



COLLECTING

ORDERING

GOVERNING

ANTHROPOLOGY, MUSEUMS, AND LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

TONY BENNETT · FIONA CAMERON · NÉLIA DIAS · BEN DIBLEY

RODNEY HARRISON · IRA JACKNIS · CONAL MCCARTHY

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AM

Australian Museum

AMNH

American Museum of Natural History

ANZ

Archives New Zealand

ATL

Alexander Turnbull Library

ATP

Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires

AWMM

Auckland War Memorial Museum

BAAS

British Association for the Advancement of Science

BMER

Board of Maori Ethnological Research

DM

Dominion Museum

EFEO

École Française d'Extrême-Orient

HC

Hocken Library Archives and Manuscripts, Dunedin

IIEH

Institut Indochinois pour l'Étude de l'Homme

MET

Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro

MH

Musée de l'Homme

MH HAN

Musée de l'Homme, Hanoi

M-O

Mass-Observation

MOI

Ministry of Information

MOO

Mass Observation Online

NAA

National Archives Australia

NMV

National Museum Victoria

NTI

Northern Territory Invention

OM

Otago Museum

POC

Papuan Official Collection

TPA

Te Papa Archives

NOTE ON THE TEXT

We have, when using the general category of “indigenous,” used lowercase throughout this study, reserving the use of capitals for our reference to specific indigenous peoples: Indigenous Australians, Native Americans, Māori. We follow the convention in current New Zealand English of using macrons for Māori words to indicate a double vowel. However, Māori words in the titles of books, organizations, and so on and in historical archival sources and texts have been left in their original form. *Aotearoa* is the Māori name for the North Island of New Zealand. While the country remains formally “New Zealand,” we use the double appellation Aotearoa/New Zealand where appropriate to reflect increasing formal use of this term in bilingual references to national institutions and in other official state contexts.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER READERS are advised that this book contains names and photographs of deceased persons.

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of Western Sydney), and Paul Turnbull (University of Queensland). We acknowledge our debt to these individuals for their contributions to the workshop as well as to the special issues of the journals *History and Anthropology* and *Museum and Society* that we edited from the workshop proceedings. Our second event was a seminar, Reassembling the Material, hosted at Te Herenga Waka marae, Victoria University of Wellington. This brought together members of the research team with local and particularly indigenous Māori scholars: Arapata Hakiwai (Kaihautū/Māori director, Te Papa) and Paul Diamond (Māori curator, National Library of New Zealand). The third event was the symposium Museums, Collecting, Agency, held at, and jointly organized with, the Australian Museum, Sydney. The keynote speakers were Phil Gordon (Australian Museum) and Huhana Smith, Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga and Ngāti Tūkorehe, and the presenters included indigenous scholars from Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand and members of the research team. We benefited greatly from the opportunity these two occasions provided for advice from Australian and New Zealand indigenous intellectuals whose work has had a formative influence on museum policies in both countries.

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While the conception, development, and writing of this book have been a collective enterprise, this has also required a division of writing and editorial responses. Tony Bennett wrote the introduction and was the lead writer for chapter 1, in collaboration with Conal McCarthy. Ben Dibley was the lead writer for chapter 2, in collaboration with Rodney Harrison. Harrison was the lead writer for chapter 3, in collaboration Ben Dibley. Ira Jacknis was the lead writer for chapter 4, in collaboration with Tony Bennett. Fiona Cameron and Conal McCarthy jointly wrote chapter 5. Nélia Dias was the lead writer for chapter 6, in collaboration with Tony Bennett. Rodney Harrison was the lead writer for the conclusion, with additional input from Tony Bennett and

Conal McCarthy. Ben Dibley coordinated the compilation of the references. Conal McCarthy superintended the production of the figures and their accompanying captions across all the chapters and the conclusion. He also oversaw the process of obtaining the permissions and the artwork for the figures. Tony Bennett and Rodney Harrison were jointly responsible for the overall coordination of the book. Their work was enormously assisted by the extremely careful and detailed copy-editing input from Kim Miller. We therefore gratefully acknowledge the value of Kim's contribution in this regard.

