

A key way that Cairns sees this change happening is the continued and increased presence of Māori and other Indigenous practitioners working in museums. As I have argued throughout this thesis, there is no way to have Indigenous voices in the museum without Indigenous people working on exhibitions, policies and in daily operations. Cairns' dream supports this, and displays the revolutionary potential of having more Indigenous museum practitioners in the museum. Our presence, knowledge, and ways of working in museums has such potential to create change, and to be a major step toward lighting the Eighth Fire and subsequently creating an Eighth Fire museum practice.

Cairns isn't alone in this dream, when I asked Paora Tibble about his dreams, one of the first things he spoke about was a new kind of museum. Similar to Cairns, and to Moses in Canada, he sees the potential for more Indigenous-led museum and heritage practice. He offered a practical image of this future:

At the moment a lot of iwi and hapū — they're at this point again where they're asking 'oh, what if we had our own whare taonga? What would that look like?' [...] So some iwi are actually looking at building their own institutions, I think it's a good idea for us to look overseas — especially to our Indigenous brothers and sisters over in the States. It's a different dynamic having museums or institutions funded by casinos but the process to build and develop them is still the same. [You have to ask:] Why? What's your foundation? In terms of your taonga, what story do you want to tell? Who are you speaking to? Normally, quite often it's to our own, it's revival, telling our story to our own: a reawakening, through our taonga.

This dream is similar to Cairns' in that it highlights the need for museums to cater to Indigenous audiences, but that that is only really possible (in our imaginings of the future or otherwise) if Indigenous people are present in those institutions in large numbers. Tibble's point about the creation of iwi-led or, more broadly, Indigenous-led museums and heritage centres being a reawakening is key to his dream. As Laenui states, dreaming is where we see a possible different future, and in terms of decolonisation and reclamation of heritage (and museum practice) that

might look like a reawakening to our pasts and our active potential to create our ideal versions of the future.

Huhana Smith's dreams also call for a total overhaul of the way things are currently done in order to make Te Papa and other museums places that work for Māori and other Indigenous people. In her words, she sees a future where museums “amplify it” and bring in more Māori worldviews. Smith spoke about Rangi Matamua as an example for the ways in which practice can shift to fit in with and work through Indigenous ontologies. Matamua's practice as an astronomer is grounded in Māori astronomy, challenging the currently accepted western, scientific ways of conducting astronomical work (2017).

Māori writer Ranea Aperahama's dream was the same, a total shift or overhaul of the way things are currently done. He told me:

My big hope is constitutional reform. Put that stake in the ground, no more fluffing around — because it's been going on for too long. Generation after generation. Haven't we learned from our history? Because we know it's not working. That's all, can we acknowledge that? It's not working. So can we at least reset [to] a model that — we've underestimated, I know — but maybe if we invested in it we'd be surprised by what happened. You might be very surprised. So, constitutional reform, [respecting] the Treaty of Waitangi, mana taonga, wai 262 claim. That's my hope.

To me, what Aperahama is describing, in his own terms, is an Eighth Fire museum (and world). His dream calls for an acknowledgement of what's not working now, and to find solutions to said problem that will lead to a stronger set of partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and, subsequently, better spaces for all museum goers.

Conclusion: Dreams in comparison

What is clear when looking at the dreams of Indigenous museum practitioners in both Aotearoa and Canada is the incredibly broad scope of dreaming in each country. They range from very specific, tangible changes to much broader and more ideological shifts that would change the museum landscape as a whole. This begs the question, then, why are some of the dreams so different when others are so similar? If the differences in dreams were place-specific, that is to

say, one group having the more tangible and immediate dreams and the other group having the broader goals, it would be easier to say that the ways in which these practitioners dream is tied directly to their societies. That is not, however, the case. Both types of dreams are discussed by practitioners at both museums, so the difference is more nuanced than a national boundary or lived experience in a particular country. John Moses and Puawai Cairns, for example, both dreamed of a seismic shift in the national museum. Moses called for a whole new kind of institution that is Indigenous-based, and Cairns called for the physical (but more realistically, ideological) relocation of the museum to a more Māori space. These dreams might be viewed as somewhat radical in both Canada and New Zealand, so it's not a national or societal difference, necessarily. I would argue in the cases of these broader, blue-sky style dreams the practitioner is actually representing their lack of precarity in the field. Moses, for example, has been working in museums and heritage institutions in Canada for decades, he knows the field well and knows how to navigate its particularities and how to avoid such a statement from coming across as incendiary. Cairns has also worked in museums, and in particular at Te Papa for some time, and she holds a director position, is outspoken in media and through her work on a daily basis and this might be because she doesn't feel unsafe or unsecure in her position at the museum.

On the other hand, practitioners like Gaëlle Mollen, who is just beginning her career, have to be more cautious with their dreams. Mollen's dreams are, in reality, no less revolutionary than those of Moses and Cairns, but she can't necessarily express them as the kind of demands for massive change that her more senior counterparts can. Mollen's dream for there to be Indigenous languages (even just one) in the museum *is* revolutionary. Speaking from personal experience, if I walked into the CMH and saw my language (Anishinaabemowin) on a label it would change my experience of the museum entirely. Mollen can't necessarily advocate for the museum to change its policy entirely, but her dreams still suggest a future in which museum practice changes and makes room for Indigenous voices. She is still advocating for an Eighth Fire world, though her position may be slightly more precarious in the field.

