that Caravaggio modelled his *Death of the Virgin* (1604–1606) on a dead prostitute, and draws her body into the orbit of other exemplary corpses circulating in the city's cultural imagination, such as the miraculously preserved Saint Cecilia and the recently deceased Filippo Neri. What emerges in each of these examples is the fragility of the bodies concerned; concerted attempts to bring epistemological coherence and authenticity to these corpses were repeatedly frustrated in a search for the corporeal integrity that Caravaggio's canvasses would ultimately deny.

The bloated flesh of Caravaggio's *Madonna* with which Olson concludes his study ruptures the prototypical relationship between signifier and signified that constituted the basis for Counter-Reformation justifications of the image. Caravaggio's 'lesson in perishable materiality' inadequately reflected the life-cycle of the Virgin's salvation. Like the stubbornly incomplete anatomy of Saint Matthew, the dead Virgin once more highlights the profound difficulties involved in effective religious representation during this period. Olson's combination of close visual analysis, theoretical speculation and a virtuoso command of sources leads him to ask compelling new questions on familiar territory. As a serious attempt to understand exactly how Caravaggio's work operated in the complex material culture of Counter-Reformation Rome, Olson's book is an indispensable new departure in post-Tridentine scholarship.

Conor Kissane

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'Artist and Empire: Facing Britain's Imperial Past', Tate Britain, London, 25 November 2015 – 10 April 2016. Catalogue: Eds Alison Smith, David Blayney Brown and Carol Jacobi, Tate Publishing, London, 2015, 256 pages, paperback, ISBN 9781849763592, £29.99.

The face-to-face encounter is very much of the essence in Tate Britain's exhibition, 'Artist and Empire', not simply in how the objects confront the viewer, but in how they confront and problematize each other. These confrontations are by no means reduced to binary oppositions between, say, past and present or colonist and colonized. Rather in its display of the anachronistic entanglements implicit in all forms of cultural encounter, the exhibition goes some way to endorse Georges Didi-Huberman's critique of 'euchronistic' connections, proving that 'contemporaries often fail to understand one another any better than individuals who are separated in time.'[1] While the curators' decision to include recent works in its final section, 'Out of Empire', could be read as a retreat – being 'out' of it suggesting the prospect of escape – confining the time of Empire to a historical period in this way only partially diminishes the sense of temporal discordance. Indeed, much effort has been made in confounding chronological structures of display and highlighting the subversive potentialities of the exhibition's objects.

This is subtly evinced in the 'Face to Face' section. Here we encounter a series of portraits of Pacific islanders, including works by three artists who accompanied Captain Cook on his voyages: Sydney Parkinson's *A Man from New Zealand* (1769), William

Hodges's *Cascade Cove, Dusky Bay* (1775) and John Webber's *Poedua, the Daughter of Orio* (1784). Referencing Cook's and Johann Reinhold Forster's accounts of the Maori family group depicted in *Cascade Cove*, Carol Jacobi critiques Hodges's choice of situating them within a setting familiarly associated with the rhetoric of the Sublime.[2] From the outset then, these images of encounter demonstrate the practice of locating non-European people into Western aesthetic realms; the same holds true, though from a classicizing perspective, in Parkinson's *A Man from New Zealand*, a profile view reminiscent of medallion portraits of Roman emperors.

Out of the three, it is perhaps the incongruously entangled figure of Poedua who stands most in need of extrication. The real Poedua, whom Webber drew in 1777, far from the tropical forest where we see her situated in the painting, was actually held captive on board the *Resolution*. She was offered as a ransom to her father, Orio, the island's chief, for the return of certain crewmembers who had voluntarily absconded. The classical allusions are obvious; wrought from the actuality of Poedua's predicament, Webber presents the Society Islander as a Venus. Such comparisons were commonplace in eighteenth-century accounts of Tahiti and its surrounding islands, though the period also saw a shift towards new taxonomies, replacing classical tropes, for example, with the theory that historical distance could be equated to geographical distance. For some eighteenth-century viewers, therefore, it was an earlier version of themselves they saw in the figure of Poedua, albeit articulated in archetypically classical terms. These anachronistic tactics functioned as a means of asserting power, diluting the threat of genuine difference within an aesthetically coded system of social, cultural and temporal elisions that served to endorse the hegemonic order. That such re-contextualizations might function as a precursive act, anticipating the actual, physical removal of people from their own land and the destruction of their histories is a point the exhibition acknowledges.

