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IF YOU SING ME A LULLABY I WILL SING YOU A SONG ABOUT WAR

Exhibition Report presented in partial fulfillment
for the degree of Master of Maori Visual Art 2013

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Acknowledgement

I would like to dedicate this to my brother Steven and my father Afa Cocker, my brother whose early death had a profound effect on my life and my father who always believed in me. I would also like to thank my supervisors Robert Jahnke and Rachael Rakena.

Abstract

I grew up in a crack between cultures that broadened briefly with the acceptance of mixed marriages only to shrink back into a more elaborate and toxic packaging ready for the free market.

No apologies, no paradoxes, just blatant contradictions, and perfect copies, a world of simulated realities and parasitic realty's, just like England's Dickensian¹ past, we wallow in squalor, conflicted, for what exactly are we buying into when we are buying, and who do we become?

This exhibition report explores the thinking behind my Masters exhibition "if you sing me a lullaby I will sing you a song about war." It is specifically about the English colonisation of the Highlands and the Pacific and relates directly to my own family story. It highlights the disconnecting effects of colonisation on the psyche of the individual and the wider ethnic groups.

¹ Cook & Wharton, 2014; "The Pocket Oxford Dictionary," 1996, p. 238

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Introduction

This Exhibition Report explores the physical, historical and psychological aspects of my exhibition: *If you sing me a lullaby I will sing you a song about war*.

While I understand that many people have colonised and been colonised, this report focuses specifically on the English colonisation of the Pacific and the Scottish Highlands. Through these events it will also explore Christianity and science as tools to achieve a certain level of subjugation within colonised people. This report also looks into the importance of the social context of England at the time of colonisation, its impact and outcome on who we have become and the importance of Captain Cook's work and influence on this process.

These include the importance of the political and social context of England at the time of its colonial expansion, the relevance of the Industrial Revolution, and the Age of Enlightenment, to the English psyche at the time they colonised the Pacific. My own family history is an important underlying narrative for this exhibition, the different ethnicities of my parents and consequently their different world views inform the sense of dis-location and location of identity and the understandings this perspective brings that can come from being of mixed blood. The significance of context is emphasised and argued through feminist theory (Dietz, 1987, pp. 1 - 24) though I am not coming from a feminist perspective.²

I will begin with some writing about the exhibition and its installation in Palmerston North.

² I am not coming from a feminist perspective because feminism has not been part of my reading or study with this exegesis or exhibition report. Julia Kristeva whose theories Kelly Oliver's book *The Colonisation of Psychic Space* is unpacking and whom I am referencing vicariously through Kelly Oliver, has never considered herself a feminist, so her theories are not feminist theories.