The relative lack of Indigenous participants from Canada also indicate the precarity of Indigenous museum practitioners in Canada. Though this was not directly communicated to me by any of my participants, nor anyone who chose not to participate, I was told by a personal contact that many Indigenous museum practitioners were wary of this thesis topic and as such they chose not to participate. Their dreams, as a result, are absent from this thesis and that is

arguably due in part to this sort of career precarity. Though this is somewhat speculative, the positions of Māori and Indigenous museum practitioners in Aotearoa seem to be a lot less precarious, based on the willingness of practitioners at Te Papa to participate in this research, and their comfort and openness with me in their interviews.

Though the general security of the practitioners' positions does appear to be a major factor in the ways in which they dream, it would be a mistake to assume this is the only factor in the differences in dreaming. This is because that sort of precarity or difference in security doesn't exist in a vacuum, the broader societies in which the museums exist must impact the ways in which the museums operate and subsequently the comfort levels of the practitioners who work at these museums. For example, some of the dreams, like those of Austin and Smith, call for exhibitions that are entirely written in te reo Māori and sorted for learners or just speakers in general. These dreams reflect the relatively high number of te reo speakers in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and this sort of dream possibly did not appear in Canada because there simply aren't enough Indigenous people who speak their languages fluently for this to be viable at this point. In Aotearoa/New Zealand there's a push to have one million te reo Māori speakers by 2040, so the national museum presenting material solely in te reo Māori isn't an unrealistic expectation.

Another factor is the difference in museum practice in each institution. Te Papa makes it very clear that they do *not* want to be like other museums, and, according to Hakiwai, they're not interested in following standard museological practice simply because it's standard. That is not to say that Te Papa isn't still a colonial institution, as we know in its founding it comes from a very colonial approach to collecting and the preservation of histories. It does, however, make commitments to tikanga and mātauranga Māori through its work. One such commitment is Te Marae, which for Hakiwai, sits at the heart of the museum and acts as the ideological centre for the institution. If this is true, then the museum has to commit to some form of museum practice that not only accounts for Māori but actually caters to Māori.

The CMH, on the other hand, is still very lacking in Indigenous presence. Though the *Grand Hall* is dedicated to Coast Salish people, it doesn't hold the same spiritual or symbolic place as Te Marae. Indigenous presence in the CMH, in contrast with Te Papa, is much more static or exhibitory. At Te Papa the marae is still used as a marae, it welcomes visitors, hosts events and acts as a gateway for repatriated taonga and tupuna. The CMH's Indigenous

structures, on the other hand, are simply exhibits that serve to educate the public instead of acting in their more realistic roles as meeting places or cultural centres.

How can the dreams of Indigenous practitioners grow beyond exhibitions-focused ideas when that is how Indigenous structures and objects are treated by the museum? This is all, arguably, reflective of the broader social landscapes of each country. In Aotearoa/New Zealand Māori are more represented in terms of population, but also tikanga Māori and mātauranga Māori are more widely shared than in Canada. In Canada, on the other hand, Indigenous cultures are still in a critical phase of recovery where they are not widely known or shared. This is partially because culturally, some knowledges aren't allowed to be shared (they must be earned and only certain people have the right to share them and learn them). This is also because the diversity of Indigenous cultures means that even if the federal government mandated more education or incorporation of Indigenous cultures in public spaces, it would be met with a lot of complex issues around *which* Indigenous cultures to include.

What is so important to me about the dreams of Indigenous museum practitioners is that they are the experts on these institutions. Through their personal, lived experiences working in these institutions they know what a brighter future could look like. They know what feels good for them as museum practitioners, and what's not working for them, and as such are uniquely placed to call for change. Their dreams and knowledge are absolutely key to the creation of an Eighth Fire museum practice in which museums are safe spaces for Indigenous peoples (both in the front of house and back of house, or as staff *and* visitors) and for people from all walks of life.

Conclusion

Over the course of this thesis, I have asked: what is the experience of Indigenous museum practitioners in Seventh Fire museums, and what might an Eighth Fire museum look like? This question, answered through an exploration of Indigenous voices in two national museums: the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) and Te Papa, has given me the opportunity to tell the stories of numerous Indigenous peoples working in these museums. The museum practitioners I interviewed throughout my fieldwork have irrevocably shaped and guided not only the story that this thesis tells, but also the structure of the thesis itself. The findings of this thesis are, therefore, as much the work of the museum practitioners who participated in the research as my own work. When I began this research, I was admittedly lost in all the potential ways that a thesis could be structured, but hearing the dreams of Indigenous museum practitioners made clear to me that there is only one way to tell the story that I really wanted to tell. This thesis is a story of struggle, triumph, and hope for the future. A structure built around understanding the experiences of these museum practitioners in modern museums, and then seeking to understand where they see museums going in the future. The structure of this thesis is my theoretical contribution to the field, with the adoption of dreaming as a guiding principle, and the acknowledgement of the active, change-making potential of dreams. This has led to some practical recommendations, but also broader, idealistic concepts of what an Eighth Fire museum could be.

