Museums and the Idea of Historical Progress

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Historical Progress

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The keynote addresses, given by Dr Susan Legêne (Professor of Political History, Vrije University, Amsterdam) and Mr Mokena Mokeka (Creative Director, Makeka Design Lab.), aptly set the tone for the conference, offered critical insights and stretched our minds to move from outdated paradigms of museum collections to make deeper meanings, provided alternative perspectives and strengthen connections through research, museum collections and exhibitions with new suggestions for interpretation. To all presenters and participants: your contributions to the conference discourse was insightful and make a small contribution towards the creation of our own theories and case studies.

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Rooksana Omar

INTRODUCTION

Utopias and Dystopias in the 21st Century Museums

Shahid Vawda

These papers were given at a joint International Council of Museums (ICOM) Committee for Collecting (COMCOL) and Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History (ICMAH) conference in November 2012. Hosted by the Iziko Museums of South Africa in Cape Town, museum workers from across Europe and Africa convened to address the theme "Utopias and Dystopias: Museums and the Idea of Historical Progress and Multiple-trajectories".

The idea of the museum, at least in its invention during the age of high colonialism and the industrial revolution, was one based on a number of attributes that sit comfortably with the idea of utopia. Indeed the keynote speaker Susan Legêne refers to colonialism as represented in European museums as "empire utopias" and its wider resonance in the mythological presentation of utopias by a silent referent, but not absent dystopias. If by utopia we mean a place or state of social, political and economic affairs as perfect and inevitable, where a place for everyone is loosely arranged around the notion that progress and equity is guaranteed by the state and manifest in society, then that has indeed been an embedded idea underlying much of modern human history. For monarchs it might have been a benevolent despotism, while utopia for republicans represented a society and state without the overbearing oppressive monarchies; for democrats it was a society based on the right to vote and equality; for communists a society free from exploitation and class differences; for freedom fighters it was free of the shackles of colonialism and based on building a nation free from the ideologies of the cold war.

Other utopias no doubt existed, from religious orders to secular communes. What these have in common is that large groups of people were galvanised by the possibility of a society free from the unbearable present.

Yet, in a world thoroughly turned upside down, periodically in our last few decades, and perhaps even centuries, none of the visions that we are accustomed to, whether as religious visions or articulated new social, political and moral orders, seem to have the stability of the past, nor any purchase on the present. Instead, the future seems ambiguous and uncertain. The present conundrum of prescient future imperfections suggests that utopias and dystopias, together, need much more exploration in the context of museums and exhibitions. An example from literature is Orwell's *1984* and Lowry's *The Giver* where the dystopia is presented as utopia, thus reversing the logic, and breaking the binary of utopia versus dystopia. The simulacra of dystopia and utopia seems apposite to explore via museums in a world where the news media is controlled by a few conglomerates and where a financial crisis is represented as everyone else's fault except those of the very financial institutions that precipitated this drama, or where the state has unprecedented access to resources to present its case with little countervailing voices, and fleeing the iron cage of bureaucracy is a daily, unending contemplation for "ordinary" citizens.

The simultaneous existence between the promise of utopia and the discomfort and torment of dystopia is challenging for museums to represent. It is true that many aspects of such situations have been explored in museums, as will be seen in several of the papers in this collection: the fall from grace; modern bureaucracies' control over populations; the vagaries of industrialism, capitalism, or communism; the violence and discrimination of colonialism; the broken promises of nationalism or even supra-nationalism (as in current Europeanism) and socialist internationalism; the promise and inadequacies of multicultural tolerance; and varieties of religious fundamentalisms. Yet, at the same time for others the re-make of the world (turning it right side up, if you will) heralds new possibilities, the fulfillment of utopian dreams of less dependence on former imperial powers, of greater South-South and South-North political and economic co-operation, of greater equal treatment and ideas about human rights, tolerance, recognition and acceptance of cultural and political diversity, and, by implication, the possibility of living in peace and harmony. The last, the harbinger of all utopias, of building a better future society on the dystopia of the present, despite differences, has been a theme of enduring significance in the last few decades in museums and is one to which many of the papers overtly allude.

It was the aim of the conference to examine, indeed to re-examine, the great ideas and experiments of our times. Through the twin lens of utopias and dystopias, delegates considered how museums might be forums for reflecting and being reflexive of the intellectual promises of the perfect world and actually existing conditions and how these have been exhibited within and through the current and future collections in museums. Museum colleagues were further invited to reflect on museums and their complicity in the dreams and shortcomings of those eloquent ideas and practices of building the utopias, and whether every utopia has, or should have, referential support in a dystopia. All the papers presented at the conference attest to these aims. Very distinctly, almost all the papers conveyed the idea that museums as public institutions are, amongst other institutions, ideal, almost utopic sites of public inquiry and places of debate through the collections they currently have and that are anticipated for the future, particularly digital ones. It is this conception of museums as sites of debate and discussion on the past, present and future imperfections mediated by the display of artifacts, rather than a curatorial temple of priestly knowledge, that currently contours what a 21st

century museum represents. Indeed, several of the threads and themes mentioned above underlie many a museum's new values, vision and practice both in the Global North and in the South with the implicit message that striving for perfection is a normative ideal, but one that will encounter and engage with the many limitations and challenges of the present and the future.

Summary of the papers

Engaging the past in order to anticipate and prepare for the museums of the future is a central theme of Susan Legêne's paper, *Powerful Ideas-Museums, Empire Utopias and Connected Worlds*. Her paper presents a set of powerful ideas linked together by her concern to understand contemporary museums in their struggle to come to terms with their imperial past, their "Empire Utopia'. "Empire" here is a colonial utopian creation that depends on the notion that there was a progressive Europe and the rest of the world's peoples and their environments were consigned to being without history, displayed forever as a series of voiceless, static and differentiated natural curiosities in ethnographic museums. This idea is also explored in some of the other conference presentations. But her paper also points to much more subtle idea, where empires are connecting points in a world or global history that is punctuated with the violence of colonialism, nationalism and the diffusion of ideas of differentiation, discrimination and prejudice, and also of ideas of equality and justice alongside affirmation of one's own identities. But, as she points out, ethnographic and nationalist museums, whether European or post-colonial, hardly ever reflect this complexity of multiple ideas or layers of perspectives. Rather, such museums have had the effect of silencing the voiceless and those on the periphery of power, creating in their wake a teleological outcome for a nationalist agenda ("We have always been …" 'Indonesian', 'South African', 'German', 'Dutch' " and so on). An important question that Legêne raises is whether the rise of post-colonial nationalism is a mimicking of European nationalism but where the empire utopia is replaced with the inclusive nation imagined as a historical trajectory to the good life? Simultaneously, she postulates that beyond the unfulfilled promises of the utopias of empire and nationalism lies a sense of global interconnectedness buried in the same collections.

But as Legêne points out, surfacing the interconnections and ties in the wake of post-colonialism and multi-culturalism in European museums, such as the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, have been attempted. To be acknowledged is the very real attempt to understand the variety of peoples of the world, especially those from the former colonies as citizens to be recognized and given a voice within the hallowed walls of exhibitions halls. But the voices of people, though the display of objects and textual interpretation, has been muted. Rather, in her view, the voice that dominates is that of the museum expert, rather than the people's representatives, and further more, such representation is along ethnic and racial lines that affirms differentiated and disconnected sets of cultural identities While not denying the necessity of such affirmations, the pertinent question, Legêne suggests, is how does the wealth of collections inherited from the imperial empire (whatever the empire might have been) bear testimony to historical connections and ties that bind without silencing the violence and inequities of the present and the past? It is, she suggests, an important point in considering what use the current objects collected and preserved under a regimes of "empire utopias'" might be to a future where such ties and movements are traced and their influence reassessed. Might this be the

new utopic presence requiring an orientation that breaks the silences of past and reconsiders our futures? Can museums play a role in this scenario? What can be learnt from such attempts of the current conjunctions in our societies, communities and states? What frameworks of museological policy might aid museums to play this role?

Such questions faced the museum sector and the new government in South Africa. In striving for new utopian perfection, South Africa's Constitution and associated museum and heritage policy framework has, as many have noted, been hailed as "ground breaking" since it provides much of the space to engage with the past and the present in order to anticipate the future. But, as seen in Vawda's paper, *Cultural Policy as Utopia*, therein also lays the danger of the policies becoming the object (as do so many museums artifacts) for re-interpretation away from the spirit of its inclusivity and interaction. There is risk of policies succumbing to unanticipated and unreconstructed notions of race and ethnicity, reframed in a genuflection to identity and diversity politics with a parting, mis-respectful nod to multiculturalism. Here multiculturalism is interpreted by the policies' antagonists as multiple cultures existing along side each other but not, in fact, seen as potentially and in reality part of a process of mimesis and alterity. And, as Alexanders' paper, *Teachers and Museums*, explains, further challenges emerge from the gulf between policy expectations and social realities. The challenge that education faces is to change the institutionalised spatial and racial separation in education and equalise the delivery of quality pedagogic practice. While the policy is idealistic, the actual process of making this radical transformation has, as Alexander points out, proved to be more or less intractable, though in good utopian fashion, he implies, not impossible. The reality is that decades of separation and apartheid, overlaid with class, status and occupational distinctions, continue to inform the current educational dispensation, and particularly in primary and high school education. It is this reality that the utopic space of the museum, less overt in its institutionalised racial shadows of the past, conducts its educational programmes that is not only "cross-curricula" and multi-cultural, but also informative, honed to develop critical skills through the use of artifacts and restore a sense of dignity and social justice, without being obvious. It is here that Alexander makes important interventions about museums and their educative role and value. He does restate the new role of museums in the 21st century as a space where learning is creative, spurs on curiosity, and provides an altogether different experience of leaning, without children and adults even knowing. But more importantly, the Iziko Museums, provides an alternative to the inward congestion of racial, spatial and residential exclusivity in the suburbs and townships. The children that come to the museum today are likely to want to engage with it at the level of new social media now and in the future. (See also the contributions of Gibson and Boogh and Diaz on social media). While not utopian in its practice, museum education, Alexander maintains, is an important means of breaking down those racial divides and silos imposed from another era and silently provides an alternative frame of reference.

It strives to be utopic, against the swirling currents that pull in different directions simultaneously engaging in pedagogic practices that resonate strongly with the current progressive policies of the state to build a new nation.

While Vawda's paper warns of the possible misuse of progressive policies and legislation, perhaps to sharpen and strengthen such state instruments, Zvjezdana Antos' paper, *Politics and the presentation of cultures in museums*, again argues for the value of museums in breaking out of the 19th and 20th centuries' "classical" presentation of identities and other cultures in silos as preserved identities in isolation from others, as has been case with many ethnographic museums. Rather, the emphasis is on world cultures and civilisations that encourage reflection and discussion on interactions between people and their embodied cultural manifestations.

Myriame Morel-Deledalle's article, *From Ethnology to Civilisations Museum, the multiple trajectories of ATP/MuCEM Collections*, is one such attempt to meet the criticism of the silo effect. The question posed both by Morel-Dalledale's and Antos' papers is how to provide the space, the forms of representation and the direction in 21st century museums for such interaction without reinforcing stereotypes. The question is critical for the future in that "diversity" is understood as tolerance of other cultures but is also mindful that civilizations are accorded their rightful contributions to current social, economic and political life and encompasses processes of being assimilated into new forms of meaningful lives: of mimesis, alterity and new transformations of contemporary social and economic life. The key issues, as demonstrated in many instances in the multicultural diversity of urban living, is on what terms such exchange, influence and incorporation takes place, and whether there is indeed an equality of reciprocity among and between groups of people. By contrast to the many civilisations and multiple trajectories that underlie Morel-Dallendale's and Antos' papers is a singular register of what constitutes a classic civilisation from which all others emerge. Such is the dominance of reflections on ancient Greek civilisation, as Katerina Mavromichali observes in her paper, *In search of the utopias of the past: reflections of antiquity upon a national narrative*, as the fount of national traditions in and no doubt spread under multiple European colonisations to the rest of the world as part of the national heritage of such colonial power. Mavromichali's call for a deconstruction, or at least for tracing the lineages of a fictive or normative classical civilisation, no doubt also fits the attempts depicted by Morel-Dallendale and Antos in their respective papers to de-centre the mythological national centre, while acknowledging how deeply invested current Greek national identity is in its own long history.

In a kind of countervailing fashion to the imagined national community valorised in utopian historico-mythologies and symbols of autochony, the local or community based museums, such those analysed by Dennis Hermann in his contribution, *Global Challenges for Regional Museums*, are less state or nation centred. The "heimat" museums are privately funded, locally centred and inward looking. They reflect a "rural idyllic" perspective deeply invested with local stories of the various objects in their collections. Their problem, as it is with such museums the world over, is their sustainability. As the original founding members pass on or retire, it becomes a key question as to how those museums will continue their day to day activities, with the inevitable loss of personal stories or the tone of affection in guiding visitors through their collections. While closure or take over by state authorities are options, the "paradise loss" characteristic of such museums might be more difficult to stich into a more contemporary utopian sensibility. The local museum and its particular structural position add another thread to understanding the complexity of displaying utopias.

The various contributions to the conference, as indicated below in this introduction and in the proceedings that follow, amply show these multiple trajectories from utopias of the past.

The positive point of departure in Antos' and Morel-Dalledale's contributions to this collection of papers, one in which a future is imagined as striving towards equality and co-operation among a diversity of cultures and civilisations, is counter-posed by Judy Jaffe-Schagen's *Imposed Utopias: Establishing collections, building the Israeli nation state*. In this paper, commonality of religion, the basis of the Israeli state, stands in contradistinction to the variety of museums, art galleries and craft centres dedicated to what Jaffe-Schagen calls "sub-cultures", such as those of Ethiopian Jews, Hasidic groups or the Muslims. These sub-cultures, Jaffe-Schagen explains, all experience difference from European Judaism in a number of ways, such as stigmatising of difference, entrenching memories of land invasions and forced occupation, incomplete incorporation into Israeli society, and various levels of indifference and inequality. Although the Israel Museum, a secular symbol of heritage, is supposed to overcome such differences and strengthen commonality of citizenship through its art collection and exhibitions of the peoples of Israel, instead the fractured emergence of sub-cultures seems to severely displace their representivity in state museums, leading to an emerging silo effect. It remains to be seen whether the transgressive nature of the sub-cultures has any effect on state policy other than the "imposed utopia" of the present.

The visions embedded in progressive state policies are contested arenas around the power to implement them with unforeseen and potentially negative consequences. Kregar and Roženberger in their paper, *Museum Collections Between Ideology and Reflection*, reflect on the consequences of policies that were initially articulated for the betterment of humankind, as in the museums of revolution in the former socialist Yugoslavia, and hint at the multiple levels of manipulation of museums by state authorities in the face of both objection and acquiesce by museologists of that period. More strongly, the paper shows how past collections in Celje and presumably in Slovenia as a whole, however they had been construed and, most importantly, misconstrued, can be re-interpreted anew to address the past, the present and the future. In this case, without placing limits on the war of liberation from Nazi occupation, the same collections can be reconceived to address such multiple issues as the constraints under communism (including the attenuation of international socialist solidarity) and broader issues on use of weapons (and presumably technology) in the control and destruction of people and simultaneously of memory and personal ties to the collections and their meanings. While the museum in Celje now addresses through its collection what might be called "higher philosophical" issues of "immanence" and "transcendence", such as the timeless problem of "destruction, killing and causing pain" through military might, it should be noted that this is also a political decision, albeit within a bureaucratic state machine, to refocus away from the overtly state-ideological-political and time bound context of museum exhibitions. For the moment it is perhaps enough that a new professionalism at arms length from government manipulation pervades the core function of display and exhibition standards in Celje's former revolutionary museum.

Such kinds of professionalism in museums to pursue projects independently, as are presumably emerging in the former communist countries, are almost taken for granted in most Northern countries.

In Boogh's and Diaz's paper, *Images for the Future*, such an essential professionalism allows them to raise questions on future collections without deference to overt political ideologies. Their concerns on why and how to collect new kinds photographic images in and for the future is timely in relation to imagining what the future might be like. Anticipating that museums need to keep abreast of the times they are in, they cogently and prophetically argue, there is a need to keep a trace of what kinds of images – mainly photographic - are taken (or created) by the public and how these may be collected and categorised. While it seems simple to make the collection categories along lines of technological process and who the actual photographers are, professional and amateur, to mention but the obvious ones, it also seems unwise not to deepen and broaden the categories by themes, age and type of users, including that of social media, and to encourage a debate and dialogue between multiple kinds of photographers, users, researchers and technologists for creating and sustaining such collections. Images preserved today will be invaluable for tomorrow. Key to such collections will be the provenance of the photographs or images so as to keep a distinct digital trace to the museum and its various publics.

The theme of digital images is taken further in the article by Laura Gibson, *Seeking Common Ground: How Digital Museums Might Play a Role in Peace*, which makes the point that while digital images and its show and tell on a range of internet based media and mobile phone spaces linked to museums is not as wide spread as it should be – there is an acknowledged digital divide – it is much more accessible than other media and public spaces than in the past, and more so in the countries of the Global South. More than simply access and availability, it provides a means, albeit not the only one, in which a range of people can participate. In areas of intense and complex conflict, with widely competing views, such digital spaces provide the forum in which objects, as wide ranging such as images of violence to peaceful co-existence, can be drawn in a closely correlated discussion and debate. It overcomes the silo effect of formally constructed museum displays (or negotiations) that as often as they encourage discussion on particular subjects, also point the gaze away from other potentially important debating points and perspectives. It is not the technological point as much as the opportunity for competing afflicted and conflicted groups of people to have conversations and engagements that are more likely to lead to bottom up agreements and solutions than facilitate top down solutions. Digital Museums in this sense play an initial role of reflecting the fault lines, but also a reflexive one that may lead to solutions other than impossibility of utopian solutions or the destructive force of dystopia.

The destructive force of dystopias, political ideologies and colonial conquests over the last few centuries (including the 20th century) has given rise to many displays as the reminder of why those kinds of events should never happen again. Memorials and holocaust centres, such as in Rwanda or slave museums, are reminders of the darker side of humanity. Some ideologies, it should be noted, have not resulted in wonton destruction and killing of humans, although protest and challenge have been present. Such is the case when depicting childcare in the industrial heartland of Sweden. Christine Fredriksen's contribution, *Obey, Play and Learn – Political ideologies and childcare*, is a carefully illustrated exposition of how the different phases of Sweden's industrial revolution from the 19th century to the present reflects not only an entanglement of political

and economic struggle and ideological positions, but also the care and education of children. It might seem to the casual observer from outside that childcare in Sweden is a neat, rational and incontestable outcome of a welfare state extending itself. Rather, Fredriksen's narrative shows how much effort, allied as it were to activities of a variety of actors, from intellectuals and politicians to trade unions, women activists and pedagogical experts, was expended to answer the central question of by whom and how children are cared for and educated when their parents are at work. The exhibition itself, involving a number of museums, reflects a spirit of co-operation both at the local level within town and cities and on an international scale.

But there is a category of museums, within the proceedings of the conference whose displays may be termed post-conflict exhibitions. The purpose of these exhibitions is not so much to record the fault lines of a bloody and brutal past with a traumatised contemporary population (and to remind us "never again" should such atrocities occur), as to build bridges for processes of reconciliation between previous fragmented, discontented and warring factions. In part the depiction of conflict has been discussed in some of the papers above, particularly in the cases of the Slovenian museums and the museums of civilisations in France, as well as the possibility of digital museums for peace. The papers on the ambivalent post-colonial museum in Mutare, Zimbabwe, the ambitious post-apartheid museums' experiment in reconciliation, affirmation and nation building in South Africa, the re-conciliatory exhibition "Side by Side" in Germany that traces the links between two neighbouring national states (Germany and Poland), the ambiguous attempt at bringing into public view the colonial situation through a military/remembrance museum in Holland, the construction of a museum in Windhoek with the assistance of Finland dedicated in part to the history and mosaic of peoples in Namibia, are all examples of such post-conflict museums.

In cases like Mutare and South Africa, where museums predated the day of independence or liberation, exhibitions took a route that constantly affirmed the positions of settlers and colonisers. Such museums, as was also evidenced in Israel, consciously displayed their crafts and ethnographic details along racial and ethnic lines, rather than exhibit the attenuation and violent loss of rights to land by segments of their population. It is, of course, surprising that so central a fact of violent loss of land and foregrounding the social claims to it, hardly ever features in Mutare's exhibitions. In Njabulo Chipangura's paper, *Rethinking the practice of collecting and displaying ethnographic objects in Mutare Museum*, the solution is not more cultural affirmation, but rather a productive post-colonial engagement with the previously dispossessed communities as equal partners with museum professionals in reconstituting the museum as a site of knowledge and learning, rather than the mere gaze of the curious onlooker that legitimizes a colonial situation. In South Africa, the re-affirmation of ethnographic details was seen as important in recording the loss of land, and thereby a livelihood, but also of culture and history. Transforming museums such as those in Mutare and similar ones in South Africa have been difficult, but not as acute as Balthi Du Plessis suggests. In fact the title of his paper, *Expectations, Disillusionment and Hope*, indicates that unrealistic utopian expectations should be tempered by hope for the future, rather than partiality and the disillusionment of dystopia. Hope and the imagined community of a newly united nation is also a strong underlying theme in the contribution of Leena Hiltula, *Windhoek – Vantaa City Museum Cooperation*.

In all of these papers about southern African museums in a post-colonial period, the idea of building a strong nation that is not fragmented and divided along lines of race and ethnicity is evident. In part this links to debates about multi-culturalism and reaching beyond merely equal representation of different ethnic, religious or language groups to understanding inclusivity not as equal multiples of different groups, but as positionality in a colonial and post-colonial system of governance based on dominance and inequity. In some ways this goes against the grain of the silo effect and grapples simultaneously with both commonalities and diversity. As Danielle Kuijten in her paper, *From military museum to remembrance museum – finding a balance*, shows, the strong and probably unintended theme of dominance and subjectivity in a Dutch museum emerges once more when it is transformed from a military museum to museum of remembrance. The museum grapples with depicting a colonial situation that influenced both the colonizer and colonized and does not disguise the issue of dominance and subjectivity but raises a question of how a balance can be achieved that is representative of the iniquities of the past and the story towards a reconciliation for the future in the post-colony space of a former colonizer.

Reconciliation is, moreover, a strong theme of the post-conflict story in art museums. Although there are examples from many parts of the world, Rwanda and South Africa being good case studies from Africa, the conference paper by Gregor Lersch, which asks, *Can Museums and art exhibitions play an active part in the process of reconciliation?*, illustrates the possibilities and limitations of reconciliation, the fluidity of negotiations involving multiple stakeholders, not least that of governments, and the vast training resources necessary to project the exhibition into public consciousness to further facilitate successful reconciliation between Polish and German people. The limitations are perhaps, as the paper suggests, much less important than the idea of a museum playing a constructive role in a much more complex and long-term process of reconciliation. It is important to note that the exhibition is in an art museum rather than any other kind of museum, which perhaps allows for greater emotional, historical and contemporary contexts in which to explore various contours of reconciliation. Important in this process was the liminal spaces where multiple and criss-crossing identities were active and seen as more important than the singular persecutory or guilt complexes that exist on both sides of the national boundaries.

The papers offered here as the proceedings of that conference reflect those days of intense debate, made all the more valuable with insightful visits to many of the Cape Town museums, such as the Iziko Slave Lodge, the Iziko South African National Gallery, the Castle, District Six Museum, and Robben Island among many others. Some visits and extensions of the debates were much more relaxed, such as those located in the coffee bars and restaurants around Cape Town, and in and among the vineyards of the Western Cape. Still others took place against the backdrop of desolation in the ghettoised low-income townships, but all whose history and contemporary situation is intimately tied up with the tragedy and fruitful prospects for the future.

Note on the papers

It should be noted that it was intended that all the papers would be published as proceedings of the conference, subject to an editorial and double blind peer review process. However, not all papers were published. Some, as was the intention of the authors, were published elsewhere. In terms of the balance of papers given at the conference, the process followed was that all authors were given the opportunity to revise their papers and submit them to the editorial team to read, review, comment and distribute for peer review. Reviewed papers were then sent back to authors for revision and then copy edited. Given that museum work is multi-disciplinary, authors had the opportunity to use whichever referencing system was most suitable and familiar to their own field. Both authors and the editorial team undertook final revisions of all submitted papers. Those that did not submit their papers, or did not satisfy the editors, or did not subject themselves to this process, were excluded. This lengthy process has been deemed necessary by the editors so as to give time for authors to respond to criticisms, to strengthen their arguments and so enhance the scholarly and intellectual content of the proceedings.

It must be noted that the views expressed in these papers are those of the authors and not the editors, organising committee of the conference, nor that of hosts of the conference, Iziko Museums of South Africa, ICOM-South Africa, ICMAH or COMCOL.

Dr Shahid Vawda

Powerful Ideas – Museums, Empire Utopias and Connected Worlds[1]

Susan Legêne

A few months ago, when visiting the modern art museum "Belvédère" in the north of the Netherlands, I came across an artwork by the Dutch painter Jacques van Alphen (b. 1946). Having read the preliminary outline for our conference "Museums and the Idea of Historical Progress", which embraced the concepts of utopia and dystopia, the painting resonated, so I looked at it more carefully than I might have done otherwise. By way of introduction to this paper's theme, "Empire Utopias", I will share my thoughts on this painting, and the question whether and how museums form, express, and record powerful ideas about the future through preserving artifacts and art that refer to utopian ideals from the past.

Van Alphen's painting (Figure 1) is called *WELT-ICH*, which is German for World & Me and so my first assumption was that this painting referred to Nietzsche and German philosophy. But the other words included in the painting are in English and, since Welt could also mean "Weal", which is the mark on the skin made by a blow from, for instance, a whip, I reconsidered. Maybe, I thought, WELT-ICH could also mean "marked by blows"; blows received on the road to utopia and death. On the painting we see spots, marks, on what could be regarded as a graphic representation of this road; a mind map that

Figure 1 - *Jacques van Alphen,* WELT-ICH *(Alternative title:* Kopfgeburt*) Oil on canvas, 1990s, 30x40 cm Museum Belvédère, Heerenveen the Netherlands.*

projects utopia and death - an ideal and a certainty - both countered by the same other blank spot. However, if we ignore the name tags assigned to the spots and focus on the line instead, one could also see a face or, if you like, even two people facing each other.

If we ask ourselves whether and how utopias can be recognized in the history of museums and collections, the painting offers a segue into this question: it tells us that artists have visualized utopia in many ways. We can recognize utopias in museum collections, therefore, by looking at the oeuvre of artists.

Let us push this somewhat further. Another Dutch artist, Constant, is famous for his series of works (graphics, paintings and sculptures) on *New Babylon*, a utopian city. To Constant, *New Babylon*, designed in the 1960s, refers to a society in which all people would be able to live together and develop their creative skills without hunger, suppression or violence. Within the context of the youth democratization movement of the time, he worked on conceiving this utopian city since, he believed, the ideal future society would require a built environment fundamentally different from what we know. In his words: "Because of the structure of our society, we certainly are not yet free, but we work for the world of tomorrow. A new society will come after this one and the people then will do naturally what now requires from us a steady struggle: to be a vital creature."[2]

Constant's work is in museum collections all over the world and, moreover, he is said to have inspired many architects of our time. Meanwhile we can see that his art also echoes the art and artistic debates of the October Revolution and the first years of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet utopia of a social revolution in the making did not last long; it drowned in the repression and terror of the Stalinist era. However, many art works from that time survived in museums and the ideas generated reappeared in many different contexts in other places or other times, as with Constant. So this provides another layer to our question with respect to understanding utopia in museum collections. Art connects with change in society. As well, artists not only relate to *their* time, but also to other artists *before* them. Through their art they also explore past utopian ideals that became historical experience. Museums thus archive and present in their exhibitions intersubjective and intermedial histories of utopia through the arts.[3]

[2]Constant Nieuwenhuijs, b.1920, d.2005. "We zijn door de structuur onzer maatschappij zeker nog niet vrij, maar we werken voor de wereld van morgen. Een nieuwe maatschappij komt na deze en dan zal de mens van nature doen wat van ons thans een hevige strijd vergt: een levend wezen zijn." (Quoted in Stokvis 1974: 12). For more information on *New Babylon* works in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, see http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.516181.

[3]Sarah Barber and Corinna M. Penniston-Bird, in their Introduction to *History Beyond the Text* explain this as a "'cultural circuit', whereby a continuous inter-relationship between memories of events and cultural representations of events, and thus between past and present, is set up..." and they stress the significance of context and time for historical interpretation. Next to memories, art-history, philosophical, political, and technical aspects need to be included in this notion of intersubjectivity in museum collections and practices (Barber and Penniston Bird 2009: 8, 10).

These examples lead us to question what role museums as institutions play, or have played, in those intermedial histories of utopia. I will argue here that whereas their collections gather numerous utopian concepts, ideals and ideas, museums also produced their own genre of utopias, such as empire utopias, which emerged in many ethnographic museums around the world. Ethnographic museums, through their method of displaying stereotypical timeless plaster or wax figures of colonial subjects dressed in and surrounded by the objects that mark their specific (ethnic) identities, created a sense of utopia. The mannequins represented distant people willingly presenting their static condition of traditional life to visitors who identified themselves with the powers of modernization and progress. It was these powers, people perceived, that would spark motion within these scenes and so bring change.[4]

Such time-conscious dynamics, hinting at inevitable progress, were at work as well at World Exhibitions. In their colonial pavilions, the empires played out the difference between the timeless present of the colonized people and the dynamics of imperial rule that was making "History" while bringing about change. Then and after decolonization, World Expos time and again suggest that we live in transformative times; that the future is bringing new developments that the past has failed to do. World Expos present dynamic utopian futures as real options. An example that relates to Constant's *New Babylon* is the Philips Pavilion at the Brussels World Expo in 1958, which was designed by Le Corbusier and animated with electronic music by Thomas Varèse and Iannis Xenakis. It shows the utopian future of an electronic revolution designed by a multinational company based in the Netherlands.[5]

Visualizations of utopia, either empire utopias or technological utopias, play with visitors' past experiences and expectations regarding the future. Such explorations cannot be politically neutral since they focus on transition and transformation, which requires agency, instead of the acceptance of a status quo. So when we want to answer the question whether utopias can be recognized in the history of museum collections, we not only have to research the collections and exhibition practices, but we also need a critical reflection on the agency involved in the collecting and making of displays that visualized utopias in the past, and how they work today.

[4]In 2003 the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam presented this empire utopia in a semi-permanent exhibition, which mirrored a 1938 display of subjected people paying homage to the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina (Van Dartel 2009: 16-18 and passim).

[5]The scale model of the pavilion and the music are now on display in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam: Le poème électronique en Interlude sonore / The Electronic Poem and Sound Interlude (Object nr. NG-C-2013-5) See also the research programme by Peter Pels and others (University of Leiden), "The Future is Elsewhere: Towards a Comparative History of Digital Futurities" (2010-2015).

Figure 2A - *Nowadays a full colour photograph by Paul Weinberg has been added to the display. The caption to that photograph reads: 'As a way of making a living in pre-independence Namibia, San men joined the South African Defence Force as trackers.'(Mobile phone snapshot by the author, 2012).*

Museums and Empire

Established in the context of nineteenth century state formation, museums have contributed to the development of imperial culture and its internalization by the people.[6] In many respects museums as tools of empire produced and displayed empire utopias of control through the exploration, collecting and further classification of the natural and cultural world. Moreover, like World Exhibitions, they also displayed images that supported a hierarchical European culture of "thinking like an Empire". This expression "thinking like an Empire" refers to Cooper's concept of imperial imagination, developed in discussion with Anderson's famous notion of the "imagined communities" that emerged in the process of modern nation state formation.[7] Cooper suggests that not nationalism *within* Europe, but the thinking like an empire <u>in</u> Europe *beyond* the European continent, was inherent to European imperial state formation. Indeed, national and ethnographic museums taught citizens to imagine their nation as an empire and themselves as citizens in an imperial space that also influenced their own life.

To contemporary cultural historians and museum professionals who work with collections and in museums that were founded in those years of modern state formation, a historicizing approach of museums as the tools of empire has revitalized collection and exhibition research. This approach links to postcolonial understandings of categorization processes that were at the heart of collection policies and that also played out as ways to discipline and subject people, installing in them ideas of progress entangled with feelings of dependency. However, what is the implication of this understanding for contemporary museum practice? What does this metaphor of museums as tools of empire in the past mean for museums today as they work with their legacies?

In addressing this question I will focus on concepts of imperial and national citizenship. In the empire past, museum exhibition and collection policies played a role in the construction of empire with its political practices of inclusion and exclusion in terms of legal and cultural citizenship, both within the colonies and throughout Europe. Museums did not reflect on their exclusiveness, but showed their utopian ideal of imperial power. Through displaying the colonial subjects, they taught their visitors to regard themselves as citizens of empire in the same way that the 1958 World Expo in Brussels showed the utopian future of an electronic revolution and helped visitors see themselves as the future users of these products. So, if we start with the metaphor of museums as tools of empire, we have to ask ourselves when and how empire ever ended in museums. Are museums as the former tools of empire now tools of a widening global citizenship, or do they serve the nation-state, and what other inclusive ideals can they express beyond citizenship? The tool-metaphor suggests a mere passive role for museums: they happened to be tools of empire. Can museums make their own choices in this respect through their collection and exhibition practices?

[6]For an elaboration see, for instance, the comparative volume edited by John MacKenzie, European empires and the people. Popular responses to imperialism in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy (2011), or the photoCLEC website which approaches this impact of colonialism on Europe through photograph albums, and more specifically the section on museums and colonialism at http://photoclec.dmu.ac.uk/content/museums-and-colonialism

[7]Cooper 2005:27; Anderson 199; See also, Burbank and Cooper 2011.

Human suffering

My answer will evoke another utopia: a utopia of connected worlds. But, before further investigating this issue, I would like to introduce an argument made by Asma Abbas in her book *Liberalism and human suffering; materialist reflections on Politics, Ethics and Aesthetics* (2010).[8] I suspect it was her book that made me interpret Jacques van Alphen's utopia painting within the context of German philosophy. Abbas argues that in liberal enlightenment philosophy, human suffering is understood as an opposition between autonomous actors and passive victims. Liberalism has alienated victims from their own suffering and does not perceive them as capable of speaking for themselves. At best, others possessing agency can represent the victims' suffering. She understands such representation of human suffering as a "making present once again".

If we follow Abbas, we can understand ethnographic displays of archetypical mannequins as clues to how those previous tools of empire "represented", or rather *silenced*, the human suffering of colonialism by presenting the arts and crafts, the beliefs and knowledge, the traditions and customs of the colonized people as timeless and ahistorical. The museums at the time displayed an empire utopia that contributed to the "alienation" of human suffering with respect to, for instance, slavery, other forms of forced labor or physical abuse, war, conquest, conversion and political conflict, and everyday racism, segregation and discrimination.[9] The visitors to the ethnographic museums were included as agents of historical progress; the static mannequins on display represented the colonized as passive receivers of such progress. Their suffering, which was an integral part of the very collecting of ethnographic objects – from human remains to precious regalia – went unrepresented and so their subjectivity was denied by the authority of the museum.

If today museums try to tell another story and address the issue of colonial human suffering through both historical exhibitions and a critical deconstruction of existing collection categories, they are confronted with the issue of whom they speak about, and to whom they speak. Abbas argues that in liberalism, suffering has been diagnosed in universalizing terms referring to either natural or man-made disasters. She suggests that existing silences about suffering have to do with this "diagnostic scheme" that rules out suffering that does not fit into liberal thought. "Maybe silences germinate in conscious responses to, or as an unintended consequence of suffering being diagnosed, interpreted, evaluated, sanctioned, and prescribed," she says. The universalizing discourse on natural and man-made disasters, she claims, not only does not allow victims to speak, but it also "drowns" the political conversation of who must account for the human suffering in specific historical situations,[10] such as the suffering caused by colonialism and imperialism.

With respect to colonialism and the knowledge connected to the objects collected in museums, these museums might be in a deadlock. How could ethnographic knowledge be displayed other than as ethnographic knowledge? In the context of a developing imperialism, ethnography was not seen as a man-made disaster caused by colonial agency, but as a step towards historical progress.

[8]For a more extensive discussion see: Open Arts Journal issue 4 2014, forthcoming at http://openartsjournal.org/.
[9]Abbas 2010: 110-112, 47.
[10]Abbas 2010: 89-90.

Figure 2B – *Left- Mannequin (1970s) of a San man spinning. Picture of the showcase in the 1980s, in the ethnographic wing of the Iziko South African Museum, Cape Town South Africa. (Iziko Museums of South African, Iziko Social History Collections).*

This creates a significant dilemma in many museums. We can see it in the ethnographic wing of the Iziko South African Museum with, among other mannequins, a sculpture of a San person spinning (Figure 2). Similar ethnographic displays can still be found all around the world, such as in the Russian Museum in St Petersburg, the American Museum of Natural History in New York, Dahlem in Berlin, the National Museum in Jakarta or the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam.

The Tropenmuseum has looked for a way out of this deadlock by displaying some colonial mannequins in a context that suggests agency (like changing a former archetypical Javanese woman into a politically conscious school teacher – Figure 3). They stand next to new mannequins (life casts) that represent colonizers in specific roles as well. Moreover, the museum staged a contrast between the mannequins of the self-possessed colonizers who tell their story and a complete silence of the older ethnographic mannequins, thus suggesting that what they could tell about the past is drowned in the dominant voice of their collectors.[11]

The Iziko South Africa Museum uses another exhibition strategy. On the one hand it tries to install historical agency in the ethnographic mannequins by adding a photograph in which "real" people act in historical roles, such as the Paul Weinberg photograph of San trackers in the South African Defense Force. As well, Iziko invites attentive visitors to reflect on the background of this static display of traditional culture through devices such as the "Out of Touch?" signs. An example is: "This gallery was constructed in the 1970s and since that time approaches to exhibiting African culture have changed. Do these exhibits create the impression that all black South-Africans live in rural villages, wear traditional dress and use only hand-made utensils? What about those people who live and work in towns, travel abroad or become industrialists? (...) African culture is not static. *Why*, then, are many labels in the gallery written in the present tense, as if time had stood still? ..."

[11]Van Dartel 2009: 16-18

Figure 3 – *Mannequin (1930s) of a Javanese woman, now representing a school teacher in a 'taman siswo' local school. The Indonesian nationalist movement founded these schools in opposition to colonial rule. Photograph by Rob van Houten 'Colonial Theatre display' in the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam the Netherlands.*
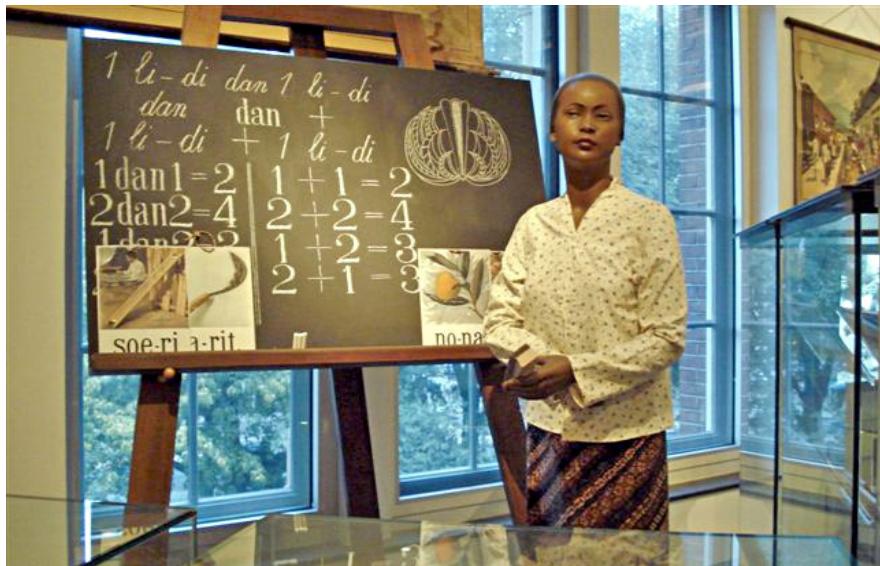
Both strategies of the Tropenmuseum and Iziko South Africa Museum relate to processes of transformation in display conventions in the context of larger transformations in society. The museums invite the visitors to actively reflect on the exclusive display strategies of the past, and how that touches on today's society. As such, the museums continue to represent ethnography – albeit as a hangover from the past. But maybe they need to radically deviate from an ethnographic discourse, for instance by turning all ethnographic objects into historical objects and by replacing anthropology with history.

However, historicizing ethnographic objects raises the question of who will be the historians. Do the Javanese woman and the San man speak about their past; will they speak as "I", as in Van Alphen's WELT-ICH, or will they forever be "They" about whom the museum speaks? By respectfully displaying the mannequins that represent those who were subjected to the empire utopia, the museum cannot provide these people with a voice, but it can provide them with a historical citizenship entitlement that changes the writing of histories.[12] This, obviously, is what the Museum de Koloniehof intends with its representation of 19th century Dutch displaced persons who were forced to leave their urban lives in order to "colonize" the waste lands (Figure 4). The mannequins, reaching back to an old exhibition device and as such "inter-medial', represent class, rather than ethnicity; they have been designed to visualize a history, to inscribe subaltern people in contemporary historical awareness.

Abbas argues that human suffering is at the core of transformative politics (2010:14). Decolonization is such a historically specific transition moment with a long history invoking suffering as well as new utopian futures. We witness that museums take part in the transition and struggle to bring the empire utopia to an end. Yet, this idea is deeply engrained in its collections and display practice and

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[12] Premesh Lalu's argument with respect to (South-African) historiography also applies to museology : 'If colonialism inaugurated modes of evidence that later structured not only settler representations but also acted as conditions of constraint on the imaginations of anti-colonial nationalist narrations, then the question of entanglement in the discourse of history needs serious critical scrutiny if not new critical models. I believe a history after apartheid would haunt the discussion of the post-apartheid as long as the underlying consequences of historicism in the formation of subaltern effects are not subjected to critical scrutiny." Lalu 2008:281.

Figure 4 – *Mannequins of a 19th century Dutch pauper family expelled from the city to become land laborers. Disciplined by semi-forced labor contracts, they brought into cultivation the waste lands in the east of the Netherlands. Photograph by the author (2004). Museum de Koloniehof, Frederiksoord the Netherlands.*

museums are not necessarily convinced that another idea of historical progress can take its place. The hard work in ethnographic museums to find out how they can make relevant in contemporary society their collections, buildings and exhibition practices, is a crucial historiographical endeavor. It tries to bring into the present the experiences of the people whose cultural artifacts were collected in the past in a process that confirmed the domination of the collector. In doing so the institution is confronted with itself, and this struggle offers a crucial counterweight to the many new museums, established under breathtaking architecture, that embrace new utopias of universal world culture without acknowledging the implications of the cultural canon formation on which their exhibition programs rely.[13]

Connected worlds

So, in conclusion I would like to address the three lead questions raised by the conference theme "Museums and the Idea of Historical Progress". I began my talk with an affirmation that museums do indeed "keep" utopias in their collections, as well as in their histories of exhibition practice. This I illustrated with art and display practices as inter-subjective and inter-medial histories of utopian ideals, as in the case of World Exhibitions, imperial displays and Constant's *New Babylon* that embraced an ideal of creative citizenship.

With respect to the conference's second question on possible roles for museums to reflect on the intellectual promises of the utopian word and the actually existing conditions, I have elaborated elsewhere that we need a new understanding of those existing conditions, notably the impact of the nationalization of empire histories that happened in the process of decolonization.[14] It seems that the *imperial* context of much museum collecting and display, with all their mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, has been transferred into multiple *national* contexts.

Despite the acknowledgement that imperialism was part and parcel of the history of European nation state formation, the grand narrative on Europe after 1945 often bypasses the issue of decolonization, as in Tomy Judt's *Postwar Europe* (2005). The transition from colonial empires to nation states came with large scale migration and displacement, struggle and violence, as well as new ideals about the future. In the process of "re-imagining" the communities, museums may have changed from tools of empire to tools of the nation state that – as the example of the Tropenmuseum, the Iziko South Africa Gallery and the Museum de Koloniehof suggest - attribute a new historical subjectivity to those represented in the collections and on display, through staging a new interaction with the visitors. However, when the nation state forms an undisputed new frame for histories of belonging and displacement (in which the anthropological notion of autochtony, allochtony amd authenticity has gained a new momentum), museums might contribute to a further alienation from the human

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[13] Le musée du Quay Branly in Paris is a case in point (Price 2007), even though the museum does address legacies of ethnography in special exhibitions. Of course, architecture always has been important with respect to the establishment of museums. For the existing museums as well, re-establishing a productive relationship with the building is sometimes hard work.