The traumatic realities of Empire – including the enforced relocations of millions of people – is alluded to in various ways. Disrupting the temporality of the triad of images of Cook's voyages, for example, is a photograph of *A Man from Malaita in Fiji* (late nineteenth century), which hangs between Parkinson's and Webber's portraits, both painted a century earlier. The inclusion of the photograph is effective, for whilst acknowledging the plural temporalities operating within notions of Empire, the viewer is also reminded that photography is no more objectively reportage and no less attentive to aesthetic pleasure than the paintings that surround it. The young man sits, semi-naked, his skin oiled, dressed in 'traditional' costume, looking out at the viewer; that he was in reality an indentured worker probably brought by force to labour on Fijian plantations is nowhere in evidence. Like Poedua, trapped on the *Resolution*, his history has been erased.

By such means, the exhibition encourages the viewer to question the aesthetic strategies of these British artists. Alternatively, while acknowledging the scarcity of non-British records to provide counter-narratives, displays of ethnographic objects attempt to cross-cut discussions surrounding context and de-contextualization. As Nicholas Thomas maintains, although the impact of these objects were designed to be efficacious elsewhere, they are nevertheless still effective here. The *Tekoteko* (Maori gable ornament;

before 1834) continues 'to empower locals and intimidate strangers.'[3] Similarly, though, we cannot bypass the intentions, often profoundly oppressive, of any of these objects. According to Paul Gilroy, in his foreword to the catalogue, rather than engendering feelings of entrapment, the attitude of detailed engagement which the exhibition prompts us to adopt offers a 'liberating alternative to the nostalgia and melancholia' that confounds our understanding of what Empire should mean to us today.[4] If, by 'liberating', he means that these new critical dynamics may somehow free us from the complex and troubled legacies of Empire, that would be wishful thinking indeed.

1 Georges Didi-Huberman, 'Before the Image, Before Time: The Sovereignty of Anachronism', in Claire Farago and Robert Zwijnenberg (eds), *Compelling Visuality: The Work of Art in and out of History*, Minnesota, 2003, p. 37.
2 Carol Jacobi, 'Face to Face', in Alison Smith, David Blayney Brown and Carol Jacobi (eds), *Artist and Empire: Facing Britain's Imperial Past*, London, 2015, p. 160.
3 Nicholas Thomas, 'Artefacts of Encounter: Rethinking Objects and Collections', unpublished conference paper presented at 'Artist and Empire: New Dynamics 1790 to the present day', Tate Britain, 24 November 2015.
4 Paul Gilroy, 'Foreword', in Alison Smith, David Blayney Brown and Carol Jacobi (eds), op. cit., p. 8.

Ben Pollitt

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'Celts: Art and Identity', British Museum, London, 24 September 2015 – 31 January 2016. Catalogue: Eds Julia Farley and Fraser Hunter, British Museum Press, London, 2015, 304 pages, paperback, ISBN 9780714128368, £25.00.

'Celts: Art and Identity' begins with a note of caution. Very few motifs are as evocative of a single people, or somehow as immediate and familiar, as the twists, torcs and triskeles splayed across the rooms that follow. And yet, we are told, their makers — whose identity this exhibition promises to trace — were definitely not Celtic. Before being annexed to a sentimental wave of nineteenth-century antiquarianism, the 'Celt' — like the 'Tory', the 'Suffragette' and the 'Impressionist' — had begun life as a term of antagonism. The antique appellative *keltoi* emerged as a Greek exonym and was probably used somewhat indiscriminately, like its cognate *barbaros* (barbarian), to describe and disparage any number of Others living outside of the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean. It might seem pedantic to point out that no one but the Romans referred to the 'Greeks' (*Graeci*) as such either. But perhaps therein lies the rub: no one disputes the Greek sense of identity. In truth, the people we now call the 'Celts' were neither homogenous (a charge levelled by archaeologists many times over) nor can they be consigned to a single place, period or power. And so, not for the first time, the lines of Celtic identity are being challenged. Refreshingly, however, curators Rosie Weetch and Julia Farley seem to be in no rush to redraw any of them.

The second room inaugurates a grand pageant spanning most of the Continent, close to three millennia, dozens of national and international loans and more than two hundred remarkable objects. The first, the Holzgerlingen statue (third century BC), an enormous and imposing monolith — a kind of sandstone chaperon — marshals the oldest treasures from Iron Age Hallstatt and La Tène. There is very little speculation about this ancient figure. It is thus, however,