Through my literature review, I demonstrated the gap in both the museum studies and Indigenous studies research landscapes that I seek to fill: the experiences of individual Indigenous museum practitioners. The museums research landscape discusses museum practice broadly (Papadakēs 1991; Stam 2005; Labrum 2007; Sandell 2007; Dudley 2010; Davidson and Sibley 2011; McCarthy 2011; Alivizatou 2012; Steorn 2012; Jolles 2013; Shelton 2014; Jeffery 2015; Norton-Westbrook 2015; Schorch and McCarthy 2019; Forster and von Bose 2019; Mallon 2019; McCall and Gray 2019), and the relationships between Indigenous peoples and museums (Tamarapa 1996; Conaty 2003; Butts 2007; Stanley 2007; Labrum 2007; McCarthy 2007; Sleeper-Smith 2009; McCarthy 2011; Phillips 2011; Lonetree 2012; McCarthy 2012; McCarthy 2014; McCarthy 2015; Onciul 2015; Schorch et al. 2016; Phillips 2019; Tapsell 2019; Lonetree 2021). I also engaged with Indigenous studies or Critical Indigenous Studies (CIS)

fields which tend to focus on Indigenous issues like defining and understanding Indigenous identities (Maaka and Fleras 2005; Hokowhitu 2010), the intersectional forces of oppression faced by Indigenous people (Driskill 2011), and the incorporation of Indigenous peoples and ontologies into education (Phillips and Lampert 2005). What is unique about my research is that I work in the intersection of these fields, drawing from both sets of literature in order to frame this thesis. I also engage with decolonial literature broadly (Smith 1997; Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Green 2002; Mohanty 2003; Laenui 2006; Sharma and Wright 2008; Hokowhitu 2010; Gordon 2020; Kiddle et al. 2020) and in terms of the decolonisation of museums (Stanley 2007; Sleeper-Smith 2009; Lonetree 2012; Onciul 2015; Cairns 2020; Pitman 2021; Soares 2021), which helps to frame the forward-looking nature of this research. Though both fields are useful, they do not focus on the individual and personal experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners. My research contributes to this landscape by addressing this gap and showing that the individual experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners can tell rich stories, and can inform the future of museum practice. Moreover, this thesis brings together the voices of Indigenous museum practitioners in both Canada and Aotearoa and the similarities of their experiences at two national museums might have never been discussed without this thesis.

This research was methodologically grounded in Indigenous research methods (Smith 1997; Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Wilson 2001; Weber-Pillwax 2001; Denzin, Lincoln and Tuhiwai Smith 2008; Wilson 2008; Kovach 2010; Botha 2011; Mertens, Cram and Chilisa 2013; Moreton-Robinson 2016) in order to support its goals of prioritising Indigenous voices and understanding the experiences of Indigenous museum practitioners. These methods, specifically, were Kaupapa Māori (Tuhiwai Smith 1999) and research as a relation (Wilson 2019; Anderson and Meshake 2019). They grounded me in Indigenous ways of conducting research and helped me to centre Indigenous voices (including my own) throughout this thesis. I also made use of autoethnographic (Houston 2007; Denzin 2014; Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis 2015; Pensoneau-Conway 2017) and ethnographic (Kreps 2003; Shagrir 2016; Kwame Harrison 2018) research methods to honour both the fact that I am a participant (as an Indigenous museum practitioner myself) and an observer in this research. Finally, I also made use of action-research methods (Costello 2003; Tzbazi 2013) to ground this thesis and to support its forward-looking, change-making goals. All of these methodological groundings supported me in various ways and they factored into my decision to conduct semi-structured interviews and observational research

in order to collect my data. In particular, the grounding in Indigenous research methods supported my choice to conduct interviews as meeting practitioners face to face (or via Zoom) allowed me to build relationships with them and to centre myself in Indigenous oral traditions (Irwin and Miller 1997; Hanna 2000).

What I have found, through my fieldwork, is a set of hopes and dreams for the future of museums, but I have also found areas in which museums must improve in order to take steps toward those dreams. Through asking where and how Indigenous voices appear in museum spaces, I have been able to better understand the experiences of individual Indigenous museum practitioners, and, through the themes that emerged in interviews with these individuals, I have a much better understanding of the broader experience of working in a museum or colonial heritage/ memory institution as an Indigenous person. Indigenous voices do not appear as frequently as they could in museums, and this is not due to a lack of effort on the parts of Indigenous museum practitioners. It is clear that currently, Indigenous museum practitioners are too few and far between, and as such their collective (and individual) voices are not being heard or properly supported in these institutions. At the CMH and Te Papa alike, Indigenous practitioners find themselves being ignored or challenged on issues like using the right terminology, including Indigenous languages in grammatically correct ways, or writing labels that reflect an Indigenous viewpoint. Though there are some who feel they have the ability to stand up and demand that they are heard (like Cairns, for example, in the case of the title of *Te Taiao*) this does not indicate that the museums actually *want* Indigenous voices to have influence over their practices.