[14] Susan Legêne and Martijn Eickhoff, "Postwar Europe and the Colonial Past in Photographs," in Ann Rigney and Chiara de Cesari (eds), Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales. Berlin (De Gruyter) 2014, 287-311.

suffering implied in the transition process as such. The museum then will lock people into past categories and thus provide an insufficient representation of the challenges of the connected worlds in which we live now. In my view we have to understand the dominant framework of the nation state as not necessarily more inclusive than the frameworks of former empire utopias.

Finally, this conference posed the question of whether we need an international ethical reconsideration of the existing distribution of museum collections. In my view the answer is yes, most definitely. I am in favor of a pro-active debate on restitution as an important aspect of a new ideal of connected worlds. I would add, however, that we must be aware that merely returning objects once collected by and displayed in Europe's colonial centers in such a way that they contributed to an alienation of human suffering outside the frame of historical progress, does not necessarily install historical subjectivity to the people concerned. To do this, museums will have to rethink the role of objects in establishing positive relationships between subjectivity and citizenship.

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Biography

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Cultural Policy as Utopia: The Case of South Africa

Shahid Vawda

Abstract

From 1994 onwards there has been a plethora of policies on heritage and museums in particular in South Africa. In the aftermath of Apartheid it was natural to re-think and replace policies that were both divisive and discriminatory with policies that were egalitarian and gave those who were denied their history and their cultural rights a positive imprint on the emerging new institutions of a democratic state. Much of the policies were hailed as progressive drawing on a language and thought from the writers and thinkers of what may be termed a progressive bent from the 17th to 20th centuries. These policies also affirmed those whose culture and heritage was silenced in the past or manipulated to suit the ideas of apartheid, racial discrimination and exploitation. The policies also affirmed the idea of new nation being born and sought to construct out of the history of the country and a new constitution based on human rights a different national identity that appealed both locally and globally, to local sentiments and to universal themes about humankind. In this the heritage and cultural policies conjured out of a universalising human rights discourse and on the ruins of colonialism and apartheid a vision - a utopian ideal - of a new South Africa. However within the discourse of these policies also lay the means of a language and power to construct new forms of discourse for a different set of identities and trajectories, some of which stand at odds with the utopian vision of the mid-1990s. This paper traces some of the lineages of those ideas and what it potentially might mean for museums in South Africa and more globally.

Introduction

Museums, Benedict Anderson remarks in his important study on nationalism and state formation, are one of the main institutions that communicate to a disparate group of people, the virtues of thinking and communicating among themselves as a national community in a modern state (1991: 178-185). Museums, in this view, are not just about imparting information and describing events, places, people or things, but present a particular way in which people may gaze at displays that are at one and the same time aesthetically pleasing and persuades its visitors and citizens to a particular inclusive focus or naturalised perspective of belonging to the nation-state (that is, to the exclusion of other indeterminate perspectives). The success of this particular informed gaze in museums is that it is not noticed, at least not in an obvious way by its various public audiences. In a way, museums in new modern states, while adhering to the usual standards of naming, classifying, describing and other scientific nomenclature associated with the research and display of artefacts, seek to manufacture consent to a new national or set of identities that seek to legitimate the new or emerging nation. By using museums, whose ostensible *raison d'être* is to provide a scientific and therefore a rational and knowledgeable presentation of events, people, places and things, albeit in a particular way, is to encourage subscription to a particular identity or sets of identifications as if these are natural, acceptable, normal and of one's own choosing.

This view of museums is neither particularly startling nor new. A whole generation of the "new museology" devoted itself to deconstructing museums and their subtle affirmation of nation, colonialism, imperialism, class, ethnic group, gender, or attitudes superiority or whatever interest was being promoted or defended (or, in a negative register, undermined). In this sense museums, as Anderson intimates, are political institutions that affirm certain values and identities as part of national, nation building or nationalist project. However, I want to understand museums not simply in the obvious ways that they cater for particular power holders or particular interests, nation building ones included. Various state (parliament, law courts, police, and prisons) or civic institutions (the media, schools, welfare agencies, and the family) are obviously institutions in the making of nations, but museums are not apparent candidates for the equally obvious "political" analysis. Rather, museums are much more subtle institutions in the making of nations, or the national interests. The very idea that they invite a gaze rather than an interrogative viewing suggests their more subtle influence alongside the very real scientific and information provision function they perform. I want to understand these institutions in terms of the policies that inform their work above the technicalities of collecting, research, classifying, storing and exhibiting. I wish to focus instead on one of the less obvious technologies that pervade modern museums and guide their activities: policies as technologies that shape and contest identities, and in particular national identities. There are museum policies that inform work ranging from collecting to exhibitions to the protection and transfer of objects and artefacts to other museums or as repatriated objects, but they also work within a larger legislative and legal framework, in which power is diffused and not always apparent or obvious.

In South Africa since 1994, a particular dimension or aspect of the progression to nationhood and state formation that undergirds it is the proliferation of policies that seek to guide the actions, activities and aims of the museums and other heritage institutions. A cluster of policies and legislation that pertain here are: The South African Constitution, 1996; The White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, 1996; The National Heritage Council Act, 1999; and the Cultural Institutions Act, 1998.

Policies in this sense are the utopian desire to conjure out of a very real question, to create out of a very divided past a South African identity. Museums, to the extent that they contribute to nation building, answers in part the question posed by Chipkin (2007), as to whether South Africans exist. That is, to be a modern nation state presupposes a set of policies as to how to govern – not just the obvious political institutions of society, but also the more subtle ones, funded wholly or in part by the state that contributes notionally in their policies to ideas about what constitutes a nation. In general public discourse, and no doubt many policy practioners also believe, policies in the modern nation states usually circulate around the idea that these are rational, scientifically verified instruments of efficient planning and implementation. Such a perspective applies no less at the governance of a modern state than it does to other institutions of society: political parties, universities, private sector companies, and museums (among others) wherein policies, blueprints, programmes and strategies all have the unmistakable stamp of a plan that has to be accomplished, usually written, but also articulated in various forms, including that of instruction and ritualised implementation. Policies may thus be seen as a programme of action: legal rational plans of intentions, of what is to be done, and programmes of implementation and action. But they are also about the power to implement and not just about the force of ensuring they are implemented. It is also, if not more, about the authority and legitimacy to plan and implement and to consider the consequences of an implementation programme, as it is also thickly bound with all kinds of symbols and signifiers. Policies can then be seen as the outcome of a legitimate authority and its associated symbols of what, when and how a plan or a blueprint is created, and its "translation" into action, upon the authorisation of a person or group of persons, with both planned and unplanned or unintended effects. In this sense, polices are a set of related social and cultural processes that have particular kinds of effects. For museums, policies are manifestly about what they collect, with what scientific rationale, for whom, and how it should be displayed.

My quest here is not simply to make a diagnostic mapping of such policies, or to provide the dramatis personae in the mapping and codification of such policies, but to raise questions about the way the audiences of museums and the curators (all people associated with putting on displays/exhibitions) are conceptualised in the policies through which museums are constituted and in this process analyse the way in which "new subjects" of power (or powerlessness) are imagined in and through the policies. In short, the question that I seek to investigate is how policy and more specifically sets of policies provide a way of those effects and reflects both the abstract way in which the new subject of the post-apartheid period is constituted in the new constitution. This principle document and other cultural policy documents are further refracted in multiple ways within museums as visitors, curators or in whatever way museum personnel and visitors interact. Although power is also a vital consideration towards understanding the way in which subjectivities or subject's identities are formed and structured, in this paper the focus is on the way the policies envisage that interaction; to

interrogate the natural "order of things" envisaged in the policies which are presented as progress (such as national unity in diversity, for example), not just as the post-apartheid stage, but as a constitutional democracy that is often touted as the most advanced or progressive in the world.

In broader terms my concerns here are part of a wider question: what are the present rationalities that structure the world of museums in South Africa? How do museums contribute, or not, to the rationalities of governance as well as the subjects and subjectivities as envisaged in the broader policies on culture and heritage? In the policies that I analyse below the focus is not so much on the policies of individual museums, but on the broad framing policies in which museums operate, including the constitution as it relates to matters that re-member or re-constitute the citizen as a subject of a united South Africa. My analysis includes the UNESCO's various policy documents on culture and diversity and the promotion of tolerance and acceptance of difference in a diverse world that informed much of South Africa's cultural and heritage policies.

Cultural rights: The Constitution's Bill of Rights: Foundations for Diversity and Nation Building

The broad thrust of South Africa's new policies and legislative framework on culture, heritage and art relies heavily on the fundamental clauses of rights as contained in Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights.

The Constitution's Bill of Rights (chapter 2) lays down some of the most fundamental rights as contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, namely, rights of equality and human dignity, freedom of security of the person, expression, political rights, the rights to freedom assembly, demonstration, picket and petition, movement, trade, occupation and profession. To these fundamental rights of the individual are added the rights to language and culture. Drawing on Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that states that "Everyone shall have the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community (and) to enjoy the arts …" The Bill of Rights goes on to state:

> "Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but in exercising these rights may not do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of rights". (Section 30).

It should be noted that this individual right must be consistent without infringing other people's rights to practice their culture, and indeed with the fundamental rights of the individual. These individual rights of language and participation in cultural life are further extended to communities, in that the Constitution states:

> "31. (1) Persons belong to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of the community –
>   a) To enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language; and
>   b) To form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society
> (2) The rights in subsection 1 may not be exercised in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights."

The importance of these fundamental rights and the clauses on the right to practice one's culture is that it should not undermine anyone else's right to either practice their own culture or religion or speak a language. More important than this, the entire bill of rights places no boundaries on who may practice whatever culture, religion or speak a language of their choosing. It implies that culture is not a solidified specific territorial group or has impermeable social boundaries. Although there is an implication that there is such an objective verifiable thing called a cultural group, the constitution is silent on any explicit reference to what that might be or how it be formed, or have come to be formed, except to say that they must be an enactment of culture. It does not specify what minimally might be considered a practice or an act of cultural practice that identifies a group cultural practice. Presumably some historical weight must be attached to it.

The weight of the clause indicates that an association may be formed to practice or enhance a cultural group, but such an association should not be such as to deny entry to those who may wish to legitimately participate in its customs, traditions and rituals. It is not that someone who is unknown will want to join a cultural group because it is an "exotic other", but that the right of freedom to join such a group is upheld. The subject of this conception are the citizens and people who live in South Africa, whose identities in the past were preconceived, stereotypical, given by the state and imposed when necessary, rather than being constructed and negotiated meaningfully by members for themselves. Without pre-defining what such cultural groups might be, it is left to individuals who will define for themselves their belonging. It leaves open the social process by which individuals are presumably socialised, acculturated or ritually incorporated into such groups, and who are equally at will to re-define their relationship to such cultural groups, including a continuum from being a notional member to actively distancing themselves and repudiating any such cultural belonging or identification. Clearly the citizen-subject here is a free thinking individual who decides the where and with whom to identify and where the strength of that belonging might be. Of course the tension between group belonging and identification and individual wilfulness remains. The way this is interpreted by individuals and self-defined cultural groups maybe highly varied. However, more to the point of this discussion, and, crucially for museums, particularly public funded ones, is their approach to represent both the diversity of South Africa and create the conditions for the state's policy on social cohesion for the country (e.g. South Africa belongs to all who live in it[15]) and national identity to gain traction (the creation of a national identity as in my reference to Anderson at the very beginning of this paper predicates[16]).

[15]*Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, Preamble of 1996

[16]In passing it should be noted that those scientists, especially botanists, biologists, zoologists, paleontologists, physicians, astronomers among others, working in museums who do not think this applies to them, they should bear witness to the fact that the symbolic representation on bank notes in the first 15 years or so of South Africa were and still are animals (for example, the big five of lions, elephants, rhinos, buffalo and giraffe) and plants (proteas and aloes) including on the coat of arms the secretary bird. Often, the state celebrates breakthroughs in science and technology by South Africans, whether they are within or outside the country. A more major recent cause for celebration is the largest radio telescopes in the world being located here (rather than Australia), recent paleotological finds that gives credence to South Africa as the cradle of humankind, and sometimes in a negative vein, the lamentable progress in mathematics education and skills shortage in a range of specific occupations, including, museum technicians of various kinds. Contary to what the "hard" scientists may think, their work is as much part of the national project, as any social scientist working in the museum sector of society. Policy that affects museums, and what lies within, behind and in front of it, matters. In itself is the matter of seriously gazing and critically engaging with it.

The crucial point is that the Constitution confers the freedom of decision making to individuals in matters of culture, the principle on which cultural freedom is associated. In enjoying that freedom to practice one's culture, other policies and legislation create the regulatory framework within which all South Africans can enjoy, not only their own, but other cultures, if they so wish. The regulatory framework thus also provides for the emergence of a common South African culture, in the first instance around the acknowledgement of many cultures, and hence of tolerance, respect and acceptance of such a diversity. Secondly, the regulatory framework acknowledges that those that were oppressed in the past, and their cultural landscape denigrated by previous colonial and apartheid regimes, now have the freedom to re-constitute, resurrect, re-construct and re-member that which was dismembered and ruptured in the past. Thirdly, it signals the desire, an emergence, if allowed, of a common culture through the assistance of the state by exploring what are the ties that bind a multi-racial, multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic group of people together as a national entity, and hence national unity. Here the principle of non-racialism is a foundational truth and a vision for the future. In other words, race is no longer a principle of nation-building[17] and a re-constructed and re-negotiated term of cultural representation becomes the starting point for building the imagined community of South Africans. If indeed this is the case, the concept of culture becomes one of signalling not the lack of ties that prevent binding, but what exists to enact a desirable future. What policy content on or about culture assists institutions such as museums, if they are implicated in nation building, not as teleological outcome, but one which has to connect the dots, strands and links, or if they are not there, is to imagine how that could be done.

Defining Culture

Although the Bill of Rights defines what the rights are, it is silent on the definition of culture. Indeed its silence on offering any definition is instructional. Here I want to introduce some analytical distinctions between culture as an area of empirical and analytical research, and culture as a political-economic object of intervention and thirdly as meaningful to the practice of people who may wish to define themselves in particular ways which distinguish them from others and which may be accepted by others as a reasonable distinction to be made. First I want to define the notion of culture.

UNESCO has defined culture as:

"...culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or as a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyle, ways of thinking, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs." (1982, 1997, 1998, 2001)

[17]I want to distinguish here, between what the object of the my gaze is in relation to the policy, concretised in the official policy documents, and policy that is expressed by state officials and politicians from whereever the influence makers come from, such as UNESCO, and further make the distinction between these categories of policy actants (in the Latour sense that includes both objects such a documents and the actors who make, interpret and implement such policies) and the actual real or emprically verifiable implementation of those policies, such as in museums. The idea and policy of non-racialism is highy contested concept in itself, but here I reference the central idea of the irrelevance of race.

The White paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage defines culture as:

"Culture refers to the dynamic totality of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features which characterise a society or social group. It includes the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions, heritage and beliefs developed over time and subject to change."

In these first two definitions of culture, there are two emphases: The first is that human rights are part of culture, and not as an external instrument of law. Secondly in the listing of what makes up culture (value systems, traditions, heritage and beliefs), it can and does exist independently of those aspects culture defined in instrumental terms and often in developing countries and used deliberately in cultural tourism (for example Zulu dancing or an enactment of Bushman hunting and gathering, or craft villages), or the use of culture in urban redevelopment. In the very obvious way museums are reliant on material culture, or the immaterial or non-tangible being valorised into photographs or textual representation, some resemblance to its instrumentalisation. But the curatorial decisions (and who and how they are made, important as that is in museological terms) need not detract from the focus here on how culture as a central organising policy is deployed. In Article 1 of the UNESCO Universal Declaration of on Cultural Diversity it is stated that

*"Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the **uniqueness and plurality of the identities** of the groups and societies making up humankind. **As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity,** cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is common heritage of humanity and should be recognised and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations."*

Here, emphasis is on the diversity of culture that has material aspects and is a source of ideas – exchange, innovation and creativity-, and these particular aspects, regardless of the diversity of its manifestation is what makes us human and gives us unique identities. Of course there are many other definitions of culture, and much debate, but as a descriptive tool for research and analysis in museums these would serve as adequate as any other. The South African policy on culture and heritage draws on this conception. It can be said that culture, broadly speaking, provides a set of material and symbolic resources that are in abundant supply. These definitions of culture are highlighted because they provide strong links with the policy guidelines and with definitions of culture in some of the legislative and regulatory framework.

However, it is not the intrinsic value of culture that is important but the way in which culture's material and symbolic resources are read, appropriated, made meaningful for people and applied. In making this link between the material and symbolic resources that inform cultural practices, the principle question to ask is who has access to those "cultural resources and subsequent products" that allows for them to be used in ways that facilitate exchange, innovation, creativity, and ultimately a livelihood, but also in making such "culture" available within a common policy framework, through a tacit of rules, expressed in a multiple layering of bureaucratic procedures, ritualised and symbolically acknowledged, a certain set of value and norms about belonging to a state and nation is inculcated. The re-invention of heritage, history and reconstituting or re-tempering the traditions of specific

cultural groups is subsumed to the overall practices of a state that proclaims unity in diversity. Of course it is paradoxical and might even appear contradictory, and possibly violate provisions of the constitution (for example, cultural or "traditional" practices that may be exclusionary on gender, language or religious grounds), but it does, or potentially, achieves two remarkable outcomes: that, firstly, the making and celebration of variable heritage, cultural identities or particular aspects of language, religion or crafts is done in recognition of diversity and as part of the nation building in a constant process of renewal, disintegration of past practices, and its resurrection anew through its interaction with museums and other state institutions, and secondly, the recognition that everyone, the curator and the audience, the communicator and communicant or receiver and the whole panoptic of bureaucrats, officials and beneficiaries, is knowingly doing this repeatedly and simultaneously with many others about whose background, idiosyncratic identities and specific cultural proclivities they know little or nothing.

This is not to suggest that such a panoptic vision is complete and works efficiently. It is on an everyday level, messy, inconsistent and not always applied equitably. It is also equally possible, as many museums and state departments responsible for cultural institutions are likely to do, to have profiles or more likely to develop a set of profiles of their institutional links through reports, boards or councils, as well as their likely beneficiaries and service organisations. In the case of their beneficiaries this might be called cultural profiling, which I now to turn to

Cultural Profiling

While the general conception of culture as an intrinsic set of material and symbolic values has been established and as an analytical and empirical category for research and analysis, the notion of cultural profiling tries to establish principle ways of accessing this in clear, efficient and verifiable ways. Cultural profiling then refers to a comprehensive understanding of "social dynamics involved in community based efforts". Such profiles will to a greater or lesser extent detail issues on various aspects such as languages spoken within a community, leadership and depth of leadership, influential community members, historical and demographic trends, including in and out migration, economic and social conditions, religious and spiritual practices, local arts, history, traditions, local identities, governance, levels of education and facilities, infrastructure and public services, public safety, health, property ownership as well as leisure and recreation. It is here that the identification of the specifics of culture can be usefully used to facilitate exchange, innovation, creativity and livelihoods.

Once again, I want to stress the importance of this approach as a flexible, sophisticated, comprehensive social and cultural understanding of a community, not a simple list of categories on a check list that can be ticked, and by doing so emphasize the self-containment of that particular community as a social and cultural isolate. In stressing this non-essentializing aspect I want to raise the issue of cultural diversity and multiculturalism. In my analysis above, I suggested cultural institutions such as museums are important in developing a national consciousness – a national identity or a community of nationals in spite of the diversity through a particular lens I have labelled policy. I have argued that in the long term this has the effect of asserting a particular brand of govermentality over citizens, who, knowingly or unknowingly, through a ritualised process of adherence to policy guidelines and

legislative requirements, are incorporated into desirability of the citizenship process of nation building and identification as subjects of a nation. But this process is not unambiguous or without contradiction and tensions. I now turn to explore within the policy or policies on culture what might be the unresolved issues and contradictions that may implode the seemingly neat model laid out above.

Cultural diversity

In the late 1980s and early 1990s many people expressed a profound concern about the risks of cultural homogeneity in face of rampant economic and/or trade globalisation. In the corridors of UNESCO these concerns were raised by developing countries, or the nations of the South, who felt on the verge of being encapsulation by the national economies of the North. Quite often this concern was raised in the context of cultural hegemony and imperialism.[18]

The one explanation offered for the attempt at cultural hegemony was the contention that it results in the clash of civilisations out of which the triumphant civilisation would dominate the world. Often this has been portrayed as the clash between Islamic and western Christian civilisation[19]. I will not indulge the hypocrisy of this theory, save to say that the notion of cultural imperialism has better currency in terms of explaining the spread of ideas from external sources into a receiving culture or cultures within nation states, albeit with different nuances as to its reception, resistance and acceptance among the receiving or affected population.

What is important is that UNESCO took a very different perspective. From the late 1950s onwards it has consistently argued for the notion of inter-cultural dialogue (Principles of International Cultural Co-operation, 1966; The Convention on the means of Prohibiting and preventing Illicit Import, Trade, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), the Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and natural Heritage (1972), the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (1976) Recommendation on Safeguarding Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989), the World Conference on Cultural Policies (1982) Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (1998) and most recently the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001). All these declarations and agreements and convention stress:

• The importance of intercultural dialogue
• Preservation of cultural diversity
• Culture and heritage is not unchanging, but a creative and adaptive process
• Such processes are universal, where cultures flourish that come into contact with one another.

The important point is that such intercultural dialogue takes place beyond the consumption of culture in commoditised forms or as consumer goods to be exchanged and purchased in the market. Indeed, UNESCO argues for the dialogue and exchange to take place within legal parameters.

[18]See, for example, Edward Said's books, *Orientalism* (London: Vintage, 1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 2005) and *John Tomlinson, Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Continuum, 1991).
[19]See, Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

At the heart of these policy recommendations by the UNESCO are the following

- Cultural diversity is a value in itself – it should mirror the concern for biodiversity.
- Respect for diversity should simultaneously benefit the creative dynamic within a culture.
- Inter-cultural dialogue should lead to cultural development

All this amounts to greater sophistication in absorbing and assimilating new experiences, practices and ideas in developing its own cultural dynamics. While the idea of culture as explicitly about the material, tangible (such as monuments, sites – basically the tangible material culture) and the symbolic (the ideas, values, norms and practices – the intangible culture) persists, there is an understanding of culture as a means towards an end. That is to say culture also embodies the following:

- Culture as ideological, such as a tool for nation building
- Culture as identity
- As a vantage point to develop critical insights into society

UNESCO lays down an internationally accepted normative foundation for the celebration of cultural diversity, or multiculturalism. It is a position that politically stands for the recognition of the heterogeneous nature of the cultural and ethnic makeup of modern societies. It is a call for addressing the relations between cultural groups that must accommodate, rather than repress, suppress, or simply ignore the multiplicity of social and cultural identities. It calls for the social equality of defined social/cultural identities. Yet in UNESCO formulation there is an implicit recognition of its conceptual limitations. Indeed, there are at least two conceptions of multiculturalism embedded in the UNESCO discourse to which I want to make explicit reference because they emerge in reference to identities and the freedom to explore those identities. It is also a tension that is implied in the South Africa constitution, as I indicated above. The first conception is one that celebrates difference in itself, where difference is reduced to an ethnic label, implying a coherent homogenous entity (and at its most vulgar, a racial label), whereas the second conception sees difference, more specifically cultural difference, as a "thing" to be unpacked and reconstituted in different ways to make it meaningful for those practising their culture and provides opportunities for others to participate in what may be deemed an exotic culture, or more pointedly to participate in a cultural milieu that may not be originally ascribed as a result of familial or inherited or historical background. In short, the freedom to choose by reasoning what kind of cultural practices they wish to embrace. (Of course the usual limitation of the constitution applies in how cultures are practised.) By posing the question in this way, the issue that is being raised is how do human beings see themselves, or more pertinently, how do others see particular cultural groups, belongings and identities.

In the first conception of multiculturalism, that is, that which sees it as a value in itself, the idea of cultural identity is closely tied to a set of ascribed, inherited traditions, especially in their belief systems (not necessarily simply religion) or the community one originates from or were born into. In short it is a cultural identity that is automatically, ascribed and "unfreely" associated with a person, over and above any other associations or identity markers such as a profession, class, gender, religion, charity work, politician, trade unionist, language, or any other associations. In this conception, then, multiculturalism is, at best, nothing but the tolerance of diversity.

Culture becomes a set of imposed social identities on to a predetermined group. In the second conception, such presumptions are mitigated, perhaps even undermined, by the choice that a person makes about what she/he wishes to pursue and the active construction of their culture around those attributes. While there can be much debate over what are the implications of this distinction, two critical sets of features with respect to these two conceptions can be made. Firstly, the distinction is one of enclave cultural practices as opposed to freely entered into cultural practices, where the former model closes off any possibility of freely entered into cultural associations and explorations, and possibilities of integration, assimilation or accommodation.

In the enclave model the following features may be present:

a. The treatment of cultural groups as discrete units, isolated from other cultural influences
b. Begins to treat such discrete units as total systems of meanings, values, norms and symbols, detached from their social and economic embededness in a wider political-economy

In creating this act of separation (not unlike the apartheid technicians tried to do) it begins to treat the idea of culture as the property of a group or race. It reifies culture as separate entities and in doing so risks

• Exaggerating a group's distinctiveness, thus creating an artificial boundedness, which in turn feeds ethic chauvinism

• Creating the impression of cultural homogeneity of cultures and communities which profess those cultural identities

• Legitimising acts of repression to create conformity (e.g. no women must wear trousers, or short skirts whose hem must not exceed knee height)

The logic of these kinds of conceptions is that cultural meanings can only be valorised within an exclusively defined group. Thus, for example, a culture of democracy in a multiple ethnic society with cross cutting social ties becomes impossibe. It means that economic and political ties and other identities as part of everyday activities must be suspended for democratic elections because a group of people are not allowed to vote because there is no ethnic representative

By contrast the second conception does not question the need for multiculturalism, but registers itself as an issue more broadly:

• Being born in to a particular cultural milieu is not an impediment to cultural liberty or freedom to choose and practice one's culture (as the South African constitution enjoins all who live in it to do, that is, beyond the official citizens)

• If a person decides to choose to stay confined to a particular cultural group, it is a free active choice that is made

• Cultural or ethnic background or being born into a particular religious background does not disqualify a desire to participate in cultural association of other people

The contrast I wish to draw out is the association of culture with imposed attributes or associations, as opposed those that are freely chosen.

What I am suggesting here is that affiliations are not sacrosanct. Indeed it can be argued there is no need for identities to be mediated through the govermentality processes I outlined above.

Policy implications

In the first model, a policy scenario encourages insularity and promotion of a narrow inward looking citizenry. It obliges the state to identify cultural groups by a set of fixed criteria and without reference to any possible set of historical influences, present day interactions and combinations, or new directions and any kind of cultural imaginings. Apartheid woud be the best example. But so too would be a logical outcome of national groups identified in the Freedom Charter: four nations are identified that make up South Africa. Such a position where groups are pre-determined, further denies possibilities of cultural learning, creativity, the adoption and influences on cultural practices through a process of exposure, integration, assimilation or accommodation with other forms of cultural expressions mediated or transmitted through the museum experience. At its most benevolent such a policy option relies on a reflexive mode of thinking that closes off influences from the outside on the grounds of previous domination and subjugation, colonialism, cultural imperialism, marginalisation through neo-liberal globalisation and so forth. While attempting to limit such negative influences, the state or policy making body would want to put in place its own vision of what a cultural policy linked to utopian desires might be without reference to external influences. While such a policy scenario may seem extreme in an interconnected and globalised world, it is entirely within the realm of possibility that the state invokes a desire to allow, in the name of cultural rights and tolerance, specific programmes or projects. For example, a specific cultural intervention by the state that allows faith based educational programmes immediately places parameters around how to interpret, teach and learn about a broad range of societal issues, not least of which is an ideological perspective on other religions. This does not encourage openness, critical assessment and choice, but narrowly defined theological inspired pedagogical perspectives, rather than an educational system that is agnostic about religious beliefs, promoting critical thinking, and adoption of diversity as a central plank of its cultural policy. The creationists/evolutionist debate comes to mind or the very different conceptions of the divine origin of humans in, for example, the religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as against that of Hinduism or Buddhism or Taoism or the variety of African beliefs on the same issue.

In the second model, the proposition is that cultural diversity is not the result solely of cultural preservation or conservation, but in fact it's opposite: allowing for human decision to make on the basis freedom as what cultural practice to follow or indeed create – whether these are initiation rites or tastes in music and informed decision making. In short, only by exposure to information and reasoning can decisions about cultural practices be made. The critical point is that there is no preconceived idea of what culture is, and least of all what constitutes a cultural/ethnic/minority group. The point is to consider the information that is available, understand what choices are involved in deciding what kinds of cultural practices to pursue, adopt, or amend, and their consequences. Such a process requires a different approach in policy. Rather than govern through a set of stereotypical indicators

of what constitutes a culture, any new conception envisages an open decision making process. In such a policy scenario, the value of what cultural practices are chosen, adopted and practiced is not the result of imposition but rather by choice and reasoning. The fact of allowing for diversity means presenting options to choose from. In short, to be able to choose – the act of cultural freedom – means (albeit in a very instrumental kind of way as presented here) cultural diversity is a consequence of the freedom of choice in cultural matters. In other words, this way of exercising cultural freedom also allows for the choices to be presented in the open, which creates better understanding of other cultures, their practices, and therefore of informed choices.

To illustrate this idea, an example of immigrants coming into a new country may be used. When immigrants come to a new country, it would be unrealistic, not to mention impossible, if they were suddenly forced to adopt the cultural practices of their new country. It might be acceptable, in the interests of cultural diversity or multiculturalism to allow them to continue with their practices. Indeed, it seems appropriate for them to continue their practices. Yet, it would also be unrealistic for them to continue their cultural practices as if nothing in their personal circumstances has changed. The key question is not whether they should or should not practices their culture, but what options do they have, do they understand these options, within what social and political context are they being accepted, and what will be the consequences of their choices. Thus, for example, if women from immigrant groups are forbidden to attend school, or work, or be in public spaces because it is against their cultural norms, it might be that such behavior proceeds from a lack of unsupervised explanation of what the options for both men and women are, and their consequences. More to the point, such behavior would be at the cost of their freedom. In short, it would limit the life changing options for women, and more to the point it would an imposition on those women.

In short, the whole world is assimilated into a one world historical sequence, and in this performs a cultural act, or produces a culture, through research, writing, ideas, policy, modes of giving developmental aid, images, ideas, media etc. which become institutionalised in colonial administration, neo-colonial relationships, inter-governmental relations, universities, museums, etc.

Conclusion

Utopian ideas are more often about what should be now and in the future. They also usually have a romantic tinge, and when enacted into policy or legislation suggest a rather more rational scientific approach with a kind of theological anticipation in the envisaged outcomes. While there might be some debate about whether South Africans really exist, the end point of the current thinking and embedded in heritage policy and legislation is community associated with a broad based South Africanism. I have suggested that policies are not about this kind of black box approach – a policy is the result of a scientific engagement with a problem or issue, and governed with sufficient resources applied to the problem, the envisaged outcome should occur. That particular view I suggested, while not inconsequential in the nature of policy implementation, rather belies a more subtle construction of the designers, implementers and beneficiaries of policy. In the case of museums, it becomes one of the most important institutions of society to construct the ideal citizen that consumes through the steady gaze of museums' exhibitions and displays reconstruction both local and national identities

simultaneously. In South Africa's case a national identity, through the apparent contradictory process of acknowledging diversity of cultural groups and their importance in the construction and contribution to a desire of a single national identity – of identifying and belonging to South Africa over and above its fractional debates about race, ethnicity, religion, cultural beliefs, prejudices and tolerance. This is not to say that issues such as unemployment, corruption, violence and crime are unimportant or are not relevant to what it means to be a South African – indeed, these issues too reflect desires to be a "normal" nation state, or perhaps that this is a normal nation state with a functioning democratic practice that accommodates the extremes. Indeed, as I suggest in the two outcomes models of current culture and heritage policies, there is the political space to disrupt the "rational" policy sequence suggesting a much better approach to evaluate and assess the current trajectories.

I would suggest that a review of actual museum practices within the framework of the current policies might illuminate that its value or its valorisation is not placed on nation, or "presumed homogenous and pure/'authentic" national identities", as national liberation movements tend to do. Instead museums in their interactions with both their publics and the state find that there is a shift towards the ambivalent, disjunctive, temporal and differentiated nature of national identities. Difference is highlighted such as in profiling ethnic or religious minorities, but also migrants, the landless and homeless, unorganized workers, women, the youth etc. not because they wish to highlight these per se, but to counter claims of dominating or totalizing discourses and practices. Emphasis and acceptance of representational and symbolic presences divided from and within the terms of culture and heritage policies often obviates the needs for prioritizing some narratives, discourses, cultural practices over others. This reality of such kinds of power is important in understanding why some forms of heritage or culture are emphasized to the exclusion of others in the colonial and post-colonial situations, especially in post-Apartheid South Africa. Why, while difference is emphasized, and may be constitutionally respected, there is still a struggle for recognition and beyond that in the actual valorisation of heritage and culture in public spaces such as museums? The question highlights the need to recognize that developing policy is itself a multi-layed, complex cultural process. It is a representational process in that one has to imagine it; speak about it; write about it; discuss and debate it and see to its implementation: in others it is culturally embedded, transacted, involves the production and systematic exploration of ideas through language, images, rhetoric, debate and negotiation: above all it must incorporate all groups and interests and their support in a desirable utopian project.

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UNESCO (2001) Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

Biography

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Teachers and Museums

Wayne Alexander

Abstract

This paper explores how 135 teachers in the Cape Peninsula, South Africa understand museums education and how they indicate it adds value to classroom practice. The data gathered was drawn from a survey, conducted between August and October 2012 by the Education and Public Programmes Department of Iziko Museums of South Africa. The purpose of this survey was to ascertain the perceptions of teachers regarding museum education and to highlight the challenges Iziko faces in relation to the museums potential as an educational site.

This paper gives an account of the museums' educational activities while reflecting on how museums can develop their role as sites of thinking and learning. This survey supports the Department of Arts and Culture's (DAC) agenda to support improved educational outcomes in South Africa as Iziko Museums, plays a significant role in the learning processes of all learners.

It is generally recognised that Museum Education offers young people knowledge and skills, and inculcates values and attitudes useful for life long learning. It further affords youth the opportunity to engage in creative problem solving, analytical thinking, and developing social and communication skills, which are all critical for growth and citizenship, as presented in the critical outcomes that underpin education in South Africa.

The findings of the survey give rise to reflections on how museums can develop their potential as sites of learning through various exhibitions, collections and programmes. In addition, the comments collected from teachers also serve as a basis for collaboration and communication between Iziko staff to develop inspiring exhibitions and programmes, increasing the museums potential as an educational site.

Introduction

In 1994, the democratically elected government in South Africa inherited a divided and unequal system of governance. Under apartheid, the education system played a powerful role in reinforcing inequality and imbalances based on the notion of separateness. The apartheid philosophy underpinned all institutions and the museums in South Africa did not escape the political nature of the time, with separate legislations governing the different museums.

However, with the ushering in of democracy in 1994, there has been a plethora of policies on education, heritage and museums, repealing all divisive and discriminatory laws that existed under apartheid, moving towards inclusive, non –discriminatory policies[1].

In light of such policy changes, Iziko Museums, the Southern Flagship Institution (SFI), was formed in 1999 when five clusters of established national museums in and around Cape Town merged. The amalgamation was given legal effect by the Cultural Institutions Act of 1998 and was part of the effort by the Department of Arts and Culture to create national museum institutions aligned with the new government's transformation imperatives, as reflected in the Constitution.

Iziko is an isiXhosa word meaning "hearth' – traditionally and symbolically the social centre where food is prepared and shared stories are told, and knowledge is passed from one generation in to the next. Similarly, the national museums that make up Iziko are spaces for cultural interaction – where people can gather, share, learn and connect with our art, social and natural history.

In keeping with the transformative imperatives, the social, economic, cultural and educational context of the 21st Century clearly demands new ways of thinking about the arts, culture, heritage and museum sector. This thinking is aimed at involving young people as active and reflective participants in society.

Museums remain an important structure in the field of generating knowledge and sharing information. More recently, museums are globally recognized as public education resources for lifelong learning and development aimed at cultivating a museum culture, sharing knowledge and raising awareness. This is a change from the traditional concept of museums as places for preserving, collecting, exhibiting, conducting surveys, researching and conveying traditional culture to future generations.

As such, great demand has been placed on museums as sites of learning and thinking. The education programmes at the museums are in general cross-curricula with an array of learning and teaching forms. The activities are based on the museum's core fields of art, social history and natural history and aligned to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) of the National Department of Education.

[1] White Paper on Education and Training, 1995.
  Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) (Act No. 108 of 1996)
  National White Paper on arts, Culture and Heritage, 1996
  Cultural Institutions Act (Act No. 119 of 1998)

Exploring teachers' understanding of museum education was informed by a social justice agenda, drawing on both national and international information. At a national level, the study was informed by the constitution of the country, aimed at breaking down the barriers of apartheid. From an international perspective, the study draws on the vision of UNESCO (2003) that education, including museum education, needs to find content and learning strategies that enable all to learn to live together.

Drawing on theory, those working in the field of social justice, such as Pendlebury and Enslin (2004) argue that educational and political inclusions are interdependent and lie together at the core of social justice. Learning at educational sites, including museums is about restoring and inculcating dignity while contributing to the quality of life and improving the life chances of people. As museums we need to ask, "Do museums add value to the life's of people?" Museums, specifically in the context of our imbalanced past in South Africa are now being challenged to actively confront past inequities, and offer educational programmes underpinned by social justice.

Given South Africa's historical past and diversity, an approach suggested by Ladson-Billings (1990), Gay (2000), Ball (2000) is that of cultural responsive teaching. This approach places emphasis on respecting cultures and using the experiences of various groups as meaningful resources for teaching and learning. It is marked by showing respect for human dignity while offering teaching styles that are inclusive, dialogic and cognizant of just educational opportunities for all learners, aimed at providing the opportunities for learners to develop critical skills. In all of this, the most disadvantaged and poor whose social, economic, and political discrimination placed them at an educational disadvantage and at risk, should receive focused consideration (Goduka, 1999; Alexander, 2009).

Furthermore, constructivist theory, in particular a more critical approach to –how people learn, construct, deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge – informed the discussions. The principles of constructivism, in particular the principles of meaning making and social construction are increasingly influencing the organization of classrooms and curricula in schools and are particularly relevant to learning in museums (Carr et al., 1994; Fensham et al, 1994; Hein, 1998). While knowledge is being generated and presented in varied forms in museums, it is noted that learners construct knowledge for themselves by making meaning of the objects, collections and exhibitions displayed. Fosnot (2005) suggests that constructivism is not a theory about teaching, but rather a way to think about how meaningful learning takes place between teachers and learners.

The process of constructing meaning is always placed within a social context, aware of the technological process of power, language and practices which construct and offer learners particular views of themselves and the world (Giroux, 1991). Drawing on Goduka (1999) the learning experience should be contextually relevant and culturally sensitive providing programmes that resonate with the life experiences of learners.

Despite the multi-faceted challenges, I am of the opinion that Museums must attract not only young people but also diverse audiences. Furthermore, by embracing cultural diversity, Iziko museums will significantly benefit its growth and sustainability. It cannot stand aloof from issues confronting society and risk the possibility of being marginalized by the very community it is intended to serve.

Methodology

This study focused on the link between museum education and classroom practice in the context of socio-political transformation in South Africa. It draws on the notion that the pedagogic task of museum education cannot be separated from the social task. The interest in exploring how teachers understand museum education derives from a perspective that teachers have varied backgrounds and experiences and teach in varied school contexts. The study was open to the multifarious conceptions and experiences of museum education expressed by the teachers.

The questionnaire itself elicited both quantitative and qualitative data and was completed by teachers who accompanied their learners to the Iziko Slave Lodge, Iziko South African Museum and the Iziko South African National Gallery. Of the 224 schools that visited the three sites over the period, 135 teachers completed the questionnaire. The teachers were from five Pre-primary, 63 Primary and 17 High schools, representing a total of 85 schools.

The questionnaire consisted of eleven questions and considered:
 • Demographics
 • Teachers' understanding of museum education
 • Visit expectations
 • Links to subjects and value to classroom practice
 • Teaching approaches at museums
 • Museum resources

Findings:

Type of School

The description of the demographics of the participants involved in the study is presented to show the diverse historical, geographic and socio-economic environment and the segregation policy of the apartheid government. Given our apartheid history in South Africa, coloured people could only be employed at House of Representative Schools (HOR schools), white teachers at House of Assembly Schools (HOA schools), black teachers at Department of Education and Training (DET schools) and Indian teachers at House of Delegates (HOD schools). The majority of teachers at the former departments represented the race they were expected to teach and were generally shaped by former socio – historical factors.

The schools that visited the museums during the period were categorized using former apartheid classification systems. Thirty two schools from the former Department of Education (DET) (black),

thirty six schools from the former House of Representative (HOR) (coloured), sixty three schools from the former House of Assembly (HOA) (white, former model C) and one House of Delegate (HOD) (Indian) visited the sites where the questionnaire was administered. The percentage breakdown of the sample is; DET (37, 6%); HOR (42, 4%); HOA (74, 1%); HOD (1.2%). It is worth noting that during this period of the survey, HOA schools dominated the study, as presented in the graph 1.

While schools have integrated, geography, access and affordability still determine school of choice, reflected in the shadow of privilege engineered by apartheid. The population demographics are such that single race schools, especially among the poor still exist (Nkomo et al, 2004; Soudien, 2004; Chisholm and Sujee, 2006, Chisholm, 2009). My observations of schools visiting the museum have been that most black learners still attend schools that are predominantly black.

Historically, education in South Africa consisted of both advantaged and disadvantaged schools, which reflected different economic, race, and language compositions (Alexander, 2009). The former HOA (white) schools remain the most advantaged, reflecting easier access to cultural and financial capital. On the other hand, there are large numbers of disadvantaged schools where conditions are challenging, specifically in relation to the environmental conditions.

In general, many of the black and coloured schools in this sample, based on where they are located, were affected by the general problems widespread in the South African education system, characterized by issues of resources, discipline, poverty, lack of parental involvement and socio-economic challenges.

Graph 1: Number of School Visiting by Former Department, September - October
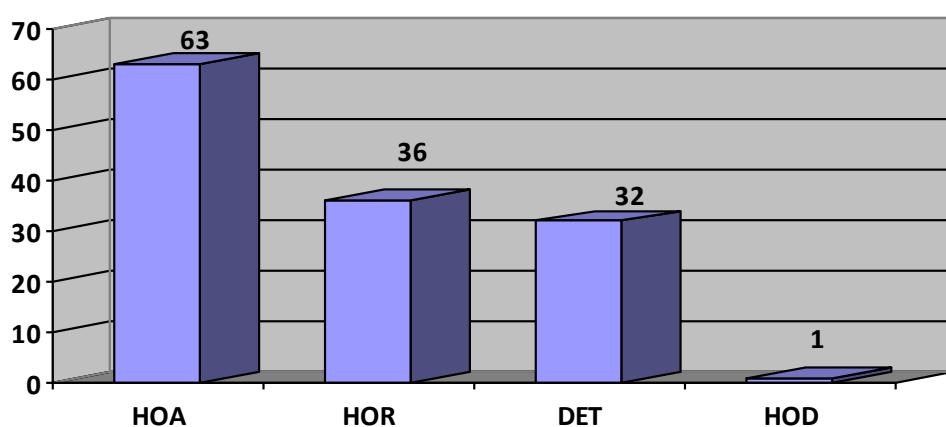
The graph reveals that during the period of the survey, visits to the museum are still mostly by schools from former white schools who economically still have access to better resources than other schools. The notion of access and affordability precipitated Iziko Museums to subsidize transport and visits to the museums by historically disadvantaged schools as the museum's location plays a role in terms of accessibility. The free transport and lowering the entrance fee has resulted in an increase of historically disadvantaged schools visiting the museums.

