# Audio file

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# Transcript

NJ

Welcome to this month's research and Focus Podcast from the Faculty of Humanities Social Sciences here at the University of Liverpool. My name is Nick Jones. I'm part of the Research and Impact team at the Faculty. Today I'm very pleased to be joined by Doctor Mary Booth, Programme Manager for the Centre for the Study of International Slavery. Today, Mary will be telling us all about her work at the Centre and her wide research interests, including the study of interpretation and memorialisation techniques surrounding the representation of historic atrocities. So Mary, thank you very much for joining us, just by way of a quick introduction. I wonder if you could just give us a quick rundown of your academic background and career so far and what brought you to the University of Liverpool.

MB

Definitely yes. Thank you for having me. I'm so, as you can tell from my accent, I'm native to the Liverpool area.

NJ

I could tell, I knew you were from around here somewhere!

MB

I actually come from Los Angeles, CA. I've been out in the UK for about 8 years now, so my academic career stems in the US, so I did my undergraduate degree in a beach city right outside of Los Angeles called Long Beach. I did a degree in history with a minor in mathematics because you know those two always link up quite seamlessly and during my undergraduate degree, I became really invested and interested in museology. Specifically, how particular histories are represented depending on kind of the background of it? Is it a contested history? Is it one that is widely represented and often done in a very similar way. So I worked at the Natural History Museum in Los Angeles for a minute. That was interesting. I did realise, though, that my biology and dinosaur knowledge was not up to par. And so then I I transferred to the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, and that was an extremely eye-opening experience for me, learning from professionals in the field, getting to interact with people from all different backgrounds, Holocaust survivors and hear their story and hear how, how history in museums is far more than just history. It's memory. It's personal and it can, it can move people, and and activate, activate communities for positive action. So I thought that was it was a really life changing experience for me. So when I finished my undergraduate degree, I came out to the UK. I did a year up in Scotland where I got a Masters degree in museum and gallery studies. I continued to work in museums up there. I worked at the Frigate Unicorn in Dundee for a little while. And then I and during my degree at University of Saint Andrews is when I started to academically explore memorialization and commemorative techniques. And so my first Masters thesis was about the commemoration of the Easter Rising. It was a 100th commemoration in 2016. So looking at how different areas depending on their background depending on the perception they come from. So I looked at Dublin and Belfast, how they remembered this one instance in drastically different ways, and I thought that was absolutely fascinating. And so when I came down to Manchester, which is where I did my second masters in history, as well as my PhD, I wanted to continue to look at how specific memories and histories are represented in museums. And I had. I always kind of had a passion and an interest in slavery. I was, I studied African American studies in the US so I when I went to the University of Manchester, I explored that even further. So. So, and that's also what introduced me to Liverpool. My MA thesis at the University of Manchester was on the evolution of slavery representation at the Merseyside Maritime Museum and its creation of the International Slavery Museum that we know today. I followed the evolutionary trends from when slavery was just mentioned on one little panel in the museum in the 1980s to its expanse into first ‘The against Human dignity’ exhibition in the basement and then growth to the International Slavery Museum in 2007 and how not only the spatial awareness changed of the topic. How just the memory and the representation of it changed and why? What were the reasons that certain curatorial decisions were made? And that's always fascinated me, because you can look and see how different representations and conversations evolve, but why do they evolve? What are the reasons behind that and so that was when I that was a aspect of the study that I found extremely fascinating. So I took that and I expanded it from my doctoral thesis. So my doctoral thesis looked as had to come back to my American roots. So I did a transnational comparative study between privately managed heritage sites so townhouses and and historic houses of estates in the UK and plantations in the US. And I studied not only what how the site functioned in in the world of slavery, so was it an act of plantation? What is? Was it a site of empire for absentee ownership? So how did it, how did it connect with slavery and what financial benefits did the site did the family see from from enslavement? But also when it transitioned from a from a personally, a privately owned site to one of national heritage, when that initial transition happened, what was the the narrative there and how has that evolved? Since it's open to the public whether that be 20-30 years, whether that be two centuries in some ways, so that's something I've always found really fascinating. And then when I finished my degree, I applied for the job at Liverpool and. Liverpool is an absolutely fascinating city. It's one of the reasons I was interested in, of course, is its connection to this history. So. I know I'm talking to you, I'm preaching to the choir, but Liverpool was intrinsically involved in the slave trade during the 18th. It was during the 18th century Liverpool was Britain's main slaving port. Between 1700 and 1807, ships from Liverpool carried about 1.5 million Africans across the Atlantic into slavery. So it's a huge it's a huge aspect. It's the this history is ingrained in this city. It was a small the city was a small, small little port town before kind of the investment to slavery and the growth from that finances became really ingrained in it. So. So, so because of my Masters's work studying not only the museum, but having the opportunity to work in a thriving and amazing city such as Liverpool, that has such a darker history, but has communities and has people involved that are really pushing that history to become common knowledge. And that was one thing that really excited me about working in Liverpool.