Other practitioners, like Lainey at the CMH, have had to face challenges from committee members, directors, or others in management positions. Lainey's label writing for the *Canada History Hall* (CHH), for example, was challenged by a non-Indigenous committee member who told him that his writing was biased. Whereas on the other hand, an Indigenous committee member celebrated his voice and his ability to write labels that reflect an Indigenous viewpoint. Lainey also faced challenges from management in his collecting practices, with him needing to call on his personal networks in order to secure a real wampum belt for the CHH — without the support of other Indigenous peoples and their voices he might not have been able to achieve this, despite being an expert in wampum.

Through my interviews I have also seen the nuance of Indigenous voices in these two national museums, and I have learned the ways in which they do (or do not) appear in the museum's practice (daily operations, but also ideologically the ways in which the museums *want* to work), and in the museums' external offerings. Indigenous languages appearing in the front of house and in external materials were the most obvious form of voice in the two case study museums, with instances of their inclusion often indicating an Indigenous presence on the exhibitions teams. However, even this — as was discussed in earlier chapters — was not a sure way to tell if Indigenous people were being heard. In times when Indigenous languages appeared in exhibition spaces — like when Ranea Aperahama's work as Te Papa's Māori writer leads to different versions (historical or place-based changes) of te reo Māori appearing in the museum in order to reflect the contexts of a given story or taonga — they changed the exhibitions fundamentally. That is to say, they made clear the Indigenous roots of some stories, or they told stories in a way that was only possible to do in an Indigenous language (e.g., the story of Tāne holding apart his parents, from the Te Papa case study chapter). The physical and audio presence of Indigenous languages also act as a way to remind audiences that the national museums in which they stand are on Indigenous lands.

Language, however, as hinted at above, did not always work as a representative of Indigenous voices. At Te Papa the inclusion of te reo Māori on directional or informational signage, for example the COVID-19 precautions signs or the labelling of bathrooms, didn't tell a particularly Indigenous story in the way that the labels in exhibition spaces could. Instead, these were direct translations, that could have been written by anyone who had access to translation services, (i.e., they didn't necessarily have to be written by a Māori museum practitioner) and as such didn't represent the voices of any particular people. At the CMH, on the other hand, this might be a different story, as the general lack of Indigenous languages there means that any instance of an Indigenous language in the museum is more likely to be indicative of an Indigenous person's work to advocate for their voice and the voices of people like them. In fact, I would go so far as to say that having labels for bathrooms or spaces in any Indigenous language at the CMH would be a massive step forward for the museum's journey in changing its practice and becoming a space where Indigenous people feel safe.

I also found that the CMH, contrary to Te Papa, tends to rely on audio recordings of Indigenous languages, perhaps due to the fact that very few Indigenous languages in Canada

have their own alphabets (like te reo Māori, they use the Latin alphabet with modifiers) or perhaps due to the fact that the museum can access archival examples of recordings of Indigenous languages, rather than having to find someone new to record audio clips or write labels. Though this brings literal, audible Indigenous voices into the exhibitions it does mean that the languages are limited to one space (usually under a listening cone), rather than appearing in numerous forms on labels across an exhibition. Like the literal translations on directional signage at Te Papa, this form of language inclusion may not always be indicative of an actual Indigenous voice, each instance of audio-recordings of Indigenous languages would therefore need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, the way audio recordings of Indigenous languages are used in Canada is sometimes more of an environmental reminder of the roles of Indigenous people in the story, rather than being treated as a taonga as they often are in Aotearoa.

This has all led me to question: if Indigenous languages were treated more like a national treasure – in a way where they were entrenched in the wider national consciousness — would museums be more apt to find ways to include them regularly? Moreover, would museums work to include Indigenous languages in ways that are reflective of Indigenous voices, and not simply as translations or tokenistic gestures? If there is a social and museological shift in mind sets from viewing these languages as solely a means of communication to a treasure, or a priceless object then would they be more comfortable including larger sections of text in exhibitions? This is to say, would viewing Indigenous languages as part of the storytelling of the museum rather than just a communication medium lead to more Indigenous languages in the museum? Indigenous museum practitioners run into barriers when trying to include Indigenous language-labels frequently. Practitioners at both the CMH and Te Papa spoke about having to work to claim “real estate” for Indigenous languages (and subsequently their voices), but in this sort of hypothetical society, would they have to do that kind of extra work?

The other ways in which Indigenous voices seem to appear in the front of house spaces at both case study museums is through objects or taonga. Objects, as became clear through my discussions with Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) museum practitioners, have a remarkable capacity to act as symbols for the perspectives of Indigenous museum practitioners and Indigenous peoples in general. The appearance of Indigenous voices through objects, like the *Once Were Warriors* jacket collected by Cairns, or the rattle and photograph loaned by John Moses, tells stories about the experiences of Indigenous peoples in these two museums. The

inclusion of Indigenous voices through objects also tells stories about the collecting priorities of museums — for example Te Papa’s reluctance to collect gang-related objects — and the struggles faced by Indigenous museum practitioners who work to subvert those priorities in order to tell uniquely Indigenous stories.