Language of learning and teaching (LOLT)

The first question focused on the issue of language. The language of learning and teaching (LOLT) is best described as the language medium through which all teaching, instruction and communication at a particular school takes place.

The sample showed that ninety schools indicated English as their LOLT, thirty Afrikaans, twelve English and Afrikaans; therefore characterized as dual medium, five, English and Xhosa, dual medium and one was Sesotho (see graph 2).

Graph 2: Language of Learning and Teaching
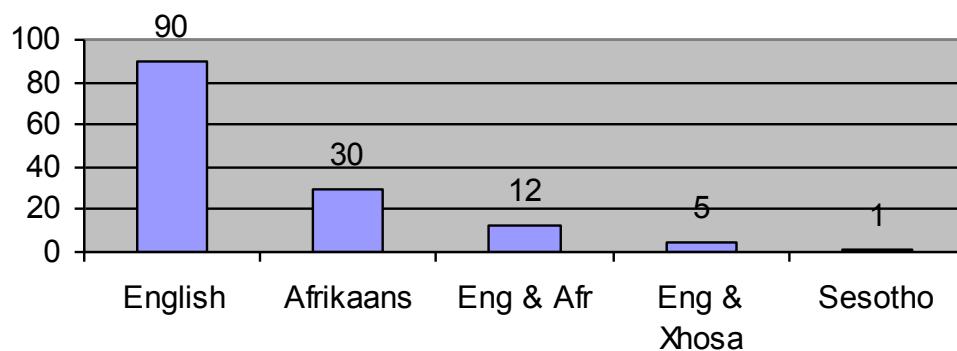
The majority of schools that visited the museum cited English as the language of learning and teaching, and also as the main medium of communication at Iziko Museums of South Africa. However, many schools do prefer another language, which remains a challenge for the museum as it mainly presents its lessons and tours in English. There were comments that presentations in the learners' "mother tongue" would add to the learners' understanding and experience. It is argued that language influences learning since language and learning are inextricably intertwined (Pile and Smythe, 1999, PRAESA, 1999).

As expressed by some teachers in this sample, having presentations, resources and labels of objects in the learners' language of learning enhances the learning process. It becomes a learning challenge and barrier for learners whose "mother tongue" is not English. Despite its access policy, "mother tongue" engagement and multilingualism remains a challenge for Iziko whose business culture is English.

School Programmes and Grades Distribution

The museum has a school programme that caters for all grades – Grade R to Grade 12 - in the field of art, social history, natural history, science, technology and astronomy. The schools that visit the Iziko sites are encouraged to select the programme in which they wish to engage.

During the period the survey was conducted, the museums were visited by the following number of school grades:

Graph 3: Number of Visitors per Grade during September and October
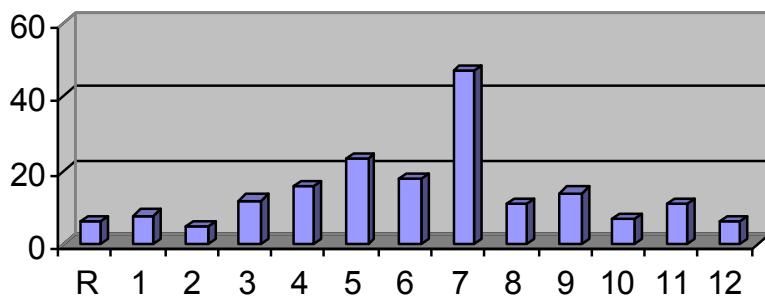
Drawing on the data, visits to the museums during the survey were mainly by primary schools, Grade 1 to 7 and age group – 6 to 13 years. It would appear that only very few high schools, despite the professional specialist knowledge at museums, visit museums. This is an area for development and certainly a factor to consider when planning exhibitions and programmes.

Although, South Africa has come a long way in terms of change, increasing access to learning, challenges such as access to resources prevail. This is an area where museums can make a contribution given its wealth of educative resources – human, array of objects and researched content.

Objects/ Exhibitions and curriculum knowledge

The question; *Do the exhibitions and objects on display add more value to your learners understanding of the curriculum? If yes, which subjects do they cover mainly?*

There was an overwhelming "*yes*" response to this question, confirming that the exhibitions and objects on display at the museums do add to the knowledge base of the learners. In this regard, access to museum specialists is increasingly becoming a request, which may place challenges on Iziko staff. This, however, may be remedied through a more co-operative arrangement across Iziko departments so that, for example, curators and scientists allocate time to interact with the public and so share new knowledge while doing so.

Hein (1998) reminds us that learners come to us with a wealth of existing, already organised knowledge. It is upon this knowledge structure that learners hang new information, creating new links to their pre-existing knowledge. Museums contribute to this knowledge construction by providing opportunities for visitors to think, learn, make meaning, analyze and reflect.

Drawing on theory, the understanding that knowledge is socially constructed has challenged traditional views of museums. We need to realize and accept that visitors will follow their own agendas and construct their own knowledge structures. In many ways, museums provide some of the most real learning experiences people ever encounter, thus expanding the learning opportunity for learners.

In respect to museums and school subjects, the data gathered revealed the following:

Graph 4: Museum Education to School Subjects by Teachers
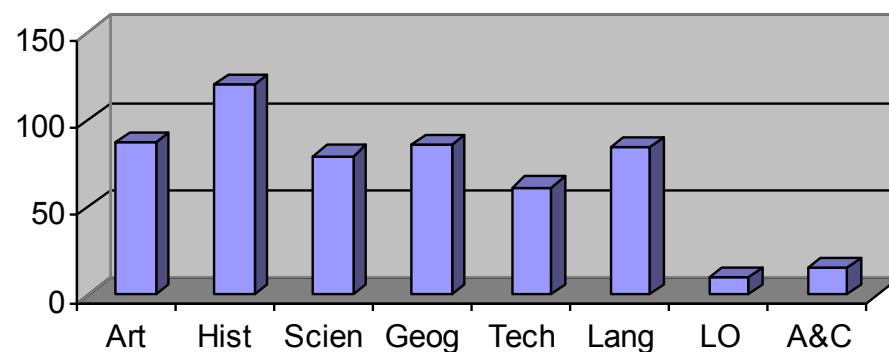
The majority of teachers responded that museums are relevant to many school subjects, which included history, art, geography, language, science and technology. Most of the educational offerings at Iziko are directed at the subject history; however the educational offerings are characterized by being cross-curricula. The connection to history is not surprising as Iziko museums have nine social history sites. Although not part of the grid offered in the questionnaire, ten teachers indicated the link to Life Orientation/skills (a subject taught from grades 1 to 12) and 16 to Arts and Culture, a subject that is taught from Grades 1 to 9, where emphasis is placed on cultural diversity and citizenship.

Furthermore, teachers in this study claimed that at the museum the learners are generally unaware of time and for most the time passed so quickly. By applying skills and knowledge learnt at school into a real life activity, the activities instilled in learners a sense of excitement and emphasized the relevance of problem solving and teamwork. It is noted that some exhibitions – depending on age and grade - enthralled learners more than others. So, getting the balance right, having exhibitions and programmes that allow for interactive, interpretive and reflective processes in the 21st century is a challenging factor for museums.

In museum education, it is common to find a thematic approach to issues that provide much variety and enable the development of interesting activities that are linked. However, as a cautionary measure, one needs to consider what is linked, and why the links are made when planning activities around a particular issue. In some cases these links can become superficial and may lead to problems of conceptual coherence and trivializing of some issues.

It is noteworthy, from the information gathered, that teachers view the visit to the museum as adding to the achievement of the outcomes of the curriculum in at least eight subjects. The varied numbers would be linked to the museum sites visited and the theme/topic expected to be covered by the museum educator.

The introduction of a new curriculum in South Africa has provided an opportunity to incorporate a number of cross curricular themes linked to heritage, history, science, art and other subjects in the curriculum. However, concern should be expressed in certain discipline areas, such as history and art that are under threat. It remains essential for museums to act as support education structures and facilitators for communities to explore a shared heritage. In addition to the knowledge and skills components of learning, museums play an important role in developing citizenship, human rights and the inculcation of values such as respect for diversity.

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) provides the basis for curriculum development in South Africa and also governs processes at museums. Inspired by the constitution, the critical outcomes that underpin all learning in South Africa include problem solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, working with others, organizational skills, analytical skills, communication skills, awareness and responsibility, learning strategies, responsible citizenship, respecting diversity, exploring career opportunities and entrepreneurial opportunities. These outcomes are also central to learning at Iziko, framed by the notion of social justice.

Museum and Classroom Practice

The teachers surveyed offered an overwhelming *"yes"* to the question: *Do the lessons offered at the museum sites add value to your classroom practice?*

To quote a Grade 7 teacher,

> *"Coming to the museum helps with making things real for our learners and also builds on what has been learnt in the classroom"*

There has been a continuous voice from the sample that exhibits take into account how learners may view and interpret the collections. It is generally accepted that museums provide the things that are real and authentic. History, heritage, objects, collections are to be used to enrich the world of our learners and future generations.

Museums offer visitors experiences with objects involving modalities such as, look and see, touch and tell, interactivity, explore and experiment which may also include technology. To quote a Grade 5 teacher,

> *"the learners should be able to touch some stuff and lessons are to be more interactive"*

Museums are important sites of learning allowing people access where they are welcomed, embraced, stimulated and offered space for critical inter-generational dialogue while advocating respect for diversity.

Further to the notion of classroom practice, teacher enrichment sessions at Iziko are aimed at adding to the content knowledge and skills of teachers in their respective areas of expertise.

Teaching Approach

Under this category, the question was – *Did you find our teaching approach to be: interactive, inclusive, formal, informal, stimulating, educative and fun? The teachers had to tick the appropriate block.*

Graph 5: Teaching Approach using Museum Education
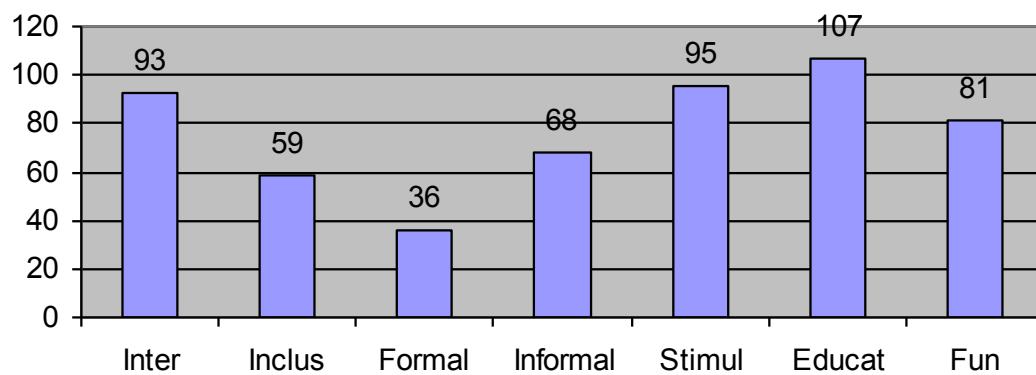
Most find the approach to be educative, followed by stimulating, interactive, fun, informal, inclusive and formal (see graph 5 above). Some commented that the learners enjoyed themselves so much that they were unaware that they were actually learning. Learning at museums is marked by how we present objects, how we allow visitors to interact with objects, and how we help visitors to relate the objects to their prior knowledge.

However, noteworthy comments such as:

"It was not interactive enough"

"Some exhibitions not child friendly and interactive"

"Too much to take in"

"Some educators spoke too much"

"Would like exposure to the backrooms"

"Would like to interact with the curators and scientists"

require examination by the education department at Iziko. The experience of the visitors should be noted and acted upon to create an inclusive and meaningful learning experience.

Learning in the museums includes emotional, social, contemplative, recreational and attitudinal aspects, all of which have been documented by researchers seeking to characterize the nature of the visitor's experience. An understanding of theses aspects is essential to developing exhibitions, exhibiting objects and teaching approaches that reach learners in ways meaningful to them. Hein (1998) makes the point that learning is an active process that includes the hand, mind and heart.

Using different forms of modalities marks interactive learning, inclusive of different learning styles. This includes reading; listening, smelling, touching and the use of technology, underpinned by multiple intelligence theory as espoused by (Gardner, 1999). Museums need to provide all visitors with connecting points allowing them entry into the exhibits regardless of their diverse backgrounds, learning styles and learning experiences.

An appeal by museum visitors - in this case the teachers - is for the freedom to explore a variety of exhibits, artifacts, and programmes, which often inspires a sense of discovery and wonder that motivates further exploration. The teaching approach is to lead to a deeper appreciation and understanding of the exhibit, leading to a worthwhile museum experience. A worthwhile museum visit is one that is enjoyable and stimulating, whereby learners leave feeling excited and enthusiastic while assisting with improved educational outcomes in South Africa.

Lessons at Iziko are presented by staff with varied educational and professional backgrounds and primarily take place in the exhibition spaces. However some sites have special classrooms for presentations and practical activities. The activities are based on sound education theory and methodology, while the objects and collections used were specifically identified for education purposes. The education material used is a central part of the education programme, and the resources developed are aligned to the National Education Curriculum, an important agreement with Department of Education. The development of digital educational material remains a priority but using the staff resources appropriately in order to deliver quality education programmes should always be a consideration.

What is museum education all about?

The teachers' response to the question, *what is museum education all about*; span a range of concepts, which may be marked by the following themes:

  a) Creativity, Originality, Authenticity

  b) Interesting, Stimulating, Explorative

  c) Strengthening of knowledge and Skills

  d) Culture, Heritage and History

  e) Social Justice

The table represents some of the thoughts offered by the teachers.

Table 1: What is museum education about?

Creativity, Originality, Authenticity	Interesting, Stimulating, Explorative	Strengthening of knowledge and Skills	Culture, Heritage and History	Social Justice
Making visits more real	Experiential	Serves as extension to curriculum	Bring heritage to life	Linking things to life challenges
More exciting and creative way	Stimulates the imagination	Integrated to other curriculum learning	Historical	Social issues Looking at our past wrongs.
Seeing models of the real thing	Tactile experience	Education beyond the classroom	Cultural experience	Colonial issues
Seeing things differently	Explore and enquire	Extend child's knowledge	Learning about our heritage.	
Receiving authentic information	Touch the objects	Making history tangible		
Reality closer to the learner	Visual and tactile	Seeing beyond the textbook		
	Experience the greatness of the world	Expert knowledge being imparted		
	Make use of all the senses	Expansion to the talk and chalk		
	Experiential learning	Broaden the child's experience		
		Visual experience of what taught in classroom		
		Understand better what leant in the classroom		
		Pivotal role in the learning process		

To quote a teacher; *"when we visit the museum we want the experience to add to what we have done in the classroom and broaden our learners knowledge"*.

The teachers' response to the question, what do you expect from visiting our museum with your school group? were marked by the following categories.

a) Expanded opportunities (learning experience beyond the boundaries of the classroom)

b) Interactive approaches (learning through doing and interacting with the different objects, exhibitions and resources)

c) New knowledge (new and current information shared)

d) Culture, History, Heritage and Life (deeper understanding of history, heritage and cultures)

e) Inclusive, Friendly Environment (all learners welcomed, all languages accommodated)

f) Access to resources

The table reflects some of the response as linked to the various categories.

Table 2: What to expect when visiting museums?

Expanded opportunities	Interactive Explore, touch and tell	New Knowledge	Culture, history, heritage and life	Inclusive, Friendly Environment	Access to Resources
Short focused interactive discussions	Extend learners knowledge	Introduced to new ideas	Expose learners to the past	Explain in simple and coherent language	Exposure to visual resources
More practical explanations for the little ones	Expand on topics covered in class	Application of knowledge	Respect nature and value life	Warm hospitality	Detail, great visuals and excitement
First hand experience and knowledge to understand the curriculum better	See and talk about things	Exposure to current knowledge	Better understanding of history and the world and South Africa	Treated respectfully	Bringing to life the schools curriculum
Hands on experience outside of the classroom	Explore, feel and see the real thing	Greater insight for learners		Friendly reception	Learners to experience what we cannot show them in the classroom.

	Observe and Explore			Patient tour guides	Exposed to more detail, info and slides, artifacts
				Understand young learners with passion	Visual learning
				Know the topic and know how to work with children	

In making museums meaningful learning sites, museum staff and departments cannot operate in silos; rather they need to use their expertise to develop exhibitions and programmes that will offer the learner a holistic and meaningful experience.

Conclusion

Relevant museum education within a South African context has to take cognizance not only of the local cultural diversity but also the wide array of knowledge that marks the diversity of our humanity. This survey showed that museums are important learning sites that add value to classroom practice.

The shifts from traditional museums practices to a social justice agenda that may not be congruent with the professional interests of museum staff are all forces that impact on practice. The gap between the constitutional mandate educational, cultural policy and social reality remains, and the challenge is to bring together the constructs that inform the practices to reflect social transformation.

South Africa is divided by the burdens of its historical legacy, and the mandate enshrined in the constitution of South Africa is to see how policies are implemented to address issues of social justice. The terrain of policy needs to understand whether existing strategies are implementable and what unintended consequences may arise.

Education is an integral part of the museum's practice, aimed at contributing to the achievement of the National Basic Education outcomes of South Africa. Education, like museum education is informed by the constitution of South Africa, instituted in 1996, with museum education having a role to play in the development of a society based on the values of the constitution – democracy, human rights, human dignity and respect for cultural diversity – promoting a culture of social justice and inclusivity.

While we have witnessed much change, the educational imbalances of the past in South Africa remain unrealized for learners who, whether by choice or circumstance, remain outside of the school system or other structured opportunities for systematic learning. These children are generally excluded for reasons of poverty, disease, conflict and associated conditions, and are hence denied the opportunity of a holistic education. Museums play a central role in providing a holistic museum experience aimed at recovering and reconstructing South Africa's cultural heritage.

This survey aimed to respond to current museum education practice, purporting that museums have a role in the construction of education. It is imperative for museum staff to understand the role that museums play in joining knowledge and power and how this is presented in our exhibitions and programmes.

The background of teachers and the history of South Africa all impact on the perceptions that teachers have about museums. Upon a closer examination of the interplay of factors, what stood out was that museum education was understood as an all-encompassing concept underscored by notions of Creativity, Originality, Authenticity, Interesting aspects, Stimulating experiences, Explorative, Strengthening of knowledge and Skills, Culture, Heritage, History and Social Justice. Teachers also expressed a sense that visiting museums should be characterized by a learning environment that allows for expanded learning opportunities; one that is interactive while also offering a touch and tell experience. In addition, the attainment of new knowledge as it relates to culture, history, heritage and life remains important. Learning remains complex and it is important for exhibits to provide different kinds of entry points, using various modalities to cater for and attract a wider range of learners.

Against the socio-historical background of South Africa, the findings of the survey influenced the Strategic Plan of Iziko Museums of South Africa. In the foreword of the plan, Iziko demonstrates its commitment to the issue of social justice and education. The sentence reads:

"As spaces of heritage, museums are important in educating people of social issues such as poverty and illiteracy, and in turn act as catalysts for social change" (Iziko Strategic Plan, 2013 to 2018).

Furthermore the varied school experiences and expectations have influenced the structuring of learning opportunities at the museum while the voice of teachers continue to contribute to the ongoing discourse on museum education within the rich cultural diversity of South Africa.

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Biography

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Politics and the Presentation of Cultures in Museums

Zvjezdana Antos

Abstract

Collections have to be constantly interpreted and reinterpreted in order to extend knowledge about the collected objects. It is a well-known fact that each museum is defined by its collections, but a contemporary museum cannot offer its visitors only the elements of the past. That is why museums encounter the questions of how to give a new meaning to objects in the interaction with a multicultural community. Some museums have succeeded in opening a dialogue with their communities or their representatives by relating them to the objects in museum collections. Restitution of items to communities of their origin is considered to be one of the most liberal gestures towards the native population in the past several years, referring in particular to the protection of their right to cultural property. In this sense, it is necessary to establish a dialogue and enable communication and preservation of the "living" heritage, where new technologies will have an important role to play. One important achievement is the possibility of aggregating visual, textual and graphic records in cyber space, which enables participation of various communities and sharing of information about their history and opinions. Cybermuseology will be able to transform the museum environment in the future and help museums to solve certain problems.

Introduction

Having never been neutral, museums have always mirrored political landscapes. Various political enmities (a war between countries or diplomatic scandals) have been reflected in museum collections so, for instance, objects from the "enemy" country were banned from permanent or temporary exhibitions. In the same manner, some objects have been used to prove the autochtony of the dominant population, as was the case with numerous exhibitions in many european countries.There are still numerous examples from our recent past, as well as from further back in history. Political aspects inevitably reflect on the visitors. "Europeisation" itself hides a lot of injustice, for example to the peoples that waged wars (Bosnians, Albanians etc.), to the refugees from the Eastern Mediterranean, to the countries with a deep economy crisis (Greece, Romania etc.), but also to West and East Europe. There have and will always exist differences in "equality". Ethnographic museums in particular face a difficult and complex question of how to represent a culture. Every new permanent exhibition should primarily show cultural contacts and conflict that have left their mark on a particular culture. Current policy of reconciliation and repatriation should also embrace the idea of giving back objects to indigenous populations from some museums. In spite of complex histories museums have to show the "truth". Museums have to set the balance, which is an extremely difficult task since we live in the world going through intensive political changes. Some museums, like the Museum of Civilisations from Europe and the Mediterranean (MuCEM) have a political dimension because the decisions are brought by the highest political authorities, which aim at proving that there is a link between Marseille and the rest of the Mediterranean. The Arabic world is going through significant political changes that will definitely reflect on museums and their collections. The balance between political expectations and scientific interpretation has to be found. Therefore museum professionals face an extremely dificult task.

Reconciliation and repatriation

Museum curators face a new challenge: they have to move away from the focus on authenticity and tradition, and the presentation thereof, and turn to establishing new connections with the community and various target groups to create new links between museums, collections and visitors. As a result, significant changes in the social interaction between the museum and the community occurred in the past two decades. The approach to collecting items started changing in the recent years, as museums began focusing on needs of their users, shifting their primary interest from collecting items to visitors. This caused museums to direct their attention, when collecting items, to the public, i.e. to involve citizens in documenting their history and culture. Besides this, new innovative museum concepts appeared which were oriented towards the public and visitors since the initial planning phase – new museum forms that are participative and interactive. The collection of objects that invites active participation of citizens is extremely important because of their symbolic and emotional role. The significance of the item is further increased and enriched with information about the place where it was found, the owner, the way and how it was used, the memories and emotions the evokes for the owner. What is especially valuable in this is the possibility of establishing contact with numerous people who will tell the story about the role of this item in their lives. Conversation makes it possible to establish dialogue, and also opens up the possibility of collecting old photographs and films or

to tape interviews. This method of collecting objects enables us to place them in a richer context. Museums can learn a lot from Dalai Lama's message: "Significant human dialogue can be preserved only by mutual respect or understanding in the spirit of reconciliation" (Singh 1999).

Some authors (Bell, 2008) consider it important to redefine the concept and meaning of items, because their actual value is not in the items themselves, but rather in their physical manifestation and social relationships. If we focus on the social relationship surrounding a particular item, reconciliation and restitution of the item to the community of its origin becomes very important.[1] "Restitution and Repatriation: *Guidelines for Good Practice*", 2000, was the first publication in Europe to contain advice about the restitution of museum items. Certain objects represent symbols of identity to certain communities. Restitution of museum items makes sense only when the respective heritage or tradition is implemented in daily practice, which is important to the communities concerned. For example, the restitution of several thousands of ethnological and archaeological items from the National Museum of Denmark in the 1980s and 1990s had a great significance for Greenland and helped in understanding its identity and cultural past. Above all, the people of Greenland have direct access to their prehistory through these items, which is a common desire of previously colonised countries. Besides this, policymakers of both countries supported the process of repatriation, which was important not only to politicians but also to scientists. This facilitated the establishment of the Greenland National Museum, a museum institution preserving and exhibiting artefacts according to the most recent trends in museology. The process of repatriation implied cooperation with the former colonial power and between two institutions – two national museums, laying the groundwork for new possibilities of cooperation (Thorleifsen, 2009:25).

In many countries, including Great Britain, this issue is extremely "hot" and the process of restitution is carried out in different ways. How this process should be implemented in practice was, however, relatively unexplored by museum professionals until nowdays.To clarify this issue, museum professionals decided to produce general instructions regarding the restitution of items, but time has shown that every museum institution must approach the problem from a different position, depending on the country, institution and community to which the items originally belonged.

The example of restitution from the National Museum of Denmark demonstrates that it is best to establish a dialogue between institutions and the community to which the items originate. The atmosphere of good fellowship made this process much simpler. Certain museum institutions have large collections constituting world cultural heritage and face the problem of how to determine what they hold in their museum collections. They must study in close detail documents about such items and establish connections with the respective communities. They consider it most useful to photograph or film all data in the museum's catalogue of items and make them publicly available.

[1]The process of repatriation refers to the return of museum items appropriated from countries colonised by big colonial powers. In the USA, the process of restitution of items to the native population started in 1990 (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation art – Nagpra); the initiative is, however, limited to the USA only and does not include international repatriation. A similar organisation, Group on Human Remains in Museum Collections (Flynn, 2004:39) was established in Great Britain in 2000.

Data transparency, establishment of good relationships with various cultural groups and online availability are particularly important for every museum, "because museums have nothing to hide" (Flynn, 2004:41).

Some cultural institutions in Great Britain, like the Horniman museum, decided to return items with religious significance to the communities of their origin, as they represent "holy items" for many of them. In this way, they established a network that is now well functioning. The London Horniman Museum also had a positive, new experience as it returned to the Aborigines of Australia the bones of their ancestors that had been held in the Horniman's collections. This event was considered a cultural enrichment for the museum as museum professionals had the opportunity to attend a private ceremony. During this, they were able to conduct further research, learn more about the site where the items were found and the manner in which they were collected, as well as developing a better understanding of the rituals of the community. In any case, the dialogue about the exchange of items and information continues, creating new connections between museums and communities. Elsewhere, the year 2002 saw the return of the remains of Sara Baartman to South Africa from the Musee de l' Hommes after a protracted period of negotiations with the French government. Put on show between 1810 and 1815 in Parisian pleasure fairs as the Hottentot Venus, her body later entered the world of science of comparative anatomy in the Museum of Natural History in Paris before, eventually, being returned to her people.

Dissemination of knowledge by using the possibilities of interactivity

Restitution of items to communities of origin is considered one of the most liberal gestures towards indigenous populations in the past several years, referring in particular to the protection of their right to cultural property. In this sense, it is necessary to establish a dialogue and enable communication and preservation of the "living" heritage, where new technologies will have an important role to play. One important achievement is the possibility of aggregating visual, textual and graphic records in *cyber space*, which enables participation of various communities and sharing of information about their history and opinions. This is possible if the indigenous population uses the Internet as a medium to present its history, right to land, knowledge and cultural heritage (Zimmerman, 2000). Collecting in an Internet age is composed of discovery, accumulation, categorization, and sharing and collaborating within online communities. As collected objects become more accessible virtually, access is democratized and greater potential for public input and collaboration exists. Such sharing can also repatriate virtually collected objects. This is why new technologies contribute to the strengthening of the existing identity through creation of new social and political spaces.[2]

[2] I am aware not all indigenous communities do have easy access to an internet and so the digital age in fact risks alientating them further from their heritage.

[3] Such example is accessible at the Virtual Collection of Masterpieces site
http://masterpieces.asemus.museum/museums.aspx

A good example is the project ASEMUS[3] – The Asia Europe Museum Network, a network where masterpieces from 90 ethnographic museums of the world are virtually presented. The special value of the project is the presentation of stories about items, which contribute to the mutual understanding of different cultures or civilisations. What I consider particularly interesting are video records of interviews with curators from various museums, where they explain the value of a particular masterpiece and tell interesting stories about each of the items. The objective of the ASEMUS project is to present masterpieces from all over the world at one site and to gather not only large and representative museums, but also small museums that also have masterpieces in their collections.

Cybermuseology will be able to transform the museum environment in the future and help museums to solve certain problems. According to Langlais, "cybermuseology is known as the practice oriented more towards knowledge than to items, which is why its basic objective is to disseminate knowledge using the possibilities of interactivity of Information Communication Technologies" (Langlais, 2005:73-74). Many traditional museum institutions present online museum databases without any deeper meaning besides being digital keeping rooms for items. In other words, if we have no supplementary data about items and no possibility to interact with the community, such information is not sufficient to expand knowledge. If this information does not provide a broader context to items, the public will not understand it and have no need to compare it with similar material. Online museums must enable visitors to create their own contents and add their "life stories". There can be the problem of ideological manipulation, but *cybermuseology* has the need to present intangible heritage as a process that makes sense if transmitted verbally and through personal experience. In this way, *cybermuseology* will create completely new values and experiences of cultural knowledge. Interactivity will offer the visitor a feeling of greater freedom in its experience of presenting knowledge and heritage (Langlais, 2005:76). The content of the online museum for indigenous cultures means for us that we will present museum contents in ways that enable interaction with all visitors who will be able to expand knowledge through this process. The result can be the understanding of individual items and stories, but the most important outcome is to help keep heritage alive.

The global culture created through global electronic media is a universal culture of communication that has become available to everyone. This is why new media have an important role in the understanding of the new culture of globalisation. To Appadurai, the popular mass media culture and migration movements represent factors of identity reconfiguration (Appudarai, 1997:23-45). A challenge for museums is how to distance themselves from items in practice and how to start developing space for dialogue between communities and their audience. This prompted museum practitioners to start considering new contents of online presentation. The present time is an extremely interesting period for museums, because museums undergo a kind of transition, which is confirmed by the fact that representatives of indigenous populations or ethnic communities in certain cities participate at exhibition openings like in the British museum in London or in the Tropen museum in Amsterdam. Works of contemporary artists are exhibited alongside with ethnographic pieces of art, and voices of various ethnic diaspora communities are louder within museum walls than in real life.

How to give a new meaning to objects?

Collections have to be constantly interpreted and reinterpreted in order to extend knowledge about the collected objects. Museums and science have always been closely linked because through objects we can understand who we are, where we come from and what our past was like. For this very reason it is crucial to develop an interdisciplinary approach. It is a well-known fact that each museum is defined by its collections, but a contemporary museum cannot offer its visitors only the elements of the past. That is why museums encounter questions about how to give new meanings to objects in the interaction with a multicultural community. Some museums have succeeded in opening a dialogue with their communities or their representatives by relating them to the objects in museum collections. Members of a community have helped to interpret the objects from museum collections, like temporary exhibitions at the Museum of World Cultures in Göthenbourg, for example *Bollywood*. The quality of a visit has become more important, namely the type of visitor who understands the museum as a place of dialogue, the place where he/she will find answers to many questions. That is why a new museum has become interactive, it does not only offer answers to questions, but also encourages the visitor to think and enables him/her to understand what he/she has seen or gone through in a museum.

A museum communicates with visitors in various manners, one of which is social networks where it invites individuals to participate actively. The significance of social networks has been proved by recent political events, such as when *Facebook* was used to ecourage people to start the revolution in Tunisia. For this reason a number of museums have decided to present their new projects and exhibitions on *Facebook* or *Flicker* to attract new public, which will actively participate in museum programs or collect everyday objects for museum collections.

Seen in retrospect, museums as social institutions have undergone a process of different degrees of openness and accessibility to the public from the moment they opened their doors to restricted groups of people at the end of 18th century, to widening their audience during the 19th century, to the 20th century and present day when the institution became physically accessible to everyone. The museum was bound to become responsive to the new social structures and to satisfy their quench for information. The focus on object had been changed. The break in the concept of auratic and authentic quality of the physical object occured before the advent of the electronic age. Museums need to use both material and immaterial sources of knowledge but in such a way as to invite a multiplicity of interpretations by allowing the comunity to step in.

Concluding thoughts

To conclude, a new museum concept has been developed – participative, which invites visitors to active participation and becomes accessible to everyone, regardless of their education, race or religion.

It is quite clear that ethnographic and social history museums promote cultural identities and regional diversity of their own free choice. This role is particularly important today with people living in multiethnic societies, in societies that have become multicultural through the media, and societies that have become multiracial because of historical reasons and open borders. Only today, very occasionally though, there are good examples of museums dealing with these issues. Until more recently they have been largely avoided in ethnographic museums, primarily due to colonial history and the denial of other ethnic groups within a society. The question is whether ethnographic museums have been limited by putting themselves within the limits of their own nation, region, ethnic group or homeland. Is the establishment and the defence of a cultural identity the only possible way to discover links with other numerous cultural identities in Europe?

New trends have encouraged museums to produce new attitudes to their missions, and possibly development strategies, depending on financial schemes or national cultural policies. Numerous conferences and scientific discussions have played a significant role in this area by shaping new ideas and musem concepts.

Conclusion - New transformed museum

Social museums are also trying to find their place in contemporary society. They intergrate various disciplines and raise questions of the new meaning of presenting an identity and by doing so they give an intercultural context to their collections, that is, they try to show changes in the society. Their new role is to influence the community and find the answers to its needs. Museography today has a provocative role: it ought to explain who we are and what museums are to the society, which is much more than showing technical advances and functions of objects. It is essential to introduce these changes. It is essential to start the cooperation with the community and bring its members to the museum and help them understand the exhibits and the world surrounding them. Although German prime minister A. Merkel recently announced that "multiculturalism is a failed idea" (!) , and this view is shared by many prime ministers in other European countries, museums still try to undertake the difficult task of contributing to coexistence with other cultures.[4]

[4]"Merkel says German multiculturalism has failed", Reuters, 16.10.2010.
http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/10/16/us-germany-merkel-immigration-idUSTRE69F1K320101016

Ethnographic museums situated in some towns constantly work on setting up a democratic dialogue and try to be mediators in political games. Thus it is not a coincidence that a new type of museum has been established in Sweden, which is innovative and creative and dedicated to new hybrid cultural manifestations. The Museum of World Cultures in Göthenborg – Hybrid Museum, is a new type of museum about society, dialogue and communication, which, like the Musée Dauphinois in France, is at the same time a pluralistic and media museum. Sweden is an open society which has abandoned the idea of 19th century museum and has created a new concept of a 21st century museum. This museum fearlessly presents the sometimes difficult issues that modern society faces, like homosexuality, human trafficking, AIDS etc. It is about the exchange of differences, defined in numerous ways. A museum may be a form, but it is determined by the way it communicates with objects and the messages it sends. A newly transformed museum will try to find the answer to the questions of who we are and where we come from, who our ancestors are and why the world looks like it does, but at the same time it will try to find answers to many other questions. Museums have to be provocative, they have to play an active role in society and react to events by giving exhibitions or organising various public discussions.

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Biography

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From Ethnology to Civilisations Museum, the Multiple Trajectories of ATP/MuCEM Collections

Myriame Morel-Deledalle

Abstract

I wish to present the situation in France regarding the historical and ethnological museums, which have experienced a deep crisis over the last 30 years. France seems to have missed several rendez-vous with history: de-colonisation (1960), the Algerian war, immigration situation, the end of rural society and of industrial regions (coal and mining).

Historical and ethnological museums in France do not reflect any of those topics. These museums are no longer visited because they have no interest for the public and do not reflect any of our contemporary questions. More, they give a backwards idea of society and history. Those museums are either closed or are going to be. The crisis is real and deep, we are conscience and try to shake our minds but we need tools – through other experiences and exchanges.

The new national Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée MuCEM, relocated from Paris to Marseilles and due to open in May 2013 tries to give an answer to that fact and to propose to some keys for new ways of looking at Society. From 1937 (the creation of Musée des arts et traditions populaires ATP in Paris) to 2013 in Marseilles, I shall try to analyse the major points of the evolution from Utopia to Reality.

Introduction

My paper deals very pragmatically with a new project for the Civilisation Museum (MuCEM in Marseilles, France), which could be an interesting case study about the link between past collecting habits and contemporary collections. The questions with which I am primarily concerned are: *what happens to the collections when they do not meet the interests of the public any longer; what remains of their original meaning; and how far can we make the collections speak to contemporary purposes?*

Within France, and likely elsewhere, historical and ethnological museums have faced a growing crisis over the last thirty years. France itself seems to have experienced several significant changes that affected its history and its society in the past century. Of particular importance is decolonisation, the Algerian war, the ex-French colonies gaining independence, and the more recent immigration from North Africa, as well as the end of rural society and, the simultaneous collapse of the important sectors of the industrial economy, specifically coal and mining. Yet, no museum in France adequately reflects any of those political and social events. For this reason, our historical or ethnological or society museums, already limited in number, are not visited because they hold no interest for the public, especially the younger generations, since they do not reflect any of our contemporary issues.

The new MuCEM (National Museum for European and Mediterranean civilisations), relocated from Paris to Marseilles in the South of France, explores topics such as agriculture, monotheisms and citizenship as a way to understand aspects of civilisation, history and society that are shared (or not) by people on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. It is a new project reborn from the most ancient folklore museum in France: the MNATP (musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires) created in Paris in 1884.

So how can a folklore museum and its collections, which are mainly linked to rural French society in the 19th and 20th centuries, be transformed into a European and Mediterranean civilisations Museum?

Collections for Ethnography Museums in the 19th century

The very first event of significance was the opening of La Salle de France (France Show Room) in the Ethnological Museum in the Trocadero, Paris, in 1884. The Salle de France is so interesting because it is the real ancestor of our MuCEM. Like most, this first generation of "society" museums was born in the end of the 19th century. For French people, and Europeans in general, it was a *gorgious periode*, prosperous and determined to bring its civilisation and progress to the rest of the world (mainly in the newly acquired colonies).

Following Darwin's theory on evolution, many Europeans distorted his ideas and justified their behaviour by claiming they were at the top level of human evolution. They also professed interest in the wonders of the world, such as extraordinary fauna and flora, wild worlds and strange creatures, as they considered, for instance, Girafe-women in Central Africa, Jivaros reduced heads in Latin America, or the Black Venus in South Africa. At that time also, several Universal Exhibitions occurred all European capitals, which were essentially Human Zoos.

In Paris in 1884, Palais de Chaillot, the Ministry of Public Instruction, created the first "Ethnographic museum of the scientific Missions" with the declaration, "Ethnography is one of the most important human sciences. The study of the material evidences of human activities belongs to it. Each characteristic fact linked to the material living of individuals, families, societies belongs to Ethnography".

At the very beginning, the question facing those who studied Folklore (defined as "people's science") and Anthropology (defined as the study of human beings) was what is the link between ideas and physicality?

For this reason, the physicality of populations, either in France or in any other European country, was connected with their supposed physical and cognitive characteristics in the 19th century. In 1803, L.F. Jauffret, a French observer in charge of a report about the future Anthropology museum, wrote, "It is a fact that, from the first glance, Negros are different from Whites, but also the Jewish from the Christians, the Spanish from the French, the French from the German, etc. More often the inhabitants of a town or a village, have a similar physical appearance which separate them from the OTHERS".

This concept of "Others" incited nationalisms; in France, the first manifestation of this new feeling was the creation of the Celtic Academy whose purpose was to study French manners and their origins. The Academy studied language and antiquities using scientific methods, the first step of which was to investigate language through the texts and ancient monuments, and such local dialects as Breton and Gallic. The second step was to collect, inventorise, compare and explain all those uses and traditions before they disappeared.

The Salle de France's purpose in 1884 was to present the variety of the French Provinces inside the world panorama and the diversity of its people. The Salle de France is the ancestor of the ATP and MuCEM museums and some of the collections exhibited in the new MuCEM (2013) are the very items inscribed in the Museum's first Accessions Book of 1884.

This very first collection had been chosen with two considerations: first to look for and to preserve the objects for their aesthetic qualities (primarily ceramics and prints); and secondly through the choice of the items, to inform about society and the people who produced them. This is why the first collectors, Lionel Bonnemère and Paul Sebillot, simultaneously collected aesthetically beautiful pieces but also almanacs and popular charms as relics of habits and behaviours specific to certain French provinces. It was, for that period at the end of 19th century, a very "modern" and self-aware way of collecting.

In this first museum, French people were divided and presented according to their geographic environment in a way not dissimilar to other ethnic groups who were, in this way, presented as "exotic". Different ethnicities were displayed as part of reconstructions; for example, Bretons or Normans were shown inside displays supposedly depicting "everyday life" where Norman women were placed in Norman farms surrounded by objects typical of a Norman house. This way of exhibiting proved very popular and attracted large numbers of visitors.

The museographs followed public interest and developed theories about their scenography: the public liked the presentation because of their interest in everyday life, which could be explained by the fact that the notion underlying the exhibits was to display people in their everyday life contexts. This perspective was closely aligned with those of archaeologists at this time.

Collecting collections as a scientific way to know, preserve- and remember- a certain way of life of the past society?

After World War One (WWI) and just before World War Two (WWII), the Ethnographic Museum of Trocadero was closed, demolished, and replaced by the Palais de Chaillot Museum. The Musée de l'Homme (Mankind museum) and the Musée national d'art et traditions populaires, MNATP (Popular arts and traditions museum) were developed at the same time and under the same terms as the Palais de Chaillot Museum.

The MNATP Museum was created with the intention of addressing the disappearing rural world, exhibiting collections that had been re-examined in 1937 through the Universal Exhibition point of view, and to satisfy the desires of Georges-Henri Rivière (GHR), a genial museologist who wished to create a new Museum out of the Salle de France around a new concept. GHR wanted to omit the word "folklore" and replace it with "Museum of popular arts and traditions for all the French people". He liked to call it "Le Louvre des pauvres " (The poor people's Louvre Museum) and wanted to make "ethnology" a science, based on a totally renewed museology. This new museum was opened to the public in 1937, under the *Front Populaire* government, the first socialist government in France. Linked to the socialist progressive ideas of that time, the MNATP wished to celebrate those who were not the Heroes of History but instead just ordinary citizens undertaking everyday life.

At that time, the museum occupied 2000m^2 in the Palais de Chaillot with a collection of 7334 items. For scientific purposes, a library and a center for documentary and scientific archives were later added.

From 1939 to 1945, in the middle of WWII, GHR conducted several field investigations related to instrumental music in Britain, traditional furniture and rural architecture. Research was then definitively part of the collecting method and began to represent the originality of the ATP Museum. Later, in 1963, with the National Scientific Research Center (CNRS), the museum realised the very famous and emblematic " Aubrac programme", which increased the collections and also the photographic documentation of the Museum.[1] It was the model of the ethnographic method of collecting.

[1]For more about the history and evolution of the MNATP, see Martine Segalen, "Vie d'un musée. 1937-2005" Editions Stock, Paris 2005, 352.

As GHR desired, the Palais de Chaillot was relocated to a new purpose built museum building in the Bois de Boulogne, west of Paris, complete with a "study gallery", which opened to the public in 1972. This gallery, conceived for students and researchers, which occupied 2500 m², presented a typology of French popular society items, under categories defined by the great Prehistorian and Archaeologist André Leroi-Gourhan.

It is fundamental to observe that the ethnological methods developed by GHR were very similar to those developed by Leroi-Gourhan for the comprehension of prehistorical settlements, i.e. through comparison methods and experimentation. The representations in the Study Gallery were related to "everyday" pursuits such as agriculture, candles, lamps, and cooking, as well as the making of the wheel and barrels.