SOME OF THE CHAPTERS DRAW on material previously published elsewhere, although in all cases this has been substantially edited and revised in the form in which it appears in the present volume.

Chapter 1 draws on material first published as Tony Bennett, Ben Dibley, and Rodney Harrison, "Introduction: Anthropology, Collecting and Colonial Governmentalities," special issue, *History and Anthropology* 25, no. 2 (2014): 137–49; and Tony Bennett, "Liberal Government and the Practical History of Anthropology," *History and Anthropology* 25, no. 2 (2014): 150–70. Chapter 2 draws on material first published as Ben Dibley, "Assembling an Anthropological Actor: Anthropological Assemblage and Colonial Government in Papua," *History and Anthropology* 25, no. 2 (2014): 263–79. Chapter 3 draws on material first published as Rodney Harrison, "Observing, Collecting and Governing 'Ourselves' and 'Others': Mass-Observation's Fieldwork *Agencements*," *History and Anthropology* 25, no. 2 (2014): 227–45; and Ben Dibley and Michelle Kelly, "Morale and Mass-Observation: Governing the Affective Atmosphere on the Home-Front," *Museum and Society* 13, no. 1 (2015): 22–41. Chapter 4 draws on Ira Jacknis, "'America Is Our Field': Anthropological Regionalism at the American Museum of Natural History, 1895–1945," *Museum and Society* 13, no. 1 (2015): 52–71; and Tony Bennett, "Cultural Studies and the Culture Concept," *Cultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (2015): 546–68. Chapter 5 includes material first published as Fiona Ruth Cameron, "From 'Dead Things' to Immutable, Combinable Mobiles: H.D. Skinner, the Otago Museum and University and the Governance of Māori Populations," *History and Anthropology* 25, no. 2 (2014): 208–26; Fiona Ruth Cameron and Conal McCarthy, "Two Anthropological Assemblages: New Zealand Museums, Native Policy, and Māori 'Culture Areas' and 'Adaptation,'" *Museum and Society* 13, no. 1 (2015): 88–106; Conal McCarthy, "'Empirical Anthropologists Advocating Cultural Adjustments': The Anthropological Governance of Āpirana Ngata and the Native Affairs Department," *History and Anthropology* 25, no.

2 (2014): 280–95; and Conal McCarthy, “To Foster and Encourage the Study and Practice of Māori Arts and Crafts: Indigenous Material Culture, Colonial Culture and Museums in New Zealand,” in *Craft and Community: The Material Culture of Place and Politics, 19th–20th Century*, edited by Janice Helland, Beverly Lemire, and Alena Buis (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2014b), 59–82. Chapter 6 includes material first published as Nélia Dias, “Rivet’s Mission in Colonial Indochina (1931–1932) or the Failure to Create an Ethnographic Museum,” *History and Anthropology* 25, no. 2 (2014): 189–207; and Nélia Dias, “From French Indochina to Paris and Back Again: The Circulation of Objects, People, and Information, 1900–1932,” *Museum and Society* 13, no. 1 (2015): 7–21. It also draws on “Collecting, Instructing, Governing: Fields, Publics, Milieus,” chapter 3 of Tony Bennett, *Making Culture, Changing Society* (London: Routledge, 2013).

INTRODUCTION

The concerns of this study are located at the intersections of museum studies and the history of anthropology. Our primary interest with regard to the former focuses on the varied ways in which museums act on social worlds. These include, but are not limited to, their exhibition practices, which we consider alongside the ways in which museums obtain and order their collections. Our interests relating to the latter concern how its practices have been shaped by its relations to mechanisms for the governance of populations. We bring these two sets of questions together to examine the connections between museums and anthropology associated with the articulation of a new set of relations between the practices of collecting, ordering, and governing that characterized the development of anthropological fieldwork in the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.