NJ

Interesting. You talked there about buildings or institutions moving from private into like more kind of public kind of sately home type things as a middle-aged person, I'm now a member of the National Trust and we recently visited Corey Bank Mill out by Manchester, obviously that's cotton mill and a lot of the stuff that talks about there is, you know, that the situation that the Lancashire workers were in, but it also does mention where that cotton came from, so there was, in the interpretation moments of it, there was talking about. You know the guy who owned and also owned some slaves and. That they they produced it. So it was interesting to see that that was not glossed over and nor was it that the main focus, but it was they had Ledger books about, you know, people they owned and things like that. So yeah, interesting to see that going on there. In the researcher in focus blog that you sent us and you talk about the crossover between history and heritage and often that being sometimes contested terrain. Could you explain the difference between the two to a lay person such as myself, and perhaps explain what these areas of conflict may be?

MB

So from my opinion, history is a study of the past. It's very cut and dry. You you study an instance of the past, it could be different interpretations of it. But as a researcher you study it, you take in primary and secondary sources to better understand it and you can provide a contemporary lens at which to look at it. That is history in its most generic form. Heritage is far more personal. It's a form of memory, whether that be created by an individual curated by a community or a national body heritage is a tangible way, a tangible manner. Of remembering historical event, time period, atrocity, or individual. And it's physically impossible when you talk about a history in in heritage because often these are quite there's walls to this. There's only so much space that you can put in a museum in a heritage that you can only tell so much of a story. It's physically impossible, physically impossible to include every aspect of that history. That you're trying to tell in a heritage in a museological representation. So something has to get cut out. You can never tell a full story and what gets caught out, I find is where the contestation lies. What story is focused on and why? What message is trying to be is trying to be articulated to the masses. Certain objects are highlighted. Often now this is based on a variety of reasons, availability of the objects in a collection, or availability to get them from other museums, as well as space. The actual physical, the physicality of the museum. However, when a when a space is curated, when it's when it's put together and you combine text and context with these objects, a very specific message, a specific story and narrative is selected, which can be very problematic depending on. Who's doing it? Why? What the purpose is, and therefore quite contested, especially when representing historical atrocities, because often in historical atrocities representation. There's a personal nature to it. I say this coming from a Museum of Tolerance background where we would have school groups go through what we would call the Holocaust exhibition and they were given cards with children's faces and names on it and a machine. And you followed the machine throughout the entirety of the exhibition to learn your child's story. And if they lived or died following the end of the Holocaust, these are very individual. These are very personal stories and so when they are curated, when they're created, a specific message is highlighted and I think depending on who's doing the curation, and depending on what message they're trying to get out, that's where the contestation comes from. And that's where a lot of the a lot of the older exhibitions that we can talk about in a minute. They had a specific message that is just distorting. And not not accurate when you when you look at the the history of the time.

NJ

OK, so to put it back into the context of my recent day out, the heritage focus there would have been on the workers very much on the the people who worked in the cotton mills and the very difficult environments that they're in rather than the other side of that which was arguably worse in terms of where the cotton coming from. So there was a definite focus on the story. That was being told in that place that I've visited.

MB

Physicality where you are, where the exhibition is, depending on what history they're you're trying to tell will have a big influence on exactly what is being told and how to. How do you include a massive story that happened on 2 continents that are completely in and historically separated? Not not, not that they should be, but they have been. So it's kind of peeling back those layers and understanding, understanding why these changes have been made or why number one, this narrative was selected and how do you infuse, uh, a deeper understanding of what, what happened and how these systems functioned, that's been, I guess, what I love to study because I think it's fascinating.

NJ

Yeah. And from that, you know, you talk about focusing on the interpretation and organisation techniques surrounding how historical atrocities are represented. Is there a common language or convention in how these things are done and or is the one that tends to dominate or are there as many different ways of telling the story as there are stories to be told.