Objects, like Moses’ photograph and rattle, can also tell broader stories. The inclusion of those two objects in particular work to represent the deeply traumatic and personal experiences that Indigenous peoples in Canada have and had with the Indian residential schools system. Objects, arguably, are more effective in telling these stories than written or audio language because they have the ability to hold numerous layers of meaning in a way that words sometimes cannot — especially when labels are being written according to museological standards or best practices. Objects don’t limit the kinds of stories they tell, rather they hold all the stories we give them, and allow each person to overlay their own meanings onto them. Understanding or being able to read the stories they hold certainly requires more work, but throughout this research it has become clear that objects are powerful in their ability to represent a wealth of Indigenous perspectives in the museums, if you know how to look at them. The presence of Indigenous voices via objects can also indicate the kinds of experiences Indigenous museum practitioners are having at these museums. They are the physical representations of the priorities of these practitioners and the kinds of stories they want to tell in museums.

My fieldwork also showed me that Indigenous voices appear in less obvious ways and spaces. They’re not only found in the front of house spaces, but instead they influence the operations of museums and subsequently the experiences of Indigenous peoples working for those museums. For example, Indigenous museum practitioners and their voices are instrumental in relationship building. Not only because they know other Indigenous peoples and the proper ways in which to interact with other Indigenous people, but because the ways in which Indigenous people work tends to be centred in the practice of relationship building. Practitioners build relationships amongst themselves, between themselves and the museums, and with their wider communities. The networks that Indigenous peoples can and do build when working for museums can irrevocably alter the ways in which those institutions work. For example, through his relationships and familial network Jonathan Lainey was able to change the way wampum belts were displayed in the *CHH*, through this act he not only called on his own relationships and network, but opened the door for the *CMH* to build relationships with Indigenous peoples who

would get to see a real wampum (and subsequently representation of real Indigenous practices) in Canada's national history museum. Without Lainey, all the wampum in the exhibition would have likely been replicas and wouldn't have had the capacity to forge new relationships the way the real object and its spiritual power (manido) can.

This sort of relationship-building practice (or kinship-focused) is important due to its ability to make museums a safer space for Indigenous peoples — visitors and practitioners alike. It is a gateway to changing museums more broadly in the world as it is a fundamental shift in museological practice. This is not to say that museum practice hasn't included some form of relationship or network building in the past (or doesn't include it now) but basing an institution's practice in relationships would be a leap forward from this. Museums evidently do rely on their networks for acquisitions, lending, etc. but they could be viewing relationships as more central to a future museum practice.

Another major theme in my fieldwork interviews was the idea that things, as they are now, are simply not good enough. Museums might be trying to hire more Indigenous people and to bring in more Indigenous content, but the way in which they operate in a Seventh Fire world isn't conducive to supporting Indigenous voices. For example, the lack of Indigenous peoples in higher-up positions in the two case study institutions (particularly at the CMH, but the lack of guaranteed mana whenua representation on Te Papa's board is also problematic) means that only so much change can actually happen in these institutions. As was noted in the previous chapter, there needs to be a fundamental shift in museum practice as a whole in order for Indigenous people and our voices to thrive in these spaces. This does not just apply to the two case study museums, though they are indicative of the need for change in the field of museums and museum practice. These two institutions, on opposite sides of the world and with different management structures face many of the same issues — tokenism, lack of Indigenous language inclusion (and excuses around the lack of space on walls for those languages), and the isolation sickness faced by Indigenous museum practitioners — and this seems indicative of a global issue with museums. The ways that museums currently operate are tied to their colonial roots, the emphasis on preservation and didactic education that still underpins large parts of their practices makes this obvious, and if this continues then there is no hope for real change. Museums need to step outside of their current conceptions of what a heritage or cultural collecting institution is, and start to dream of a different form of museum altogether.

This is why we are in need of a new kind of museum practice, one based in an Eighth Fire ideology. That is to say, a museum practice that seeks to work with differences and to celebrate them, one that supports Indigenous voices and the reclamation (or new claiming) of spaces — both physical and metaphorical — for Indigenous voices and ontologies, but also one that sees non-Indigenous peoples working together with Indigenous museum practitioners. Throughout this thesis I have asked what this kind of museum practice might look like, and through my fieldwork interviews I have developed a number of suggestions for how we, as practitioners in the field, might light that prophetic Eighth Fire. In the following sections I will offer a number of recommendations, both broad and ideological and more practical, for how we might achieve these dreams and I will outline my dreams, as informed by my fieldwork and the dreams of Indigenous museum practitioners at the CMH and Te Papa, for the future of museums and museum practice.

Solutions and recommendations

It will come as no surprise that my fieldwork has made clear that the first step toward an Eighth Fire museum practice is having more Indigenous people working in museums or museum-like spaces. In saying museum-like spaces I refer to alternative memory, heritage and educational institutions that might not currently be understood in the same ways as museums. These include: cultural centres which often host workshops and language classes along with acting as museums; community centres which may not be collections focused but may have similar goals to museums in terms of education and the preservation (and continuation) of cultural knowledge; whare taonga; and other Indigenous-led institutions. We don't necessarily need the old-style museums in order to create an Eighth Fire museum practice, but if they do not follow suit then change may be less likely to happen. Without Indigenous peoples working in all levels of museums — from national down to community or even family-run museums (and museum-like spaces) — there is no chance of an Eighth Fire version of the field and museum practice becoming a reality. Simply put, Indigenous people are key to changing the museums and heritage landscape. The active potential of Indigenous dreaming is key in lighting the sparks of a future museum practice.