We examine these practices through a set of case studies that illustrate the different social and governmental logics underlying their interconnections in different sociohistorical contexts. The historical horizon encompassed by these case studies stretches from the Torres Strait Island expeditions led by Alfred Cort Haddon in the 1880s and 1890s through to the fieldwork missions of the Musée de l'Homme (MH) in the 1930s and the influence of the Boasian culture concept on the development of American assimilationist policies in the 1930s and 1940s. We take in, en route, the fieldwork expeditions of Baldwin Spencer and Frank Gillen to Central Australia; the varied versions of Māori culture informing a connected set of collecting, ordering, and governing practices in early twentieth-century Aotearoa/New Zealand; and the role of the Papuan Official Collection established by Hubert Murray in Papua. If this last case stretches our definition of museums beyond its conventional limits, the same is true of our inclusion of Mass-Observation (M-O) among our case studies. This was, however, a project whose collecting practices partly derived from and resonated with anthropological fieldwork,

while its conception as an “anthropology of ourselves” was echoed in the projects of the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires, which brought the methods developed by the MH in its overseas fieldwork missions to bear on the study of France’s rural populations. The role of M-O in the governance of morale in wartime Britain was also partly shaped by its interactions with the wartime mobilization of anthropology in the United States.

Our purpose, however, is not to provide a comprehensive comparative analysis of the relations among museums (or similar collections), anthropology, and governing practices across these different case studies. That said, we have been surprised at the extent to which the literature available on these matters has rarely ranged across national boundaries. We therefore highlight those similarities and differences among our case studies that are most striking from the point of view of our lines of inquiry. We also stress some little-noted connections among them, particularly those bearing on the role that the Boasian culture concept played in the political projects of Māori intellectuals in the 1920s and 1930s and into the early 1940s. We are also aware that the traditions we examine do not exhaust the course of early twentieth-century anthropological fieldwork. There is, most obviously, the parallel work of Bronislaw Malinowski in Britain and Adolf Bastian in Germany, whose work, through its influence on Franz Boas, helped to shape the trajectories of American anthropology. While we draw on these where they touch on our concerns, we do not consider them in any detail.

We should also note that our focus on early twentieth-century fieldwork traditions does not imply acceptance of an unbridgeable divide between the pre- and postfieldwork moments in the historical development of anthropology. This aspect of the discipline’s early twentieth-century professional rhetoric has since been called into question on numerous grounds that we shall review in due course. Nonetheless, the development of fieldwork practices at this time did have a significant impact on what was gathered from different sites of anthropological collection, on how it was collected, and on how such collections were relayed to centers of calculation. These practices also constituted, in the figure of the field-worker, a new kind of authority that called earlier forms of anthropological authority—notably that of the armchair savant—into question. We are, however, wary of the further suggestion, predicated on the strength of the connection between armchair anthropology and the so-called museum phase of anthropology, that the early twentieth-century development of anthropological fieldwork brought about a severance of this connection to the museum as anthropologists increasingly took up positions in a developing university system.

The American case represents perhaps the clearest shift in this direction. Boas is the key figure here. His departure from the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in 1905, his critique of the comparative method for museum displays advocated by Otis T. Mason, and his focus on postgraduate training during his years at Columbia: all of these make him the emblematic figure for those narratives that argue that by the early twentieth century anthropology had abandoned the museum for the university. Such accounts neglect the continuing commitment to fieldwork shown by Clark Wissler, Boas's successor at the AMNH. Boas's case was also far from typical internationally: the MH, for example, was the primary institutional site for French fieldwork in the 1930s; the expeditions of Spencer and Gillen set off from and returned to the National Museum of Victoria; and in New Zealand the fieldwork of Thomas Cheeseman, Henry Devenish Skinner, Āpirana Ngata, and Peter Buck (Te Rangihīroa) depended on their relations to, respectively, the Auckland, Otago, and Dominion Museums. A part of what was involved in the Australian and New Zealand cases was the displacement of the earlier flow of indigenous materials from settler-colonial contexts to London and other metropolitan centers as in situ museums became the primary sites for the collection of such materials and for the exercise of more local forms of anthropological authority.