In 1975 a "Cultural Gallery" was also opened to the public. Spanning over 2500 m², it was composed of three sections:

• social activities and material, for instance "from corn to bread" or "from cradle to grave",
• social activities such as religion, music or other items which we would today call "intangible heritage",
• popular items, organised by material types : glass, wood, metal, ceramics, etc.
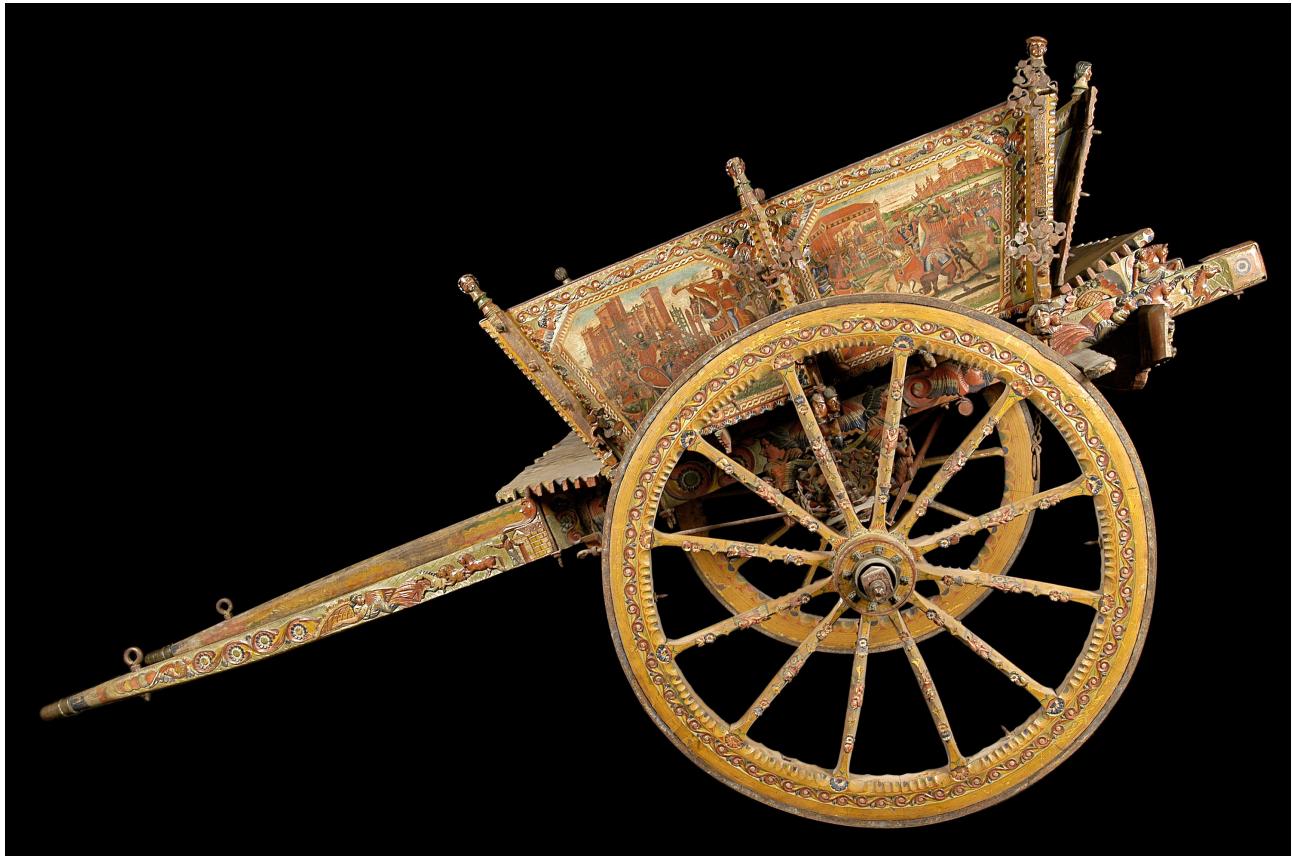
ABOVE: *Sicilian cart, 19 th century, Italy (copyright MuCEM, Anne Maigret)*

Both galleries were presented in the dark, with cases being individually illuminated. Each item was suspended from the case ceilings with transparent nylon threads, which became very famous amongst museum professionals. The Galleries were meant to appear as Encyclopedia pages with three-dimensional illustrations against backdrop scenery that was also very elegant and subtle, clever and delicate. They were considered the best museological realisations of the time. Nevertheless, the Gallery had such little success among the students and researchers and so this section was soon closed. Between 1975 and 2005, no further modifications were made to the Gallery.

LEFT: *Chest, Sweden, 1823, (copyright MuCEM, Anne Maigret).*

From the beginning, the museum was essentially devoted to rural life, with very little space for urban culture. It might be possible that the collections can have been interpreted as the symbol of a past life, which had been somehow "idealised ". Certainly, a deep gap had appeared between the museum and the curators themselves and the Scientific Centre for French Ethnology.[2]

The national museum in Paris didnot undergo the same significantmoves or transformations that museumsin other regions of France did, where new museology and ways of exhibiting evolved. In particular, the new eco-museums, such as Musée de Bretagne, Rennes or Musée du Vin (Wine museum), Beaune, Burgundy proposed immersion participatory exhibitions and visits with the inhabitants in local costumes, as was the fashion in North American. These society museums and eco-museums became the new models and references, which increased the gap with the now old-fashioned MNATP museum.

Museums collections as reservoirs for new projects?

Since the year 1970, new categories of museums, particularly "society museums" and "civilisation museums" gained popularity, as evidenced by the new model of the Quebec Civilisations Museum.

[2]Centre de l'Ethnologie Française: CEF, University and CNRS /National Research Center

Society museums dealt with delimited subjects, sometimes related to a human group, historical period, a town or a territory, recovering sometimes history museums, city museums, regional museums. The collections are mainly those that can support either discourse. Civilisation museums attempt instead to encompass all knowledge and expressions of tangible and intangible cultures, from archaeology to anthropology, history, sociology, and the arts.

During this period, the MNATP did not adapt to these trends and no longer met visitor expectations. In 1982, the museum received 100 000 visitors but this had dropped to 30 000 in 1992, ten years later.

Yet, it was not only ethnology museums experiencing these difficulties: the situation was similar for the MAAO, Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens, and the Musée de l'Homme (Mankind Museum) in Paris. Primarily concerned with Fine Art, The Ministry of Culture and the entire administration were not so interested in the future of other types of museums. The collections were just items of "memory" and museums "memory" places.

Debate ensued, which lasted several years. The main criticism was that the MNATP did not represent anything specific or exhibit anything new: it was not the French identity museum and was still considered as a conservatory of rural society. The French Minister of Culture thus requested the help of external experts, the founder of Quebec's Civilisation Museum, Michel Côté, and Jean Guibal, the director of Musée Dauphinois (Grenoble, France), who achieved great success by choosing appealing themes for temporary exhibits and developing a museography borrowed from theater.

Several options were proposed for MNATP, with the favoured idea being to reduce part of the permanent exhibition to 20 % and to develop the other 80 % with several temporary exhibitions about urban and contemporary culture and society in France.

Michel Colardelle, historian, archaeologist and curator, assisted in his capacity as Director of MuCEM, 1994 - 2009. His proposal in 1994 was first to change the name of the museum to France's Civilisations Museum, and then to propose a programme about "everyday life since the year 1000 up to globalisation of socio-cultural models". He began a series of successful exhibitions about strips-cartoons and popular culture. He drew on collecting campaigns and research programmes already started in the areas of urban graphics, skating and hip-pop, and AIDS.
In 1997, following these changes, the Ministry of Culture decided to relocate the Museum from Paris and in 1999 it was decided that it would be in Marseilles inside the Fort Saint-Jean, a historical fortress belonging to the State. Two reasons were cited: delocalisation was felt to be a positive point in the process of cultural decentralisation and opening a museum in a military place would be a good way to offer to Marseilles' inhabitants access to the fortification that had previously been off limits at the entrance of the Old Harbour.

The choice of Marseilles changed the general orientation of the museum project. Facing the Mediterranean Sea, it became symbolic of the need to look beyond France's own shoreline and to that on the other side. Hence, it became the "Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée" (European and Mediterranean Civilisations Museum). The nomination of Marseille-Provence as Cultural European Capital for 2013 gave a strong impulse to complete the project.

Elsewhere in Europe and also in France, the ethnology museums were re-shaping and it became possible to talk of post-colonial and national museums. Some museums were closed and collections dispersed and recycled (MAAO), while others were renewed with part of their own original collections re-visited (Musée de l'Homme), and yet other museums were created without collections and began developing new collections (Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration).

The Musée du Quai Branly, MQB (Quai Branly Museum), a political choice of French President Chirac was developed at the same time as MuCEM. The brand new MQB had also been looking for its destination for a long time. The collections came from the closed MAAO and part of Musée de l'Homme collections, a part being given to the MuCEM for its renewal and the rest donated to the future new Musée de l'Homme, still in process. The final choice for the Quai Branly project, after long and hard intellectual and professional debates, was to exhibit the old collections from Musée de l'Homme and MAAO issued from the colonial and scientific missions from the point of view of Art.

How to make a European and Mediterranean Civilisations Museum with the ATP heritage?

This is our challenge. Currently, the scientific project includes a semi-permanent gallery and a space for temporary exhibitions. The permanent gallery is, of course, not easy to maintain.

Our collections are composed mainly with French rural collections dating from the 19th and 20th centuries. Our name symbolises the fact that our subject concerns all Mediterranean countries and civilisations from Neolithic times to now. Our collections, however, are not this extensive. The Musée de l'Homme's temporary loan to MuCEM concerns Europe, which is very useful but in terms of our cultural mission to draw attention to the areas south of Mediterranean, we have very few collections. The recent acquisition programme has tried to collect items from all Mediterranean countries in diverse areas, mainly popular art and society, although it has not been sufficiently successful to provide an introduction to Mediterranean civilisations.

Although we have not yet finalised a definition for a "civilisation museum", the opening exhibit attempts to present four topics or "keys" to understanding Mediterranean civilisations: Agriculture, Monotheisms, Citizenship and the Others. Some of the sections show 80 % of MNATP collections (Agriculture and Monotheismes), the two others show 20 %, because our collections cannot effectively illustrate the topics.

ABOVE: *Silver and red cabochon coral fibulae, Kabylie, Algeria, 1900, copyright MuCEM, Christophe Fouin.*

We have to get collections linked to our scientific programme. Ways of doing this are limited: we can buy new collections on the market, especially for Mediterranean antiquities, but we do not have the legitimate right to purchase antiques on the market. At present, Le Louvre is the only National Museum permitted to do so.[3] Besides that, this market is international and very expensive; at the moment we do not have sufficient funds.

We can borrow the collections from other museums, which is what we are currently doing, but generally the best collections are exhibited in our colleagues' museums. When they agree to loan, it is for a short time and we need the help of other museums for rotations, which means we must find a more sustainable solution

As for contemporary collections and art, we can buy, depending on the costs. For more traditional contemporary society in the south of Mediterranean, we have engaged conventions and exchanges with our colleagues from the south countries to think collectively about such questions facing our museums today. Besides that remains the question of one million MNATP collections now kept in functional stores. We are now considering exchanging exhibitions and developing more depots in external museums.

The historical MNATP collections have been inventorised, numbered, photographed, conserved and restored, which is the major benefit for the collections of this long process of the MNATP museum renewal. Although they play only a minor role in the radical new orientations of the MuCEM, somehow it seems that the collections are really contextual and can seldom be recycled to show something very different from the time at which they were collected.

[3]MuCEM is the only legitimate and official reference for Ethnology Museums
(French legislation, décret 2011-574/ article R422)

Biography

Myriame Morel-Deledalle has participated in many archaeological excavations, mainly on La Bourse site in Marseilles (France). She has been Director of the History museum of Marseille from the opening in 1983 to 2007. She organised and collected the collections for all the departments of the museum: antiquity, medieval, modern and contemporary and presented 81 temporary exhibitions on all the periods (cf. catalogues). She also contributed to the extension of Carthage and El Jem museums (Tunisia).

Active member of ICOM (ICMAH Treasury, Board 1998-2004 and ICMAH Secretary since 2010), ICOMOS, vice president of IAHM since 2006, she participated to a number of colloquiums and publications related mainly to site and reconstitution museums, treatment and conservation of waterlogged woods and wrecks, History and Memory.

From 2007 to 2010, she was the director of the Culture department at Senghor University in Alexandria (Egypt).

Since 2011 she has been in charge of the Mediterranean collections in the MuCEM (Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations) located in Marseilles, France, which opened to the public in Spring 2013.

In Search of the Utopia of the Past: Reflections of Antiquity Upon a National Narrative

Katerina Mavromichali

Abstract

The collections developed under the influence of the Grand Tour and of encyclopedism in the Age of Enlightment reflected the intellectual promises of what seemed to be a utopian world. National museums started also to make their appearance from the beginning of the 19th century following and supporting the development of national consciousness. The movement of philhellenism and the 'goût à la grecque' dominate leading to the new interesting social phenomenon of neoclassicism hand-in-hand though, with the pillaging of the possessions of the forefathers. As Korais stated in 1807 'we are the descendants of the Greeks, and we must endeavor to once more become worthy of the name, or cease to use it'. The archetypes of Classical antiquity reflected the ideological pursuits of the young Greek nation with antiquity as the connecting link between the present, the past and the future; as the medium for the comprehension of the history and the experiences of the past; as a social capital supporting a national idea, calling into question though the way these utopian reflections go in line with the prospective of evolution and the disengagement of the powers of today from the chains of the past. This paper will focus on the nationalization of Classical heritage, a utopia as a source of inspiration for a future society, free from a difficult present, in view also of the current critical crossroad of postmodern history.

Introduction

South Africa is a sound place to examine utopian ideologies, to discuss the ways they are represented in museums and collections and to explore the importance of social memory in relation to national museums, identity, the goodness of the nation and the dark sides of nationalism.[1] The optimism within the new democracy has led to the gradual restructuring of South Africa's museums and to advanced new narratives limiting the role of western interpretations in examining the legacy of the past as well as in the development of the present. We have entered a new age of doubt[2] and colonialism is followed by imagination with all the responsibility that this entails.[3] The need to surpass borders as well as the experience of segregation are more evident than ever on a global level and demand that we question the ideological foundations of modernity; a crack, a line, and eventually a scar; politically nuanced works, by metaphoring negativity, uncover the dark sides of modernity and propose a different outlook for museums as well.[4]

Museums, Creation Myths and Utopic Reflections

In the words of Walter Benjamin, museums unquestionably belong to the dream houses of the collective. Museums, as places indefinitely accumulating time, have the potential to create new cycles of life and new unlimited associations between knowledge and interpretation. Museums, as heterotopias, create narratives and express ways of managing time, place, history and interpretation, reflecting both the real contestation of the space in which we live, as well as the mythic promises of a utopian world.[5] As Octavio Paz has written, "utopias are the dreams of reason; active dreams that turn into revolutions and reforms".[6]

The concept of utopia in every age is a variation of an ideal present, an ideal past and an ideal future. It is a place we have been to, as well as one still unknown that we seek to approach. It offers the prospect of moving towards progress, especially in modernity, and onwards, against deterioration and threat; it provides the hope of creating a reinforced sense of harmony as well as a sense of identity.[7] In this context many societies have creation myths that reflect the idea of a past golden age, like the nostalgia for the early years of our life. In Greece, classical relics, as links of the past with the present, confirm Greek national identity and retain a dual nature as symbols of both Greek and global attachment.[8]

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[1] Anderson (2011), 109-118; Bernal (2011), 59-66; McGee (2006), 178-199.

[2] Mahjoub (1994), 5.

[3] Appiah (2006); Coombes (1994); Gaylard (2005), 290-320.

[4] e.g. 'Shibboleth', an installation of the Canadian artist Salcedo, Tate Modern, 2007. See Bal (2010); Kelly(2012).

[5] Appadurai (2010); Foucault (1984); Lord (2006).

[6] Paz (1989), 57-62.

[7] Clayes (2011), 7-27.

[8] Lowenthal (1988), 726-35.

Recognizing that in the diagram of the intellectual life of the world everything new encircles anything old, this paper points out the symbolic role of classical antiquity in the course of time up to the Age of the Enlightenment and the advent of the countervailing forces of the Anti-Enlightenment,[9] as well as the new social reality that emerged within the framework of the European history of ideas.

This paper sets museums in the center of the intellectual and cultural tendencies of the period and paves the way for central figures of the Enlightenment, a period when "man is the measure of all things".[10] "Man", and the profile of the "universal intellectual" are put on the map: the philosophers, the thinkers, the grand tourists and intellectuals of the period, those that laid the foundations of neoclassicism and of the philhellenic movement, contributed considerably to the development of philosophical thought, as well as in national resurgence, in revolution and reform.

The Age of Enlightenment, a critical age which gave birth to the idea of a revolutionary utopia, was characterized by significant changes in Europe, such as the beginning of colonization and the radical industrialization of production. Indicative examples constitute the promise for modernity passing through the notions of universality, freedom, equality, tolerance and justice, as well as the inspiration from a major social group in view of a future society liberated from a thorny present, guided often by a glorious past; utopias that easily turn into dystopias.[11] In this context the notion of the modern museum was affected as well.

The encyclopedic museum found its expression in the cabinets of curiosities of art and of nature from all around the world, in the Kunst and Wunderkammers of the European princely collections, and this pattern was followed and transplanted in the New World as well as in Russia; collective worlds that didn't only produce knowledge but new social relations, balances and practices as well.[12] The development of the public museum in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to the emergence of a new professional specialization, museology and museographia, and to the development of the arts and sciences.

In the case of archaeology, J.J. Winckelmann, with his work *The history of art in antiquity*, first published in 1764, developed a classification system for ancient sculpture which evolved into the organizational basis of many European collections.[13] Furthermore, in 1755, in his work *"Thoughts on the imitation of Greek works in painting and sculpture"*, he pointed out "the noble simplicity and the serene grandeur" of ancient Greek art and set the theoretical basis of classicism in modern European art. "The only way for us to become great, yes, inimitable, if it is possible, is the imitation of the Greeks" Winckelmann argued.[14] He associated the ideas of the Enlightenment with the art of

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[9] Sternhell (2009, 2010).

[10] Windelband, Heimsoeth (2001: 19-32, 2005: v.2:228 ff).

[11] Bazin (1967); Clayes (2011); Gombrich (2003, 2007); Honour, Fleming (2009); Kemp (2000).

[12] Arnold (2006); Bazin (1967); Findlen (2004), 23-50; Higonett (2009), 2-9; Jardine, Secord, Spary (1996); Lewis(1992), 5-21; MacGregor (2007), 11-70; MacDonald (2011), 81-97; Mavromichali (2011); O' Neil (2004); Ovenell (1986); Pearce (2010), 12-33; Strong (1994), 13-32.

[13] Alexander (1995, 1979); Sheehan (2000).

[14] Winkelmann (2001), 8, 24, 32.

antiquity and gave meaning to the reaction against Rococo that developed in France, Germany and England. Winckelmann's ideas were diffused in Europe, and later on in America with the translation of his work *The History of Ancient Art*, in 1880.

These publications, as well as the *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèçe, dans le milieu du quatrième siècle avant l' ère vulgaire*, by Jean-Jacques Barthélemy, in 1787, and *The Antiquities of Athens, Measured and Delineated*, by James Stuart and Nicholas Revett (ed. 1762, 1789, 1794, 1830), and other significant works of that time, contributed decisively to the diffusion of knowledge and admiration for the ancient Greek world. These publications made a great impression on the intellectuals of Europe, to the artists, philosophers and historians, and consequently led to a profound and concrete study and imitation of the values and aesthetics of ancient Greece.[15]

Neoclassical Taste and Collective Practices

Neoclassicism thus acknowledges a distinct development during this period bringing influence upon contemporary culture, on painting,[17] sculpture,[18] architecture,[19] as well as on fashion and decoration of objects of everyday use, as well as on the *libretti* surpassing the traditional religious themes. The myths and the literature of ancient Greece constituted a sound source of inspiration for the visual arts in Europe. The intellectuals of the Enlightenment had their own special role in the developments with their request for reason, simplicity and ethical integrity.

Kant worked within the same framework. In addition, Baumgarten and Sulzer developed the theory on the notion of aesthetics, which was later used in the theory and practice of museology by Meier and Mendelssohn. Voltaire, the leading spirit of the Enlightenment in France, observed that without knowledge of the classical rules, the man of taste could not savor the piquancy of deviations from

[15] Other fundamental works with a significant impact on many levels, on philhellenism and on the struggle for Independence –yet without always avoiding the distorted nuances: Julien-David Le Roy (1758), Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce. Paris; Pierre-Augustin Guys (1771), Voyage littéraire de la Grèce. Paris; Pierre-François Hugues baron d' Hancarville (1785), Recherches sur l'origine, l' esprit et les progrès des arts de la Grèce. London; Marie-Gabriel-Auguste-Florent comte de Choiseul-Gouffier (1809, 1822), Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce. Paris; Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy (1814), Le Jupiter olympien, ou l' art de la sculpture antique considéré sous un nouveau point de vue. Paris; Edward Dodwell (1819), A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece during the years 1801, 1805, and 1806. London; Otto Magnus Freiherr von Stackelberg (1826), Der Apollotempel zu Bassae in Arcadien und die daselbst ausgegrabenen Bildwerke. Rome; Louis Dupré (1825), Voyage à Athènes et à Constantinople. Paris.

[16] L' antiquité rêvée (2011); Le gout à la grecque (2009); Biris (2001); Giebelhausen (2011, 2003); Papanikolaou (2002), 46 ff.; Watkin (2009).

[17] Indicative examples: Jacques-Louis David and Jean Dominique Ingres. David stimulated the promotion of neoclassical art and reflects the shift in the aesthetic views of the 17th c. as well as the radical developments in the visual arts.

[18] Indicative examples: Bertil Thorvaldsen and Antonio Canova; next to Canova studied Prosalentis, from Corfu, the first Greek neoclassic sculptor with academic education, that brought classicism to the Ionian Islands; e.g. his work 'Platon', National Gallery-Alexandros Soutzos Museum, n. 3717.

[19] Indicative the example of Soufflot who made the plans for Saint Genevieve (Pantheon), in 1757; the foundation stone of the à la grecque church was set by Louis IV in 1764. In 1791, at the Pantheon, Koraïs was present during the removal of Voltaire's relics and expressed the wish to become a Greek version of Voltaire; see Kondylis (2008), 201 ff.

them. Jean-Jacque Rousseau condemned images of every perversion of heart and mind, drawn ingeniously from ancient mythology. On the other hand he called in 1750 for a didactic art-for statues and paintings of the men who defended their country or those still greater that enriched it through their genius. The new interest in man favored historical portraits of prominent men of the time and idealistic images.[20] The comparisons with gods and heroes of classical antiquity added a distinct status to the rulers, as they pointed out their virtues and their sound leadership.

The *goût grec* is associated with the reign of Louis XV. France once again played a significant role in developments. Paris changed from the second half of the 18th century and, when Napoleon dominated in Europe, acted as custodian of the ideas of the Revolution; neoclassicism in architecture thus evolved into the leading style of the empire. From the late 18th century onwards, monumental buildings with pediments and colonnades of Ionic, Doric or Corinthian order dominated in Europe and North America. Indicative are the examples of the Pantheon, of La Madeleine, at Rue Royale in Paris and the White House, a paradigm inspired by the ancient Greek style of Andrea Palladio.

This interest in classical culture was enhanced by the excavations in Italy, the boost given to the long tradition of the Grand Tour[21] and the hellenocentric scholars and thinkers like Herder, Schiller, and Goethe.[22] The eagerness in the pursuit of ancient Greek culture was also associated with the philhellenic movement that supported the Greek cause,[23] but at the same time it led also to various collective practices and even to the plundering and illicit trading of artifacts, which contributed to the establishment of collections and grand museums of the world, reflecting the era of exploration and conquest, as well as the associations that developed steadily between art and politics in the course of time.[25]

In the 18th century, in tune with the new desire of rulers to educate their people, the royal collections turned into public museums.[26] An Act of Parliament established the British museum in 1753[27] and with this archetypal encyclopedic collection, Great Britain was presented as the heir of a tradition that encompassed the entire world and all world history. At the end of the 18th century, access to collections was connected with intellectual merit, social credit as well as with historical knowledge, contributing thus to the recognition of the concept of cultural heritage, the building of national consciousness and the role of the museum in the protection of national heritage.[28]

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[20] Indicative the examples of the French sculptor, Houdon, who created portraits of the most prominent persons of his time, from the scholars of the Enlightenment to the leaders of the American Revolution, as well as of Rottiers: Honour, Fleming (2009: 607-635); Gombrich (2003), 472-473, 478-480; Kemp (2000: 178-409).

[21] Musées de Papier (2010).

[22] Windelband, Heimsoeth (2005), vol.2: 217-328.

[23] From the love of Antiquity to philhellenism (2005).

[24] Cuno (2011); Holo, Álvarez (2009); Paolucci (2002).

[25] Black (2004); Kokkou (2009); Stonemann (1996); Tolias (1996); Urry (1996); Voudouri (2003).

[26] Fyfe (2000); Lewis (1992); Lorente (1998); Prior (2002); Turner (1981).

[27] Wilson (2002).

[28] Hobsbawm (1990); Gellner (1983); Knell et al (2011).

In 1793, following the French Revolution, the Louvre opened as a public museum[29] and the royal collections were nationalized. From the beginning it was connected with the aims and the policies of the new democratic regime. During this period, France evolved into a center of theoretical dialogue upon architecture, and the French architects are dedicated to the development of an aesthetic, an ideology and a structure that would exclusively be connected with museums. The combination of the political dynamics of a museum, as expressed by Musée Français, with the ambitious designs of Boullée and Durand, established the ideological fundamentals and the architectural framework for the creation of a broad range of museums in Europe.

The leaders of the French Revolution acknowledged the importance of art as a tool for political reform and social reconstruction. The Louvre museum would play an important role in the formation and growth of the new society, would symbolize the new order of things, would follow the rhythms of all people and would eventually evolve into a museum of the world[30] which everybody would be entitled to admire instead of just a privileged few. The French Revolution enhanced the utopic reflection around the Louvre. Armand-Guy Kersaint, in 1792, wrote that the Louvre would create links with all the nations, would surpass the limits of the material world and would triumph in the course of time as it would evolve into a research center for all the world and would house all the creations of nature and art; Louvre would make Paris "the capital of the arts" and the Athens of the modern world.[31] The politician Boissy d' Anglas, in 1794, imagined Paris as "the asylum of all human knowledge...the capital of the arts, the school of the universe".[32]

The revolutionary euphoria led the philosopher Condorcet, the proponent of mankind's progress, to revive Bacon's vision of Atlantis, with monumental buildings devoted to knowledge and with research teams cooperating for the good of humankind. "Architects in some way are always looking for their Atlantis" in the words of Renzo Piano,[33] and, according to Bronislaw Baczko, the Enlightenment impelled a shift from "cities in utopia to the utopia of the city, from power and government in the utopia to the power and government envisaged as the agent of the utopia and the executor of social dreams".[34]

The message "Freedom, Equality, Fraternity" transferred to the entire world the ideals of a society that evolves into a paradigm for other revolutions and reforms of the postmodern society, where "all individuals useful to society are joined to be as one".[35] At the same time, though, and next to the desire for progress, followed the desire for perfection, giving way to terror and to the use of the guillotine, one of the most dynamic symbols of the democratic revolution.[36]

[29] Gould (1965); McClellan (2008: 13-52, 1999); Schubert (2002); Sherman (1989).

[30] Mavromichali (2011).

[31] A.-G. Kersaint (1792), Discours sur les monuments publics. Paris: P.Didot ainé, I, 39, 41-45; B. Poyer (1790), Mémoire sur la nécessité d'éntreprendre de grands travaux publics. Paris.

[32] François-Antoine, comte de Boissy d' Anglas (1794), Quelques idées sur les arts, sur la nésessité de les encourager, sur les institutions qui peuvent en assurer le perfectionnement, & sur divers établissemens nécessaires à l' ensignement public. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 28-9, 164.

[33] McClellan (2008), 53.

[34] Ibid., 18.

[35] In the words of Jacques-Louis David, at the inauguration of the founding of the republic, during a festival of Unity celebrating the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. Ibid., 19; McClellan (1994), 91 ff.

[36] Clayes (2011), 98-111.

Russia and the United States of America continued looking at the developments in Europe. Saint Petersburg, influenced by Italy, France and Germany, founded the Hermitage Museum in 1764 with the support of Catherine the Great who enhanced her status in Europe and added a political dimension to the arts. As such, this Russian city played the same global role as New York in the second half of the twentieth century.[37] Likewise, in the United States of America the influences of Europe were important. The European model was replaced, however, by a museum of extroverted, educational character that combined the functions of a theatre, a school and a church to promote the aims of the Enlightenment and so evolved into an organization of vital importance in American life. Philadelphia, until 1770, with the development of important collections, evolved into the "Paris of the New World" and then sought inspiration from London, while New York's Metropolitan Museum looked instead towards Paris' Louvre.[38]

American art was considered a continuance of the western tradition that has its roots in ancient Greece. Cast collections with copies from the Louvre, the British Museum, the Hermitage and the Vatican Museums were quickly developed; as the architect Pierre LeBrun mentioned in 1885 "cast collections present coherence impossible to be found in any museum with original works".[39] Corcoran made plans for "an American Louvre", a national organization devoted to the history of art. The highest point of this concept was met in Webster Smith's proposal for an "American Acropolis", a utopic museum of the world cultural heritage. In the words of Walter, an architect who had a great impact on the "Greek Revival" in America, "two only truths prevail in this world: the Bible and Greek architecture".[40]

The emergence of national consciousness

In the Age of Enlightenment, in the second grand époque of political thought, in the place of Athens[41] we now had the intellectual movement of the civilized peoples of Europe. The Greek scholar Katartzis reminded us though that philosophy accepts only Greece as its homeland.[42] After the incorporation of Athens into the fabric of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent isolation and obscurity that dominated over four centuries,[43] political conditions in Greece started to change and the outside world gradually rediscovered the city of Athens. The ancient Greek spirit was diffused throughout the world and ancient Greek art and science evolved into a common cultural good, an intellectual

[37] Giebelhausen (2003), 17-31, (2011), 223-244; Norman (1997).

[38] Bazin (1967), 241-258; Orosz (1990); Lewis (1992), 12-14; Conn (1998); Wallach (1998).

[39] In 1885, in The American Architect and Building News: see Wallach (1998), 46ff. In 1867, fifteen European princes encourage the practice of casts by signing The Convention for Promoting Universal Reproductions of Works of Art, see Knell (2011), 15 ff.

[40]Watkin (2009), 365 ff.

[41] See indicatively the image of Athens at that time in the work 'Athens. View from the roots of Mount Anchesme': Dodwell, Ed. (1821), Views in Greece from drawings by Edward Dodwell. London.

[42] Dimaras (2009), 177-243; Kondylis (2008), 23-27.

[43] Mackenzie (1992).

force that, based on "the light of reason and experience", puts an end to prepossessions.[44] The land of Attica, blessed by the Muses, as well as the "classical" image of the Greek philosopher, a wise and gifted educator embodying the ideals of freedom, spiritual religiosity and compassion, who honors man and his position in the world, are two images that met and had a lasting effect in the history of art. "Poor and naked goes philosophy, you'll have poor company on that road", Petrarch exposed in the fourteenth century, pinpointing the distance that had developed between philosophy and man. Yet, in the Age of Enlightenment, all mankind's concern was man.

Scholars fought ceaselessly for the diffusion of their ideas. Ancient Greek philosophical patterns dominated and they either found a fine formulation or met their complete deconstruction. From England to France and Germany, questions regarding man's relationship to the world and society dominated. With neo-platonic optimism, the harmony of the world was explained in juxtaposition to the limits of knowledge, the unknown quality of providence, egoism as the driving force of culture, logic as the destiny of reality. Voltaire and Diderot were at first carried away by this enthusiastic view of the world. Likewise, its universal character had a significant impact on the German poets Herder and Schiller.[45] The French Revolution provided political sustenance to the Enlightenment. France and the States of America struggled for a society of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" inspired by the "Social Contract of Rousseau", a contract formerly proposed by Epicurus. The Enlightenment resisted the obscurity of prejudices, and the thinkers of the 18th century, despite their differences, all believed in the power of man as capable of achieving perfection and knowledge. Against this backdrop of optimism, knowledge and incessant research, the French encyclopedia of Diderot and D' Alembert was gradually developed.

European Enlightenment evolved and constructed a humanitarian system of values.[46] The Modern Greek Enlightenment movement, with the support of the Greek Diaspora, also functioned within this framework. Despotism was denounced and the central role of education and the popularization of knowledge were promoted with the aim of provoking national resurgence,[47] with references to the glorious past, as reflected by symbolic depictions of that time. The allegorical depictions of Greece enslaved, known from European artists from the years before the Revolution, became an inspiration for Greek scholars and turned into a popular subject of Greek art in the post-revolutionary period, which encouraged the reconnection with the heritage of the forefathers.[48]

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[44] This is eloquently reflected in the contraposition of the image of Voltaire at his office receiving the light of truth from Newton, with the work "The death of St. Scholastica" of J. Restout reflecting the end to religious prejudices. See the frontispiece in Elements de la philosophie de Newton, Amsterdam, 1738 and Honour, Fleming (2009), 608 respectively.

[45] Windelband, Heimsoeth (2005), v.2: 275-279.

[46] 'Freedom' leading and enlightening the peoples at the works of Eugène Delacroix and Frédèric Auguste Bartholdi: Honour, Fleming (2009), 650-651, and of Edward Savage, Liberty in the form of the Goddess of Youth, 1796, at Worcester Art Museum.

[47] Argyropoulou, Tabaki (2006); Dimaras (2009); Kondylis (2008); Kitromilidis (2009); Rigas Velestinlis from Thessaly (1998).

[48] e.g. The lithographie with the allegorical depiction: "Greece in chains" from the title page of M.-G.-A.-F. comte de Choisseul Gouffier(1782) Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce. Paris; as well as the aquarelle 'Greece enslaved begging for liberation', second half of the 19th c., Athens, National Historical Museum, n. 1910.

The Enlightenment,[49] with its optimistic character, believed in education, training and in theatre. With the new schools, the public approached with interest the cosmopolitan intellectuals of the European Enlightenment. Books, translations, journals all constituted chief characteristics of the Greek Enlightenment.[50] At the same time, the theatre, in essence a book of the world, was the alternative school of the people, the school that filled in the gaps of the other schools, as Koraïs mentions, and, at the same time, promoted the central role of the preparation of the Greek nation for the resurrection of motherland, as pinpointed in the work of Christopoulos "Achilles", in 1805.[51] As mentioned in one of Voltaire's theatre works, performed in Bucharest in the early 19th century, "...this clearly confirms that the Greeks have already started searching for the course that their glorious ancestors walked on".[52] At the same time, the opera started presenting themes from ancient tragedies, such as *Antigone, Oedipus and Electra*. Performances, musical as well as theatrical, had a significant impact on the development of the aesthetics of that time.[53]

The Age of Enlightenment contributed significantly to the American and the French Revolution; it transformed and continues to transform the world. During this period, an extremely current issue was projected: the faith to the unity of Europe; a Europe without fanaticism, a wise, "enlightened" and liberal Europe. At the same time, the Greek Enlightenment movement contributed to the emergence of national consciousness and to the building of the modern state. The Greek nation stood on its own feet, broke its chains and became liberated, albeit fragmented, to walk in the footsteps of western civilization.[54]

The young Greek state started organizing the country. Immediately following liberation, a series of laws and decrees were passed supporting education and aimed at the restoration of the "tranquility of the monuments" despite adverse conditions. Thus, the foundations of the reconstruction of national and cultural identity were laid.[55] In 1803, Koraïs wrote "we are the descendants of the Greeks, and we must endeavor to once more become worthy of the name, or cease to use it".[56] The Greek state derives its legitimacy from its association with ancient Greece having as visible and substantial proof the monuments. And later on, in 1807 after the looting of the manuscripts from Patmos, Koraïs proclaimed that "we neither give away nor any longer sell the possessions of our ancestors"− a unique script, the first that talks about the care of antiquities and archives.[57]

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[49] Dimaras (2009), 23-119.

[50] e.g. Jérôme Lalande (1803), Abrégé d' astronomie, vol. I-II, translation by Daniel Filippidis. Vienne: George Vendotis or the Trilingual Dictionary of the French, Italian and Romaine Languages, published in 1790, in Vienne, to support the needs of the Greek intelligentsia and of the Greek merchants of the European centres.

[51] Dimaras (2009), 71-73.

[52] Ibid., 168.

[53] Berchtold, Porret (2003); Fisher-Lichte (2010); Frantz, Sajous d' Oria (1999); Lever (2001); Loisel, Goulaki-Voutyra (2012), 17-30; Markezinis (2013); Puchner (1999, 2004).

[54] Indicative the lithographies: 'Liberated Greece', 'The Resurrection of Greece', and 'Rigas-Koraïs-The renaissance of Greece', from the Prints and Engravings Collection of the National Historical Museum in Athens, n. 2339, n. 874 and n. 11920 respectively: Adam-Veleni, Stefani, Mavromichali (2012), 91-92.

[55] Kokkou (2009); Voudouri (2003).

[56] Kokkou (2009), 27; Korais, A. (1803), Mémoire sur l' état actuel de la civilization dans la Grèce. Paris, 60.

[57] Kokkou (2009), 28; Korais, A. (1807), Improvised Reflections upon Greek Education and language. In: Korais. Collected Works (ed. by G. Valetas), A' 2, 917.

He was also the first person to propose the foundation of a Greek Museum designed to guard the possessions of the forefathers.

With the arrival of the first governor Kapodistrias, the protection measures were enhanced and the foundation of the first national museum on the island of Aigina soon followed. With the declaration of Athens as capital of the new state, the city attracted many archaeologists, architects and artists, such as Klenze, Schinkel, Lange, Gaertner and others. The myth surrounding classical heritage was indicatively depicted in their work, as the West propelled a romanticized version of the Greek classical identity through moralizing nuances.[58]

The archaeological legislation of 1834 was the first legislative document that regulated the issues regarding antiquities as well as the Archaeological Service and the foundation of museums both in Athens and the periphery. The statute of 1834 constitutes undoubtedly an innovative legislation of King Otto in order to construct a modern state following the European prototypes. Antiquities are characterized as heritage and national treasures, and whoever does not respect and protect them is accused as sacrilegious and unworthy of being a Greek.[59] However, during this period an inconsistency was observed between the political will for modernization and the political, social, educational and economic reality of the country. The application of the acts of the statute didn't manage to inhibit the illicit excavations and the illicit trafficking of antiquities, phenomena that reached their peak during the 19th century.

"It is to these stones that we owe our political renaissance", said the archaeologist Iakovos Rizos-Neroulos at the Acropolis in 1838.[60] The classical relics had supported the Greek cause throughout Europe. At the same time, ironically, the campaigns in order to safeguard classical heritage were associated with a disintegrated philhellene identity introduced from the countries where these treasures eventually ended up.

The first museums and the reconstruction of national and cultural identity

In the beginning, the archaeological finds and the numerous discoveries within the Greek territory were kept for security reasons, till 1863, within public spaces, such as ancient monuments, churches, schools and town halls. In 1864, the Acropolis Museum, the first organized museum in Greece, was established on the east side of the Acropolis. Culture was nationalized and evolved into a high priority of the state reflecting the national position on heritage in relation to the struggle for Independence.[61] The developments in museology in association with all the central principles and prerequisites regarding sound exhibition, protection, restoration and rapprochement led to the foundation of the

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[58] See for example: Leo von Klenze, Idealized view of the Acropolis and the Areopagus in Athens, 1846, (acquired by King Ludwig I from the artist in 1852) reflecting the German ideal of the conquest of beauty through classical antiquity.

[59] Voudouri (2003), 18 ff and especially 25-26.

[60] Kokkou (2009), 16.

[61] Aronsson (2011), 32 ff.

New Acropolis Museum in 2004. As described by John Urry, the place-myth, which produces value in the landscape, has in the museum its counterpart in the object-myth.[62]

The aim of the first museums was to safeguard cultural heritage and to enhance national consciousness. The National Archaeological Museum opened to the public in 1894. It was a panhellenic demand after the liberation and the establishment of the new Greek state. According to a royal decree of 1893 it aimed at the study and teaching of archaeology, the diffusion of archaeological knowledge and the development of love towards the fine arts.

The restoration of the byzantine history of Greece, which was considered during the Age of Enlightenment as a period of darkness and decline, was followed by the first measures of the Greek state for the protection of byzantine monuments, at the end of the 19th century. In 1899, the incorporation of Medieval Greek material culture in the legislation, as well as the foundation of important historical museums in Athens, enhanced national identity by recognizing Byzantium as the connecting link towards the unity of Greek history. Already since 1837 a statute reported the necessity for the protection of medieval remnants. Yet, the official foundation of a byzantine museum was realized only in 1914.

Concluding thoughts

Greece is one of a few modern states that have formed an identity essentially upon an ancient ideal. Sometimes this image is so intense that it is occasionally difficult to claim any "moderness". In both imagination and reality, ancient Greece is central to European identity. The values of classical antiquity didn't only encourage the emergence of new cultural ideas and transformations but also defined their successful incorporation in the decisive formation of the contemporary European amalgamation where humanistic values are perceived as being common European tradition. The longevity and endurance of classical heritage through its evolution should function as a creative force and a mindset of positivity for the present and as a guide for the future liberated though from any utopian reflections. The past might actually be no better than the present: comparing the idealized retrospection with the present can remind us that life can find its way to balance and leads us to believe that seamless perfection could be not behind but ahead of us.

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[62] Knell (2011), 21 ff.; Urry (1995), 194-198.

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Biography

Dr Katerina Mavromichali is an archaeologist-museologist. She studied at the Department of History and Archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (PhD, MA, BA), with a specialization in Classical Archaeology. She has a Master's degree in Cultural and Creative Industries, from King's College London University. Having had 16 years of professional experience in the Greek cultural sector, Mavromichali has worked in the departments of Prehistoric, Classical and Byzantine Antiquities, as a Cultural Manager Officer for the Hellenic Culture Organization-Cultural Olympiad, Department of Program Realization and Planning, as well as at the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki with an active role in programming, designing, implementing the exhibition, education and communication activities of the museum. She has held a senior position at the State Museum of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki since 2002, in the Department of Research, Lifelong Learning and Conferences. She participated in European programs as a member of the scientific team and as a national trainer. Mavromichali also has teaching work experience at a graduate and a postgraduate level and her research work has a special focus on cultural policies and the history of glass, archaeology, museology, museum education, history of art and conservation of cultural heritage. She is a member of the International Association for the History of Glass (AIHV), of the International Council of Museums (ICOM, ICMAH) and of the Museums Association (MA, London).

Global Challenges for Regional Utopias

Dennis Hermann

Abstract

A large number of German local countryside museums established in the 1990s deal with the at that time already past utopias of industrialization, small scale trade and early standardized agriculture that served as a motor for individual wellÐbeing, community building and prosperity in the 1950s and the following decades. These museums were privately founded by individuals or small groups who themselves experienced a time period of an economic miracle in Germany, the so called "Wirtschaftswunder" and want(ed) to preserve it for the future. Nowadays the founders and early inheritors retire or die, local farming and small scale trade are replaced by mass production and globalized market infrastructures, the young move away to cities or identify themselves with different narratives of their local history, e.g. their utopias differ from those of their ancestors.

In our triennially, international research project "New Local Museums as Institutions of Knowledge Production", based at the University Oldenburg, Germany, we research the challenges local museums in Germany have to face in the age of globalization. Research questions we want to address in this presentation are: What are the strategies of these museums for recruiting a next generation of people engaging with local countryside museums? What financing models can be established for the previous mostly private collections? How can they – or should they – adapt their exhibitions towards temporary and future standards? And last but not least, can former utopias function as a bridge to contemporary utopias and the people who dream them?

Introduction

"I think the term of "Heimatmuseum" doesn't quite fit here [to our museum]. Well of course, it's about our "Heimat", about what is shown from our local nature [...] but a "Heimatmuseum" [...] There I have certain imaginations where I think about an amateurish local history parlor [a so called 'Heimatstube'] "Heimatmuseum", that is a little bit, has a little touch of not-that-professional [...] something self-knitted. Anyway this [museum] here is self-knitted, too (laughs)."

(Former museum director about the term "Heimatmuseum", Interview, 24-11-11 translation by the author)

As a reader, I don't know whether you've ever heard about the German term "Heimat", let alone the term "Heimatmuseum"? "Heimat' means something like home and "Heimatmuseums" are the topic of this article. The introductory quotation from a director of such a "Heimatmuseum" already illustrates the problem of "Heimatmuseums": "Heimat" seems to be a complex topic, which is somehow precious, but also boring and old-fashioned.

So what can you expect from my paper? First I try to explain the term "Heimat"; thereafter I take a closer look at the object of my research - the "Heimatmuseum". I also clarify my research methods. Furthermore I give an insight into why I call these museums "regional utopias" and which "global challenges" they have to face nowadays. After considering the problems of "Heimatmuseums", I briefly discuss some approaches to solving their problems before concluding with an open question.