Central to this goal is developing a form of relational museum practice that is grounded in (or at least draws from) Indigenous ontologies. When we, as practitioners in the field,

understand the power of our collective voices then we see change happening. This was clear in my fieldwork interviews, with practitioners like Cairns or Aperahama discussing examples where their combined voices were listened to much more frequently than they were when they were on their own. This is also key, though, in expanding the definition of museum practice. A true relational museum practice would call on people from across museums (both within individual institutions and across the field more broadly) to work together but would also require the presence of external people who would, in their own right, become a form of museum practitioner. Arguably, we already see this beginning to happen, with museums like Te Papa hosting iwi exhibitions, or working with communities across Aotearoa to create whare taonga or other cultural centres that are community-based and run by the same people whose cultures and objects are being featured.

In terms of an Eighth Fire world, this would entail the creation of new Indigenous-run museums. Interviewees like Moses and Cairns' dreams of the creation of museums in their respective countries that are run by and for Indigenous peoples have led to this solution. This would mean the incorporation of Indigenous voices, both from the practitioners working within the museums, and external contributors (another kind of museum practitioner). Indigenous-run national and community museums would entail wider national support from governments to give space and resources to Indigenous people to create our own kinds of museums/cultural centres/heritage institutions/whare taonga that work for us in our ways.

This, therefore, is also a call for a major shift in governmental priorities in nations around the world. There must be a fundamental re-prioritisation of Indigenous rights and voices, one that is not tokenistic or written into a larger document for the sake of virtue signalling. On the other hand, perhaps this sort of change requires stepping outside of colonial governments and finding resources to create these sorts of institutions on our own, in a broader move toward decolonisation on an international level. Certainly, independence from colonial governments and the need for their resources and financial support would allow for Indigenous museum practitioners at these hypothetical institutions to turn our backs on standard museological practice if it isn't conducive to our goals, and would therefore support the creation of new, Indigenous museum practices.

The question of how we actually achieve these idealistic recommendations remains. I propose a few practical recommendations: firstly, museums need to explicitly direct (or redirect)

resources into embedding Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into their everyday practice. This means more comprehensive cultural awareness training, the creation of policies that allot financial resources to cultural training but also policies that require all staff (especially non-Indigenous) to meet minimum requirements for their awareness of Indigenous cultures and participation in decolonisation efforts and the Indigenisation of museum spaces. This also means hiring more Indigenous people in roles across the museums, as I have recommended throughout this thesis. Indigenous knowledges and perspectives *cannot* be represented without the actual presence of Indigenous peoples. Museums and heritage institutions also need, in order to fulfill this recommendation, to prioritise Indigenous knowledges and perspectives over current museological standards of practice. There are times where embedding Indigenous perspectives will clash with what is considered to be a best practice, but institutions must be staunch in their commitment to change and must not be limited by best practices. Arapata Hakiwai noted this in his interview, saying that Te Papa isn't interested in following the standards of the field simply because they're the standards, but this could go even further in an Eighth Fire world. This means more Indigenous languages in exhibitions despite the higher word count on labels, it means exhibitions entirely in te reo Māori even if that's not accessible to English-speaking audiences. In order to operate in an Eighth Fire world, museums will need to acknowledge the issues with the Seventh Fire operations and museum practices they currently hold to, and commit to change. This does not mean that non-Indigenous stories, languages, or people should be excluded from museums, rather it is a rebalancing of the priorities of these institutions and taking steps toward becoming institutions where Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can work together as equals. The acknowledgement and celebration of difference will always be key in this and that is what the Eighth Fire seeks to promote.

Secondly, I recommend that museums put more resources into building a network with Indigenous cultural centres, friendship and community centres, etc. and educating Indigenous people on museum practice (broadly) in order to give back the care of objects/taonga and cultural memory. Perhaps museums in their current form will never work for Indigenous peoples in the ways we need them to, and instead what we need is to acknowledge that the colonial roots (and ongoing colonial practices) of large, national museums will always be unhealthy for Indigenous people. This could open a door for the creation of a new kind of museum, one that is run by and for Indigenous people and is spread out across nations or the globe. This sort of network of

knowledge could become not only a practice in relationship building nationally or even globally but would hand back the power over cultural narratives to Indigenous peoples. There would no longer be a need to fight for our voices to be heard in these spaces, as they would be built entirely by and for our voices as Indigenous peoples. Moreover, they would allow the return of Indigenous preservation practices – whether this meets museological conservation standards or not. That is to say, Indigenous people and communities in this sort of Eighth Fire museum network would be able to decide if objects are shared, how or if they are treated by conservators (because some objects are meant to decay), and other preservation practices might emerge. For example, in these networks of institutions we could reconstruct lost knowledge of practices around traditional arts and craft – with weavers teaching each other their techniques in a cross-country or cross-global network of weavers, this could also be true for beaders or canoe builders etc. who would, in this system have the resources and time to create these connections and revitalise cultural practices. More than that, this would allow for the expansion and continuation of Indigenous cultural practices – rather than preserving some historical version of our objects as examples of our practices. For me, as an Anishinaabe person, I would much rather learn the techniques and stories of my ancestors through experience than to see a canoe in a glass case at the CMH.