MB

I think it really goes back into who's telling the story and why. That's been my biggest concern when looking at curatorial decisions and narratives specifically in, in, in museum representations of historical conflict atrocities, death. So when I did the Easter Rising in Belfast and Dublin, I was studying one conflict from two vastly different perspectives and they highlighted different aspects. Again, there was certain Dublin being the site of where the Easter rising happened. They highlighted different things. Dublin went a different or I'm sorry, Belfast, went the Museum in Belfast, went a different way about it and used other aspects and other material cultures to highlight different things about it, but there was definitely a stratification, a separation between those two representations, and it was very much based on the kind of message they were trying to perpetuate. Holocaust memorialization, you could argue, is a bit more semiotic. There are, I've seen the ones in I'm more of an expert in the ones in the US versus globally, but there are some commonalities, similar practises, when it comes to representing the Holocaust, particularly in the US. This question became really interesting when I was studying the slavery representation in the US and the UK and I chose privately managed plantations and heritage sites because you can see a more linear connection between kind of those making the decisions any kind of outside forces or others that have kind of influenced the decision. And a change in interpretation and representation. So I chose those specifically for that reason. They're national bodies like the Smithsonian or National Heritage Institutions, where there's a board and. Large conversations that take years and years to to curate, these are much more instantaneous. They can, they can change depending on what's happening on social pressures, on local movement, stuff like that. So those, I would say when I looked at the US versus the UK. And it's this is not looking at these two representations next to each other is not groundbreaking. This has been done and people have come, scholars excuse me, have come up with a lot of different reasons why representations are not the same in the US and the UK, and it's a multitude of factors, including the localization of enslavement. Enslaved people were on the ground in plantations. They live, they laboured. They died there. Bodies are buried in the grounds. You can. There's a connection, a tangible connection in the soil here. In the UK there is some connection, but it's often a a more a separate narrative. It's something that happened. It's minimized or something. That was kind of a history at, in the British W Indies, or the global South, or America. So it there is a a sense of separation there that isn't as prevalent throughout the US. However, when I did this study, I found some very distinct and critical commonalities in the representation between both countries. Even though they didn't manifest themselves in the same ways due to the distinct socio-historical nature of the sites environment during curation. So I put that in a lot of things and a lot of people asked me exactly what I mean by that. So when a site is created. Especially a heritage site, I would say it's it's not created in a bubble. It's not just, this is a heritage site. Come to us. This is because we are a heritage site. We're beautiful. There's competition among heritage sites. There's over 400 plantations in the US actively that you can go visit as a heritage site. These are not. It's not that you have to travel. There's one singular Smithsonian, winged African American heritage and culture that is not the same about plantations or plantations all over the American South and some in the north. So when you create a museum of this nature, there's a specific. Like what makes it special? What makes it distinct? What will make people want to come see it, and in doing so and and kind of answering that question about why people should come to your plantation to come to come view this, they they take on a certain narrative, a certain unique aspect to their plantation that not everyone else. Has one of the examples I can think of off my head is Drayton Hall in South Carolina. Drayton Hall is a fascinating place. It's one of the oldest preserved plantation houses on the on river. Gosh, what's the river called? That's sad. I can't river off the top of my head. I'm going to. They're going to Take Me Out. I'm gonna say stop. Coming to Charleston, you can't come here anymore.

NJ

It's just that river. We know the one.

MB

You mean the river? The river in Charleston, obviously.

NJ

Yeah, yeah. And I I know it. Yeah, yeah.

MB

But it's one of the oldest. It survived the Civil war. It's Revolutionary War. It's one of the oldest preserved houses. It has no furniture in it because it's one of the oldest. So when you see these lavishly reconstructed homes, this one is not like that. There is no furniture. It is, it tells the story of colonialism, history of America through architecture. Which again very vast, very unique, but when, when sites like this originally transition, let's look at the US for a second. When sites like these originally transition, and again, you're looking there were some that did after the Civil war, some in the early 20th century, but this happened in droves, probably 1960s, 70s, 80s. So when they transitioned this dominating narrative of magnolias and night skies or midnight magnolias. That's what it is in this very dreamy view of the South was very prevalent. So they they transitioned at a time when heritage was meant to demonstrate the luxury, the romance of Southern genteel life and not the actuality of what plantations were, which was a a place a a site of. I can't even think of the correct words to say this. A site of labour. Beatings, rapings, murders. So this it's it was a it was a site of business. It wasn't a beautiful house. It wasn't something genteel that you can come and drink sweet tea out of. It was an entire enterprise based on the enslavement and murder of populations, generations of people. So. I lost my point. I'm not going to lie to you.