The key question I am thereby trying to answer and to bring up for discussion is, what role do small museums in regional contexts play for society, not only in the German-speaking countryside, but also all over the world and in the cities, understood as regions as well? Furthermore, which utopias can be developed and imagined for their future?

Defining "Heimat"

Well, what is "Heimat"? Normally, the easiest way to explain a foreign-language term is just to translate it. But already a search with the online translation service LEO (dict.leo.org[a]) shows the ambiguity of the term. LEO shows that the expression "Heimat" can be understood as "home", "home country", "homeland" and "native country" (dict.leo.org[b]). When I found that, I thought even all these translations do not really embody the point. "Heimat" does not only have a geographical relevance, it also has to do with a feeling. "Heimat" is a discourse, not a word.

This discourse can be seen and analyzed best in the usage of the term, such as in "Heimatmuseum". In this context, the translation program offered an interesting answer when I asked for a translation of "Heimatmuseum", explaining it as a "local museum – in Germany with sentimental connotations" (dict.leo.org[c]). This translation was closer to my own interpretation.

Research conducted by my colleague at the University of Oldenburg into the "Heimat"-discourse showed that there are two major understandings underlying the "Heimatdiscourse". On the one hand, "Heimat" seems to be something very valuable, personally meaningful and worth conserving, especially in the current times of a rapid changing world. On the other hand, the concept of "Heimat" seems to be a "dusty" one: it includes all sorts of old-fashioned, boring, affective (and because of its affectivity, also non-professional) stuff (Bollmann, 2012, 2). We already saw from the quotation at the beginning of this paper that "Heimatmuseums" somehow deal with or include both these positive and negative "Heimat"-aspects.

But next to the discursive aspects of "Heimat", our research follows a very practical and phenomenological approach for defining "Heimatmuseums" as objects of research. Museums with a local reference were founded in Germany since the end of the 19th century, and many of them after World War II (Schöne 1998, 105). The last big wave of museum formations took place in the 1980s. After this period the number of new formations decreased. These museums, which were founded in the 1980s, are those we are researching.

We define these museums as "Heimatmuseums" if they meet the following criteria, whereby the following list should not be understood as a static classification, but as a working definition:

> "Heimatmuseums" are mainly founded or completely restructured in the 1980s, small museums in the countryside with a local reference, showing new regionalisms, museums with a specialization for handicraft or local landscape and they mostly use reallocated old village buildings as exhibition rooms (Ellwanger et al. 2009, 1).

Hundreds of museums fulfill these criteria in the German-speaking countries, and probably many more all over the world. In our research project we are focusing on five museums with which we are cooperating and researching: the Museum and National Park Centre Fedderwardersiel; the Landscape Museum in Angeln/Unewatt, which is near the Danish border; the Museum of Handicrafts in Ovelgönne; the Werra valley Museum in Gerstungen, in the middle of Germany near a river called Werra; and the Lötschen valley Museum in Kippel in Switzerland.

For a better understanding of the constitution and nature of "Heimatmuseums" we speak to the people who run these houses, most specifically the CEOs and heads of managing associations as well as other members of the staff, the many laypersons working there and so on. We furthermore analyze everything that can be found in these museums: the exhibitions, the rooms, the collections and the archives. Through a triangulation of these methods we get a pretty clear picture of the character of these museums, yet I can only give you a small insight into our findings in this paper. Our approach differs from a lot of research that is done about museums nowadays, which focuses on the visitors and recipients. Anyhow we believe an analysis of these museums on a structural level is very appropriate to these museums, whose characteristics and specifics rather lie on a structural level than on the level of appropriation.

"Heimatmuseums" and Utopias

But let us now come back to the utopias, which the "Heimatmuseums" represent. Why did I announce these museums as utopias? Utopias, as I understand them, are conditions of a time or a society possessing highly desirable or perfect qualities. These conditions are not there at present times, they might have never been there, but are desirable for the future. In the case of "Heimatmuseums" these utopias are a form of an elapsed (and idealized) past, which is not there anymore and which wasn't even necessarily there when these museums were founded.

As I mentioned above, these museums were founded in the 1980s, mostly by private initiatives, some by single persons, some by groups. The leading persons were mainly intellectuals and academics, and many of them worked as teachers. When they started implementing a museum, these people already had a clear idea about what should be represented and collected in the museums and what role their museum should play in society or for the region. These people organized themselves, activated more people, developed concepts, raised money, collected objects and installed the museums in buildings that no longer fulfilled their former functions. In the majority of cases, the source of such a development was the existence of a private collection with a strong reference to the surrounding locality, which seemed to be worth preserving and exhibiting. Therefore the founders wanted to transfer this private collection into a public "Heimatmuseum".

Even stronger than the link between the collection and the local region was the relationship between the museum and the people who actually developed the museum. At this point you can already see one of the obstacles of these museums. They are basically initiated as "public private collections" and therefore fulfill a very subjective and personal function, but at the same time they also function as public institutions.

With regards to content, all five "Heimatmuseums" show forms of economy and industry in their collections and exhibitions, which no longer exist because of transformation in the region within the last decades. Most museums deal with utopias of industrialization, small-scale trade and early standardized agriculture that served as a motor for individual well-being, community building and prosperity, mostly in the 1950s and the following decades. As such, the utopias they represent were already historical, even at the time of the museum's inception. The founders and collectors themselves experienced immense economic growth after the Second World War in their local region, the so-called "Wirtschaftswunder" (best translated as an economic "miracle"), which they wanted, and still want, to preserve for the future. Examples for this purpose can be found in the Museum and National Park Centre Fedderwardersiel portraying industrialized fishing. The Museum of Handicrafts in Ovelgönne exhibits a modern mom-and-pop store. And the Werra valley Museum shows local handicraft and coal mining, which was important for the region.

The author Martin Hecht already proclaimed that "Heimat" is always associated with the experience of a certain loss (Hecht 2000). At least in the "Heimatmuseums" we are researching you can find the verification of this thesis. Museum expert Tony Bennett states, however, that museums are institutions of nation building, where audiences can participate in general education, culture and

the development of a nation (Bennett 2005). Anyhow I believe these functions can also easily be transferred to small regional museums where anyone can learn something about a region and locals can take part and experience a certain cultural memory (Assmann 1999) of their region, which is a basis for the construction of their own (regional) identity.

But here comes the challenge: What kind of regional identity can one construct through "Heimatmuseums", if the main thing they show is a personal and subjective history one has rarely heard of before? Subsequent to this question one can derive the question, what is the function of such a "Heimatmuseum"?

Problems and Challenges

Before I try to answer this question, I'd like to further analyze the problems inherent to "Heimatmuseums". The first problem is a structural one. I already mentioned the problem of the linkage between the founders or early inheritors to "their Heimatmuseums". But what seems to be even more problematic is that nowadays these founders and early inheritors retire or die, which means that there's nobody left who can tell the stories of the museums, objects and collections, not even the emotionally driven and subjective stories.

The second problem is a discrepancy between objects and stories and a potential audience. Local farming and small-scale trade are replaced by mass production and globalized market infrastructures and are therefore topics one has problems connecting with or identifying oneself with different narratives of one's regional history.

Additionally, the younger generation moves away to cities to find jobs or enter higher education, which means there are fewer people willing to visit such a museum, not to mention to run or manage it. Moreover, the number of tourists who formerly visited the museum's regions decreased, because nowadays they prefer globalized holidays in Cape Town, for example, or at least in sunny European countries.

The next point is that "Heimatmuseums" normally have very little money and therefore rarely spend it on purchasing new objects. In addition to that, they don't even have space for new objects or collections. As a result of this, the bases of today's exhibitions are still the collections of the past.

Questions evolving from that problem set include the following:

• What are the strategies of these museums for recruiting a next generation of people engaging with local countryside museums?

• What financing models can be established for the previous mostly private collections?

• How can they – or should they – adapt their exhibitions towards temporary and future standards? And last but not least, can former utopias function as a bridge to contemporary utopias and the people who dream them?

The Future of "Heimatmuseums"

Unfortunately I do not have an answer to all these questions. But at least the museums already realize some of the challenges they face and try to give an answer themselves; unfortunately most are not on a sustainable level. This means they are increasing their membership fees or organize special events like an "apple day", "bread and butter day" or a "children's day", which only have a short time effect.

At least on a structural level I can say that to some extent the obstacles of "Heimatmuseums" can be solved easily through an abstraction of personal stories, collections and objects to stories, collections and objects, which can be more generalized and thus understood by a broader audience; by a professional or academic coming to terms with the past, instead of a subjective and emotional one; and by a transformation of the museum's structures towards professional leading persons or teams with a clear allocation of tasks.

In fact, the museums we are researching are making these transformations, at least to some degree. They are, for example, cooperating with researchers. Still, the non-structural problem remains: the world outside the museum is changing, but the museums in terms of their collections and exhibitions are not. The utopias they were once built upon are redundant and fewer people can remember when they held some sway.

As an end to my paper, I would like to draw attention once more to my introductory sentence: ""Heimat" seems to be a complex topic, which is somehow precious, but also boring and old-fashioned". Now, we have to decide whether we want to keep this precious topic, these museums and this part of our history. If so, how we can do this? If not, is it because we want to forget about this part of our history, or simply because nowadays it is boring and somewhat alien? One thing I certainly look forward to is the opportunity to discuss these questions further in the future.

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Biography

Dennis Hermann is a PhD student in the project "Heimatmuseums as Institutions of Knowledge Production". He holds an M.A.: Museum and Exhibition, University of Oldenburg, Germany. He completed his B.A.: Literature, Art, Media; Sociology, at University of Konstanz, Germany. His Research Interests include: Participation in Museums, Knowledge Production in Museums, Local and Regional Museums in a Global Context, Museums in Everyday Life. Dennis' most recent presentation was at ICOM 2013, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: "David vs. Goliath: International Standards and Regional Museums".

Imposed Utopias. Establishing Collections, Building the Israeli Nation State[i]

Judy Jaffe-Schagen

Abstract

My research in Israel suggests that the way subcultures view the society in which they live affects both their position and their possessions. The ways in which citizens of a nation state function as nodes in a global network determines to a large degree the character of the state. Having begun the research focusing on objects, I was surprised to learn how museums in Israel are used by subcultures to visualize their role as nodes as well as to claim, literally and figuratively, part of the nation state. The ideologies presented in the museums differ per subculture.

In this paper I argue that more than trends in museology, it is the character of the subculture, religious, ethnic or political, that is decisive in defining the kind of museum. In Israel, I found, different kinds of museums (re)present different subcultures and this is strongly linked to politics.
Remarkably, the Israeli government seems to ignore most presented narratives, exhibiting instead its old Zionist utopia through a newly acquired art collection.

The paper is part of a wider research on material culture in Israel, entitled 'Objects in context, people in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel.' It is under the auspices of the CLUE research institute for the heritage and history of the cultural landscape and urban environment of VU University, Amsterdam.

Introduction

When you find yourself on a continent other than the one you live in, literally a different light illuminates the unfamiliar landscape filled with nature, people and objects. Light is an inextricable part of where we live, but one that can easily be taken for granted, ignored or even manipulated. Miki Kratsman, a well known Israeli photographer and head of the photography department at the Bezalel Art Academy in Jerusalem, says: "If I wait for a wintry morning to take a photograph so that the picture will have a European light, (like many photographers do) then there is a problem. We (in Israel) live with yellow smudges from the local weather, and when we print our pictures, the sky will not be blue like it is in Europe"[ii]. I would like to add to this quote that while the color of the Israeli sky also differs from that of Cape Town, it is unlikely that photographers in Israel would try to manipulate the light to look like the South African sky. Israel relates more to the West than to any other region, a fact that considering the composition of the population, is not at all self evident. But imitating a European sky doesn't make Israel European.

By looking at museums in Israel with the European light in the background, a false impression arises that Israel is like any other Western country.

Objects in context, peoples in places

In this article I would like to share some of the findings of my research *'Objects in context, peoples in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel.'*[iii] In the research I argue that Western museum studies, based on an assumption of a peaceful society with shared understanding of the roles of the state and of private initiatives, are not sufficient to apply to the uniqueness of the Israeli state where museums seem to be part of the struggle over land and national narrative.

The sheer quantity of museums in Western European countries often expresses the concept of a multicultural society. By contrast, the relatively large number of museums in Israel reinforces, or at least expresses, the distance that exists between subcultures.[iv] Multiculturalism is not the umbrella concept to summarize this process.[v]

My research shows that the number of museums and a growing emphasis on art are expressions of something entirely different in Western Europe than in Israel. In Israel, the way museums operate and the expectations placed on them, differ from museums in the West. The differences are linked with location and politics, which I will address in this article.

In short, the research *'Objects in context, peoples in places'* consists of two parts. In the first part I defined eight units of analysis, each consisting of a home and a museum that are linked to a particular subculture.[vi] I compared objects collected during interviews with both families in their homes and curators in museums.[vii] To compare this material culture found in the two spheres I chose specific categories: 'Collective and Personal History', 'Religious and Ritual Experience' and 'Art', that imply the use, function and social life of an object. In the second part of the research I analyzed significant differences between subcultures regarding the types of museums that are linked to them. These

differences are inextricably linked with Israeli politics. I argue that more than trends in museology, it is the character of the subculture - religious, ethnic or political - and the connection with the land and the state, that is decisive in defining the particular kind of museum. In any case, every museum established in Israel has to deal with the question of whether to tell the Zionist narrative in all its nuances and variations, or to exhibit another narrative.[viii] The answer depends on the political position or aspirations of the initiators of the museum. It also shows to what extent museums in a Middle Eastern country relate to the Western world.

Place, politics and narratives

Broadly speaking, until the end of the sixties, Israeli museums were based on the classical European museum model that "claims the heritage of classical tradition for contemporary society and equates that tradition with the very notion of civilization itself".[ix]

In the late sixties and seventies, a specific type of museum dedicated to the pioneering settlement of the land from 1882 to 1948, called "settlement" museums, became popular. These museums served to support and reflect the Israeli nation-building project. Moreover, Tamar Katriel states, "the political administration strived to erase cultural traces of life in the Diaspora and to create a uniform Zionist secular Euro-centric society, a "melting pot" policy".[x] This was doomed from the start as not all groups found themselves part of this nation-building project.[xi] Yet, these museums still exist. However the very term "settlement" museum is becoming problematic and should be changed to "pioneering" museum. The word settlement, once neutral, became politically loaded, as "settlers" is now used to refer to people living on the other side of the Green Line: the former border between Israel and the territories it captured in the Six Day War, including Gaza and the West Bank.

The ever-present connection between place, politics and museums was evident in July 2011 when the Israeli parliament's Education and Culture Committee approved a bill extending state funding of museums in the West Bank.[xii] Where a museum is built is connected with what is shown inside. The new settlement museums are situated beyond the Green Line. Member of Parliament Uri Ariel from the Nationalist Party, who sponsored the new bill, stated that: "Judea and Samaria"(the Jewish name for the West Bank) are the cradle of the Jewish nation, and the treasures exhibited in these museums are the historical proof of our ownership of the country". The purpose of both the old and the new settlement museums is the same: by their physical structure they claim land and through their objects they claim part of the national history. The answer to the question "which of the two museums will receive state funding?" is in and of itself a political statement. The settlement museums present a Zionist narrative where there is literally and figuratively no room for the other.

Other narratives are, however, being presented by museums throughout Israel. These museums are almost always established and run by the members of the subculture they present, which affects the location of the museum and the type of collection they house.

For example, the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center was built in 1973 in Or Jehuda in the center of Israel on the exact place where thousands of tents and shacks stood in the fifties, housing Iraqi Jews after they had fled Iraq. Inside the museum the Zionist story is imposed with retroactive effect on Jewish life in Baghdad in the thirties, estranging visitors with other narratives.[xiv]

A museum presenting the Ethiopian subculture, for which a law was enacted in March 2012,[xv] will be built in Jerusalem because, as Shlomo Akale puts it, "we didn't yearn in Ethiopia for Tel Aviv".[xvi] Shlomo Akale is the director of Bahalachin, The Ethiopian Jews Cultural Center founded in 1996 in Tel Aviv. The center shows ethnography for the general public and offers counseling by elders of the community for members of the subculture. It ignores the existence of Ethiopian art. Dalya Markovich, an Israeli sociologist, points out that the reclaiming of Ethiopian crafts while totally rejecting the Ethiopian art, accords with a long Western tradition, which characterizes the local museums. Due to its Western character, the Israeli museum excludes Ethiopian art and artists that use and apply mediums and materials considered Western. At the same time, the museum reclaims cultural products perceived as "authentic".[xvii] The fact that Bahalachin also shows ethnography rather than art is not so surprising. Rather, it is in line with one of the outcomes of my research: that copying Western museum practices does not work when one has still to fight for a place in society.[xviii] One could say that when the art of a subculture is ignored by others as well as by its own group, it is a sign of lack of recognition of the subculture within the nation state.

Another example is the planned Museum of Contemporary Art in Umm el Fahem, the second largest Muslim Arab town in Israel. [xix] Its building is designed as if it is floating in the air, expressing the absence of need to claim the land. The director Said Abu Shakra of the Umm el Fahem Art Gallery states, "we already own the land".[xx] The collection of the planned museum will, like the collection of the gallery, be dedicated mainly to contemporary art. It will be a museum meant for a broad international audience from Western countries. While the focus of homes in this subculture is directed outward to the surrounding Arab world, the gallery invited Yoko Ono to conduct an exhibition.[xxi] The gap between the home and the museum is enormous. It seems that the museum is not meant to serve the subculture, rather to attain recognition as Israeli citizens by the Western world.[xxii]

Remarkably, the Israeli government seems to ignore most presented narratives, like those mentioned earlier, and exhibits instead the old Zionist utopia through a newly acquired art collection. And through this, the government presents itself as a subculture.

Moving towards art: A government's utopia

As mentioned, museums in Israel have gone through significant developments over the past few years. The most important change, in line with Western Europe, is the emphasis on art. I would like to single out two recent developments in the establishment of collections in relation to the building of the Israeli nation state as examples of imposed utopias: the art collection of the Israeli legislature and a secular museum showing a religion.

Figure 1 - The Orange-grower's family. *Jaffa 1939-2007 Painting by Eliyahu Bokobza. Oil on canvas. Collection Parliament building. Courtesy of Eliyahu Bokobza*

The first is the establishment of an art collection by the government, through which it seems that the Israeli government promotes its own narrative. [xxiii] In May 2011 the exhibition "Israeli texture" opened in the parliament building. This permanent exhibition shows the Parliament collection of contemporary Israeli art. Sharon Sofer, responsible for artwork in the parliament, says, "where first archaeological items were put on display, now we are moving ahead to art".[xxiv] The Ministry of Culture sets the criteria: artists should reside in Israel, have exhibited in a museum in Israel or abroad, and been artistically active for at least five years. As to subject matter, it must be taken into account that it is a work place, and a place of politics. In the text accompanying the exhibition it states that the 47 selected works all share universal values, while at the same time having a strong local connection.[xxv] The works consist of something Israeli. They depict the landscape, or the home or the memory. When the chosen works were put on display, Ariyeh Eldad from the right wing National party demanded the removal of the painting "The Orange-grower's family" by Eliyahu Bokobza.[xxvi]

Eldad called the painting of an Arab family from the thirties, a "Nakba" painting, presenting the Palestinian narrative.[xxvii] Nakba is an Arab word meaning catastrophe and refers to the independence of the State of Israel in 1948. According to Rona Sela, a specialist in the history of photography in Palestine, "a photograph or painting of a Palestinian family from before 1948, against the backdrop of an orchard, would up till now not have precipitated a discussion of the Nakba".[xxviii] Reuven Rivlin the Speaker of the Parliament responded by saying that the exhibition represents all layers of the Israeli population, and that he is proud to present contemporary art on its walls that displays the variety in Israeli society.[xxix]

However the Parliament collection doesn't include the different layers of the Israeli population; it is the government's own story. In order to show all the layers of the population, works by Israeli Arab artists among others should be added to the collection.

"כָּל־כְּבוּדָּה בַת־מֶלֶךְ פְּנִימָה" תהילים מה׳ יד

"The glory of the king's daughter is all within." Psalms 45:14

אמנם בספר משלי נאמר "שקר החן והבל היופי",
אך מן האישה מצפים להיראות מושכת בעיני בעלה

Although, according to the Bible, "grace is deceptive and beauty illusory," a wife should make herself attractive to her husband.

לבוש צנוע משמר את כבודה של בת ישראל

Modest clothing is considered essential to maintain
the honor and sanctity of a daughter of Israel.

יכסו האישה הנישאה חבויה של פיזור... ונשים נשואות מכסות אמא את שערן כליל

Married Hasidic women cover their hair completely in various ways, since the
seductive power of a woman's hair is likened in the sources to that of nudity.

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Moving towards art: A curator's utopia

The second recent development I would like to address is a temporary exhibition on Hasidim, a movement within Orthodox Judaism[xxx], by the Israel Museum in Jerusalem that opened summer 2012.[xxxi] This national museum, founded in 1965, completed a comprehensive eighty million dollar makeover in July 2010. The goal was to renew, transform and unify the facilities. Until the renovation, the museum had a large ethnographic and Judaica department; however, many of the curators saw it primarily as an art museum. As part of the renewal project, the name of the Department of Jewish Ethnography was changed to the Department of Jewish Art and Life.[xxxii]Mrs Muchawsky-Schnapper, a long time curator of this department and the curator of the Hasidim exhibition, explains that this is not simply a change of name but rather an indication of what previously had been just a feeling that more and more the Israel Museum wants to become an art museum.[xxxiii] This notion is expressed not only by what is on display but also by how it is displayed. Temporary ethnographic exhibitions like the one on Hasidim, are designed as if pieces of art are on display. Moreover the museum turns to artists to curate some of its exhibitions. When artist Zvi Goldstein was asked to curate one of the exhibitions for the opening of the renovated museum in 2010, he described his encounter with the collection as follows:

> "As I became familiar with the collections, I was struck by the huge number of objects and artifacts from countless places. It was a surprise to see in a museum with no real tradition and no colonial history –but rather an eagerness to colonize the audience's consciousness – such a vast visual encyclopedia of the 'far', of the 'other', and of the 'we'."[xxxiv]

It remains unidentified who is the "other" and who is the "we" in the case of the exhibition on Hasidim. It seems as though Hasidic culture belongs to the "other", both according to the museum as well as to the group itself.

Mrs Muchawsky-Schnapper believes that one of the obligations of the museum is to overcome existing stigmas by presenting the material culture of specific subcultures, and by building a bridge between one subculture and another.[xxxv]However it is not self-evident that a secular institution like the Israel Museum would show an exhibition with a religious subject and within the museum this was discussed at length.[xxxvi] At the same time it was questionable whether people wanted to loan their objects to the museum for the exhibition. The Israel Museum is seen as belonging to the secular world. Some of the Hasidic groups, who are anti-Zionist and don't recognize the Israeli state, consider the museum a Zionist symbol.[xxxvii] Hence the exhibition on Hasidim shows the material culture from a group most of whose members have never, and probably will never, visit the museum, as they consider it an inappropriate place for them.

Still, the museum, in order to build a bridge, adapted itself to the exhibited subculture. For the duration of the exhibition there were special openings hours for women only. Moreover in the case of a Ruzhiner shtreimel shown next to a photo of a painting of a Tatar ruler wearing a similar fur crown, the cross on top of the crown in the original has been digitally removed from the photograph out of consideration for the anticipated Hasidic visitors.[xxxviii] The outcome is an exhibition that is most of all a tool to pursue the utopic self-image of the museum as an institute that is capable of building bridges between secular and religious groups.

But the reality is a one way bridge where objects are presented as art stripped from the intangible aspects that make them valuable for the subculture to which they belong. Only when the intangible aspects of an object are known can it be chosen, and consequently presented, in a way that connects the two locations, the home and the museum, with the third location, the nation-state.[xxxix] The exhibition makes visible that museums have their own utopia, one that might include the hope of acting as a mediator between subcultures. But as long as the subjects' own utopia, in this case the arrival of the Hasidim's awaited messiah, is not addressed in the museum, and as long as the subculture does not acknowledge the museum as a tool for achieving this goal, the museum won't be able to connect the home, the museum and the nation-state, no matter how beautiful the bridge it builds.[xl]

Imposed utopias

The acquisition of art in museums in Western Europe is "a strategy to break through former ethnographic distinctions and to strengthen the existing collection profiles".[xli] By contrast, in collections in Israel, art is used increasingly to make neutral statements and as a tool to promote coexistence.[xlii] In this vein, most of the museums catering to a national public concentrate on collecting and exhibiting art, as is the case with the Parliament collection and the Israel Museum. Art can be a beautiful disguise for a political statement, an imposed utopia. Art, however, is never neutral, nor does it have an effect of unity in Israel.[xliii] Once the European light in the background is removed and the actual location is acknowledged, it becomes clear that the quantity of museums in Israel reflects a society that is divided and one in which museums seem to be part of the struggle over land and national narrative. The collections that are being established don't build the Israeli nation state as a whole; rather they form single blocks, each comprising its own utopia. The extent to which this utopia, often taking the form of seemingly neutral art, can be imposed, depends on the level of power that each subculture or institution enjoys.

The question arises whether in Israel a museum is the right tool to enable a subculture to establish itself within the nation-state, to act as a mediator between generations and to function as a bridge to the other subcultures. My research indicates that this might be too naïve and positive for the Israeli nation-state under present conditions, which are not conducive to conviviality.[xliv]

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i Jaffe-Schagen, J. (2013) *Objects in context, peoples in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel*. p.366

ii Gilerman, D. The photographs within. *Haaretz*, 19 October 2006
http://www.haaretz.com/culture/arts-leisure/the-photographs-within-1.202759

iii Jaffe-Schagen, J. (2013) *Objects in context, peoples in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel*. (PhD thesis, VU University Amsterdam)
   The main research question being to what extent location affects the interplay between objects and people in the specific setting of Israel where the concept of conviviality is not self-evident.

iv By analogy with Roger Brubaker's concept of assimilation as a continuous process rather than an end-product, subculture is conceived as that part of a migrant or indigenous culture that is retained in the process of continuous assimilation into the main culture. When applied to Israel, it can even be said that subcultures come into existence the moment they become part of the nation-state. Following the notion of a lack of a clear main identity in Israel, the process of assimilation is focused more heavily on behavior rather than on identity.
   Jaffe-Schagen, J. (2013) *Objects in context, peoples in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel*. p. 10. See also Brubaker, R. (2001) The return of assimilation? Changing perspectives on immigration and its sequels in France, Germany, and the United States. In: *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 24 (4):531-548. And Gad, Y. (2011) *The code of Israeliness*. *The ten commandments for the 21st century*. Keter (in Hebrew)

v Jaffe-Schagen, J. (2013) *Objects in context, peoples in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel*. p.263

vi Chabad, Moroccan, Iraqi, Ethiopian, Russian, National Religious, Israeli Christian Arab, Israeli Muslim Arab.

vii This resulted in an unique collection of 66 objects. See: Jaffe-Schagen, J. (2013) *Objects in context, peoples in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel*. p.249

viii Jaffe-Schagen, J. (2013) *Objects in context, peoples in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel*. p.269

ix Karp, I. and Lavine, S. (1991) *Poetics and politics, Smithsonian Institution Press*. p.3

x Katriel, T. (1997) *Performing the past. A study of Israeli settlement museums*. Mahwah,N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

xi Hakohen, D. (2003) *Immigrants in Turmoil. Mass Immigration to Israel and its Repercussions in the 1950s and after*. Syracuse University Press

xii This law is referred to by the media as the ''Settlement Museums bill''.

xiii Lis, J. and Rauchwerger, D. (2011) ''Knesset to vote on bill to allow state funding of W. Bank museums. *Haaretz*'', 24 November 2011

xiv See also: A migration museum and its visitors. Mrs Kaduri and the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center. In: Jaffe-Schagen, J. (2013) *Objects in context, peoples in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel*. p. 99-121

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Biography

Dr. Judy Jaffe-Schagen is a historian. As a post-doctoral fellow, she is affiliated with the department of geography and environmental studies at the Haifa University, Israel. Her current research focuses on the interrelation between migrants, museums and memorials in the Israeli nation-state. She obtained her PhD from the faculty of history at the VU University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Her dissertation 'Objects in context, peoples in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel', considers how Israel, as a location of meaning, affects the interplay between objects and people.

Museum Collections Between Ideology and Reflection

An Example of the Museum of Recent History Celje, Slovenia (EU)

Tone Kregar
Tanja Roženbergar

Abstract

The Museum of Recent History Celje, Slovenia, was established in 1963 as the Museum of Revolution Celje. In the period of former Yugoslavia, which Slovenia was part of at the time, museums of revolution were dedicated to the history of labour movement, anti-fascist struggle and socialist revolution during the second world war, and their task was to profess and promote the ideology of the ruling communist regime. Their programme orientation thus set the basis for their collecting standards and their exhibiting policies.

In the context of social and political changes, which took place in the last decades of the twentieth century, the Museum of Revolution Celje threw off ideological shackles of the past regime, expanded the scope of its activities and the content of its collections, and changed it name to the Museum of Recent History Celje. It successfully transformed into a modern, thriving and well frequented Slovenian Museum. Despite its current new role, purpose and mission, the museum also pays attention to preserve its own history and collections that it accumulated in past. Those collections are not seen as ideological ballast or redundant remnants of past times, but are appreciated as an important part of our heritage, which today has a different function and a different meaning. Collections based on ideological foundations represent a special challenge to museums in modern democratic environments, as they require a careful interpretation and contextualization - both in terms of validating their former function and in terms of affirming or justifying their current role. It is crucial that this topic is also included in recent museological theory in the frame of "difficult heritage."

Introduction

The purpose of the article "Museum Collections between Ideology and Reflection" is to present the interdependence of museum material and its contemporary social environment with a concrete example of museum practice, particularly in relation to the dominant ideology, which determines attitudes towards heritage and memory. The understanding, recognition and acceptance of such items and the related content are, therefore, always conditioned by social changes and the current social reflections. This is reflected in the criteria for collection strategies, in the ways of displaying them and in the selection and interpretation of content.

An illustrative example of this process is the creation, development and changing mission of the former museum of the revolution, today the Museum of Recent History Celje in the third largest Slovenian city, which is presented in this paper. It focuses on museum collections compiled during and for the needs of the socialist regime in the 1960s. It draws attention to and redefines the role of collections and their message 50 years later, in a different political context.

We should point out that the terms such as communism, socialism, and especially revolution should be understood in the context of that specific period and space, as their perceptions differed in other social environments, for example in Central European or Southern African countries.

The Museum of Revolution Celje was established in 1963

At the end of World War II and the liberation from the brutal Nazi occupation, the Communist Party rose to power in Slovenia and Yugoslavia. During the war, the Communist Party under Tito's leadership had led the anti-fascist national-defence fight and started the socialist revolution. In doing so, it enjoyed considerable popular support and could relentlessly take revenge on its political opponents, especially those who had collaborated with the occupier during the war. The undemocratic regime gradually eased its totalitarian edge and distanced itself from the Soviet bloc after 1948. It remained in power for almost half a century, until the democratic changes that took place at the end of 1980s, which shortly afterwards led to Slovenian independence.

After 1945, the communist regime consolidated its position and disseminated its ideology in many ways, especially through official cultural institutions, including museums. Throughout the history of the former Yugoslavia, which Slovenia was then part of, the communist regime set up museums of revolution, which could nowadays be called "red" museums. Those museums showed the history of the labour movement, the anti-fascist struggle and the socialist revolution; moreover, they promoted the communist regime and the personality cult of Josip Broz Tito. One such museum was the Museum of Revolution Celje, which was established in 1963 in the former town hall, a historic symbol of political power and political changes.

The institutionally formed and maintained collective historical memory was always an important part of the identity, (self) image and (self) awareness of a particular local or national community. Its purpose always remained, along with the presentation of the past, to justify the present and the

future. This applied and still applies for democratic societies, but even more so for authoritative, totalitarian and all undemocratic societies, which, by justifying the legitimacy of their own regime or the present authorities, use and misuse the past and allow and favour only one officially determined and politically controlled interpretation of history.[1]

Historians and museum employees were aware of the political framework and limitations on research. Therefore, they focused primarily on the Nazi violence against the population, on the liberation movement and partisan struggle and their role within this, and on the victims of this fight on the communist side. Certain aspects were presented fairly objectively; others reflected a highly ideological and one-sided approach in their strictly black-and-white interpretation. Some of the most controversial events and phenomena in the recent history, such as post-war killings of political opponents, were completely ignored and tabooed.

Within those limitations and under the direct supervision of the communist authorities, the museum existed for over two decades. With the gradual democratization of Slovenian society in the 1980s (still in the time of communist Yugoslavia), museum professionals sensed the opportunity for change and became increasingly autonomous.[2]

The Museum of Revolution Celje changed its name to the Museum of Recent History Celje in 1991

According to the English historian Tony Judt, the fall of communism triggered a whole wave of bitter memories, truths that were concealed for decades came to light and some of the most persistent taboos were broken. At the same time there emerged a problematic temptation of surpassing the memory of communism by approximation, generalization and distortion (Judt 2007:933).

Those museums that dealt with recent political history, especially the former red museums, faced new challenges and questions. As active participants or initiators of social and cultural processes in the field of (re)interpretation of the past, the museums deal with the characteristics of a particular historical period, to which their scientific and professional interest is devoted. But if they want to carry out this mission in a credible and competent way, they first have to critically confront the past of their country, nation or community, as well as their own role in it.

[1] It is a wider issue or a current discourse, which is present also in Slovenia. Being the subject of confrontations and controversy on political, scientific and professional levels and even in public spheres, it would take a separate chapter to give a clearer idea of the matter.

[2] The spirit of the time and changes triggered self-initiated crossing of traditional boundaries by individuals and entire museum teams. Museum of Revolution Celje being among the first when, in cooperation with the Gorenjska Museum, in 1990, i.e. still within the previous political system and before the formal renaming of the museum, it organised an important exhibition about Slovenes who had been mobilised into the German armed forces, entitled "Soldier under Duress".

Transitional post communist destinies and metamorphoses of the former red museums, are not just a clear and revealing reflection of the socio-political changes at the end of the 20th century; they also trigger reflection on the role of museums in the democratic European area in the 21st century. In order to (re)define their mission, the museums must objectively interpret their former status and critically assess their own past. At the same time they must provide the answer to the question of what their present and future attitude will be regarding the present politics and authorities.

In the early 1980s, the museum began to expand its activities and to include collections based on research of life after 1945. It also acquired new premises where, between 1987 and 1989, a permanent exhibition on the development of Celje after World War II was set up. Eventually, the *Museum of Revolution Celje* also officially changed its name to the *Museum of Recent History Celje* in 1991.

The new name had therefore not been the cause of the above-mentioned changes, but rather the result of these changes. It was the result of having expanded the temporal frame of research to include the entire 20th century, of having introduced new topics that were no longer ideologically conditioned, and of introducing professional and methodological novelties. Accordingly, the expert team changed and expanded, as well. Younger historians and an ethnologist joined the museum and introduced new historical methods and approaches, such as urban ethnology, which became accepted areas of museum work.

In the new political and social conditions, the museum had to justify its continued existence, create new content, redefine its mission and, above all, address new audiences. Therefore, we focused on the younger generation in particular and opened a special section of the museum, naming it the Children's Museum in 1995. Even today this is the only and also very well attended children's museum in Slovenia. It has been designed for children up to 12 years of age, who can learn about our cultural heritage through play and also get to know the world.

Another turning point in the new and modern museum was the opening of a completely restored glass photography studio dating from the late 19th century. The studio used to belong to a legendary city photographer, Josip Pelikan. To add to this project we collected over 20,000 photographs that were taken in the first half of the 20th century; a great source of historical evidence and valuable museum material.

The transformation of the museum content and orientation was completed in 2000 with the opening of a new permanent exhibition titled "Life in Celje". The exhibition brings the story of the city and its people in the 20th century to life, with more emphasis on social and cultural than on political history. As one of the first such contemporary permanent exhibitions in Slovenia, with fresh content and a modern set up, it has been greatly appreciated by professionals and the public. The exhibition is regularly refreshed, updated and actualized, and by doing so we keep attracting new groups and new generations of visitors.

The good attendance levels and reputation of our museum have proved that its transformation from the former political to a modern museum, in-line with adopted European guidelines for museum

work, has been successful, though it keeps facing new challenges and tests, partly due to its role in society and its methods of working in the past.

Collections between science and propaganda

Transformation thus took place gradually and at different levels, stages and segments of museum work. The field of research was extended to include new research approaches and methodologies (sociology, ethnology, anthropology, interdisciplinary way of work…), and new content, which stemmed from contemporary periods (at the turn of the 20th to the 21st century) and by addressing different groups of visitors we created a wholesome museum offer that meets the demands of users.

Our key and fundamental issue of changes and transformation, of course, refers to the "centre" of the museum: museum collections and different museum material.

- What determined and defined the museum objects?
- What were the collection and exhibition policies of former museums of revolution like, and what were the common characteristics of former museum collections and other museum objects that met the mission?
- How did that mission materialize in museum collections and in what ways did museum exhibits reconstruct the ideology of the time? In what exhibition language or manner?
- Why and how has their testimony changed over the past 50 years?
- Has a museum object made a whole way from basking in the glory of power to reaching its antipode?
- And last but not least, what is the role of those collections nowadays?

A review of collections and museum material of the Celje Museum of Revolution from 1963 shows a large volume of museum material dating from the time or related to the World War II in Slovenia. We can divide it into four thematic groups:

1. Museum objects indicating violence - these refer to various means of violence, weapons, rifles, pistols, machine guns, cannons, military instruments and equipment. The exhibition language of this group of objects emphasized the technical perfection of those objects, their preservation, diversity, rarity, while the facts that those objects are or were basically used for performing violence and killing people were entirely ignored. The exhibited military equipment and other museum objects of the kind were primarily meant to invoke feelings of majestic grandeur and elevated enthusiasm, and not, however paradoxical, feelings of anxiety, horror and death.

   Let me particularly point out the collection of arms, which is still one of our museum collections. It consists of firearms that have been used by soldiers during World War II. Despite the relatively few precious and worthy pieces, it was considered one of the most important collections of our museum, because it included numerous firearms that had belonged to important protagonists of the national liberation struggle. Many had donated their weapons to the museum themselves, simply for affirmation of their contribution to the revolution and to strengthen their reputation and position.

2. The second thematic group of museum objects include personal items that belonged to national heroes and various symbols and mementoes of the revolution: different decorations and medals, guns, records, photographs, personal objects, statues of national heroes, flags, banners, models and monuments. The museum was often given the entire legacy of individuals and thus took care to preserve their memory and glorify images of people considered national heroes.

3. The third thematic group includes museum objects that represent witnesses and act as evidence of the wartime period. They primarily act as a way to preserve a more personal kind of historical memory. These items are the least ideologically charged as they talk about the fates of individuals, bitter experiences of war, various survival stories and tragic events. Our work in this area focused on interviewing victims of violence and their relatives and witnesses, members of resistance movements, war veterans and other survivors. Museum objects were used for thematic exhibitions representing certain events from World War II or individual historic periods, for example objects that were made by or belonged to war prisoners and detainees in concentration camps, their prison clothes and accessories, and a whole range of other documentary material. A heart-rending collection of farewell letters by prisoners who expected to be sentenced to death and wrote letters to their loved the day before being sentenced is included in this. As well, the letters written by prisoners the day after they had been sentenced to death, in which they sent their last goodbyes and words of love to their families. The Celje Museum of Revolution managed to collect objects and documentation from over thirty hostages who were shot in 1941 and 1942. Those exhibits represented one of the most poignant museum collections: a testimony of sacrifice, courage and moral strength; as such, it was one of the most valuable collections for the museum. Although most letters offered very few or no grounds for ideological connotations, the collection was very valuable for the regime, which justified its views and stance with all the blood that had been shed for freedom.

4. The Museum accumulated a large volume of printed propaganda and other documentary material: documents, photographs, books, paroles, post cards, letters, diaries, partisan newspaper editions and recordings of partisan speeches. That material was used for simple, so-called "paper exhibitions" communicated primarily through the media of words and photos and contained just a small amount of other material on the subject.

Exhibits were actually an exhibition of power, with the aim of affirmations, especially those that the regime was particularly proud of. In essence, the presentation of the content, regardless of the diverse types of shows, or maybe exactly for that reason, remained black-and-white in terms of painting the political history. Collections were the tools for presenting the communist ideology and for building collective historical memory on one side, and controlling society on the other. Exhibits of the Museum of Revolution were arranged to convey and blend information between science and propaganda, education and indoctrination, taboos and glorified selective historical memory, positive and negative iconography.

The power of collections 50 years later

What is the role of these collections and items 50 years later, when yellow stars of a united Europe replace the former flags? What is their power?

Despite changes in collecting, research and exhibition policies, which also brought other, new collections to the museum, the original exhibits were not made redundant or disposed of in any way. Most of them, however, lost their exhibit function and were not displayed. Former exhibits were removed from permanent exhibitions, but not abandoned. I would like to point out that this "move" or reorganization was carefully controlled and documented, and performed strictly in accordance with all the principles and standards of museum and library work.

Formerly discussed and presented topics are today part of a broader survey, with a critical eye on their historical context; the historical material is being actualized and made available and accessible via modern media. The items have gained more credibility, as they also testify to the period in which they were collected, and in this way help modern generations understand the past.

Modern trends in museology stress the importance of exhibition themes that speak about the dark side of the past and our so-called "difficult heritage", which may include the museum material of the former museum revolution. At the beginning of the 21st century, the time is ripe for the content, which bears a contemporary accent, engaged accent and includes the necessary contextualization of the displayed content. Museums need to "come out" and reveal the topics and different perspective from the recent history that used to be concealed from the public. This is a new challenge in museum practice and a difficult task in terms of overcoming various obstacles. It takes more than listing and revealing mere historic facts; they need to be updated as well. In doing so, it appears that we are trying to warn, to apologize, to forgive and to understand.

Various interpretations of collections have emerged; their new and trendy set up and interpretive forms, such as art installations in historical museums, seem to be very effective and appealing. The project "Artistic interpretation of collections and its complementarity", which was started in 2009 at the Museum of Recent History, uses artistic potential for increasing the visibility and accessibility of collections, its updating and systematic expansion. In this way, attention can be directed also to the material, which is not on display but stored in archives and depots.

Our museum still devotes considerable attention to World War II and to the preservation of our memory of the Nazi violence and our national liberation struggle. However, we do it professionally, without prejudices from the past. Since our current mission is different from the former mission of the Museum of Revolution, the role of some old files and collections, like the aforementioned collections of weapons and farewell letters, has also changed. Individual items from both collections have been included in current permanent exhibitions but placed in the broader context of the display of the history of World War II in Celje. Other items are stored neatly and safely in the museum depot, while the collection of farewell letters is available to the public in digital form and can be accessed via the museum's thematic web portal.

Exhibition Guns and letters

The 50th anniversary of the founding of our museum make us wonder whether these "old" collections can offer more than just reminiscences and artefacts of the past? Can they be seen outside the historical context of their origin? How do they function without the help of "classical" historical interpretation? What do we get when we interpret them in a fresh way and place them in a more timeless, contemporary context? What is the potential of their current communicative narrative?

The exhibition entitled Guns & Letters helped us gain some answers. By interpreting the collection of arms and the collection of farewell letters, we were trying to not only preserve the memory, but also encourage the urge to critical social reflection. This exhibition was an opportunity to critically evaluate the role of our museum (and its collections) in the past and present time. We wanted to expose both collections face to face and highlight their universal and timeless essence.

On one side there were weapons as a means of destruction, killing and causing pain, regardless of their origin, history or their former owners; just the cold, industrially manufactured pieces of metal, which can turn into a murder weapon when in human hands. On the other side, there was their antipode in the form of farewell letters, the most personal and at the same time poignant artefacts from the preserved heritage and legacy that we as museum professionals have been faced with.

In this way, we are using a piece of Slovenian history to draw attention to a broader, global context of war and violence, hoping to encourage visitors to critically reflect upon their heritage and legacy. To make the purpose and the message of the exhibition clearer, we invited 16 Slovene intellectuals to think not only about the farewell letters or about arms, but also about things like the passing of life, sacrifice, farewell, courage, survival, and hope. They put their thoughts on paper in the form of letters. We then taped their interpretations on to the gallery walls so that they became an integral part of the exhibition, and their essays were published in a special edition. These letters added value to the exhibition, and the words in those letters become, to paraphrase Berthold Brecht, their most powerful weapon.