However, if museums remained important sites for the exercise of new forms of authority, their roles in this regard also changed significantly. The connections between anthropological and natural history collections loosened; the hold of evolutionary assumptions on museum displays weakened relative to those stressing the distinguishing properties of indigenous cultures; the influence of physical anthropology declined without entirely disappearing; the increasing attention given to the collection of stories, myths, and grammars as well as phonographic recordings and films, relative to material objects and anthropometric measurements, transformed museum collections and their relations to other archives; the connections between museums and practices of colonial governance became increasingly important, while the growing popularity of "anthropology at home" projects also embroiled ethnographic museums in debates and practices directed toward the governance of metropolitan populations. The role of the field-worker as a new point of connection between colonizing and indigenous worlds also opened up new challenges and prospects for indigenous agency operating through these new forms of contact.

Our object of inquiry, then, is constituted by the connections between the processes of collecting, ordering, and governing as these were articulated

across the relations between the varied sites of collection, the centers of calculation, and the practices of a range of governmental agencies involved in the management of colonized, metropolitan, and settler populations. We explore these processes by drawing on and developing the insights suggested by three related traditions of inquiry. We approach processes of *collecting* through the concept of fieldwork *agencements*, which we derive from post-Deleuzian assemblage theory and use to analyze the agency of human and non-human actors in different sites of collection and in the passage of things, texts, and data from those sites of collection to centers of calculation. We approach processes of *ordering* by drawing on the approaches to centers of calculation developed in the Latourian tradition of science studies and on the “archival turn” that has characterized recent revisionist approaches to the histories of anthropology and other collecting practices. A good deal of our attention here will focus on the ordering practices of museums and the material technologies—means of accessioning, index and file cards, and exhibition practices—through which these operated. We approach processes of *governing* through the optic of Michel Foucault’s account of liberal government as a set of knowledge practices and technologies that work through the forms of freedom they organize. This provides a means of engaging with anthropology as a “liberal discipline” that has worked through its differential distribution of capacities for freedom across varied populations. Its adjudications in these regards have been crucial in distinguishing ways of governing that operate through liberal forms of subjecthood in relation to some populations and issues while favoring discriminatory biopolitical approaches in other contexts. In developing this approach, we pay particular attention to the “transactional realities” through which anthropology’s role in governmental practices was organized. We borrow this term from Foucault to refer to the concepts and technologies that epistemological authorities produce and through which their forms of action on social worlds are mediated. In the case of the cultural disciplines, including anthropology, we interpret such transactional realities—of race, culture, morale, and tradition, for example—as the “working surfaces on the social” through which those disciplines engaged with the management of populations.

We offer a fuller elaboration of how we interpret and apply these concepts and the traditions of inquiry from which they derive in chapter 1. Our main concern in that chapter is, however, to give a more concrete sense of how the relationships between the processes of collecting, ordering, and governing operate across our case studies. We do so by means of four vignettes organized around emblematic museum exhibits: Spencer’s display connecting the development of the Aboriginal throwing stick to that of the boomerang at

the National Museum of Victoria, Boas's life group in the Hall of Northwest Coast Indians at the AMNH, the introductory vitrine in the Senegal section of the Sub-Saharan Africa Hall at the MH, and two exhibits in Wellington's Dominion Museum in 1936 that illustrate different interpretations of "the Maori as he was" and of how he or she is or should be. We show how these exhibits were informed by specific processes of collecting, how they subjected the materials they brought together to distinctive kinds of ordering, and how they formed a part of processes of governing informed by particular governmental rationalities: that is, particular combinations of the ends of governing, the means by which these should be pursued, and their distribution across varied populations.