NJ

I think it was around the what I was taking from that and the notes I was taking was around that kind of commercialization of the slavery heritage itself, you know, in terms of all of these places privately owned, each have to look for their own USP in terms of why should you come and visit me when 25 miles down the road, there's another thing. You know, it was almost like a continued commercialization and exploitation is perhaps maybe too strong a word, but you know that looking to to continue to upsell on the heritage or history that they have. That was what, that was, what I was taking.

MB

Yeah, so capitalise kind of on what makes them unique and why why that was important, why people would want to come like Charleston, SC for example. Dozens of plantations in it, there's a lot of a heritage sites currently set up to tell this story, so why come to this one in particular. The UK, has a different relationship and a different kind of transition, and setting up heritage at the US does. The US is quite sporadic, it's very much done in different ways, but the the owners have a lot of control over it. That's not to say here they don't. You have the English Heritage, National Trust that are also quite prevalent in this field. Also, it happened a lot earlier here in the UK, in in general terms, so houses of the wealthy like largest state houses were opened up to friends, families to come view wealth and collections a lot earlier and they transition from that to kind of opening it up to the public. And then you had this evolution of kind of falling in and falling out of popularity with society. So kind of coming into the 20th century, the entering of the years pre-World War One and the World War One, there was kind of a falling out with society about they didn't, it wasn't popular anymore and nobody wanted to go to these estate houses. They were kind of the the symbols of luxury and wealth and kind of a a spitting in the face of society that again evolved, changed again after World War Two. These houses were being they were decimated. After the war, a lot of them left to kind of decay, a lot of them were being torn down because people couldn't afford the maintenance on them anymore, and there was this camaraderie that happened after people kind of went to war and survived that. So they went back in and became more popular. They became popular tourist destination once again. But in kind of this seesawing and this, this evolution of popularity among societies, their narratives change. So while the US has the focus on this one, what I call a meta narrative, this one particular voice, this one story that really helps them define themselves in a sea of similar sites, the UK doesn't do that as much. There's not. When you go to a house. There's not one singular story that people focus on. There's not ‘I'm going to go learn about this one individual, or even really a prominent family’. It's all very general what I call strategically ambiguous. So I say that because it's either knowingly or subconsciously, curators have taken out that connecting story, that story that people can come be like, I know more about this individual in lieu of a more general discussion about trends, architecture, art. Beautifully lavish rooms, many aspects of social history. So for Paxton house in Scotland is one of the places I've studied. They talk about the family owning that house and kind of the different generations that have influenced it and touch not. But there's not a real long linear focus on any particular connection in history. It's more sporadic. This person owned it. They had this wealth. They added this furniture, and then there's less information about the next owner, possibly because their connections to slavery and then more about the other. So it's it's not, it it's not unified under a single message, whereas the US it very much is. And while you have these separate, these contrasting representational and interpretive styles, they both overlap in different ways of representing this history. So the history of slavery representation in both the US and the UK is encompassed in a shroud of amnesia, romanticism and really blatant whitewashing of the nation's dehumanising past and that really is seen in plantations and historic houses directly connected to this practise and the economic benefit of the slave system. In the past 30 years, however, both nations have experienced a wave of discourse surrounding the need for more inclusive narratives. Now, this is seen in a few different ways. Bicentennial celebrations, social protests, and within the aftermath of violent race related tragedies like we saw not too long ago, in 2020 with the murder of George Floyd. So while these institutions are fluid and often react or evolve with social movements, like I said before, those with privately managed states or heritage house do have the ability to evolve in a in a quicker manner than those larger institutions that are nationally funded. They are still trying to include this narrative in er, the original in their original house, essentially in their original focus. So in a in a context that was stifling for a narrative of this so. So specifically, when they shift, when they shift through and become these sites of national recognition, they adopt their specific view of history and their own importance that emulates the political and cultural ideologies of the time. And I don't think, or I assert, I should say, they don't ever fully rid themselves of these representational techniques. So when the work that's happening now to include more discussions, acknowledgements, understandings about a site's connection with slavery. If you're doing it in this context of in a specific sociohistorical environment that is resistant to these exact narratives, it's not going to be, it's not going to be done in a substantive matter. It's going to be more like adding facts like adding just certain instances instead of a really deep understanding of the the systems that were in play.

NJ

I mean that kind of leads on to the next question really in terms of you talk about lots of these memorial landscapes quite resistant to incorporating these often quite complex discourses into their connection, perhaps to historic violence going on. Do you think that comes down to the people who are the owners and creators of that memorial landscape or are there other factors?