Conclusion

Our basic principle at revising the museum material that comes from the Celje Museum of Revolution is certainly its demystification. Objects, which in the past served ideologies for indoctrinating people, today help us understand those ideologies. That is why the museum material, after 50 or more years of its existence, gained further value and offered new modes of interpretation of the past. Taken from the perspective of participation, social activism and sustainable development, we are starting a social dialogue - an open, respectful, even conflicting dialogue, but still a dialogue, which will replace the former inclination to one-sided views. It is in this way that we can also discuss the development of collections and their dynamics, and the social relevance of material, and the fact that collecting museum material is a task never fully accomplished and never finite. Each museum has to find a balance between the historical legacy of its collections and the requirements of its mission in modern times; or, like Peter Mensch says: "Old collections are, in fact, accumulations of `fossilised world views', each one covering the next, like matruskas, the wooden Russian dolls (2010:3)".

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Biographies

Tone Kregar was born in Celje. In 1997 he received a bachelor's degree in history and sociology at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana. At the History Department of the Ljubljana Faculty of Arts he successfully defended his master's thesis (2003) and doctoral dissertation (2007). As a historian he has published widely. As a curator and museum professional, his focus is local and national 20th - century history with special emphasis on museum presentations of dark and violent periods and phenomena in history. For his museological work he recieved the Slovene museology award, the Valvasor Award in 2000 and two Valvasor Prices in 2006. He is a member of the Slovene Museum Society, ICOM, president of the Celje History Society and member of the editorial board of historical review Zgodovina za vse. In his spare time he writes lyrics and sings in a rock band.

A graduate of ethnology and sociology, and a curatorial adviser, Tanja gained both her bachelor's and master's degrees at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. From 1990 to 2003 she was employed as ethnology curator at the Museum of Recent History Celje. In her museum work she has set up a variety of projects and she established the department of urban ethnology and department for education in the field of museology (School of Museology Celje, co-creator). She was employed from 2003 to 2005 as a secretary at the Slovenian Ministry of Culture. Since 2008, she has been working once again for the Museum of Recent History Celje, as a director. Tanja Roženbergar is president of the Slovenian ICOM committee.

Images for the Future:

Aspects on Collecting Contemporary Images and on Future Collections

Elisabeth Boogh
Merja Diaz

Abstract

This paper will discuss contemporary photography from two different perspectives. First, we attempt to define what a digital photograph is and elaborate on how the digital image and the networked sharing of images have changed the way we use photography. The focus is on the development of digital technologies and how it has altered the photographic image's meaning and role in everyday life.

The second deals with the museum's role as a collecting institution. We argue that there's a threat that even though more photographs are being produced than ever before in history, fewer than ever will be collected by museums. Do museums have the resources to gather a representative selection of contemporary images, from both professional and personal images? How do we present a fair view of our diverse society that corresponds to the real world?

We will present an empirical survey from the project Images for the Future. The findings reflect museums' collecting policies and approach to the digital image in Sweden.

Museum collections are part of a democratic practice, and our aim is to be inclusive. Older photographic collections reflect contemporary views on society and often include the gaze on the other. Today's photography is ubiquitous, immediate and can be shared through social networks. No longer does the gaze belong to the professional and this needs to be reflected upon in the museum collection. Issues to discuss are which images are important to collect, who makes the selection, how to collect and why we need to preserve a visual memory of our time to future generations? How does the method of collecting change the representation in the collections? What possibilities and what difficulties lie ahead?

The Evolution of Photography

The digital age has brought about great changes to photography. The development is stated to be as revolutionary as the invention of the Daguerroeotype in the 1830s and the later Calotype, which was patented by Fox-Talbot in 1841. This negative-positive process enabled, for the first time in history, the duplication of images.

According to the annual publication (Svenskarna och Internet, 2011) by the Swedish Bureau of Statistics, most Swedes have access to a digital or mobile camera and to the Internet, making them potential contributors to digital cultural heritage. Eighty-six percent of the Swedish population older than eighteen uses the Internet and at least half of them upload images. Half of the users older than twelve are also using social media and almost all use Facebook. MMS are sent and received by fifty-four percent of the overall users of the Internet. Digital born photography has become an integrated part of a wider computation and information technology, whereas the camera and film industry of the analogue age was dedicated to photography alone.

Photography of our time is no longer a physical thing collected in shoeboxes and photo albums, or kept in climate controlled archives as a unique object; instead it has become part of an intangible cultural heritage. Digital photographs are often disseminated on the Internet, which makes them accessible and ephemeral at the same time, and some kind of device like a computer or a mobile phone is required for displaying and accessing them. They can immediately be erased from a memory card if the photographer or the subject is unhappy with the result. They are stored on hard drives and CDs, which risk becoming unreadable in the future. Furthermore, the file formats used today, such as tif and jpeg, will change and most likely be replaced by other formats.

The major difference between analogue and digital photography lies in the purpose for which a picture is taken, how the picture is used and how it is disseminated. When a photograph gets published on the Internet it moves in circles where it is difficult to control or limit the use and transformation of the image. It will most likely be copied, remixed and tagged with other meanings than the intended ones.

Personal Photography

The biggest change since the analogue age has taken place in amateur, or personal photography. The pendulum has swung from taking photographs to remember important life events to using photography as visual communication. Just as the traditional photo album was often created over long periods of time, and the images were organised chronologically, it is not uncommon for new digital practices to emerge from traditional uses of photography so that images saved in a mobile phone camera or uploaded to Flickr or blogs resemble traditional photo albums. Yet, while the traditional family albums showed happy moments, the digital albums show images of a far more everyday and mundane nature. The widespread use of the mobile phone camera has contributed to this focus on the mundane, which is a new and still relatively unexplored field in photography.

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"These two photographs show the same content. One as a photographic image and the other one shown as ones and zeros." Photo by: Elisabeth Boogh

Digital photography is in many ways an experience and a cultural expression created and transmitted on websites. It has given rise to new subject matters and created new areas of use for the photographic image. Images depicting everyday life are published in social media seconds after they have been exposed, in order to share them with a large number of people. The images get tagged and narratives are being created in the interaction between sender and recipient. The ability to switch between the visual and verbal and intertwining the two into a single language is part of the new competence or vernacular emerging in digital communication.

There are some similarities between the old arts of portraiture with today's use of self-portraits. The mobile phone is often used to create self-portraits, which sometimes get published as profile images on Facebook. The difference between the old ways and the new lies in the framing of the image and in who is in charge of the camera. During the analogue era the professional photographer had power over the image to a much greater extent. But when a digital camera or mobile phone camera is used for self-portraiture, the photographer is both subject and object. This leaves the power of framing the photograph and how it will be used is in the hands of one person. Today many people create and define their identity through the use of photography in social media. This phenomenon mirrors ones status in the public arena and it resembles the use of carte-de-visité albums in the 1860´s.

Professional photography

For the professional photographer the digital turn has primarily consisted of changes in work processes but also in increased competition from amateurs. Taking photographs with a digital camera no longer requires the same amount of technical knowledge as with an analogue camera. By viewing the image and the histogram in the camera's LCD display, the quality of the image can quickly be determined, and the photographer can choose to save or delete the picture. In the analogue age it was customary to save all exposures on the developed film and mark the frames approved for use. Today, failed exposures are erased and many important images may be lost through light pressure on the delete button.

The gap between amateurs and professionals has been further reduced through technical development. Some professional photographers have traditionally worked as photojournalists but through the rapid increase of digital communications, mobile phones and digital cameras, the public is encouraged to participate as citizen journalists. But publishing photography is not the sole privilege of news corporations. With web 2.0 it is possible to disseminate material on the Internet without editorial filters and the defining line between producer and consumer is being erased. Over the past ten years the amount of non-professional images on the web has increased significantly.

The museum as a collecting institution

There are two different, principle aspects to collecting. On the one hand, the museum professionals decide what to collect and how. They have an overall idea of the selection and systematic practices for the management and storage of the collections. On the other hand, the collection itself is an active actor shaping the museum and us as a collective and as individuals. As soon as an object has been acquired by a museum, it begins to shape the group to which it belongs to and maintains the self-image and self-understanding of the group. It becomes part of their heritage and their identity. A geographically defined idea of one uniform reality is easily established and consolidated. The question is whose cultural heritage is being collected by the museums and what are the consequences? If using homogeneity as a norm we risk creating one single cultural heritage, featuring both inclusion and exclusion. As museums hold great legitimacy among citizens, they can easily turn this heritage into a simple truth. We have to keep in mind that collecting and collections are primarily about people. Therefore it is crucial how the selections are made, and for whom a cultural heritage is singled out.

Photography as Cultural Heritage

Photography is a multi-faceted media, which can be approached from many different perspectives: technical performance, artistic expression, as an object of cultural history or as a social phenomenon. What would the world look like without photography? Very little would be familiar. The question implies a different society with another memory. The colonial idea of "the other" would have been difficult to sustain, and the modern notion of celebrities would be completely unknown.

Photography plays a central role in the production of cultural heritage and the photographic image contributes greatly towards constructing the way we see life and society. It is both a means and an end in this process. Based on the number of objects, the museum's photographic collections are frequently the most comprehensive. The photographs have often been passively collected by the museum as gifts and donations and can be seen as monuments of society, depicting important buildings, avenues and persons.

Another method of collecting images is through documentation and through the expertise and knowledge of the museum professional. In practice, a curator and a photographer go out to do fieldwork and illustrate a certain subject matter through observations, photo documentations and acquisition of objects and photographs. But today many museum professionals acknowledge the fact that a curator's version cannot represent all the nuances of life today.

The photographic images have a strong position as carrier of information. It is one of the most important sources for highlighting social development and change. Despite this there is no government institution or Swedish museum that has a designated responsibility for collecting photographs. National, regional and municipal museums collect photographs as art or objects of cultural history in accordance with their mission statements and acquisition policies but they do not have an overall responsibility. Nor is there an institution with a national responsibility for the digital cultural heritage.

What Is Collected Today?

A survey, which we carried out among Swedish museums, shows that the museum staffs have produced most of the digital born photographs in the collections. Few museums have begun collecting contemporary photography from the public or professionals. Very few museums realise that photographic practices are changing, nor have they understood the implications of this. Photography is still considered a means by which single objects are produced and collected by curators.

The Digital Utopia

We are in the middle of a rapid, technological change providing far more users with access to digital media and global communication. Narratives become limitless and they cross boundaries. When the world around us changes, the contents of the collections do not necessarily reflect contemporary society. It is a common practice to complement current collections with lacking images and motifs, but this will be difficult, if not impossible in the future as many of today´s photographs risk being lost. Even though more pictures than ever are being produced, a majority of them might disappear due to lack of metadata and storage on unstable media carriers. In the future we will not be able to collect retroactively, as we could in the analogue age. Nor can we rely on social media and the Internet to be the keepers of photography for us.

How do museums cope with this change and stretch the boundaries of current collection practices? What should the photographic collections look like in the future? Which stories will they tell us about?

Today many new groups have the possibility to produce and disseminate their images, which can be seen as a process of democratization that gives rise to new possibilities for participation and creates new content for future cultural heritage collections. But the digital development put great demands on the collectors, their competence and abilities to adapt to new collection practices in collaboration with the public.

The keywords for the selection and collection of digital born photography are cooperation and dialogue. The images have to be collected in collaboration with their creators and it must be undertaken in parallel with when the pictures are produced. Photographs can be collected using apps or portals connected directly to the archives. The images can be made available online; they can be tagged and commented on by other users, thereby adding content to the collections. The information from the public will supplement the museum's formal classification system. Narrow, authoritarian collection content can be bridged by user-generated collecting methods and the museum professionals could waive their authority and their rights of interpretation in favour of user influence.

The immense amount of digitally produced images is significant for our time. A selection has to be made, but the museums should attempt to collect in quantity as well as *quality*.

"Today many new groups have the possibility to produce and disseminate images which enables new groups to participate in the making of cultural heritage and create new content to museum collections." Photo by: Fadumo Mohamed, Malmö Museer.

09/03/2012

Museums should also *cooperate with researchers* who are asking for quantitative collecting with comprehensive metadata and context. Together it is possible to find new ways to work with contemporary photography. In order to be prepared for on-going changes it will also be necessary to work with *experts of technology and future studies*.

The challenge for the museum is to find ways to interest the amateurs, as well as the professional photographers to collaborate and add content to the collections. It is of utmost importance for the museum to engage with people who want to contribute to the cultural heritage; the practices used in web 2.0 enables this participation.

An unanswered question still remains. Will the museums be able to adapt to new methods of collecting? Or are we handing over the responsibility for our mutual collections and history to commercial image banks such as Gorbis and Getty Images, or social media like Facebook and Flickr?

Who will preserve our contemporary images for the future? Will there even be pictures in future that can help us understand the complex reality of our present society? As an answer to this, we suggest that museums open up their collecting practices and let the public join in, accepting all the risks that come with that.

This paper draws its conclusion from a two-year project in Sweden aimed at finding new methods and strategies for collecting contemporary digital born photography. The project has mapped the development of photography over the past decades and examined how the collection of digital born photographs is being conducted today.

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Biographies

Elisabeth Boogh has been a museum photographer since 1995. She currently works at the Stockholm County Museum as a Photographer and Curator of Photography Collections where she manages both digital born collections as well as the older collections. During the last three years the museum has focused its collecting of digital born photography from amateurs in a project called "Samtidsbild" or Contemporary Images and Elisabeth is the head of this project. Samtidsbild was part of a bigger project "Images for the future" where Stockholm County Museum collaborated with Merja Diaz at Malmö Museums. The aim of the project "Images for the future" was to find and define practises for collecting digital born photography to museums and archives. The project ended 2013 and the results were published.

Merja Diaz has been working at Malmö museums since 1999 as a museum photographer, supervisor and presently worked as curator of Photographic Exhibitions. She was Project Manager for the project "Images for the Future". During the project Malmö Museums focused on collecting digital born photographs especially from more marginalized groups in society to increase the representation in the museum's photographic collections and Merja was the head of this collecting project.

Seeking Common Ground:

How Digital Museums Might Play a Role in Promoting Peace

Laura Kate Gibson

Abstract

Even in post-conflict societies where previous economic, social and political utopian ideologies and experiments have seemingly failed, there is popular desire to create new models and conditions that will foster peaceful and harmonious societies. Although recognizing that museums are never apolitical entities, this paper argues that as guardians of cultural heritage museums can, and should, still play a role in advancing a utopian idea of lasting peace in the twenty-first century. The existing literature concerned with the positive role of museums in post-conflict situations is currently narrow. It focuses primarily on the museum's ability to facilitate reconciliation and social inclusion by producing inclusive exhibitions and executing transformative education programmes. The significance of these activities lie in the museum's ability to (re)interpret collections to inspire a sense of common ownership over heritage, rather than allowing collections to represent apparently irreconcilable differences between peoples and cultures. As Guzin-Lukic explains, collections can be interpreted to enhance a sense of appreciation of the "Other's" influence on our own heritage and so instill a sense of common ground, essential for resolving conflict and building harmonious societies. This paper proposes that making digital collections meaningfully available through the Internet to wider audiences, including previously marginalised people, is another way in which museums can engage with publics in fractured societies to provoke multiple interpretations of collections that were originally conceived within earlier utopian discourses. By maintaining an ongoing dialogue that demystifies and problematises heritage through the online collections, museums can play a role in challenging and shaping emerging ideas of utopia.

Introduction

Rest assured, this discussion paper is not going to argue that museum workers suddenly take on the role of UN peacekeepers and start patrolling conflict zones armed with the sharpest artefacts in their collections. Nor will it suggest that any museum assumes a role in actively facilitating peace agreements between warring parties. What it does propose, however, is that museums might play a vital role in facilitating shifts in mindsets, or outlooks, which bring about the conditions necessary for generating positively peaceful societies.

In Conflict Resolution theory, "Positive Peace" is quite distinct from "Negative Peace". While the latter alludes to an "absence of direct violence" and is a short-term aim in peace negotiations, positive peace encompasses many situations that guarantee positive human conditions such as equality, and social and legal rights.[1] Using these definitions, museums can perhaps play a role in promoting specifically positive peace through problematising difference, generating deeper understandings of difference and by cultivating awareness of our similarities and inter-connectedness. Of particular interest is the way the museum might perform such functions through virtual spaces on the web, which has, problematically, come to be considered a "digital utopia".[2]

Museums and Utopias

Before proceeding further, it's important to acknowledge that museums in the past have been engaged in utopian projects and that the utopias many museums have envisaged have been conceived within discourses of colonialism, capitalism, communism and nationalism, all systems that were lived dystopias for much of the world.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that the history of museums might be written as a series of utopia projects intent on exploiting a museum's worldmaking capacity to imagine a better future.[3] Its ability to do this lies in the way it identifies, classifies and arranges the objects that it has collected and withdrawn from the world, and which it subsequently releases into the museum where they can be rearranged in "a space of infinite recombination".[4] The relationships that the museums build between these objects, and then between object and audience, do not mirror real-world encounters but they provoke speculation, reflection and prospection (sometimes more dreamed than reasoned), and this facilitates utopian possibilities.[5] In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when museums opened to the "masses", this potential to imagine utopia expanded as museums became a place in which as many people as entered and explored the collections could be involved in practicing utopian imaginings and "alternative realities".[6]

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[1] Ho-Won Jeong, Peace & Conflict Studies: An introduction (London: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2001), 24.
[2] Cristiano Agostino, "Utopia and Digital Museum Policy in the Web 2.0," Museological Review 17 (2013)
[3] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "The Museum- A Refuge for Utopian Thought" in German translation in Die Unruhe der Kultur: Potentiale des Utopischen, eds. Jörn Rüsen, Michael Fehr, and Annelie Ramsbrock (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2004).
[4] Ibid, 1.
[5] Ibid, 4.
[6] Agostino, "Utopia and Digital Museum Policy", 78.

In spite of the paradigmatic shifts that museums have undergone in the past decades, which have seen them adopt a more cautious approach to grand narratives and a conscious willingness to become more inclusive and visitor centred, Agostino suggests that a "utopian instinct" survives in museums today.[7] While recognising that certain past utopian visions were far from laudable, a museum's capacity to imagine, and perhaps contribute towards, a more complete and perfect world is not something that should be discredited outright. Certainly, freedom from war, from violence, from oppression, from civil disorder may be utopian visions that we cannot actually hope to fully achieve, but they remain desirable in the twenty-first century and, as such, are something towards which we should constantly strive. And, given their capacity to re-imagine, museums can, arguably, play a role in moving us from a purely utopian vision of world peace towards more widespread positive peace where people enjoy economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society.[8]

Contraexistence and Coexistence

Based on the notion that museums can explore nuanced relationships through their collections, it seems possible that they can examine our imagined differences and similarities in a way that fosters understanding, tolerance and coexistence.

Jannie Malan's work in peace and conflict resolution is very useful in understanding how this might happen. Underpinning Malan's work is the belief that it is our shared humanness (ubuntu) that makes it possible for us to co-exist with differences, to transform our mindsets and attitudes from "contraextistence" (or "turned againstness") to "coexistence" (or "turned towardsness"). Based on this understanding, museums might play a role in demonstrating that people do not necessarily have incommensurable ways of thinking about the world, in spite of our apparent differences that have previously been so exoticised through museums and other media. Through sophisticated engagement with their collections, museums might in fact simultaneously draw attention to our shared humanness while problematising our differences to cultivate, at the very least, tolerance for them.

Interestingly, people do tend to be orientated towards observing differences and taking similarities for granted.[9] Jannie Malan explores this phenomenon as part of his work on conflict resolution, particularly in Africa. He draws attention to the way bird-watchers will marvel at the amazing differences between birds while overlooking such obvious similarities as all are covered in feathers and have a pair of wings. This orientation towards difference, Malan argues, extends towards our dealings with people. Rather than focussing on the similarities of our bodies, our needs, desires and emotions, we pay attention to differences of physical appearance, language, culture and behaviour. Malan highlights "remarkable similarities" between all human beings, such as how we came into being and the inability of any of us to choose our parents, gender or birth date.[10] In overlooking these we

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[7] Ibid, 81.

[8] For further discussion on positive peace, see Ho-Won Jeong, Peace & Conflict Studies: An introduction.

[9] Jannie Malan, Being similar, different and coexistent (Durban: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Occasional Paper Series Issue 3, 2011), 14.

[10] Ibid, 15.

risk generating perceivably insurmountable divisions based on apparent differences that polarise our opinion against other groups. This type of contraexistential mindset is anathema to building truly peaceful societies.[11]

There are two conflicts in particular that Malan was involved in resolving through actively consulting with the conflicted communities to facilitate this shift towards coexistence. The first was in Muden, KwaZulu-Natal, where the conflict was between black and white communities over the need for land transfer. Talks between both sides, where mutual need was recognised and mutual trust shown, eventually led to the transfer of several farms.[12] The second violent conflict was amongst opposing political parties in the Zulu community of Mpumalanga, which led to the deaths of 2000 people over a six year period. During meetings between the political warlords, both sides came to realise that they had identical objectives of freedom of association and freedom of speech; a Peace Agreement was signed at the second meeting.[13]

The major lessons learned from the process of resolving these conflicts was a need for respect for one another, a recognition of mutual needs and the full involvement of the community- peace from inside, not imposed. Only in this way can positive peace evolve. His research into these situations and participation in the peace processes led him to conclude that "as human beings we should not allow our differences to prevail over our similarities".[14]

Museums and coexistence

Museums are not apolitical institutions, it's true, and so a museum assuming a role as peace facilitators is somewhat suspect. However, museums do have spaces in which dialogue might take place. More significantly, museums have great opportunity through their collections to problematise differences between people that in the past were simply exhibited as different. Exhibitions can destabilise normal assumptions and collections offer perfect tools to explore the idea that cultural differences and forms of representation are nurtured, which, Malan suggests, opens us up to believing that "cultural commandments" are not absolutes that govern everyone's entire lives; with courage and creativity, escape routes from cultural predicaments might be found.[15] Such open-minded interpretations pave the way towards building greater understanding and tolerance between people.

One exhibition that effectively problematised notions of difference is the *Inscribing meaning: Writing and graphic systems in African Art*, which exhibited at the National Museum of African Art and Fowler Museum in 2007. The exhibition incorporated an apparently diverse variety of artworks, including images showing scarification of the body and lukasa memory boards. Rather than focussing on the aesthetic differences between these objects, the exhibition invited visitors to consider each object as a form of script. The intention was not to dwell on the differences in aesthetics between these

[11] Ibid, 4.
[12] Ibid, 51.
[13] Ibid, 53.
[14] Ibid, 62.
[15] Ibid, 36.

scripts, but rather to demonstrate how people in Africa have utilised interrelated symbols and signs to encode and transmit meaning for centuries.[16] And how in this way these items, like alphabetic scripts, can be understood as texts that Bakhtin argues function as "a coherent complex of signs", significant for their ability to represent intricate knowledge systems.[17] Within this paradigm, visitors were invited to challenge a discourse of difference that historically divides people into literate and illiterate cultures, a dichotomy that rests on a narrow, albeit entrenched, notion of writing and literacy as the ability to produce and interpret texts in alphabetic scripts.

This is not to suggest, however, that we should seek artificially constructed similarities between objects or cultures. Nor that we should overlook differences entirely and risk a discourse of universalism. What is important, however, is that these differences are not perceived as inherent. Instead they are presented as pragmatic and cognitive.

One of the greatest lessons learnt from successful conflict resolution was how paramount the involvement of the community is. Again this is something that museums can engage with by ensuring source communities produce knowledge about the collections since this will surely give a better understanding of supposed differences, which is necessary to overcome contraexistent attitudes emanating from ignorance.

The Digital Space As Utopia

If we accept that museums, through sophisticated engagement with their collections and visitors, can play a part in ameliorating social relations in the ways Malan advocates are necessary, it is pertinent to consider how this role might play out in the digital world where museums are increasingly present. Agostino's research into the ways museums think about Web 2.0 leads him to suggest that many museums perceive the Internet as a "promised land for intellectual, social, cultural and sometimes physical freedom" and as somewhere they can realise their utopian visions.[18] His work does not focus specifically on whether or not museums *should* attempt to realise utopian or "microtopian" visions (although he does describe utopian projects as "at best idealistic, at worst a pernicious wish fulfillment") but instead explores the challenges inherent in employing the Internet to fulfill them.[19] This is significant.

Many prominent theorists have postulated utopian ideals of online access. For example, Francis Fukuyama writes about unhindered access to information that embodies the realisation of liberal democracy and the subsequent "end of history".[20] In terms of striving for world peace, *The Economist's* Frances Cairncross's argument is even more exciting since he suggests that the end of distance in

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[16] Mary Nooter Roberts, Elizabeth Harney, Allyson Purpura & Christine Mullen Kreamer, "Inscribing Meaning: Ways of Knowing" in *Inscribing meaning: Writing and graphic systems in African Arts*, eds. Christine Mullen Kreamer, Sarah Adams (National Museum of African Art (U.S.). and Fowler Museum at UCLA: 5 Continents. 2007), 14.

[17] Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics. Oral and written culture in Africa and beyond* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 21.

[18] Agostino, "Utopia and Digital Museum Policy", 83.

[19] Ibid, 80.

[20] Cited, Vincent Mosco, *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power and Cyberspace* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 62.

cyberspace and immediate access to this free for all information will facilitate an end to international misunderstandings and even war.[21] Many criticisms are levelled against this digital utopian vision on the grounds that it overlooks the realities of a digital divide,[22] and its erroneous assumption that online users are unburdened by the innate problems of offline interaction.[23] Yet, as Agostino highlights, the utopia of the Web as an egalitarian space in which "democracy and engaged speech" are intrinsic still captures popular imagination and that of museums. Moreover, this understanding informs museums' online and web strategies.[24]

Agostino's prime concern is a misplaced belief in participatory audiences and the assumption that large numbers of users will engage meaningfully with an online museum simply because it has a web presence. There is certainly a great deal that we do not know about how people use and interact with the web. What we do know is that currently, 65.7% of the world's population does not have access to fixed internet connections, and that those areas with lowest internet connectivity are the places that conflicts occur more often.[25] This might lead us to perceive it as futile to imagine that museums can have any impact through the Internet, let alone a positive role in promoting peaceful relations.

Certainly the web is not a new utopia and it is incumbent on museums not to shape their online presence as though it were. However, this is not to suggest that we should wholly disregard the ability of the web to communicate information to wider audiences of users. While a global disparity in access to communication technology persists, museums that are cognisant of these conditions can develop ways to overcome this. In Africa, for example, the cell phone is almost ubiquitous and these devices are increasingly web enabled, which means technology and associated skills should no longer act as a barrier to access.[26] Of course, the museum should consider embracing these local conditions and adapt their online sites to be mobile ready in these circumstances. What this does mean, however, is that there is the *potential* to reach these wide audiences through the web.

[21] Frances Cairncross, *The Death of Distance: How the Communications Revolution Is Changing our Lives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1997), 86.

[22] For more discussion on utopian ideals, online access and the digital divide, see: Laura Gibson & Hannah Turner, "Facilitating Inclusivity: The Politics of Access and Digitisation in a South African and Canadian Museum." *International Journal of the Inclusive Museum* 4, no.1 (2012): 1–14.

[23] Agostino, "Utopia and Digital Museum Policy", 82.

[24] In his paper "Museum 2.0", Agostino examines the ways this utopian ideal has shaped museums' web strategies through a case study of the Tate Gallery's online strategy.

[25]"Internet World Stats," last modified 3 November 2013, http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm.

[26] For more discussion on museums reframing the digital divide, see: Gibson & Turner, "Facilitating Inclusivity," 4-8.

Varied Perspectives and Interpretations

As well as simply sharing information with wider audiences, digital museums are exciting precisely because they offer the possibility for engaging source communities in knowledge production projects.[27] It's this opportunity to give voice and ownership to previously marginalised source communities that actually makes it possible to facilitate understandings, even if this means the museum's authority is unsettled. Time and again, peace negotiations have only led to positive peace because the conflicting communities have been fully involved in facilitating the process.[28] Peace has not been imposed on communities. Rather, the communities have been fully involved in leading the conversations and exchanges that have permitted differences to be explored and mutual understandings to be recognised. This hasn't always proceeded in the way facilitators imagine but these are the sorts of interactions and relationships that museums need to facilitate.

Perhaps one of the most exciting features of the digital world is its capacity to accommodate many coexisting perspectives, which forces us to consider how knowledge and assumptions are constructed. In the digital space, objects and collections do not exist in silos in the same ways that they do in physical museums; embedded metadata and search terms in digital objects make it possible for visitors to explore relationships between objects and collections that are separated in "real life". As we explore the digital collections, we come to see on our terms that there is more fluidity between cultures and identities than museums have perhaps presented in the past and so, hopefully, recognise that other cultures likely had an impact on our culture, and vice versa. In this way digital space makes it possible to imagine breaking down these constructed differences.

What these varied perspectives and interpretations do is open a dialogue around the collections that takes place within a virtual space that seems somewhat less intimidating than the "museum". The virtual museum isn't a digital utopia, it isn't wholly democratic or egalitarian, but it is a starting point. It permits a deeper understanding of apparent differences, and, as Malan argues, understanding breeds tolerance and the possibility of peaceful coexistence, even if it does not extend as far as real friendship or intimate love.[29]

[27] For examples, see the University of British Columbia's Reciprocal Research Project and South Africa's Ulwazi Project.

[28] Malan, *Being similar, different and coexistent*, 61

[29] Ibid, 66.

Concluding Thoughts

Conflict often arises from *contrae*xistential mindsets where perceived insurmountable differences drive us apart. Through sophisticated engagement with collections, museums *can* challenge assumptions about differences and collapse fixed notions about "us" and "them". Perceived as a less intimidating space than many physical museums, the digital world is not a new utopia but, used carefully, offers spaces for dialogue, multiple perspectives and deeper understanding. It's these more nuanced understandings of apparent difference that are more likely to promote tolerance, mutual respect and a desire to find common ground. Such shifts towards a coexistential attitude as these make peaceful cooperation and positive peace more possible.

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Biography

Laura Gibson previously managed the Digitisation & Collections Management Project at the Luthuli Museum National Legacy Project, South Africa. She started work at the Luthuli Museum in 2009 as an intern for the Commonwealth Association of Museums and was subsequently offered a position to design and implement the Luthuli Museum digitisation and collections management project for purposes of preservation and access. Her work builds upon interests and skills developed during her undergraduate degree in History at the University of Durham, (UK), and Master's degree in African Studies with Public Culture from the University of Cape Town (South Africa), and courses in Museum Studies at the University of Toronto (Canada). As well, she has experience working in the area of collections management at Canada's Royal Ontario Museum and South Africa's Iziko South African National Gallery. In September 2014 she commenced a PhD in Digital Humanities at King's College London.

Obey, Play and Learn – Political Ideologies and Childcare

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Abstract

The industrial revolution in Sweden and Scandinavia was related to technical innovations and a belief in industrial development. It was particularly associated with ideology and political movement. Considerable alterations in social structures took place and new social classes emerged – simultaneously Swedish politics changed. These changes in Swedish society went hand in hand with the confidence in the common good of the industrial revolution. In their collections and exhibitions, many museums include descriptions of these changes into new political ideologies and of the practice of building a new and better society. The industrial revolution is extensively described in Swedish museums. It could be said that this historical perspective has permeated many of the objectives of the work of Swedish museums.

In a project conducted by five museum institutions within the region of Västra Götaland, a study has been made on the history of childcare during the development of industrial society.

The project is called Obey, Play and Learn. This is an interesting field because of the social and political ideologies that have been expressed concerning children and the upbringing of children through several centuries. Over the decades, these ideologies have met with the changing political climate. Discussions and political points of view on how childcare should be conducted are still a part of the debate in Sweden today.

The project Obey, Play and Learn is in progress during the years 2009 – 2014 and a substantial exhibition has been produced. In the work of the project, our view is that discussions on the upbringing of children and on childcare reflect interesting ideological changes and utopian ideals in Sweden – childcare significantly expresses changes in society. In this contribution, my intention is to discuss how the documentation of this theme, carried out at the museums, can be regarded in relation to changed utopian ideals in Sweden, but also in relation to the aims of the museums in describing these changes. Moreover, in regard to this theme, I would like to discuss how museums of cultural history, in their collections and in their work, could illuminate global changes.

Introduction

Obey, Play and Learn is a project that approaches the small perspective and the smallest members of society: the children. At the same time, the aim is to illuminate greater questions in Swedish society: changes in ideology and politics. The project *Obey, Play and Learn* is conducted by five museum institutions in the west of Sweden. All the participating museums are located in main industrial cities in the Region of Västra Götaland. An important part of the research work and exhibitions of the museums thus concerns the industrial history of the region, including both the material and intangible aspects of history. The museums are active within a regional network for industrial history. Several projects are planned, which will examine industrial history from a global perspective. The region of Västra Götaland has a long tradition of industrial history; it has largely been governed and characterised by the establishment of industry. Moreover, it is one of the most densely populated regions in Sweden, with a social infrastructure that has been shaped by the industrial structure. Since the nineteenth century, a substantial industry dominated the region consisting of mechanical workshops and shipyards, paper and pulp industry, along with a thriving textile industry. During the twentieth century, the car industry, also providing work for sub-contractors, was an important contributor to the industrial structure. During the industrial era, the demography of the region transformed along with industrial and infrastructural changes.[1] The introduction of industrialism altered living conditions, creating new values in society. Conditions were changed even for the youngest children.

The purpose of the project is to study how children are regarded and how the childcare system of society has changed through time. Our idea is to show how the question of childcare has created engagement and discussions, even stormy debates. This is an interesting field because of the social and political ideologies that have been expressed concerning children and the upbringing of children through several centuries (Nyberg, 2010). Over the decades, these ideologies have met with the changing political climate. Discussions and political points of view on how childcare should be conducted are still a part of the debate in Sweden today. Consequently, our own present day is an important part of the project. For documentation work and programmes that we arrange, we work together with preschools in the communities that we visit within the framework of the project.

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[1] In his economic-historical research Kent Olsson discusses the changes in demography and infrastructure during the industrialisation in the west region of Sweden (Olsson, 2012; Westlund, 1998).

About the project Obey, Play and Learn

Obey, Play and Learn is a project within the field of history of industry, with an emphasis on the industrial society. The project aims to present the relationship between childcare in Sweden, attitudes towards children and historical changes in a global perspective. Histories of industry and industrial heritage are often associated with a material perspective concerning heavy industry and heavy industrial work carried out by men. However, industrial history also encompasses a wider context of Swedish history, involving a variety of occurrences in society. An example is the development of the Swedish public sector, including schooling, healthcare and childcare.

The industrial revolution in Sweden and Scandinavia was related to technical innovations and a belief in industrial development (Rydén, 2002; Isacson, 2007). It was particularly associated with ideology and political movement. Considerable alterations in social structures took place and new social classes emerged – simultaneously Swedish politics changed. The industrialism of the late nineteenth century resulted in an increase in class conflicts, with considerable differences in living conditions between the working class and property owners (Isacson, 2002; Isacson, 2007). Democratic mass movements arose during this period, fighting for the trade union, for political rights and better conditions of employment. These organisations promoted consumer cooperatives, education, various sports and health associations, as well as temperance societies. During the later stages of industrialism, during the twentieth century, society underwent social changes; a growing middle class attained better living standards. During this period, the Swedish welfare state became an important concept of the times. In the middle of the twentieth century, Swedish industry faced a period of expansive development; changes in Swedish society went hand in hand with confidence in the common good of the industrial revolution.

The welfare and care of children was also an important political question. In their collections and exhibitions, many museums include descriptions of these changes, illustrating the new political ideologies and the practice of building a new and better society. The industrial revolution is extensively described in Swedish museums. It could be said that this historical perspective has permeated many of the objectives of the work of museums. For this reason, the intention of this project has been to relate political and ideological changes in society to the world of children and their conditions. In which way did the conditions for children change? Did industrialisation change the world for the better for the smallest members of society? How can ideologies within childcare, together with expectations and dreams about the welfare state, be expressed in the exhibitions of the museums according to a global perspective? Is a global perspective of interest in the discussion concerning changed conditions for children?

Changes in childcare during the industrial era

The name of the project *Obey, Play and Learn* illustrates changes that have occurred in childcare during the course of time. Already during the nineteenth century, there were various forms of childcare systems (Nyberg, 2010; Vallberg Roth, 2009). Infant schools were started during the beginning of the industrial era in the 1830s, continuing until the 1880s. The classes in the infant schools were

often large, containing 150 – 200 children in each group. Usually the children of the poor attended these schools, but also children from middle class families. Many of the children were orphans. These schools were privately run, financed by donated means. Important ends were to ensure punctuality, order and cleanliness, but also to teach the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic.

During the 1860s, a form of nursery schools was started. This was an entirely different form of childcare. Children were to be looked after while their parents were at work. Nursery schools were often situated near industries with many women workers. Children of poor families were placed in these nursery schools, which did not have specially trained staff. These kinds of nursery schools occurred until the 1920s and were either privately run or run by an establishment. Order and obedience were the main principles of the infant schools and nursery schools.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Kindergarten or Children's Gardens were started in Sweden. At this stage, the pedagogy for teaching children was developed and the ideology of childcare changed. The responsibility of the society now became significant. In the Children's Gardens, the classes were smaller and there were teachers who had been educated at Fröbel Institutes. The education of these institutes was based on the teaching of the German pedagogue Fridrich Fröbel. Children's development was considered to be influenced by nature and playing was important for the development of children into harmonious adults. Ellen Key, the well-known Swedish author and women's rights ideologist, introduced this pedagogy into Sweden. These Children's Gardens were intended to relieve mothers for a few hours during the daytime. The gardens were designed to be educational for the children and staff. Around this period, children started to be regarded as children; previously they were regarded as small adults.

During the 1920s and 1930s, several Swedish politicians became interested in the question of childcare. Two of these were the politically active women authors Alva Myrdal and Stina Sandell. They held many political debates on the matter of childcare provided by the Swedish society and about ideologies concerning the upbringing of children (Moberg, Sandel, 1947; Köhler, Lichtenstein, Moberg, Myrdal, 1937). During later years, various pedagogical approaches have been of significance for how childcare centres are modelled in Sweden, in several cases with international influences. In Sweden, there are many Montessori schools; the Swedish Montessori Association was established in 1960. Reggio Emilia is a pedagogical philosophy that was developed in North Italy, which is used in many Swedish preschools. Playing and learning are important elements in these pedagogical approaches. A new Education Act was introduced in 2011, stating that learning is of utmost importance in Swedish preschools of today. This education act further emphasised the importance of learning in preschool.

The Swedish childcare centres ("dagis"), started during the 1970s, are still predominant in the twenty-first century and are a typical Swedish occurrence. The ideas of these childcare centres were based in the ideologies and public political debate of previous decades concerning childcare and the importance of school in society. In the 1930s, childcare became an obligation of society; employers were often considered responsible for providing childcare for their employees. After the 1940s, the arrangement of childcare became the responsibility of the child welfare committee of the municipalities. State subsidy of the childcare system commenced during this period and it became

a public facility (Vallberg Roth, 2009; Nyberg, 2010). State subsidy was increased several times during the 1960s and advantageous loans were introduced for the building of childcare centres and preschools (Eriksson, 2006). In 1965, the government commission for family planning proposed a substantial development of a part time and full time childcare system. There were political labour market objectives for this all-embracing development; one aim was to enable Swedish women to start work. The idea of childcare centres was also to help the children with their social interaction and to teach them orderly and helpful habits through play. During the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, childcare centres became available for everybody. During this period, there was a considerable expansion of childcare centres in Sweden, not only in the cities but also in smaller towns and rural areas (Fredriksen, Nordberg, 2014; Eriksson, 2006). Childcare centres were often built according to standard models in premises specifically planned for part time or full time childcare. The outdoor areas were also important from a pedagogical point of view.

Today, childcare centres are well established in Sweden, having developed through their historical predecessors, but with international influences. The generations growing up in Sweden during the past decades have all been to childcare centres and preschools. Today children of migrant families can also attend childcare centres from their first year in Sweden (Fredriksen, 2011-2013). Many new childcare centres and preschools were built during the end of the twentieth century to cover the demand for childcare in the Swedish local districts. This created enough room for all children to be able to go to childcare centres or preschool from the age of one.

Museum collaboration in west Sweden covering several years

The project *Obey, Play and Learn* is in progress during the years 2010 – 2014. In the work of the project, our view is that discussions on the upbringing of children and on childcare reflect interesting ideological changes and utopian ideals in Sweden – childcare significantly expresses changes in society. Our ambition is to continue these discussions in the local work with the project, in the local communities where the project is conducted.

The initiative for the theme came from one of the museums in the project, the City Museum of Gothenburg. The other museums in the project are Bohusläns Museum, Borås Museum, Innovatum Science Center and the organisation "The Exhibition is on its Way". These museums all have large collections representing industrial history and work with industrial heritage in many different ways. In the project, a study has been made of the history of childcare during the development of industrial society. We have studied several preschools that are active in the region today and their contemporary history; this work resulted in a substantial exhibition (Nyberg, 2010). For this documentation and exhibition project, which extends over several years, we have tested a model of collaboration between the museums. We have also worked according to this model in our collaboration with preschools. The City Museum of Gothenburg produced the exhibition, which is now travelling around the region, on display in libraries, museums and at schools. "The Exhibition is on its Way", a specially adapted organisation within Västarvet (The Heritage of Western Sweden), is responsible for arranging the tour of the exhibition around the region, for a period of a couple of years. When the tour comes to the various communities, we invite the general public to story-telling evenings and programmes, with

the aim of cultivating knowledge concerning cultural history of childcare and local history. We also arrange programmes for the children of the preschools where the exhibition is displayed.

The work with the exhibition included an inventory of the collections of the museums involved in the project. This was carried out to make an assessment of old items and photographs, interviews and stories concerning the cultural history of childcare in the region. At the same time, we were interested in studying how the cultural historical collections were related to ideologies in the society and to changes in society. Which type of items associated with childcare had been collected and which kind of context is related with these items? Which implications do documentary photographs have in a discussion about the changed ideologies of childcare?

One part of the project included the work of the participating museums of conducting historic and contemporary studies in their own local communities. Since knowledge of the development of childcare centres in many communities in the region is rather diversified, it has been interesting to document the situation in typical industrial communities. As the exhibition also visited some of the smaller rural communities, we could make comparisons with these. Aspects of the development of childcare have been deepened as many of the staff at childcare centres and preschools have been employed during the period when public childcare was under development. This part of the project thus provided interesting narratives and new knowledge about present-day childcare.

Conclusions

Swedish public childcare is a wide and complex field and the project group found it intriguing to study. Today, Swedish child-care is the subject of many studies concerning development of pedagogical methods, how children learn and interact, the curriculums of preschools, etc. Child-care has been debated with reference to children's welfare and concerning the aims of the work of child-care centres and preschools. In later years, discussions have concerned children's prospects of multicultural experiences and their development and learning of languages. A conclusion that we have come to is that similar to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, public childcare today attracts much attention and involvement in society. Therefore, this subject is of great concern for museums to work with.

The aim of this project has been to study Swedish childcare from the early days of infant schools, which developed during the early stages of industrialism, to present day childcare. The intention of the project has been to show how reformations in childcare also reflect changes in ideology and politics in society. The studied period is a time of great transformations in the Swedish society, ranging from the early industrial society, with large-scale movement of people and great differences in the social situations, to the modern Swedish society of the twenty-first century. The exhibition that was produced illuminated childcare and advancements made at the same rate as new pedagogical methods were introduced, along with the ongoing modernisation and democratisation of society. When the exhibition was shown at the regional museum of Bohuslän, among other places in the western part of the region, we came in touch with many preschools; the collaboration with them has been helpful. Many of the preschools came back again and made their own little exhibitions about themes that caught the attention of the children.

Another idea of the project was to study museum collections in order to find out how they might relate to the theme of the project. The overview showed that in those cases when the museums taking part in the project had items, photographs or other documentation concerning childcare in their collections, these were not collected in a systematic way or in connection with any ethnological documentation. An exception is a private collection that was donated to one of the museums. Most importantly, these collections were not set into a context of political or ideological changes in society or to the development of modern society. The collections have usually given quite a disparate view of the situation of children, of childhood and changes in childcare. However, by relating the work of producing the exhibition to contemporary documentation of the childcare of the region, new thematic approaches to the collections concerning children and childcare could be applied. The project has problematised the collections and added a social and historical perspective.