Finally, I recommend the adoption of forms of Indigenous traditional knowledge frameworks. This means setting up museums for Indigenous peoples of the future and centring ourselves in the knowledge that everything we do now is setting up a world for our descendants, and that doesn't necessarily mean the western practice of preservation. Indigenous traditional knowledge labels are one way of ensuring this, as they are essentially a form of intellectual property (IP) protection scheme that seeks to reimagine copyright laws (or some other forms of IP) in order to support and protect Indigenous knowledges (Anderson and Christen 2013). In a museum context, I would argue that this is a way to avoid tokenism – i.e., including Indigenous content just to say they did it, because with Indigenous traditional knowledge protection frameworks it means that there are people who essentially own the IP and can decide how and when certain stories and content are shared. This also, theoretically, eliminates issues around the inclusion of more controversial objects like wampum belts because there'd be protocol around labelling and the knowledges attached to wampum (though I suppose it still leaves questions around which Indigenous group gets to claim the IP rights to which wampum, etc.).

I see a world where this notion of Indigenous traditional knowledge as intellectual property being one where Indigenous voices are also protected, after all, what is voice if not a form of knowledge bound in everyday practices? If we have Indigenous people working to protect each other's knowledge and voices, then we also work to protect each other as people. This shouldn't fall only to Indigenous people, but it does mean that there could be a legal backing (in some form of legal system – in an Eighth Fire world this wouldn't necessarily need to be a colonial legal system) for Indigenous people to call on in instances where our voices and people are being made unsafe by colonial institutions.

Throughout this thesis the importance of relationships and relational museum practices has emerged as not only a theme but a guiding light toward an Eighth Fire museum practice. Those of us working in the field need to understand that without working together we cannot achieve this sort of idealised world. The clearest path, it seems, is through relationship building and through a museum practice which honours and continually strengthen those relationships. Relationships and kinship bonds, the importance of which is inbuilt in my Anishinaabe upbringing, are practices in giving and receiving and in gratitude and awareness of the world outside of ourselves. Robin Wall Kimmerer puts it eloquently in her book: “through reciprocity the gift is replenished. All of our flourishing is mutual” (2013, 166) — the relationships we can build are about flourishing together. We, as museum practitioners (and more broadly, as a society) need to be tied in all our differences in order to flourish and reach that Eighth Fire world.

My dreams as an Indigenous museum practitioner

Throughout the process of conducting fieldwork and writing this thesis I have begun to dream about the future of museums in different ways. The clarity I have gained through this process has allowed me to understand the active, change-making potential of dreaming and as such my own dreams feel relevant to this discussion. As an Indigenous museum practitioner myself, I have been shaped by my experiences of the field and I have been fortunate to speak with and be informed by a number of diverse Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) museum practitioners both from Canada and New Zealand. When I first arrived in New Zealand I, admittedly, had quite a limited capacity to dream of a bright future for museums. What I understand now is that the ability to dream, despite some of the disheartening experiences my participants and I have had as

Indigenous people working for colonial institutions, is what actually can lead us down a path to change. I have gone from dreaming of any Indigenous language appearing in museums to questioning whether museums *can* be decolonised, or if they should exist in their current form at all. Perhaps it is time to dream of a different kind of museum and museum practice altogether. In discussing the idea of dreaming and decolonisation in relation to museum practice, I actually seek to advocate for respected and powerful Indigenous museum practices — that not only incorporate Indigenous voices but also acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of those voices. This would change what happens back of house and front of house. This is my dream for the future.

As a start, I would like to see more Indigenous languages in Canadian national museums. Not just at the CMH but also at the other national museums from the Canadian Museum of Nature to the Canadian War Museum. I dream of Canadian museums where Indigenous people are hired more frequently, both in roles that are Indigenous-specific but also in roles that aren't. I dream of a framework that values traditional knowledge as much or more than Western education. I dream of the return of sacred objects, tradition, audio clips of language and ancestors.

In terms of my broad, “blue sky”, I see museums where, as Cairns mentioned, there are so many Indigenous people on staff that we are no longer the “other”. This does not mean that these imagined museums would be “Indigenous museums” that exclusively hire Indigenous people. For a number of reasons, I think exclusively hiring Indigenous people is the wrong path to walk. Firstly, because any sort of policy that limits who is worthy of a particular job based on ethnicity (even if that's an Indigenous ethnicity) is, in my opinion, discriminatory. Unless the job specifically pertains to a lived experience, for example if it is a curator of Algonquin histories it would only make sense to hire someone Algonquin, I dream of a future museum where anyone can apply for any role and feel safe in that choice. Secondly because Indigeneity, especially in the modern context and, I imagine, going forward is a nebulous concept and is so nuanced that it's nearly impossible to succinctly define. In the context of an Indigenous museum that only hires Indigenous people would diaspora Indigenous people be hired? Who qualifies as Indigenous? Thirdly, I argue that an exclusive “Indigenous museum” risks homogenising thousands of unique cultures and furthers colonial perspectives on Indigenous peoples rather than celebrating unique Indigenous cultures and peoples.