MB

I think originally it came down to who owned it originally, who set this precedent? Who set this this specific narrative and what I focused on is not only the forces that have been responsible for creating. These these sites initially, but those that have come in overtime to help change or to help evolve the representation, and there have been many owners in the US and the UK that have come in and have wanted to incorporate more, they have come in, those they're professionals on every level of work in these museums that have also wanted to incorporate. It's I say complex, but it's not really complex. It's very simple. These houses connected to slavery. That's it. So it's a it's an honest and accurate depiction. There's also descendant communities, the black communities descendant specifically in the US with those that were enslaved on plantations after emancipation sometimes resided in the local area and their families remained there for generations. So you see a a large, a large flux of descendant generations coming and assisting and and influencing interpretation in plantation sites around the world. You see that here in the UK as well, black communities coming in and demanding and advocating for accurate representation of history in these houses. So, my main focus, my main argument is that those influences are extremely important, and those are that's what's driving us today. That's what's pushing us forward to be. To create an accurate representation of this specific history. However, until the museums, until the heritage... Let's take it back to the studs. Look at what their initial message was, what their initial representation was, and start to decolonize that break it apart and rebuild it with the goal of being accurate of understanding exactly what that site was used. Every aspect of it. And while these efforts are great and will have an influence, I don't think it will have the influence and the impact that people would like.

NJ

OK. And kind of tangential to that is the question of the legacies of slavery, colonialism at UK universities. Could you give us some insights into the University of Liverpool's involvement in those things, slavery, colonialism.

MB

So while research is ongoing, I can say that the University of Liverpool, like many many others throughout the UK and other countries including the United States, was built in part or in whole by the wealth through the wealth generated by slavery, and this is either directly or indirectly. Whether Gladstone, John Gladstone, is personally financing an aspect through the money he has acquired from plantations he owns, or whether it's familial wealth that has been passed on through generations. That is still wealth generated through enslavement and that I think it's going to be hard for any university in the UK to say they had absolutely zero money, either directly or indirectly connected to slavery. We may have to cut that out. Someone may not like that, but that's my personal opinion the the exact.

NJ

No, we can leave that in.

MB

Nature and amount of this financial influence is still being investigated. This is an ongoing process. This is not something where CSIS, the University of Liverpool, say we're ready. We've we joined USS, which we did, the USS being Universities Studying Slavery out of the University of Virginia that we joined USS. We're ready to do the work and we have all the answers. It's not going to work that way. This is a long process. This is going to take a lot of voices. And so, currently, CSIS is in collaboration with libraries, museums and galleries, and we've recently created a PhD studentship that is looking into the into this history as well as a research associate post, which we hope to advertise later this year. And we will be working on the links between the university's founders and the wealth generated through slavery and colonialism. So this will be a space to look at the upcoming months and years. We're going to have great historians coming in scholars to, really deep dive specifically on these questions and give us a better understanding like the University of Glasgow has like work that's going on in Aberdeen, Cambridge, Oxford and Manchester, lots of universities around the country.

NJ

Well, we are at least turning to face the issue it sounds like but a fair way to go. Does that sound right?

MB

We do, yes. And we also understand that University of Liverpool is in a very distinct city where this research cannot be done in a bubble. We cannot just say, oh, the university is looking into it. Thank you for your attention. We have we are surrounded by amazing scholars in the community, scholars that have a wealth of knowledge. Not only on the city of Liverpool, but the connections with the University of Liverpool as well, so this is something that we are constantly in collaboration with them. The Liverpool Black History Research Group has been integral in this in the continuation of this research they have put they've published online their findings as well. So we hope to add and continue this conversation with. With that group, with the National Museums Liverpool and with the community at large to continue this research, it is it's the beginning and we are working on it. But I do want to make sure and signpost those around the community that have done so much to advance this research that we are thrilled to collaborate with and continue.

NJ

OK, great. Thank you very much. And you mentioned the Centre for the Study of International Slavery there so maybe now's your chance to tell us a little bit more about the Centre and what it does and your role there and how it works with these partners across the city and beyond.

MB

Yes. So the Centre for the Study of International slavery, or CSIS, which is the most tongue tied acronym I ever had.

NJ

It’s not the worst at the University.