Today, there is a multicultural dimension to many childcare centres and preschools. Many children have for various reasons and conditions in their home countries come to Sweden with their families. Children come from other countries, other cultures and speak other languages. By visiting some of the international preschools in the region, the project could collect narratives from children and staff from these preschools. In this context, we realised that it would be interesting to have an international exchange and to make a study of narratives from children in different countries and parts of the word. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Swedish childcare has been influenced by a variety of international pedagogical ideologies. Consequently, it would be of great interest to introduce a global perspective on the study of children, their everyday life and of preschools, which might result in fruitful international collaborations.

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Biography

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Rethinking the Practice of Collecting and Displaying Ethnographic Objects at Mutare Museum

Njabulo Chipangura

Abstract

This paper will look at the process of museumization in the post colonial state of Zimbabwe by deeply interrogating the criteria in which ethnographic displays at Mutare Museum were constituted during the colonial period. It will perform an investigation into the formation of this museum as having been induced by colonial and utopian desires to classify the 'other' through the ethnographic gaze and the longing for a primitive timeless African past. The museum as a site of knowledge construction will further be looked at in this paper in terms of how disciplines such as archaeology and anthropology were used to cement racial binaries exhibited in most displays at Mutare Museum.

I will look at our efforts at Mutare Museum to revamp one of our exhibition galleries into a traditional set up. The paper will attempt to look at how the museum can be decolonised by bringing it close to those societies whose cultural objects were appropriated for scientific inquiry. It sets to rethink the utopian ideologies instituted by colonialism at Mutare Museum where I work as a curator of archaeology. Museums must transcend beyond our accustomed way seeing them as cathedrals (sometimes of urban modernity), as ritual spaces, worthy monuments, as examples of colonial imitation of metropolitan institutions, as disciplinary structures, or as ways to reimagining the city. Issues pertaining to the proactive engagement of local societies in museum activities and allowing them access to collections will be raised in this paper.

Introduction

This paper will look critically at the practice of collecting and exhibiting ethnographic collections at Mutare Museum in Zimbabwe where I have been working as a curator in the archaeology department for the past five years. It will specifically interrogate the criteria by which ethnographic displays at Mutare Museum were constituted during the colonial period from 1964 onwards, and set out ways of transcending such practices in the post colonial period since 1980. The paper will also investigate the formation of this museum and argue that colonial and utopian desires to classify the indigenous populace as the 'other' through the ethnographic gaze and the longing for a primitive timeless African past were the harbingers to its existence. The museum as a site of knowledge construction will further be looked at in terms of how disciplines such as ethnography and anthropology were used to cement racial binaries as exhibited in displays at Mutare Museum. This museum has in the recent past continued to lose relevancy in a society that is increasingly yearning to be closely involved in its activities. Since the inception of political independence in 1980, Mutare Museum has failed to reorganise misconstrued ethnographic exhibitions that wrongly depict the indigenous population. The close involvement of society in resetting the ethnographic exhibitions put up during the colonial times at Mutare Museum can potentially give this museum a new meaning.

Two display galleries will be analysed to draw a comparison and to show how representations mean this museum has largely remained a utopian space. The museum has five permanent galleries and two will be analysed in this paper to show existing disparities in the way in which ethnographic objects are presented relative to antiquities. The Beit Gallery has collections of ethnographic objects that are on the floor with no labels to orient the visitor on what they represent. The Boultbee Gallery, on the other hand, has antiques that have well written labels and the visitor can easily understand the story being relayed. This huge disparity is problematic and calls for the rethinking of the whole collections practice of this museum, which is rooted within the matrixes of colonialism and a failure to institute changes even after the country's independence in 1980. The collections at Mutare Museum are classified and categorised according to their areas of origin with preferential elaboration being given to antiquities collections. These collections comprise of objects of European origin whereas the ethnographic collection constitutes indigenous made objects. With the dawn of political independence it was envisaged that changes in the collections and exhibition practices of this museum would be embraced to allow for a wholesome representation of indigenous narratives. Ironically, the museum's collection practices have remained stagnant years after independence because of financial challenges spurred and aggravated by a government that does not recognise the relevancy of museums in society today. None of the permanent exhibitions installed in 1964 have been changed or revamped. Attempts, however, have been made by the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) in recent years at policy level to change the irrelevant exhibitions. Over the years NMMZ's strategic plans, for example the 1998- 2002 plan, have addressed the need for a changing such exhibitions. But, to date, nothing has been done.

Placing Mutare Museum within its Historical Context

The history of Umtali Museum is inextricably interwoven with that of the Umtali Society.[1] The Umtali Society came into being as a committee of the Southern Rhodesia Hunters and Game Preservation Association in October 1953. This society was established for the purpose of inaugurating and fostering interest in the establishment of a museum in Umtali. A subcommittee was set up with Captain Boultbee as Honorary Curator who then initiated the collection of objects for the new museum. The society accumulated and displayed the first collections of historical and natural objects, which persuaded the municipality to provide a temporary home for the museum. As they still had to obtain a building, their first exhibition was shown in an empty showroom in January 1956 inspiring public interest in the proposed museum. It was only in November 1957 that the Umtali Municipality granted the association some space in an old hostel, allowing them to exhibit on a semi permanent basis.[2] Captain Boultbee contributed pistols alongside specimens obtained in Rhodesia. By mid 1958 about 500 people were visiting the museum each month but the museum had no funds for maintenance and development leading the association to approach the trustees of National Museums and Monuments of Rhodesia to takeover. Sir Edgar Whitehead officially opened the museum in November 1958 and, having secured grants from the government and Umtali Municipality, in August 1959 the trustees took over the Umtali Museum as the third one under their control.[3] Captain E.F Boultbee was then appointed Honorary Curator of the Umtali Museum Society on 1 September 1959. The Boultbee gallery was named after him in recognition of the amount of work that he had put into setting up the firearms collections.

The trustees realized that the existing building was unsuitable and with the help of the Umtali museum society it raised funds for the new museum building. The new museum building was officially opened by Sir Alfred Beit on 13 September 1964. When it opened its doors to the public, the museum had displays in antiquities, transport, botany and geology. Later on, additional displays of ethnographic and archaeological objects were put in the Beit Gallery.   Little change has been implemented within these permanent exhibitions, besides the relabeling of text and the ad hoc mounting of temporary exhibitions.

The formation of Mutare Museum and many other museums throughout Africa are closely linked with the phenomenon of colonialism.[4] These museums were formed as a result of colonial encounters. They share a common history in terms of their development in that they have tended to be the by-products of colonialism and are 20th century creations; a period in which their formulation came as a consequence of European imperialism. They were created in specific socio-political contexts that sought to denigrate the local populace, diminish self-confidence and to reduce pride in their past

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[1] D G Broadley, "History of Umtali Museum," *Rhodesian Science News* 8 (1966): 3.

[2] Broadley, "History of Umtali Museum," 1.

[3] Broadley, "History of Umtali Museum," 2.

[4] Emmanuel Nnakenyi Arinze, "African Museums: the challenge of change," *Museum International* 50 (1998): 31-37.

achievements.[5] Similarly, I can argue that exhibitions at Mutare Museum have been stagnant and biased towards colonialism so that many aspects of an independent Zimbabwe have been ignored, hence the growing need to change the displays or even revamp some of the ageing exhibitions. Indigenous populations have criticised museums for being alien, imported, elitist, urban-based and serving colonial interests, decades after colonialism ended in Africa.[6] Ivan Murambiwa, writing on a similar discourse besetting Mutare Museum argues that, "between 1965 and 1979 there were deliberate attempts to use museums to undermine African culture while at the same time highlighting the positive impact of colonisation".[7] Moving away from the colonial discourse in exhibitions at Mutare Museum has proved to be very difficult and partly hindered by financial constraints that have been besetting the country over the years. The 1998- 2002 strategic plan had envisaged that new displays would be put in place across all museums in the country by 2002 but again this has not been achieved.

A display of the Shona cultures in the Beit Gallery

The Beit gallery measures approximately 224 square metres and it contains a wide range of exhibitions that covers themes related to the traditional aspects of the Shona culture in Zimbabwe. Shona is the name widely given to the indigenous population in Zimbabwe and is constituted by people who speak one similar language also called *shona*. However, the shona language itself is not homogenous because within it are different dialects that vary from region to region. Eastern Zimbabwe is constituted by the *Manyika, Ndau, Jindwi, Hwesa and Karanga* speaking people.

The Beit Gallery has two entrances which people can use. The first entrance is located in front close to the main museum entrance and the other is situated just adjacent to the Boultbee gallery. As soon as one enters the gallery through the first entrance there is a case containing transport accessories. The artefacts in this display have been placed more or less as if they are in a storeroom. Opposite this display are zoological displays comprising an animal tree and two cases with different kind of insects. Next to this is a display of traditional beehives with one containing live bees.[8]

Along the length of the gallery are a variety of mixed objects including geological displays, different types of traditional artefacts, such as drums and games such as tsoro. There is also a display case with beads, head rests, snuff boxes and a portrait of a traditional chief adorned with symbols of chieftainship, such as badges and ceremonial artefacts.[9] There is a portion with traditional modes of transportation lying on the floor. These include bark boats and different types of sledges. Lastly

[5] G. Bvocho, "Multimedia, Museums and the Public: Communicating Heritage Information," in *Museum Memoir* 3 (National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, 2013).

[6] N. Nzewunwa, 'The Nigerian Teacher and Museum Culture," in *The Presented Past: Heritage, Museums and Education*, ed. P. G. Stone and B.L Molyneaux (London: Routledge ,1994), 283-289.

[7] I. Murambiwa, "Reconciling the museum with its stakeholders: Mutare Museum's challenge," (paper presented at the Triennial Conference of the Commonwealth Association of Museums, Barbados, May 5-12, 1999).

[8] B Mareya, "Project proposal for the Beit Gallery New Exhibitions: The Traditional aspects of the Eastern Shona in Zimbabwe," in *National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe* (Unpublished,1999), 3.

[9] Mareya, "Project proposal for the Beit Gallery New Exhibitions," 4.

there is an archaeological display with cases containing the prehistory of Manicaland stretching from the early stone age period (20 00BC) up to the late iron age period (18 000AD). These cases contain artefacts, posters and pictures. There is also a display case containing a skull of a child excavated at an archaeological site called Ziwa, which is also in eastern Zimbabwe.
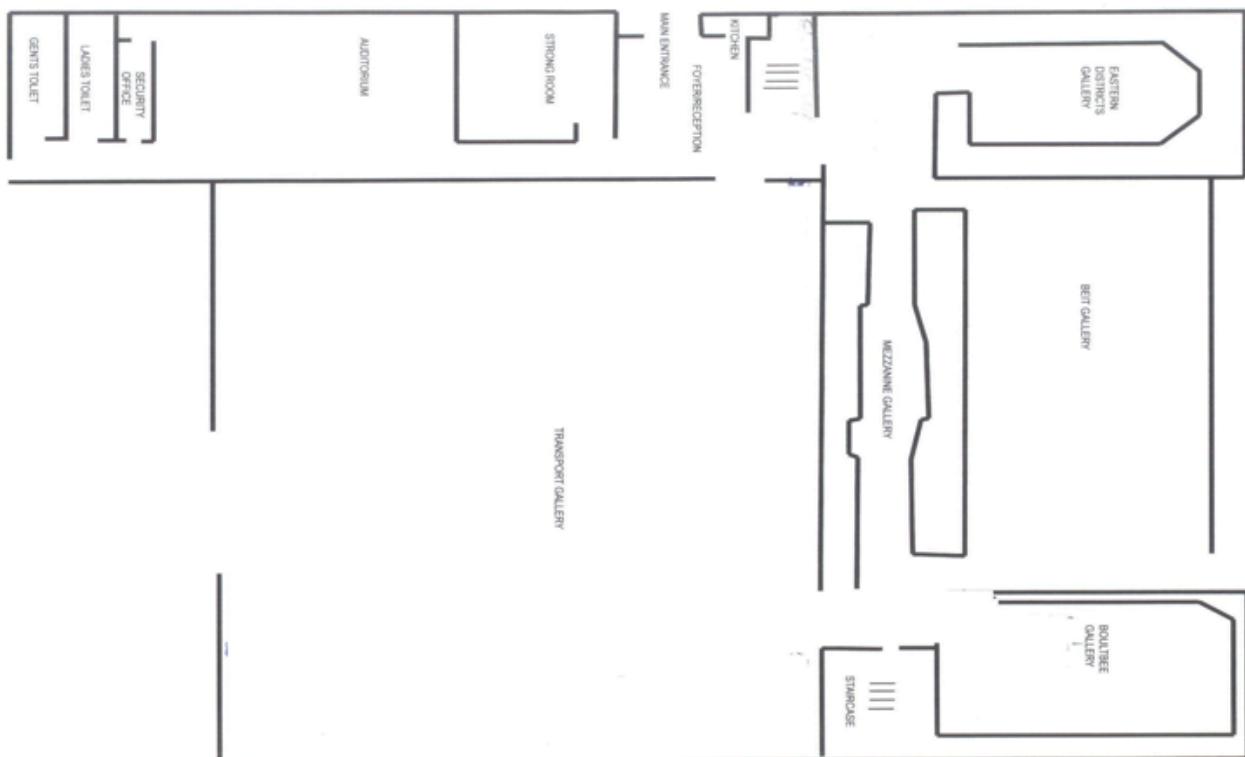
Figure 1: *Floor Plan of the Display Galleries at Mutare Museum*

In this current state the exhibitions in the Beit gallery do not represent any meaningful story and visitors could easily mistake it for a storeroom. This is because the gallery has a mixture of a lot of different types of exhibits There are no clear cut objectives and there are no specific themes addressing the visitor. One visitor noted that there is need to constantly and continuously upgrade the contents of the Beit Gallery through more research work.[10] The problem is worsened by an improper and almost derogatory presentation of ethnographic artefacts which are on the floor and displayed as strange, exotic and devoid of any social and historical significance to the way of life of the people. A visitor survey conducted in 1998 revealed that the Shona cultural displays were the most popular among visitors, receiving 79.7% of the votes.[11] In contrast, the least favoured display was the firearm collection in the Boultbee gallery with 20.3% of the votes. However, there was a general feeling that the displays in the Beit Gallery needed to be rearranged and 10.5% of the visitors wanted to see *manyika* cultural objects and its recent histories.[12]

[10] Views of R. Mapako from the Mutare Museum Visitors Comments Book 2000-2005.

[11] Brenda Kataya & Paul Mupira. Mutare Visitor Survey Results Analysis, 1998.

[12] Brenda Kataya & Paul Mupira. Mutare Visitor Survey Results Analysis, 1998

Figure 2: *A sledge in the Beit Gallery; note here the representation of the object and the conspicuous absence of labelling and it being displayed on the floor.*

Manyika is the largest dialect in eastern Zimbabwe and this probably explains why the majority of the visitors want to see Manyika objects on display.

Ivan Karp and Corrine Kratz are American anthropologists who employ an analytical approach in examining the politics of ethnographic representations in museums.[13] Of fundamental importance to their approach is their careful consideration and examination of the word "ethnography" as central to exhibitions of people's cultures. In analysing this term, they concluded that "ethnographic displays are not only confined to natural history museums, ethnographic museums or culture history museums" as "they are part of almost all cultural displays, including displays of the ethnographic, and other displays in art museums and outside museum contexts altogether".[14] Furthermore they also classify ethnographic displays as emerging out of complex histories and ideological contexts that include at least four elements. These four elements cover aspects of enlightenment, imperial and colonial expansion history, the actual history of representation itself, and, finally, the history of exhibiting exotic cultures.[15] Similarly, the ethnographic displays in the Beit Gallery somehow fits within the premise of exhibiting exotic cultures by the colonial authority when the museum was opened to the public in 1964. This was done at the expense of spiritual values which are the cornerstone of African belief systems and integral to the objects represented in the museum.

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[13] I. Karp and C. Kratz, "Reflections on the fate of Tippoo's Tiger. Defining Cultures through public display," in Cultural Encounters and Representing 'otherness', ed. E Hallam and B.V Street (London and New York: Routledge, 2000),199.

[14] Karp and Kratz, "Reflections on the fate of Tippoo's Tiger," 19.

[15] Ibid., 19.

Karp and Kratz examined ethnography in two distinct authorities, namely the ethnographic authority and the cultural authority. Cultural authority is explained as a fundamental resource that museums use to produce and reproduce themselves. The exhibitions in a museum, the documentation and the research function gives the museum its cultural authority.[16] Laurajane Smith, a leading cultural critic and an Australian, argues that getting to know people's experiences about the past is more important than ascribing their heritage to national and international frameworks where expert knowledge has hegemony over the management of heritage.[17] Instead, she argues that this authorised structure of knowledge in a museum context can be diffused by analysing its production using histories from below; that is to say giving relevancy to various socio-cultural processes that resulted in the making of the objects themselves. Moreso, I have argued elsewhere that upon the attainment of political independence in Zimbabwe, the indigenous population expected an about-turn in the ways in which their collections were being presented in museums. Debates focused on when they would be accorded respect, consultation, involvement and engagement in setting up museum displays.[18] However, decades after colonialism, Mutare Museum is seemingly still haunted by stigmatising and stereotypical concepts of presentation when it comes to ethnographic displays.

An Elaborate Representation in the Boultbee Gallery

The Boultbee Gallery, named after the first Honorary Curator of the Museum Capt. E.F. Boultbee, displays a magnificent collection of firearms and edged weapons.[19] This collection encompasses guns, swords and bayonets from all parts of the world, spanning over three centuries. It is acknowledged as one of the finest of its type in southern Africa. The collections of Boultbee brought from England formed the nucleus of the present firearms and edged weapons collection. Compared to the ethnographic displays in the Beit Gallery, a good number of some of the antiques displayed in the Boultbee Gallery shows that there is a big gap in terms of proper presentation between these two galleries. This substantiates my earlier argument that collecting and exhibiting of ethnographic objects at Mutare Museum was largely premised on the need to classify and research the "other" as this is clearly symbolised by the conspicuous absence of contextual meaning in the exhibited objects. If one again compares the two displays it can be easily discerned that antiquities, on account of their foreign histories, are well displayed vis-à-vis ethnographic objects with a local origin, which are not contextualised for the visitors.

The classifications and categorisations of antiquities at Mutare Museum represent a distinctive group of objects that has a linear history traceable and closely associated with a European origin.

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[16] Ibid., 20.

[17] Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

[18] P. J. Ucko, "Museum and sites: cultures of the past within education- Zimbabwe some ten years on," in *The Presented Past, Heritage, museum and education* ed. P. G. Stone and B. L. Molyneaux (London:Routledge,1994), 54.

[19] Broadley, "History of Umtali Museum," 8.

Figure 3: *Bayonets and Swords displayed n the Boultbee Gallery, note the difference in representation between this gallery and the Beit Gallery.*

Museums on the post-colonial trajectory

Harrison and Hughes, while writing about the role of museums in post-colonial societies, argue that "post-colonies are connected in terms of their heritage by the need to forge new national identities in the wake of decolonisation".[20] Identity has emerged as one of the most important issues for postcolonial nations and, as such, museums play an important role in helping people to identify both who they are as individuals and the collectives to which they belong.[21] The Shona cultural displays at Mutare Museum reflect how individuals and societies have to deal with the aftermath of colonial rule in the search for identity. The postcolonial theory is concerned primarily with unveiling, contesting and changing the way that colonialism structured societies and the ideologies associated with colonialism. Rethinking the old collection and exhibiting practices at Mutare Museum should be viewed from a genealogy of colonisation and its impact on indigenous communities in terms of how cultural objects were appropriated, which led to misrepresentations in exhibitions under the guise of ethnographic research. Displaced from their original context and replaced in museums, they became objects of ethnography and were assigned with new meanings derived from scientific, historical and aesthetic paradigms of western knowledge.[22] Colonialism was the precursor to the imposition of the

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[20] Rodney Harrison and Lotte Hughes, *Understanding the Politics of Heritage: Global Heritage Perspective* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 238.

[21] Harrison and Hughes, *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*, 250.

[22] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Displays*, ed. I. Karp and S. D. Lavine (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 34.

western model of the museum in the early twentieth century and as a result the indigenous people lost cultural objects and were marginalised from the museums. Ethnographic objects were simply collected from local communities without a proper understanding of their socio-cultural uses and various associations with their makers.

In thinking about how museums stand at the intersection of scientific work and public display, the "exhibitionary complex", expounded and elaborated by Tony Bennett, is a useful conceptual tool with regards to how idealized museum "publics" were produced and placed as both the object and subject of the power and knowledge ensuing from their conceived citizenship.[23] In this manner, as Bennett explains with regards to Britain, "the exhibitionary complex…perfected a self-monitoring system of looks in which the subject and object positions can be exchanged, in which the crowd comes to commune with and voluntarily regulate itself through interiorizing the ideal and ordered view of itself as seen from the controlling vision of power- a site of sight accessible to all".[24] In this way, not only was a new 'public' formed within the narratives of national progress through and toward civilization, but it was also placed in "new relations of sight and vision" as well as "new relations of power and knowledge".[25] Mutare Museum thus occupies a distinctive niche in the development of scientific enquiry, both as a site of accumulation where objects were arranged in specified orders and as the location where people were taught to look at the world, to value the past, and to visualize relations between objects. Many indigenous people still see museums as laden with colonial associations, cultural repression and loss of their heritage.

The onus is on the museum to change ethnographic displays which have been static for some time and in which indigenous societies have been frozen in a kind of timeless past. By rethinking the notion of a museum, some deep rooted ideologies of a primitive past as exhibited in most dioramas of African museums will be repudiated. Other writers like Ciraj Rassool, a renowned South African scholar in critical museology, have emphasized the importance of museums in configuring geographies of power and space or the role of metropolitan museums in constructions of knowledge that endorsed imperial policies.[26] In most African countries, the notion of a museum in its totality is still regarded as Eurocentric with a lot of people regarding the museum as an 'appropriator' of their important cultural objects.

Visitor Perspective, the call for Rethinking and Interactivity

In terms of the Beit Gallery, a mixture of a lot of different types of artefacts unrelated by either theme or subject, are simply bunched together. My argument is that this kind of display has its history in the need to propagate scientific research and inquiries on these objects. A failure to change this set up has made people view the museum with scepticism and thus label it as an entertainment platform

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[23] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 12.

[24] Ibid., 13.

[25] Ibid., 13.

[26] Ciraj Rassool, "Community Museums, Memory Politics and Social Transformation in South Africa: Histories, Possibilities and Limits," in *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* ed. I. Karp et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 286 - 321.

for the tiny leisured elites of the colonialists.[27] As such, the number of visitors to the Mutare museum has drastically dropped over the years as many argue that there is nothing new to see. A close look at the visitors' comments book has shown that many of the disgruntled visitors are agitated by the lack of dynamism in the Beit Gallery. Statistics show that between 1980 and 1999 the museum used to record annual visitors figures of around 6000 people.[28] Since the year 2000, the museum has received only around 1000 visitors each year. Reorganising the exhibitions will, therefore, not only improve the face of the existing displays but will also make the indigenous people feel more part and parcel of their heritage, unlike the present case where they are relegated to the sideline with none of their own cultural heritage being properly represented at the Mutare Museum. Moreover, the exhibitions in the Beit Gallery also suffer from poor labelling. The labels are written only in the English language, which leaves the (non-English speaking) visitor with no option but to construct their own stories concerning the exhibitions and so perhaps lose sight of the real meaning. The most immediate and practical change that must be implemented within these exhibitions is proper relabeling. Furthermore, some displays do not have titles and introduction panels to orient the visitor. The labels that are present are poorly executed: the text is invisible and is written in English with no specific explanations.

Vernacular languages are rarely used in displays at Mutare Museum beyond object identification. This is in spite of the fact that Zimbabwe is a multilingual society where a number of languages are spoken.[29] Local languages, such as Shona and Ndebele, have generally not found their way into the exhibitions and this excludes most of the public from enjoying the presented heritage.[30] In terms of language, the appropriate and feasible change should see a direct translation of all the text into vernacular languages so that it suits all visitors. That way, people will not continuously feel alienated from their cultural objects on display. However, the exhibition must also be interactive and convey information and key ideas through the use of multiple forms of digital media video, animation and computer presentations. Historically, the idea of an exhibition had to be conveyed totally by either the objects themselves or the accompanying written labels. Today, there are many more tools at the museum's disposal; the era of multi-dimensional, multi-sensory experiences is upon us.[31] Media is already a critical component of interactivity in museums because it helps to interpret certain specific ideas by making them more accessible cognitively to visitors.[32] Through reorganising objects in the Beit Gallery, the museum will become more self-reflexive, more community orientated, work in partnership with different stakeholders and present different voices in their presentations.[33]

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[27] A. Mazel and G. Ritchie, "Museums and their messages: the display of the pre – and early colonial past in the museums of Southern Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe," in The Presented Past, Heritage, museum and education, ed. P. G. Stone and B. L. Molyneaux (London: Routledge, 1994), 40.

[28] Mutare Museum Visitor Survey Analysis 1980-1990.

[29] Bvocho, "Multimedia, Museums and the Public," 13.

[30] Ibid., 13.

[31] J. H. Falk and D. Dierking, The Museum Experience Revisited (California: Left Coast Press, 2013), 28.

[32] Ibid., 119.

[33] M. Shanks and C. Tilley, Reconstructing Archaeology: Theory and Practice (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5.

Adopting multi-media methods can also enhance the fragile relationship between museums and their audiences by breaking through the barriers of physical displays and bridging the gap between curators and the public.[34] The interactive element of the new museum implies that community members become consistently active participants, as opposed to being passive recipients of information in the classic museum. It is this focus on the proactive engagement with the community that defines a movement away from the utopian ideologies of a classical museum. Thus, I argue that the introduction of technology in museums has aided the reconceptualization and rethinking of the old museum practice of simply collecting and exhibiting for educational purposes.[35]

Another example of an interactive activity in the Beit Gallery would be attained through the proposed construction of a traditional hut showing traditional architecture of the Eastern Shona people. Visitors will be allowed to enter the hut and there will be a high degree of freedom and interaction with kitchen utensils on display. This is fundamentally different from the current set up where visitors are barred from touching the objects on display. Engagement will also be achieved through giving the visitors the leverage of what to look at, discuss and do whilst in the hut. This interactive element therefore implies that the local people are consistently active participants, as opposed to being passive receivers of information as was traditional museum set up. Given the importance of emotions and societal attachments with their cultural objects, the exhibition will strive to design ways that maximise visitor experiences of awe and reverence and also ensure that those feelings are not gratuitous, but directly contribute to the messages and goals the museum wishes to convey.[36] Such a transformation thus entails looking at indigenous societies as dynamic entities as well as having a museum that focuses more on contemporary issues in their exhibitions. In addition there will be a dialogue between the objects exhibited and the surrounding communities and this will then represent a shared authority in knowledge production, unlike the present scenario where authority is vested in the expert judgements of curators.

Rethinking the ethnographic displays in the Beit gallery will entail relooking at the current collections policy of Mutare Museum by putting in place a well defined collections policy that will stop the current haphazard and random collections of artefacts. In addition, a new theme for the gallery that would correlate with the exhibited objects will be developed by September 2014 to coincide with the Mutare Museum Golden Jubilee Celebrations.[37] The chosen themes will be illustrative of the main areas of concentration in the Eastern Shona societies and these have one way or the other partly been affected by European influence at the inception of colonialism.[38] The new displays will focus on the traditional aspects of the Eastern Shona people in Zimbabwe.

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[34] Bvocho, "Multimedia, Museums and the Public," 15.

[35] C. Bruce "Spectacle and Democracy: Experience Music Project as a Post-Museum," in New Museum Theory and Practice, ed. J. Martine (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 12.

[36] Falk and Dierking, The Museum Experience Revisited, 121.

[37] Mareya, "Project proposal for the Beit Gallery New Exhibitions," 5.

[38] Ibid., 4.

The exhibition aims to promote cultural tolerance and interaction in communities and an understanding of local cultures that are being threatened by changing socio-political developments.[39] Some of the sub-themes include a short prehistory of Eastern Zimbabwean agriculture, traditional healing, music, religious practices and the community's relationship with the natural environment. These areas have generated interest in both national and international publics.[40]

The exhibition will also try to bring out those traditional values that have long since been forgotten but need to be revived. Traditionally the Shona way of life was geared towards dependence on one another. This was because they were aware of the uncertainties of life posed by diseases, deaths, accidents, droughts, famine and also the risks from attacks by other tribes. The family or group was always there in times of need. The way the Shona lived and survived was knit in such a way that dependence could not be ignored. For instance, when cultivating, hunting, and entertaining, as will be shown in the exhibition. This will solve the problem of artefacts which are lying all over the gallery with no clear meanings. Another possible change will be that of dividing the exhibitions in a way that will not further confuse the visitor. Exhibits in archaeology, ethnography, geology and antiquities are to be separated by sub-dividing the Beit Gallery through partitioning.[41] As such, the exhibitions will easily relay meanings to target groups, unlike the prevailing scenario of bundling the collections in a single large hall.

In more broad and empirical terms, museums in post colonial states have to transcend empirical practices by which they operate as object archives or repositories of dead collections. They must move instead towards becoming interactive theatres where spectacles are produced and staged for an increasingly diverse audience. These museums also have to contend with a number of other challenges facing them during this transformative processes. Some of the challenges include the effects of globalization, challenges of mass tourism, the digital age, economic recession periods and the ever changing nature of the public. Reconceptualization thus encompasses the ways in which museums have changed and turned into dynamic and interactive institutions in the global age by embracing new forms of displaying that sustains them into becoming viable entities.[42] Today the world is changing faster than ever with new technology delivering new ideas and gigabytes of information all shared on social media. Modern museums must compete for an audible voice against the furious pace of this backdrop. Being innovative then means that the museum has to respond to the social changes and adapt to their visitors expectations. This is so because today museum visitors are able to analyse critically the various ways in which objects are presented and their purposes in a museum. This type of visitor explores what is left unsaid or unshown in museum exhibitions. Thus the display styles of exhibitions in a museum are also open to inquiry and critiquing by museum visitors because different display methods impose social, cultural or historical meaning upon objects.

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[39] Paul Mupira, "Storyline for the Proposed Reorganisation of the Beit Gallery Exhibitions," National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (Unpublished, 2013), 2.

[40] Ibid., 3.

[41] Ibid., 4.

[42] Ciraj Rassool, "Community Museums, Memory Politics and Social Transformation in South Africa," 78.

However, one of the issues that complicates the notion of engagement is the continuous discussion about whether museums are about learning or fun.

This paper has attempted to provide a critique into the formation of a museum in the colonial period by arguing that ethnographic artefacts were basically appropriated from the people for scientific enquiry and research. Using the example of the Beit Gallery at Mutare Museum, I have demonstrated how ethnographic objects were simply collected for research and dumped for display without giving them clear contextual meanings. I explored the possible ways that Mutare Museum, specifically in the Beit Gallery, can rethink the exhibition practices of this museum and its associated utopian ideologies. The subsequent argument is that other museums in post-colonies must now attempt to actively engage communities whose object were appropriated and placed in the museum without proper meaning and context. A number of ways in which the notion of a museum can be reconfigured in post colonial states were suggested in the last part of the paper. In the end, such museums must attempt to combine both the educational and the entertainment functions that are conspicuously absent within most post-colonial museums. Rethinking the notion of a museum in a post-colonial state therefore seeks to combine experience and spectacle by allowing community members excess freedom that was absent in a classical museum set up. The museum community has moved beyond the day when it assumed that the physical parts of an exhibition, the objects, were all that was necessary to convey the museum's message. Creating a credible context for what's on display is essential.

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Biography

Njabulo Chipangura completed an MA in Heritage and Museum Studies at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa in 2012. His research considered Historic buildings, Conservation and shifts in social value at Old Umtali: Contestations of Heritage in Zimbabwe. He obtained his BA Honours in Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies from the Midlands State University, Zimbabwe in 2008. He continues to work at Zimbabwe's Mutare Museum as Curator of Archaeology/ Monuments Inspector. Earlier this year he completed the Museum Documentation, Principles and Practices at the CIDOC Summer School 2012, hosted by the Museum of Texas Tech University, USA.

Expectations, Disillusionment and Hope - for an Evolutionary Process in South African Museums

Balthi Du Plessis

Abstract

As a museum professional who worked for museums on local, provincial and national levels and presently a museum consultant in the private sector, I was fortunate to experience the South African museum environment at all its levels: local museums, provincial services and national museums, the white supreme "Utopia", anxiety of the early 1990s, the expectation of a "Utopia" in the middle 1990s and the disillusionment of the first decade of the 21st century.

My paper will explore the different scenarios with specific references to influence elements such as: the contrasting needs of a society split between international values and traditional African values; poor and rich; educated and uneducated; privileged and unprivileged and racial / cultural favourism, have on the responsibility of museums to adhere to and execute their core functions properly.

On the one hand, one has the new "Super Museums", some with very limited collections, on the other hand, one has some of the previous National Museums with limited funding, no staff development and demoted to storage facilities. We have local museums with little or no funding, stranded within the larger museum and heritage landscapes, as well as a constant filtering of quality museologists to the private sector.

I will argue that South African Museums mirror the SA social landscape. The lack of the "Utopia" that was envisaged by so many hopeful South Africans amplifies today the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the so-called "Black Diamonds" and the unemployed.

The South African Museums need a completely different approach to that of the so-called first world. They need to plan better, they need to approach holistically, they need to cater for different communities, and they need to reach rural communities and as a matter of great urgency, collect and research on local levels the histories that otherwise will be lost forever. To achieve this museums need well trained staff and therefore training in basic museum skills and practices are paramount. (Something that is presently lacking). It is obvious that emphasis would be on honouring political and social heroes, but the permanent fibre of communities lie in the histories on a roots level.

Museology and South Africa

Over the last century South Africa's history has been characterised by conflict, inequality and discrimination, which gave rise to numerous interpretations of history, often fuelled by politics of the day. The ways in which some of these histories are being researched, conserved and communicated by museums in South Africa is an accelerating experiment in the evolution of history museums and cultural history museums. In terms of their roles as repositories of heritage, and their evolutionary potential to adapt to different environments, these museums are, at times, a veritable meeting place for some redundant philosophies, such as Communism, Socialism and State Responsibility, as opposed to being Post-Modernist environments propagating the individual's right to self determination.

As a museologist, rather than a historian, archaeologist or anthropologist, the aim of this paper is not to construct or deconstruct methodologies of what history is, but rather to juxtapose experiences and the understanding of museology and museums as applied in South Africa. Hopefully this discussion will develop into an international conversation that may benefit South African museology in general.[1]

To scrutinise history and its relationship with museums in South Africa, one needs to understand South African history and its influence in terms of how history is understood and conveyed by museums. This means being informed about ongoing debates regarding intangible heritage and the need that is sometimes expressed for "Africanising" the museum concept, to acknowledging the challenges that museums and museology experience in South Africa, and recognising the unique needs and vocabulary necessary to accommodate history in museums in this country. Above all, we should understand that museology in South Africa is a field in flux.

[1] Most of my museum experience was in the former Transvaal Province and in the present Northern Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces as Head of the Conservation and Exhibition Section of the Transvaal Provincial Museums Services. I held various positions, including Manager of the National Cultural History Museum, and since 2001 I have worked as a freelance consultant

A Short History of South Africa

Three major revolutionary changes took place in South Africa's social environment in the 20th century.

1. At the beginning of the 20th century and following the Anglo Boer War, South Africa was dominated by British influence.[2] It was a war that affected all the various ethnic and cultural groups residing in South Africa and resulted in widespread poverty and hardship, and which finally culminated in lasting distrust between Black and White people.

2. Black consciousness and African nationalism led to the formation of the African Native National Congress (8 January 1912), the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923 and the Freedom Charter (26 June 1955).

   Equally, Afrikaner nationalism grew in the 1930s and was highlighted by the centenary of the Great Trek (1938) and the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument (1948). After the Second World War, in 1948, the National Party won the general election and South Africa became an Afrikaner-dominated country and infamous for its apartheid laws.

3. After much division, sacrifice, bloodshed and internal and external conflict, negotiations for a new democratic system were initiated after the release of Nelson Mandela in 1989. In 1994, with an interim constitution in place, South Africa at last achieved the transition to a democratic society with an African majority in power.

Transformation

During the 1980s, some museums and museum professionals were already involved in rectifying racial imbalances, but the political environment only really changed after the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. The changes in South Africa also coincided with major changes in Europe, such as the collapse of Communism and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Although in this period the urgent need for transformation was realised and discussed, museums and heritage institutions still largely excluded Black Africans. Little had really changed in terms of collecting policies and displays and museums still mainly displayed derogatory versions of Black African history.[3]

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[2] Also referred to as the South African War. The term "Anglo-Boer War" is itself contested since this conflict involved many more people that the Brits and Boers.

[3] African history collections were divided between anthropological and archaeological collections and researched under those disciplines, while European collections were separate and researched as part of the history and cultural history disciplines.

For the majority of South Africans, museums were not friendly places in those days. They were not places where people could learn more about their past history. In fact, most South Africans cared more about their newfound personal and political freedom than their history or how it was communicated through museums. When the National Cultural History Museum (NCHM) researched the potential market of museum visitors, it came to light that most Black people saw museums as places of interest exclusively for White people and would rather watch a soccer match or spend time with their families than visit a museum. Museums didn't play an important role in the lives of Black South Africans.[4]

The new South Africa presented new opportunities, new challenges and at last the chance to do things correctly. In the heritage and museum environment the opportunity presented itself to correct extreme past injustices. This utopian feeling was short-lived, however. Museums and heritage institutions were re-organised with little regard for their management.[5] These changes empowered workers to a certain extent, but alienated boards and directors. At the same time, the old provinces underwent major changes and resulted in the previous Transvaal[6] Provincial Museum Services, which, until that point, had set the standards for provincial services, becoming virtually redundant.

Everywhere museums tried to make themselves relevant by adapting research, exhibition themes and educational programmes to fit new government and educational targets. But they were, and still are, managed by different governing bodies, such as National, Provincial and Local Governments, as well as other non-profit organisations and private individuals. Although this was an improved system of the redundant Own and General Affairs[7] structures of pre-1994, it inevitably led to some duplication, lack of expertise and varying goals and management approaches.

Changing visitor profiles were generally seen as a measure for transformation. Black schools were regarded as the goose that laid the golden egg and school groups were brought in by the busload to improve visitor figures. Along with this came major marketing efforts focused on Black schools. The essence of what museums displayed did not, however, change significantly. On the one hand, museums were being developed to honour the freedom fighters, martyrs and the recent freedom struggle but, on account of colonial and apartheid collecting policies, most lacked tangible collections relating to these themes. On the other hand, Black empowerment or Black Economic Empowerment

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[4] Unpublished report by Department of Geology, University of Pretoria 1995 and unpublished report by TWS Communications August 1995.

[5] The MUSA report of April 1994 was a pro-active attempt by the museum fraternity of that to time to suggest a way forward in a new democratic South Africa (May 1994). It amplified the problems in the museum structures (lack of funding, conservation, museological research and applicable research) and suggested a combination of government funding and self-management. The structural approach of the previous era is evident. Only a very small percentage of the members had any formal museum training and only six out of the 49 members were not white.

[6] Transvaal Province became Limpopo Province, North West Province, Mpumalanga Province and Gauteng Province after democracy.

[7] Pre 1994 South Africa was administrated by a system of General Affairs, and Indian, Coloured and Whites Own Affairs. Some museums were classified as general affairs and some as own affairs. The National Cultural History Museum was classified as a Whites Own Affair.

(BEE) and affirmative action often resulted in a lack of continuity and sometimes even a lack of quality and mismanagement. Buzzwords such as *Amasiko*, Oral History, African Renaissance, *Ubunthu* and intangibles became the *lingua franca*. From the political cadres came "community consultation" and a new saying – "there were no problems, only challenges".

Problems and Challenges

But there *were* huge problems, some of which could not have been foreseen. As a consultant I soon realised that huge gaps existed between what museums expected, what was generally acceptable museum practices, and what was considered to be of value. Many years of racial domination and division resulted in an enormous cultural void, and the way history was perceived, researched, understood and displayed, was governed by different vernaculars and new rules.

The political and structural changes in South Africa are unique because they occurred virtually overnight. The beneficiaries of these changes were the majority of the population. The changes were immense, not only in approach but also in the workforce, knowledge, expertise, experience and structures. At the beginning of the 1990s there were very few qualified African[8] museologists.[9] Museums began to stagnate and many qualified people left the formal museum institutions. Those who were still involved on a consultative basis were limited by Black Empowerment or Black Economic Empowerment (BEE).[10] Museum science was neglected because museums had to cope with more relevant issues such as transformation. Heritage became one of the vehicles that had to accelerate the transformation process by the incorporation into museum activity packages of performing arts, such as traditional music and dance as well as oral histories.

The physical object became less important. Many new museums were created without even having substantial collections as a core, for instance the Hector Pieterson Museum, Apartheid Museum and Freedom Park. In a sense the perceived core of the traditional museum, namely the object and its juxta-position in the traditional museum as a vehicle for communicating history, became less important as the focus shifted to oral traditions.

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[8] The term African refers to people indigenous people to Africa. In South Africa the term "Black" refers to all people that are not European or "white" Africans were excluded in the defunked Apartheid three chamber system which gave Indians and Coloured some political powers.

[9] The training of museologists was facilitated by two post-graduate university courses at the University of Stellenbosch and Pretoria respectively, the Technicon RSA and a certificate from SAMA (Southern African Museums Association). Other courses were linked to history departments and focussed less on practical museology. The first African in a position above cleaner level was appointed in the PR department of the National Cultural History Museum in the early 1990s. Very few staff who was previously appointed as museum assistants later became professional museologists. One of those, Mr Samuel Moifatswane was appointed collections manager at the National Cultural History Museum with only a grade 5 qualification but was accessed to have Honours lever knowledge. Many were not so lucky.

[10] Which means that tenders, depending on size, penalised Whites 10%, 20% or 30% for not being previously disadvantaged which meant that a White tenderer in some cases had to be 30% cheaper than a competing Black person to stand a chance to win the tender.

The object as the vantage point from which history is displayed in museums is a long- standing tradition and, according to some museologists, a European or Western way of expressing history and culture. According to Van der Waal[11] and also Küsel, traditional African history is not an object-centred history or culture, and objects are only representations of customs and beliefs. It may be as a result of this point of view that so many museologists and museums are focusing on intangible heritage to address imbalances of the past.

The question that one should now ask is whether this is a new approach and not merely a perpetuation of colonial or westernised superiority whereby Africans are classified as "different" and therefore a different approach is needed? Are all Africans in South Africa still traditional and do they still have traditional beliefs? Will these traditional beliefs still be valued in the years to come when people are better-educated and more exposed to global trends? South Africans changed considerably over the last two decades.

Is the traditional Western approach to museums far more object-driven? Do museums collect only objects? Are objects just simply physical reminders or manifestations of what they represent? Have museums not always collected intangibles, particularly information, that was disguised as objects?[12]

Traditional discourses about objects and objects-being-vehicles-to-illustrate-histories are inherently part of the museum discourse. As early as 1989 Peter Gathercole, in *Fetishism of Artefacts,* asked the question "... whether curators perceive artefacts primarily as things of themselves rather than things beyond themselves".[13] Since the development and resulting potential of multi-, electronic- and other media, the role of objects in the presentation of histories has been continually debated. "*The object, it turns out, was just a placeholder for a story*," broached from a western point of view but applicable to the understanding of African history.[14] Indeed, Robert Janes argues that although collections are the indispensible means to an end they are not the end in themselves.[15]

Hilda Hein commented that: "Museums are actually warehouses of material things only superficially. At the bottom they are reservoirs of meaning".[16] [17]It is obvious that the obsession with museum objects and their orientation is simply a mirage shielding the reality that for many years they were

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[11] Museums and environmental education, September 1992, Dr G-M van der Waal, *Waardes, voorwerpe en plekke-nuwe geleenthede in konteks*. This was mirrored by Dr Udo Kusel in an unpublished paper delivered at a national SAMA conference.

[12] Because that is exactly what we do in most of our history displays. In exhibitions, objects represent usually in an iconic manner themes, events and persons.