We then look more closely at the social and historical contexts for each of our case studies. We draw on assemblage theory to engage with the ways in which, in their early twentieth-century forms, anthropological museums operated at the intersections of different sociomaterial networks: those connecting them to the public spheres of the major metropolitan powers, those linking them to the institutions and practices of colonial administration, and those constituting the relations among the museum, the field, and the university. We also consider the different disciplinary connections that anthropology entered into as its affiliations with natural history loosened: the importance of archaeology in the United States compared to its virtual absence in Australia, for example, and anthropology's relations to differently configured traditions of folklore studies in France, Britain, and the United States. The chapter then reviews the colonial formations that provided the settings for anthropological practices in different national contexts. All of our case studies are shaped by the end of the conquest period of colonialism and, in the settler contexts of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, the cessation of warlike relations across colonial frontiers and the movement toward more regularized forms of exchange between colonizers and colonized. The French case reflects a different dynamic in being shaped by the extractive logic of France's overseas colonies. We focus particularly on the complex ways in which the governmental rationalities in evidence across our case studies were informed by different articulations of the relations between liberal and biopolitical forms of government.

Our second chapter develops this last line of argument further by exploring the contrasting rationalities for the governance of indigenous populations that were developed in the Australian-administered territories of Papua and the Northern Territory. Both modalities of rule were in operation in these territories but in rather different combinations. Our points of

departure for broaching these questions are the ethnographic collections associated with two figures central to Australian “native policy”: the anthropologist, museum director, and intermittent colonial administrator Baldwin Spencer, and the lawyer, anthropological patron, and long-serving lieutenant governor of Papua Hubert Murray. Spencer’s notion of race helped to shape a biopolitics of assimilation whereby the indigene was to be absorbed into the national population through a program of bio-cultural “up-lift” or “whitening” through which subsequent generations would reach the threshold of liberal subjecthood. By contrast, Murray’s notion of “native culture” informed a biopolitics of protection to preserve the health and wealth of native populations and so sustain an indigenous economy independent from wage labor. This involved programs of sanitation, education, and so on by which “the better brown men”—candidates for self-improvement—would be distinguished from the unredeemable savages, who would be left to die out.

Chapter 3 focuses on M-O’s project of an “anthropology of ourselves.” It argues that M-O’s fieldwork practices were distinctive in the ways in which they brought together ethnographic methods of collecting and assembling (largely, but not exclusively, drawn from colonial anthropological contexts) with new mechanisms of collective self-watching. Drawing on arguments relating oligoptic visual economies to liberal technologies of government, we show how M-O was implicated in the development of the notion of “the mass,” giving this a distinctive interpretation as a conception of the population as self-knowing and self-regulating. We also show how the concept of civilian morale, as the barometer by which the mood of the mass might be measured, acted as an example of the practical application of an “anthropology of ourselves” that aimed to manipulate the conduct of the population by acting on its milieus. What was most innovative about M-O was the way in which it emphasized new, collectivized forms of self-knowledge that sought to make the population self-governing. At the same time, M-O’s practices had a biopolitical register that, in seeking to influence the affective dimension of the population, targeted the psychocorporeality of the masses as a new surface of social management.

Chapter 4 follows the political career of the culture concept, which was initially elaborated by Boas but then subjected to reinterpretation—and to varied forms of practical use—by his successors. We focus particularly on the role played by the concept of culture areas in relation to the fieldwork missions organized by the AMNH. While these were initially organized by Boas and focused on the Northwest Coast, we look more particularly at the American Plains expeditions organized by Clark Wissler, showing how he maintained and developed the relativistic thrust of Boasian anthropology

in spite of the constraints imposed by the museum's eugenicist president, Henry Fairfield Osborn, and his own eugenic sympathies. For Wissler, as for Boas, culture areas were not essentialist collections of peoples and cultures but relativistic constructions: spatial arrays that expressed historical encounters and developments. The ordering of anthropological materials by culture areas became the basic rationale for ordering the AMNH's public galleries, contributing significantly to the elaboration of the culture concept, which progressively displaced eugenic conceptions of population in providing an alternative basis for programs of cultural assimilation. Other students of Boas, notably Alfred Kroeber and Ruth Benedict, extended culture-area theory from a technique of museum ordering into broader theories of cultural patterning. We consider how these qualities of the culture concept informed white nativist conceptions according to which American society would creatively transform itself by absorbing immigrant cultures in an assimilationist logic focused on the relations between different periods of European migration at the expense of African Americans and Native Americans.