MB

It supports and shares leading research about human enslavement and its legacies. So originally it was founded as a partnership between the University of Liverpool and National Museums Liverpool, so the centre works together with other universities and organisations locally, domestically and internationally to develop scholarly and public activities. Related to slavery in its historical and contemporary manifestations. So Liverpool is a very stimulating home for CSIS activities and in the past Liverpool's major slaving port with ships and merchants dominating the transatlantic slave trade, especially in the second-half of the 18th century. So this is this is an amazing place. This is a it's a powerful place to house CSIS. So for me in particular, I am the programme manager for CSIS, so I am the lucky individual that gets to liaise with a lot of our amazing partners that includes community, community leaders, community researchers. Heritage sites, National Museums, Liverpool obviously being a main one and then those around the city and around the country and internationally. And I get to work with these brilliant, brilliant scholars on a multitude of projects include expanding research into the universities, collections and their connection to enslavement. We're also connecting museological sites around the globe to discuss interpretive techniques and advanced advances in representation and shared heritage through local activism and anti-racism work, we get to work with widening participation groups, secondary and primary schools around the city, as well as the newly relaunched MA and international slave. So I this is a very long-winded way of saying I get to work on a lot of fascinating projects with some really talented individuals.

NJ

Fabulous. Thank you so much. One of the centres recent series of symposia centred on barriers to Black academia. And I'm aware that here we've got two white folks talking about, you know, the legacies of the transatlantic slavery and colonialism, and all that and kind of wider issues. Are Black academics becoming more represented in academia and are talking about their own heritage? Or do you think there's still a long way to go?

MB

So from my experiences and this is not my particular, I haven't studied Black academics and in the UK specifically, so this is not this is my experience from working in absolute experts in this field and I believe it's clear that there there has been some initiatives around the country, but there is still a long way to go. This is a process that will include a fundamental change. In the in university practise and procedure. In initial steps to that recommendations and identified barriers that need to be addressed immediately in order to improve and sustain that Black representation in academia have been written by a amazing group of scholars, including Malik Al Nasir, a PhD student at Cambridge, Doctor Leona Vaughn at the University of Liverpool, Rebecca Loy from National Museums Liverpool. Rhiannon Jones from the University of Cambridge, Paige, University of Cambridge, and L'myah Sherae, founder of Enact Equality. So I have had the absolute pleasure to work with them and help facilitate the creation of these reports, they include recommendations for kind of tackling these barriers to Black academia, which include unequal access to funding for students, postgraduate level, lack of racial diversity across higher education curricula, intersectional disadvantage for Black students. Racial battle fatigue and others. So currently we're working on the next phase of the Barriers to Black Academia project, which includes the finalising of these reports, one stemming from the symposium that's on our website currently, that's the online symposium that was from 20/21. So one of the reports will summarise the recommendations there, specifically focusing on slavery discourse, the second is from a roundtable that was held at the University of Bristol last March and that was really talking about barriers to Black academics throughout academia and not only history or slavery, but all manners in all subjects. That is also working on being published and the correlation the the amalgamation I should say of both reports into one policy document is also working to be edited and published as we speak, and we're currently we're continuing to work with L'myah Sherae, who is liaising with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Race Equality and Education, and leading the charge and promoting this policy recommendation to Parliament and the bill. So, we're looking forward to seeing that work continue. We're also hoping that we can get these recommendations out to higher education institutions around the country and encourage their efforts in implementing these recommendations.

NJ

Mary, thank you so much. Great to see what's going on there and I look forward to the next stage of your barriers to Black Academia Symposium. Now, as I'm from the Impact and Research team, I am duty bound to ask this final question so. What's the single most significant change you'd like to see taking place out in the real world as a result of your research?

MB

If I had to pick one, I would see...

NJ

You do.

MB

I would say I would like to see heritage sites around the country in the UK, in the US and beyond look at how they were created, look at the powers that be that created them. Look at their original mission statements when they were created and really see how that's continuing to influence their contemporary representation and if need be, break it down and rebuild. I think sometimes if you continue to build on a shaky foundation, no matter how great everything is the work that you're putting in above, it's still going to be a shaky foundation. It won't get you to where you need to go in the end. So if. I would encourage heritage sites to really have a look at those original those original interpretive works. The original message that they were sending out to the public when they were curated and completely tear it apart and start over and implement that in every aspect of their representation.

NJ

Excellent. And as a visitor to these kind of heritage places, I'd love to see that. I'll, I want to get the real story of the place like go to rather than just, you know, here's a nice frock coat. Be nice to see a little bit more of what actually went into place. So Mary, thank you so much for that. That's fascinating insight to all that you do. Thank you so much for joining us. So thank you so much. Again, Mary's coming along, and next month we will be pleased to feature Doctor Sarah Price, Lecturer in Music Industries. Until then, thank you very much.