I dream of a new kind of museum, which I think of as Eighth Fire museum, where cultures have space to explore their histories, reclaim their knowledges but also to build futures. Spaces that are collaborative, non-exclusive, and welcoming. These museums would work in new ways that are flexible and no longer make Indigenous peoples sick. In these institutions there would be less emphasis on didactic storytelling and more on community building and collective growth.

So how do we get there? How do these dreams translate into a reality and not just an idealised future? Regardless of their relative “size” or broadness, all of the dreams of my participants are beautiful and valid and speak to the contexts in which each museum and each Indigenous museum practitioner lives and works. The question remains, how can we — the Seventh Generation — light the Eighth Fire and usher in a new way?

Epilogue

As I opened this thesis with a story, it feels only right to end it with one. This is the story of the Three Sisters, who teach us about working together and instead of competing for resources, finding ways to lift each other up and, through our relationships, acknowledge and celebrate differences. The Three Sisters are what corn, beans and squash are collectively called by several North American Indigenous groups (Kimmerer 2013). Biologically, they support each other's growth rather than competing for sunlight or water (Kimmerer 2013). Kimmerer writes:

There are many stories of how they came to be, but they all share the understanding of these plants as women, sisters. Some stories tell of a long winter when the people were dropping from hunger. Three beautiful women came to their dwellings on a snowy night. One was a tall woman dressed in all yellow, with long flowing hair. The second wore green, and the third was robed in orange. The three came inside to shelter by the fire. Food was scarce but the visiting strangers were fed generously, sharing in the little that the people had left. In gratitude for their generosity, the three sisters revealed their true identities – corn, beans, and squash – and gave themselves to the people in a bundle of seeds so that they might never go hungry again.

This story is a roadmap for those of us seeking to light the Eighth Fire in museums, through generosity, reciprocity and caring for our kin (a term used in its broadest sense here), we can find a world where Indigenous voices are lifted in museums, and we can change museum practice to be safer and healthier for Indigenous people.

Glossary

This glossary provides definitions of Algonquin Anishinaabe and Māori words and phrases that relate to the contents of this thesis. Definitions are edited to reflect the contexts in which each term is used in this thesis. Definitions are drawn from my personal knowledge of Algonquin Anishinaabe culture and the following sources:

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McCarthy, Conal. (2011) *Museums and Māori: Heritage professionals, Indigenous collections, current practices*. Wellington: Te Papa Press.

Algonquins of Pikwakanagan website: <https://www.algonquinsofpikwakanagan.com> (accessed June 2022)

Māori dictionary website: www.maoridictionary.com (accessed June 2022).

hapū – extended family group, sub-tribe or section of a large tribe, also word for ‘pregnancy’

iwi – tribe, nation, people,

kaitiaki – guardian, caretaker, word designating Māori curators or other museum staff

karakia – incantation, prayer

karanga – call of welcome to visitors in pōwhiri ceremony

kaumātua – elder or elders

kaupapa – plan, proposal, policy, reason

koha – present, gift

kōrero – say, speak, talk, conversation, discussion

mana – power, authority, prestige, respect, related to tapu (see definition below)

mana taonga – the power, authority and responsibility associated with the possession of taonga

mana whenua – the power, authority and responsibility from the possession of land, or territorial rights

manido – Anishinaabe term for the spiritual energy present in everything

marae – space in front of meeting house, can also refer generally to all the community facilities around the house

mātauranga – knowledge

mātauranga Māori – Māori knowledge, ontologies and cultural practices

pākehā – person of European descent

Papa, Papatūānuku – mother earth (goddess)

papa – land, earth, ground

pimàdjwowin – Algonquin way of life

pūtātara – a trumpet or horn constructed out of a conch shell

rangatahi – youth, young people

rangatira – chief

rangatiratanga – chieftainship, chiefly authority, power or sovereignty

tangata – adult person (sing.)

tāngata – people (pl.)

tangata whenua – people of the land, Indigenous people (Māori)

taonga – property, anything highly prized, highly prized object

tapu – sacred, special

tauīwi – foreigner, stranger

tikanga – customary rules or habits, set of beliefs associated with Māori cultural practices and procedures

tiriti – treaty (usually in reference to the Treaty of Waitangi or Te Tiriti o Waitangi)

toki – adze blade

tongarewa, tongarerewa – variety of greenstone, ear ornament, something precious (adjective)

tupuna/tipuna – ancestor (pl. tīpuna, tūpuna)

wāhine – woman

waka – canoe, vessel or container

whakapapa – genealogy

whānau – family

whanaungatanga – relationships

whakawhanaungatanga – process of establishing relationships, relating well to others

whare – house

whare taonga – museum

whenua – land

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