Chapter 5 investigates the connections between the processes of collecting, ordering, and governing in Aotearoa/New Zealand in relation to the rationalities of rule that emerged between the 1900s and 1945. These were organized around the notion of "the Maori as he was," a concept that referenced the preservation of pre-European Māori life and the construction of a classic Māori cultural tradition. In its varied career, this notion articulated a changing set of governmental rationalities ranging from liberal government practices detailing the freedoms and limits of the Māori population to the biopolitical governance of Māori bodies. Indigenous actors were closely involved in these intertwined histories of museums, fieldwork, and colonial government. We show how the notion of "the Maori as he was," in the first instance, was linked to salvage/memorial and racial assimilationist projects and, subsequently, to Wissler's notion of culture areas. This notion, which was also shaped by the influence of the Boasian culture concept, became a lever for developing Māori potential for liberal subjecthood within an emerging nation. These changing rationales are examined through four sets of fieldwork-museum relations that offer different takes on the project of preserving "the Maori as he was" in order to shape him or equip Māori to shape themselves as they ought to be.

Chapter 6 examines the governmental deployments of anthropology both "at home and away" in Greater France as represented by the interwar fieldwork and exhibition practices of the MH. Whereas the critical literature on the MH has mostly focused on its relations to France's West African colonies, we concentrate on its fieldwork missions in former French Indochina, and

on the creation of a satellite institution, the Musée de l'Homme Hanoi. Assessments of the role played by the MH in processes of governing have varied from seeing it as a key part of a developing institutional complex of colonial governance to interpreting it as relatively detached from colonizing processes. By engaging with these debates through the Indochinese case, where museums and civic institutions coexisted with native political institutions, we examine the different logics of government at work in metropolitan and colonial contexts. At the MH in Paris the Indochinese collections were displayed for the metropolitan public in accordance with the principles of a new humanistic universalism that viewed the world as made up of different, but ostensibly equal, racial types and cultures. At the Hanoi museum such collections were primarily addressed to administrators, tourists, and colonial personnel, differentiating races in terms of their degree of development in ways that connected with local imperatives of governance by acting on the milieus conditioning ways of life. We also look at how the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires translated the principles of scientific colonialism into programs for managing the populations of regional France. The currency of *les petites patries* proved particularly important in this respect, designating regional homelands as key sites for the management of identities in both France and Indochina.

We conclude by reviewing the light that our organizing themes of collecting, ordering, and governing have thrown on the relationships between anthropology and practices of social governance in the first half of the twentieth century. We then explore more recent historical and contemporary concerns in which the legacies of this period are evident. We look at how these paved the way for postwar forms of multicultural governance by (to different degrees) displacing hierarchical conceptions of race in favor of more plural and cultural conceptions of difference. We also discuss the emergence of the concept of “indigeneity” as a transnational actor, and its influence on the subsequent indigenization of museum practices, especially in settler colonies. The ongoing significance of the culture-area concept in providing templates for the development of Aboriginal land councils in Australia and of Māori social governance structures in Aotearoa/New Zealand is also considered. We look finally at how the divisions between populations produced by colonial governmental rationalities have continued to inform the segmentations of populations within settler-colonial contexts. We look particularly at the contested history of Australia's Northern Territory Intervention, in which measures relating to law enforcement, land tenure, and welfare provision have been targeted at specific Northern Territory Aboriginal communities judged to lack the capacities required for participation in a liberal political community.