[13] "Editorial: Museums and the study of material culture," *International Journal of Management and Curatorship* 8 (1989): 259.

[14] Hilda S. Hein, *The Museum in Transition –a Philosophical perspective* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2000), 14.

[15] Stephen E Weil, *Making museums matter* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2002), 210.

[16] Hilda S. Hein, *The Museum in Transition*, 55.

[17] The debate of how successful museums are as warehouses is also one that has been ongoing for decades. All the museologists consciously or subconsciously accept that museums cannot continue to collect objects. It is too expensive, the conservation and storage cost too much and the criteria for selecting objects are becoming more and more difficult. Possible duplication can be disastrous from a resources point of view.

primarily collecting, preserving and interpreting ideas, concepts, ideologies and events, and that the objects, as happened in African traditional cultures, were the symbolic representations.

The challenge to research, preserve and interpret history in museums in South Africa does not only amount to marrying value systems, but also different social structures, as well as the aspiration of these disparate social classes. To judge Africans only by their traditional values and beliefs and develop "new" museums and a new museology to accommodate them, suggests a lack of respect for African people and for their proven potential to be part of a global community.

A democratic South Africa has created enormous wealth for some individuals, but for the poor nothing has changed.[18] According to the latest census, 13 million Africans have no income and just more than 70 000 earn more than ZAR 614 000 of which 14 896 earn more than ZAR 2 457 000 per year. Although they may vote, they are not only deprived of material resources but also, in many cases, of their heritage, leaving them with a distorted identity.[19]

Except for struggle history, impoverished African people generally do not consider recent local history as significant. Tribal histories on the other hand, are becoming more and more important as a result of land claims.

Many African museologists and heritage specialists were trained and educated since 1994 and are currently in various positions in museums. However, although staff transformation is taking place, museums do not generally have the capacity to fulfil all their requirements and needs with the result that museums and heritage organisations are making more use of consultants for research, exhibitions and conservation. A lot of money was spent over the last few decades on the development of new museums and exhibitions, most of which disappeared into the pockets of consultants.[20] Even smaller museums still use consultants extensively.

This has resulted in various approaches and successes. It also resulted in the squandering of funds and a lack of continuity. When research is done by consultants, the museums lose the wider picture of the information, and the internal power and knowledge to carry on with projects. Because of tender and other financial regulations the same consultants cannot be used continually which means that institutions end up paying for the duplication of services. A lack of insight into the broader picture is the result and nullifies a holistic approach to understanding the unique needs in South Africa.

There are also other unique "challenges" due to cultural gaps, anomalies and misunderstandings, such as the following:

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[18] Rapport, 4 November 2012, *Census: miljoene mense verdien bykans niks, maar party maak 'n fortuin*, p4/nuus.

[19] As a heritage and museum practitioner I am continuously surprised that many South African have very little knowledge of their histories. As an example I remember speaking to a Venda man that lived about a kilometre form one of the major Venda historical sites – his was not aware of the significance.

[20] Cradle of Humankind, Apartheid Museum, Hector Pieterson, Freedom Park.

I designed artworks depicting important buildings in and around Sedibeng for the foyer of the Vaaltechnorama Museum in Sedibeng. Since they were original artworks I signed them. Although the museum staff was pleased with my work, a councillor insisted on having all 14 artworks removed because they were signed by a White artist.[21]

A new identity and name for the Tsonga Kraal Museum were developed and the first consultation meeting with community participation took place without any problems. A new name *Muti va va Tsonga* (meaning house of the Tsonga) was chosen. During the second meeting a completely different ethnic group, with obvious political aspirations, attended the meeting. After a lot of debate I was informed that the meeting decided they wanted a Pedi village as well as a Tsonga one.[22]

After a tender meeting for the development of a museum in Mpumalanga, I received a call informing me that the caller had a lot of influence with the decision-makers and that I should include him in the tender. I obviously refused and eventually did not get the tender.

At the Vaaltechnorama Museum in Sedibeng, I had to change the layout of a panel because the photograph of a deceased person was smaller than that of a living person on the same panel.

The research for the Dzata museum was done by a Venda researcher with a doctorate degree in history. After completion, the storyline made absolutely no provision for objects. When attempting to include objects we were informed that a valuable collection of objects was stored at the main homestead of King Mpepu, one of the Venda kings. We found objects there that were stored under appalling conditions.[23]

The Dzata exhibition enlightened me in many ways because it juxta-posed oral history and beliefs against western knowledge. It also amplified the intertwining of old customs with modern structures. Various taboos exist. Mpepu and Shivasa, two Venda Kings, for instance, are not allowed to look upon each other and Mpepu was not allowed to speak to one of the female chiefs with whom we needed to consult as part of our research. When, after extensive negotiations, we were allowed to see her, I noted that councillors in dark suits and formal ties came to visit her in black BMW's, kneeling before this petite lady who had an old towel fastened with a safety pin around her shoulders.

In an exhibition in the rural village of a previous premier of the Limpopo Province, we displayed anthropological objects such as pots, baskets and other objects. The objects were on loan from the Polokwane Museum. It so happened that the documentalist at the museum, who had a post-graduate qualification, incorrectly identified a meal mat used under grinding stones, as a table place mat.[24] We later found out that all the documentation forms were in Afrikaans and that she could not understand them. Very few of the local people knew any of the objects or their uses and we had to do a quick training course on site.[25]

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[21] Sedibeng Exhibition, Vaaltechnorama, Balthi du Plessis & Associates agent, 2005.
[22] Tsonga Exhibition, Eiland, Balthi du Plessis & Associates agent, 2007.
[23] Dzata Exhibition, Limopo Province, Balthi du Plessis & Associates and Udo Küsel agents, 2003.
[24] All the documentation of the museum objects were in Afrikaans, a language she doesn't understand.
[25] Exhibition, Makgalakwena Municipality, Balthi du Plessis & Associates agent, 2008.

These are just a few examples of the unique environment in which museologists find themselves within the South African cultural and museum landscape.

Museums should take note of the various elements surrounding heritage and its unique applications within South African museums. South Africans are caught between different worlds and between different cultures. In South Africa there are many voices, many different layers. These are magnified by the circumstances created mainly by politics, and economic and social divides, different problems and different vernaculars, the social responsibility and guardianship of the State and the right as individuals to be responsible for their own destiny. The incorporation of African histories is the major aim.

These themes should be continuously debated by museums and museologists, while historians will need a combination of different strategies and approaches, some of them structured and centrally funded, and others based on individual innovation in order to succeed.

The final[26] outcomes for me is what the Museum Group calls "healthy human communities" and what Elaine Gurian, known for her work with the Boston Children's Museum, the Smithsonian and the Holocaust Museum refers to as "a place of safety"[27] or Duncan Cameron's vision "… a confluence of voices, a forum for exchange… It is a place where the melting pot melts. Its function is something like fluid dynamics."[28]

If South Africa can create enough training opportunities, enough museum philosophical platforms, enough government awareness and enough interest from the international museum world, this may be the melting pot for an accelerated new evolutionary development for a 21th century museum concept because of the uniqueness of the South African situation.

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[26] Stephen E Weil, *Making museums matter*, 207.
[27] Ibid., 207.
[28] Ibid., 208.

Biography

Balthi du Plessis is a museologist who started his museum career as a curator in 1981 and was researcher at the Natal Provincial Museum Services. After completing his museum studies cum laude at the University of Pretoria he headed conservation, restoration, exhibitions and public relations departments at the Transvaal Museum Services and the National Cultural History Museum. He became Manager of the National Cultural History Museum before starting his own consultancy in 2001. He lectured in conservation, exhibition design and interior design at various tertiary institutions in South Africa and since 1987 has been a part time lecturer in exhibition design for the Post Graduate Museum Diploma at the University of Pretoria. He delivered papers and published articles on such diverse subjects as exhibition design, conservation, funds generation, marketing and collections management.

He has arguably designed and project managed more museum exhibitions than any other South African museologist. The pinnacle of his career so far was the display of the Golden Rhinoceros of Mapungubwe, probably South Africa's most valuable object. He has travelled extensively overseas and locally.

He is a dedicated champion for the presentation of a transformed and inclusive history by museums in South Africa.

Windhoek – Vantaa City Museum Cooperation

Leena Hiltula

Abstract

The City of Vantaa in Finland and the City of Windhoek in Namibia have co-operated since year 2001 under the North South Local Government Cooperation Programme, a development co-operation programme funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. One of the key areas is City Cultural Heritage, which supports establishing a City of Windhoek Museum.

Namibians and Finns have known each other since 1870, when the Finnish missionaries arrived in Owamboland. Should this common history reflect in the way history is presented at the upcoming museum? What are the biggest differences in how Finnish and Namibian project partners view the history of Windhoek and Namibia? Is the apartheid era the main period on which we should focus or should we look at Windhoek from the prehistoric times to this day? These questions have marked the project and the collection process, too.

The main aim of the project and reason for establishing a Museum is to get the residents of Windhoek to know more about their common history and to encourage them to tell their stories with words, photos and items. Obstacles on the way have included a delay in the renovation of a historical building into a museum. Challenges of a more abstract nature include considerations on whether establishing a museum falls within the framework of the Finnish Development Co-operation Policy. In what ways, if in any, can museums serve to reduce poverty or inequality, promote gender equality or sustainable development?

Namibia and Finland's Historical Relationship

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland funded in 2002 the North South Local Government Cooperation Programme (NSLGCP). The Programme aims through co-operative relationships between Finnish and Southern local governments to build the capacity of the local governments to provide basic services, to advance good governance and administrative practice as well as to promote participatory democracy and sustainable social, economic and environmental development. Altogether 34 municipalities in Finland (17) and around Africa (17, a.o. Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Namibia) have participated in the project. (Evaluation of Finnish support to development of logal governance. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Development Evalution (EVA-11). 2011)

The City of Vantaa in Finland and the City of Windhoek in Namibia have cooperated since 2002 under the NSLGCP. During these years, the two cities have executed projects in various areas, including library services, early childhood development and waste management just to mention a few. One of the key areas is City Cultural Heritage, which supports establishing a City of Windhoek Museum.

Mutual cooperation has been most motivating because of the long relationships between Finland and Namibia. The first Finnish missionaries arrived to Owamboland in the year 1870. The missionaries played a crucial role in the development of Namibia. They not only built churches, but also established health and education facilities. In 1978, in accordance with a UN Security Council proposal for a Special Representative, Martti Ahtisaari, a

The Reunion of the Old Location in 2012 was an important platform for the former residents, many of them over 80, to have their stories heard. Photo: Windhoek City Museum

Finn, was appointed to "ensure the early independence of Namibia through free and fair elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations". Following Namibian independence, the country became one of Finland's key development cooperation partners. (Windhoek in the Context of Namibia´s History. Mobile Exhibition Booklet. A joint venture project between the City of Windhoek, Namibia and the City of Vantaa, Finland. Windhoek 2011.)

Building a Museum

Officials from the Windhoek department of Tourism and Culture and Vantaa City Museum have worked together to promote the cultural heritage of Windhoek and Namibia. The component aims to raise awareness of the history of Windhoek among residents and to advance the tourism potential of Windhoek through collecting, preserving, documenting and exhibiting the history of Windhoek.

The original mission was to establish the Old Location Museum as a reminder of the destruction that took place in this area: the killing of thirteen people and injuring of countless others in Old Location on December 10, 1959, and the consequent removal of the residents from that area to the ethnically segregated township of Katutura.

The Old Location museum building was already finished when the project was started in 2005. There was, however, one major problem: the museum building was situated in the middle of Old Location cemetery. The site was in no way suitable for a museum, which was meant to become a tourist attraction.

Fairly soon we reached the joint decision to transfer the museum from the cemetery. First we planned a new museum building right next to Old Location cemetery, near the heroes' memorial. Later on, we ended up acquiring an old historic building closer to the city center for the museum.

Furthermore, the name of the museum was changed into Windhoek City Museum. At the same time the themes were expanded to cover the entire history of the city.

The first task of the working group was to induct their Windhoek colleagues, who had mainly worked in tourism, in practical museum operations: acquiring, documenting and cataloging collections; developing a collection policy; and exhibition manuscripts and techniques. These issues were and still are handled during reciprocal visits to Vantaa and Windhoek.

Another important task was to plan and implement a touring exhibition on the history of Namibia and Windhoek. The exhibition was inaugurated in 2007 at Vantaa City Museum and has, since its inauguration, toured around Namibia. It depicts Namibia's troubled past, its present challenges, and its future aspirations. The exhibition also showcases the history of the relationship between Namibia and Finland. Furthermore, the exhibition provides valuable and up-to-date information on Namibia and its capital city, Windhoek. Also a booklet called *Windhoek in the context of Namibia's History* was released at the exhibition.

The exhibition team had a meeting in the future museum house in 2011. Curator Aaron Nambadi is telling the wishes for the picture display technique to Alan Hendry (second from the left) and Gesa Schütte (on the right) from iMedia Productions and Photography Ltd. Chief curator Jutta Kuitunen from Vantaa City Museum and Grace Pujatura from the City of Windhoek Tourism and Marketing Division are listening. Photo: Leena Hiltula, Vantaa City Museum

Challenges

When planning the exhibition, we–for the first time–ran into differences in thinking between Namibian and Finnish colleagues. The Finns took it for granted that the exhibition, which was meant to first circulate in Finland, would include histories of ethnic groups that have lived and still live in Namibia. We suggested that the exhibition would present all the ethnic groups playing key roles in the history of Namibia: San, Nama, Damara, Caprivian, Kavango, Herero, Himba, Owambo, Tswana, Rehobot Baster, and European. We imagined there would be a focus on who they are and where they have come from. The Finns thought that it would not be enough to just say that Africans and Europeans live in Namibia.

The Namibians, however, emphasized that it would not be right to present all the groups separately since they are all Namibians. It is, of course, understandable that the Namibians emphasize their unity to create a strong national spirit. That was what Finns used to do and still do from time to time. Nevertheless, it should not prevent presentation of the different groups' own culture and history in a historical exhibition. After discussing the matter, our Namibian colleagues also approved presenting the different ethnic groups. When an individual has strong roots as a representative of his/her group and when the group is accepted as part of the entity, a true nation is born.

Another subject that often came up when we were compiling the manuscript for Windhoek City Museum's exhibition was: Where does history begin? Earlier history, before apartheid, does not seem to raise great interest when studying or presenting the history of Namibia. When planning the exhibition, we often pointed out that events dating back hundreds or thousands of years are also of interest to people and thus, worth presenting. In Finland the local and regional museums usually present in their permanent exhibitions the known history as whole, starting often from the Ice Age.

We all have our roots at least as early as in the distant Stone Age. Africans can be mighty proud of the fact that all modern men have their roots in the African Stone Age.

There was no Namibian archaeologist in our group, so ancient history was at first completely left out of the manuscript. More material is continuously being found on the ancient Southern African cultures that extend into the present, such as magnificent rock art findings. After negotiating, we finally agreed with our Windhoek colleagues that we would also include ancient history in the city museum's exhibition.

The second era over which disputes arose while compiling the manuscript was the colonial era with all its pluses and minuses. The third era that our Namibian colleagues wanted to pass over with just a few words was the apartheid era. They did not want to remind people of unpleasant issues, even though these are the issues about which many would argue people need to be reminded to ensure that they will never happen again. It is important to be very discrete when telling about sensitive issues. Sometimes it takes a couple of generations to be able to talk about difficult topics without emotional stress. For instance, In Finland we have not been able to investigate objectively the Civil War of 1918 before now.

Cooperation

A highlight was a gathering of residents in Old Location held by the City of Windhoek in March 2012. The reunion, which was addressed by the Founding President Dr. Sam Nujoma, brought together about 500 former residents of Old Location, members of the Diplomatic Corps, and members of the general public. The event served to contribute to the development of the Old Location Database and to collecting of information, narrated stories and photographs for the upcoming city museum. It created a platform that fosters understanding of the City's history, focusing on the forced removal from Old Location to Katutura and development of the city from the past to the future. The event was, furthermore, an important platform for the former residents, many of them over 80, to have their stories heard. (Reporting Form B, Implementation of the cooperation Jan.1-June 30, 2012)

Planning the exhibition has progressed in cooperation with the Museums Association of Namibia with help from the National Museum of Namibia and the National Archives of Namibia, which have made their collections available to the project. In principle, the exhibition plan is finished. In the fall of 2012, we were waiting for completion of the restoration of the museum building. The work was delayed because special expertise was required for repairing the protected historical building. Issuing calls for tenders for contractors was completed, and the work continued at the beginning of 2013.

The Current Situation

The project was also delayed by the North South Local Government Cooperation Programs re-evaluation of the project. This caused challenges of a more abstract nature: for example, considerations of whether establishing a museum falls within the framework of the Finnish Development Co-operation Policy. In what ways, if in any, can museums serve to reduce poverty or inequality, promote gender equality or sustainable development? I think the issue is crystal clear: museums cannot prevent poverty, but they play a major role in preventing poverty of the mind.

In the spring of 2013 the matter was successfully settled. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs continues the project until spring 2014. Windhoek City Museum will likely be opened in February 2014 with a festive occasion. We have found cooperation with our Namibian colleagues very pleasant and fruitful during all the years of the project. Even though Namibia is probably the closest African country to Finns, its familiarity still managed to surprise us. We are proud to have been part of planning and building Windhoek City Museum.

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Biography

Leena Hiltula has worked as Director of Vantaa City Museums since the year 2002. Hiltula started her museum career as Archaeologist in 1971, she formed part of various archaeological projects during the 1970s and 1980s. She worked as researcher at the Sports Museum of Finland in 1985-1988 and as Director of the Hunting Museum of Finland in 1988-1998. Between 1998 and 2002 she was responsible for establishing several museums and worked in many museums as Exhibition Planner. Hiltula holds a Master's Degree in Political Science.

From Military Museum to Remembrance Museum - Finding a Balance

Danielle Kuijten

Abstract

Resetting the post-colonial perspectives is becoming a dominant discourse within cultural heritage. It goes beyond questions like: Are all communities equally represented in the museum? But is more closely focused on issues like; Are museums currently creating and maintaining a feeling of disharmony?, and How to tell the contested narratives of colonial and post-colonial times in such a way that we can open up the dialogue instead of excluding? In other words: how narratives and collections of nation and identity can influence the level of harmony in society.

This paper presents an analysis of the exhibition called 'The Story of the Dutch East Indies'. This exhibition was developed in 2009 as a collaboration between The Military Museum Bronbeek and the Indisch Herrinneringscentrum, and is shown on the Estate Bronbeek. Two very different stakeholder-groups, the Indisch Herrinneringscentrum representing the Indies community, and Museum Bronbeek representing the veterans and the ministry of defense, placed under one roof challenged to tell their stories as one.

Introduction

Resetting post-colonial and post-conflict perspectives remain dominant discourses in the museum field. Likewise, deconstructing the various utopias that are still reflected in museum representation to create alternative representations continues to be a hot topic. If museums are there for a community to interpret its history and present this history to itself and others, who should decide what to tell and what to show and how should this be done? By putting the past on display, whether through objects, images or text, a museum is committing itself to an interpretation. This interpretation is formed not only by what is included and excluded in the display, but also, and equally importantly, through how it is shown and the different roles allocated to different cultural groups. The discussion goes further than questions about whether or not all communities are represented in the museum. Instead, it is about deconstructing existing utopias. It is all about resetting dominant post-colonial and post-conflict perspectives.

Resetting Perspectives in The Netherlands

Although museums in the Netherlands are working on a more inclusive approach, my feeling is that we are still at the stage where we are not deconstructing the post-colonial, but instead are just merely adding things to our collection to get a more multisided representation. This looks as if you are inclusive, but actually you are not. Real inclusiveness goes further, focussing on issues like how communities and issues are represented as part of the overall narrative in order to think ahead to what the long-term effect could be. How to go further and beyond paved paths and previous constructed assumptions? How can museums tell the contested narratives of colonial and post-colonial times in such a way that we can open up the dialogue, instead of further excluding people?

In line with this discussion, I will present an analysis of the exhibition called *The Story of the Dutch East Indies*, which I performed with two other students from the Reinwardt Academy. This exhibition was developed in 2009-2010 as a collaboration between The Military Museum Bronbeek and the Indies Remembrance Centre (IHCA) in Arnhem, and is shown in the former Military Museum on the Estate Bronbeek. These are two very different stakeholder-groups: The Museum celebrates the colonial past of the Netherlands in the Dutch-Indies with the central story focused on the Royal Dutch-Indies Army (KNIL) and the colonized opponents. The Indies Remembrance Centre focuses on the Japanese occupation and the Bersiap period in the Dutch Indies commemorating "the suffering that our compatriots, in the period between 1941-1949 in the distant part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands had to bear".[1]

The original exhibition at the Museum Bronbeek was object based and displayed within a traditional exhibition set up. The new exhibition with the IHCA challenged the Museum to revisit its collection and narratives to develop a new multi-sided presentation. As the civilian story rests heavily on memory, other ways of presenting the intangible were researched. It was a challenging attempt to have these

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[1] http://www.indischherinneringscentrum.nl/ (accessed 25-06-2012)

very different stakeholder-groups placed under one roof, trying to tell their stories in one cohesive representation. This paper discusses the set up of the new exhibition and will critically look at the approaches that brought these stories together.

A short history of the Dutch East Indies

The Dutch East Indies was a Dutch colony in modern day Indonesia from the 16th century onwards. It came under the administration of the Dutch government in 1800. During the 19th century, Dutch possessions and hegemony expanded, reaching their greatest territorial extent in the early 20th century.

The colonial social order in the Dutch East Indies was based on rigid racial and social structures. During this period, European Migrants that settled in the Dutch East Indies did mingle with locals. The number of men living there at that time outnumbered the woman of European descent, which resulted in a new mixed-race group commonly referred to as "Indo-Europeans". Members of this group had the legal status of Dutch citizens if the father recognized the child. During World War II (WWII) when Japan occupied The Dutch Indies, many Indonesians, Dutch and Indo-Europeans were imprisoned in camps. Those Dutch citizens that were not in camps were forced by the Japanese to integrate with the Indonesian population. They were therefore subject to the same regulations as the Indonesians.

Japan's WWII occupation dismantled much of the Dutch colonial state and economy in the east. Following the Japanese surrender in August 1945, Indonesian nationalists declared independence in the same month, which was not initially recognized by the Dutch government. Indonesian fighters tried forcefully to obtain power in the first post war period when the government was still in Australia and most KNIL were weak, wounded or ill in the camps. This period is called the Bersiap period. Until 1949, a period of bitter fighting alternated with attempts at negotiations persisted between the Dutch and the Indonesian independence fighters. During this time, a number of Dutch and Indo-Europeans were kept in the camps, ostensibly for their own safety. Finally, The Netherlands formally recognized Indonesian sovereignty at the 1949 Dutch–Indonesian Round Table Conference.

In the new Republic of Indonesia, Dutch citizens had to choose between the Dutch or the Indonesian nationality, which had consequences in terms of whether people could stay or leave. Although many people spoke Dutch and experienced a lifestyle and education that was heavily Dutch influenced, the emotional strings with their birth land were stronger than with The Netherlands. Many families were torn when forced to make this choice. Around 300.000 Dutch and Indo-Europeans eventually migrated to The Netherlands. Arriving in their new homeland with nothing more than a few personal belongings, they soon realised they were not welcome in The Netherlands. The Dutch, rebuilding the country after WWII, were unaware of what this group had gone through and they showed little or no sympathy to the new arrivals from overseas. Acknowledgement, acceptance and, particularly, compensation, were a long time in coming.[2]

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[2] http://indieinoorlog.nl/

Historical layers of Estate Bronbeek

The Estate Bronbeek was built in the early 19th century as a country-house. In 1845 the Dutch King Willem III bought the estate and donated it to the Dutch state in 1859. He gave it to the Ministry of Colonies with the task to create a home for veterans of the Royal Dutch East Indian Army on the estate. In 1863 it officially opened its doors. Both Willem III and other members of the Royal Family donated objects to decorate the home, as they wanted veterans to live amongst tangible memories. Additionally, donations from the Ministry for the Colonies, private individuals, as well as souvenirs from the residents ended up in the collection, which was the beginning of the museum. Today, the Estate remains a home for veterans and a museum.

When this home and museum opened, a transnational heritage layer was added to the estate; through time it acquired more layers. Now it operates as a place with multiple stories and functions. The main building (the home) houses 50 veterans from the KNIL and Royal Dutch Forces. The museum is set in the same building and displays the colonial past of the Netherlands in the Dutch-Indies. The main focus was the history of the Royal Dutch-Indies Army (KNIL) and the colonized opponents, with its mission to spread the knowledge and awareness of the colonial past and create more interest in this part of Dutch History. The park with many monuments is used to commemorate the occupation and the victims of violence. Furthermore, there are offices, a restaurant and reunion centre serving Indonesian style food.

In 2009, the Indies Remembrance Centre Bronbeek (IHCB) also opened their office on Estate Bronbeek.

The focus of the IHCB is the Japanese occupation and the Bersiap period in the Dutch Indies, commemorating "the suffering that our compatriots in the period between 1941-1949 in the distant part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, had to bear". As the Indies community is so diverse and is disconnected from the original homeland, their identity is still redefined through sequential generations. Given the position they held in Dutch society for so long, their search for identity, belonging and heritage is largely retrospective. IHCB is trying to play a role in this process and offer a platform for doing so.

Together with the Military Museum Bronbeek, IHCB received the assignment to develop a new exhibition on the history of the Dutch East Indies. The initial idea was to hold two separate exhibitions in the museum: one from the Remembrance Centre, and one from the Military Museum. Finally it was decided to bring the civil and military stories together in one exhibition. For this project a workgroup was formed to create representations of the diverse perspectives from the different (old and new) stakeholders. This new exhibition, which would combine the military narrative with the more personal civilian story, marks a shift and added a new layer of narrative to the estate.

The Exhibition

The original exhibition at the Military Museum Bronbeek had a strong emphasis on the military history. The cooperation with IHCB challenged them to come to a new multisided presentation, especially as the story of the civil side heavily rests on memory, other ways of presenting the intangible were researched. An exhibition design company was approached to translate this narrative into a cohesive story. The Museum had to make many concessions, which resulted in more than half of the objects previously on display being stored away in the depot.

The exhibition is divided into periods and spread over six rooms, which were the old sleeping rooms of the veterans. The narrative starts with the *Enterprise 1595-1817* and from there moves to *The dependency 1817-1914* (bankruptcy VOC), *The Empire 1914-1942, The War 1942-1945, The Revolution 1945-1949* and finally ends with *New Grounds 1949-now*. The design plays with the visitor's senses by using colour, smell, sound and shapes to guide you through the periods. There is the line of the military with a focus on strategy, leadership and war. The significance of memories is a valuable and an essential addition to this history. So therefore there is also the voice of IHCB with personal stories to give space to the individual people during these periods. The military story examines the war from above; the personal stories bring emotion.

When the new permanent exhibition, "The Story of the Dutch-Indies", was opened in 2010, secretary general Van Maanen (Ministry of Health, Wellbeing & Sports) emphasized the importance of commemorating and remembering those who have experienced the war in the Dutch Indies, but also for the general public: "The war history of the Dutch East Indies is part of our national history and deserves more attention. With this exhibition this gap in national representation is filled".[3] For the IHCB the aim of the exhibition was to give the visitor a sense of "coming home", to enrich his / her knowledge and to find recognition, whereas the Military Museum's mission remained spreading the knowledge and awareness of the colonial past and to create more interest in this part of Dutch History.

Some of our findings

It is this balance that is important but unfortunately is not present on all levels. There is already an imbalance in what both institutions want to achieve, based on their mission statements. Furthermore it feels like everything in this exhibition is ironically about domination: dominant design, colours, sound, and narrative. The dominant narrative in the exhibition on the coloniser and its army leaves little room for personal stories. It's not that they are not present, but they feel secondary in the majority of the displays.

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[3] http://www.defensie.nl/cdc/bronbeek/museum/vaste_expositie/opening

The multimedia and audio effects during the exhibition visit are also overwhelming. It seems as if one has forgotten that silence is a medium to connect with the past, to reflect, to contemplate. It almost enforces a certain way of how we should remember and the design creates a disconnect with the story, instead of facilitating an intimate encounter for the visitor. There is no room for personal reflection. Curious to hear what the veterans thought about the display, we tried to get in touch with them as they live there and have to walk daily through parts of the exhibition. Unfortunately, however, I was not able to ask them what they think about this. If it is for the Indies community to remember and reconnect to their history and heritage, is the current narrative the best way? Do they feel "at home" as ICHB wants to accomplish) between the screens of oppression and violence? So how does this exhibition add to heritage, awareness, identification and belonging?

Challenges

The story of the Indies community is one of people's homes being taken away from them, about human beings torn from the places that shaped their identities and community. Even though this might be a constructed identity, still people feel lost if these strings are cut. Can a person "go back home" or "feel back home" when the "home" no longer exists in the same way it once did? How do you create a sense of belonging and identity?

Another issue arises if the represented communities cannot find each other in the remembrance of the war. By deconstructing the colonial utopia, it could miss the fundamentals necessary to build a future for shared heritage in which belonging and identity are shaped. But how to deconstruct this and who to include in this narrated history remains a challenge. This history has also more players to it than just the veterans and the Indies community. The question, how to value each of these communities, persists.

The selection of the location is another challenging one. This multi-layered site is one of contestation, a power sphere that enforces a compromising situation. Maybe the institutional history and the collection endanger its mission of becoming a place for dialogue or arena for intercultural encounters.

Finally the different ideas of what the role and mission of the IHC versus Museum Bronbeek can make it difficult to work as partners in a joint effort to become a platform where all voices have a place, and where sharing knowledge from different perspectives should be an aim. The fact that the ministry of Defence is running the estate might also complicate things. Striving for an inclusive and transparent approach seems, therefore, still a long way off but, like most things, it takes time.

Conclusions

Though many worked hard on this exhibition and it is a first step in the direction of telling this history in a more inclusive way, it might not have the bonding effect that many hoped it would. It might also not help those families that moved to Holland and their descendants with the recognition they are looking for; it might even reinforce lingering feelings of inferiority.

The represented communities have lots in common, but also differ on various levels. It's on this common ground we should try to find each other to create space for other interpretations of shared histories, other memories, but also other ways of practising, remembering and connecting. As to how to deal with remembering what is "no longer there", this is still a field that needs more research. Combining traditional museum practices to coincide with communal participation should be a careful process. By doing this you depart from academic distance and invite not only non-academic voices but also emotions into the museum. If we want to broaden our role as museum and be a place for sharing and debate, we should be prepared to change our familiar routes and revisit museum guidelines on ethics to deal with this. This new field will react more overtly to invisible signifiers that could disturb the balance of a fragile relationship with communities.

On the other hand, museums might want to consider if trying to merge certain narratives in one place creates the right environment for opening up the dialogue, or if making compromises to come to a shared narrative actually means greater disharmony. Maybe for certain discussions other institutions better play the activist role. Still, this does not relieve the museum of its task to strive for an inclusive, or at least a transparent, representation. Museums should always challenge themselves in finding ways to deconstruct certain old ways or rusted habits, since they are dynamic spaces where questions of society are reflected and addressed.

I am a true believer that the museum can play a key role in society and they do have the power with the choices they make in narratives and collections to influence the level of harmony in society. Or maybe that is just my utopian view on what museums should be....

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Biography

Danielle Kuijten recently completed her Master of Museology at the Reinwardt Academy in Amsterdam (2011-2014). In 2013 she started her own company, Heritage Concepting. Currently she works on projects for Imagine IC, a pioneer in the field of heritage of the contemporary society. Here she is responsible for the disclosure of their digitally born collection. As well, she has started developing a collections policy on their behalf for a new collection to be formed on Amsterdam's South East. She is also an affiliated board member at COMCOL, ICOM's international committee for collecting. She has extensive experience working with media and photography organisations in Amsterdam. Her research interests are contemporary collecting, participative collecting, community archives, intangible heritage and critical museology.

Can Museums and Art Exhibitions Play an Active Part in the Process of Reconciliation?

An analysis of the role of museums in the Polish-German reconciliation process after World War II and the exhibition "Side by Side – Poland and Germany – 1000 years of Art and History".

Gregor H. Lersch, Berlin

Abstract

The importance of the role of museums in the process of peace-making after severe conflicts should not be neglected. The history of Germany and its neighboring countries constitutes an example for the responsibility of museums in the reconciliation phase post WWII. German-Polish relations are strongly influenced by German occupation which has led to a severe loss and destruction of polish cultural heritage. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the war relations were still affected by territorial disputes which also questioned the national attribution of archives, museums and collections.

However, the end of the Cold War in 1989 has fostered political and cultural reconciliation. Therefore, the exhibition "Side by Side-Poland and Germany-1000 years of Art and History." hold in Martin-Gropius-Bau Berlin from September 2011 to January 2012, reflects upon the current situation. With more than 800 loans from over 200 lenders the project was a milestone in the cultural relations and the reconciliation-process of these two countries. Hundreds of artworks coming from Polish collections could be shown in Berlin without any claim from German side – a fact that would have been impossible only some years ago. Most interesting is the experience and evaluation of a participative and dialogue-based Project in cooperation with a German-Polish University that was part of the

exhibition. In conclusion, the German-Polish case constitutes an example for other post-conflict cases all over the world. It demonstrates how a Museum and exhibition space can become a discursive platform. The example of this recent exhibition in Berlin also leads to the conclusion that museums do have a responsibility to illustrate and reflect upon conflicts and visions for the future need to be further explored.

Introduction

By considering the 2011 exhibition, "Side by Side – Poland and Germany – A 1000 years of Art and History", this paper examines how museums can play a significant role in the reconciliation process that follows severe conflicts. It analyses whether exhibitions in museum rather indicate the status of such processes or if they could even become generators of better dialogue.

Museums, exhibitions, programs and collecting policies are strongly affected by political and social changes in the last decades.[1] In Germany, the year 1989 marked the end of a 40 year separation of the country into "East" and "West" Germany when the so called iron curtain disappeared. The significance of this event in Germany and its neighbours can only be understood within the context of World War II.[2] Indeed, German-Polish relations today are still strongly influenced by the consequences of decisions made during the Peace Agreement in 1945.

My paper deals with this particular post-conflict scenario and the role of museums and exhibitions during this process of reconciliation. Developed against this historical backdrop, the "Side by Side" project from the year 2011, which attempted to span one thousand years of German and Polish art and history and involved extensive cooperation between German and Polish institutions, marked an important milestone in ameliorating, at least, cultural relations between these neighbouring countries. A participatory project, so called tandem tours, shows how an exhibition aims to generate and facilitate dialogue in-between visitors with different backgrounds and to play an active part in the process.

Historical Background

Following the end of WWII and a consolidation phase in 1949, the Allies established two German states. It was a separation that remained a lived reality until the year 1989. The western part of Germany (FRG/ ger.:BRD) was occupied and influenced by the western allies, mainly the United States of America, while the eastern part (GDR/ ger.:DDR) was part of the socialist bloc under the rule of the Soviet Union. In terms of relations with the Socialist People's Republic of Poland this meant that the GDR was a so called "brother state", while the FRG was officially considered part of the hostile capitalist world.

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[1] See: Ivan Karp et al., eds., *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 6-31.

[2] Hereafter shortened to WWII.

As a consequence of WWII and the Treaty of Jalta, the borders and territories in Central Europe changed enormously and Poland also lost swathes of territory in the east (today part of White Russia and Ukraine), but gained former German territories in the west. This resulted in a large-scale exchange of population and millions of Germans and Poles were forced to leave their home country and move westwards.[3] Prior to this event, German-Polish relations had already been impacted by the German occupation of 1939 – 1945, which had led not only to millions of murdered Poles but also to a severe loss and destruction of Polish cultural heritage.[4]

The provenance of cultural heritage, particularly artefacts found in museums and libraries, is regularly debated in the post WWII era. Some of these questions concerning artworks or collections remain unsolved. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the war, relations were still sullied by territorial disputes, which raised questions about ownership over archives, museums and collections.[5]

German-Polish relations with both German states are very interesting case studies in terms of the ways cultural exchange works after a conflict, particularly in terms of the different paths reconciliation took:

1) Federal Republic of Germany – People´s Republic of Poland

West German and Polish cultural exchange in the post WWII period actually shows that relations between public institutions are even possible before diplomatic relations officially commence. As a result of the disputes about the lost territories, the FRG did not officially accept the Polish borders until the year 1970.[6] Even though there were no official diplomatic contacts before 1970 the first exchanges and loans between museums actually occurred as early as in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1962, for example, the Folkwang Museum Essen displayed a large exhibition of Polish art.[7] Folkwang Museum is one of the most important places for modern art of the 20th century in Germany. Most interesting is that this exhibition was built on contacts that preceded the cold war.[8]

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[3] Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (ed.): Zwangsumsiedlung, Flucht, Vertreibung 1939-1959. Atlas zur Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas, Bonn 2009.

[4] Mezynski, Andrzej: Kommando Paulsen. Organisierter Kunstraub in Polen, 1942-1945. Köln 2000; Götz Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005).

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[6] Dieter Bingen, *Die Polenpolitik der Bonner Republik von Adenauer bis Kohl 1949-1991* (Baden-Baden, 1998), 134.

[7] Museum Folkwang Essen and Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie , eds., Polnische Malerei vom Ausgang des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart, Essen, 1963.

[8] The exhibition was supported by Bertold Beitz, an industrialist and head of the Krupp steel conglomerate beginning in the 1950s. Beitz had passed some years in Poland during the german occupation in Poland, where he gained acclaim for saving hundreds jewish workers during World War II. After the War Beitz was very much engaged in the reconciliation processes in-between Poles and Germans on a political, economical but also cultural level, as the polish exhibition from 1962 shows; See Kunstkalender from the weekly magazine "Die Zeit from 28.12.1962, http://www.zeit.de/1962/52/kleiner-kunstkalender; 30.01.2014.

Surprising is the fact that for the Folkwang exhibition, 200 loans to Western Germany came from the Peoples Republic of Poland at a time when official relations between the countries were non-existent. Usually such international loan exchanges build until today on support from cultural diplomacy and embassies. This suggests that networks in the areas of fine arts and museums do not necessarily rely on political support; the art world does not automatically mirror political boundaries.

Another significant exchange during this era was the participation of Polish artists in the second *documenta* exhibition in Kassel in 1959. The *documenta* is one of most important exhibition of contemporary art worldwide and was founded in 1955 in Western Germany to establish contemporary art in post-war Germany.[9]   At the first *documenta*, artists from socialist countries had not been invited as the organizers held the opinion that "real" art cannot be produced in the non-free socialist countries.[10] But some years later in 1959, the organising committee decided to grant an exception for artists coming from Poland, mainly because the country played a prominent role in the Constructivist movement of the 1920s.[11] Here we can identify a geography of the arts that is not identical to the geography of politics. After the start of official relations in 1972, exhibition exchanges between the two countries became more and more regular and also West German artists and exhibitions started displaying in Poland in the 1970s.

2) German Democratic Republic

Relations between the East German GDR and its socialist Polish brother state, The Peoples Republic of Poland, are today defined as "enacted friendship (ger. "Verordnete Freundschaft")".[12] This means a close cooperation in-between official institutions that is not based on a voluntary dialogue in-between the two societies. Although the populations in Eastern Germany and Poland were equally affected by the same consequences as in West Germany, which meant lingering resentment between the countries, official politics between the neighbours were characterised by a need to forge friendly relations inside the socialist bloc in Central Europe. By 1949, the GDR had already established diplomatic relations with Poland and accepted the new borderline in the east as well as the loss of the former German territories.[13] As a result, regular exchanges between the two countries are well documented and extended to the museum field. However, in terms of fine arts, cooperation between the GDR and Poland was not free from conflict.

[9] Kimpel, Harald: documenta. Mythos und Wirklichkeit. Dumont Verlag, Köln 1997, p. 10.

[10] II. documenta '59. Kunst nach 1945, Katalog Band 1: Malerei. Kassel/Köln 1959, p. 15.

[11] Timothy O. Benson, ed., *Central-European Avant-Gardes. Exchange and Transformation (1910-1930)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 307.

[12] *Basil Kerski, Zwangsverordnete Freundschaft?*: *Die Beziehungen zwischen der DDR und Polen 1949 - 1990* (Osnabrück, 2003)

[13] Michalski, Sergiusz: "Eine kalte Freundschaft. Die Beziehungen zwischen der Volksrepublik Polen und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," in *Tür an Tür. Polen-Deutschland*, ed. Malgorzata Omilanowksa (Köln, 2011), 686.

In Poland the official attitude towards art was far more liberal than in the GDR; shortly after the death of Stalin in 1953, Poland loosened a restriction on art, which previously accepted socialist realism as the only permitted form.[14] This was not the case in the GDR where until the late nineties realistic art remained the only officially accepted style of art.[15] Nevertheless, official art projects and exchanges were realized with relatively high frequency between the two countries until 1981. Polish artists, for example, participated regularly at the Biennale of the Baltic Area in Rostock, GDR. Interestingly, the style of the artworks shown by Polish artists in West and East Germany differed greatly. In West Germany, Polish artists displayed more dynamic constructivist art and performances while in the GDR, realistic and figurative art remained the norm. In the fields of arts and museum exchange, Poland was closer to West German than it was to East, i.e. the opposite of official relations with the respective country.

This highlights again the existing differences between political geographies and a geography of the arts during the cold war. In Central Europe in the 20th several examples of this phenomena exist and art historians have started to demand a "critical geography" to understand better the networks of presentations of the arts in the 20th and 21th century.[16]

3) Situation after 1989 (reunified Germany):

With the reunification of Germany and the end of the socialist regime in Poland in 1989, relations between the two countries intensified in all sectors and especially in the field of arts and culture. Shortly after this political turning point several major exhibitions were realized, first in the field of contemporary art and then with "old art" in the late nineties.[17] This project focussed on the crucial question of common grounds and historical divisions and the identity of the art produced in this region. The basic intention of the exhibitions was to show the universal character of the arts in Central Europe and to construct an identity of one common European art history.[18]

[14] Anna Malkiewicz, *Die Kunstpolitik des sozialistischen Realismus im Vergleich die Malerei in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg* (Leipzig, 2008), 222.

[15] Eckhart Gillen, *Feindliche Brüder.Der Kalte Krieg und die deutsche Kunst 1945-1990* (Berlin, 2009), 10.

[16] Irit Rogoff, "The case for critical cartographies," in *Cartographers: Geo-Gnostic Projections for the 21st Century*, ed., Z. Koscievic, 144-49 (Zagreb: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1997); Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma: Geography´s Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000)

[17] f. ex. the exhibitions *Riss im Raum* (Berlin 1994) and *Unter einer Krone* (Dresden 1997);See: Matthias Flügge, ed., *Der Riss im Raum – Positionen der Kunst seit 1945 in Deutschland, Polen, der Slowakei und Tschechien* (Berlin, 1994); Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden et al., eds., *Unter einer Krone: Kunst und Kultur der sächsisch-polnischen Union* (Warsaw, 1997)

[18] Proposals of tackling art-historical borders, ranging between the approaches of postmodern geography, a new art history, postmodern criticism of western hegemony can f. ex. be found at Piotr Piotrowski, "Between Place and time: a critical geography of "new" Central Europe," in *Time and Place, The geohistory of art,* eds., Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and Elizabeth Pilliod (Hants.: Ashgate, 2005) and Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, ed., Borders *In Art: Revisiting 'Kunstgeographie* (Warsaw 2000)

While relations between museums and art institutions improved, however, there were still struggles over the national attribution and the distribution of some parts of collections and artefacts. Even in the twenty-first century, the attribution of cultural heritage regularly reappears as a topic on the Polish-German agenda. The most known example is the collection of documents called *Berlinka*, which is still in Breslau but is claimed by Germany.[19]

While these disputes are not fully resolved, the end of the post-Cold War period has been largely characterised by political and cultural reconciliation. In the field of Museums and exhibition exchange it can be shown that cultural exchange was more fluid than official political relations. After 1989 the political situation in-between the reunified Germany and Poland had changed enormously but on the other hand also the way exhibitions usually are designed had changed. The exhibition "Side by Side-Poland and Germany-1000 years of Art and History" from the year 2011, reflects upon this current situation.

The exhibition "Side by Side. Poland – Germany. A 1000 years of art and culture "[20]

Although first proposed in 2005, changes in the Polish government meant the "Side by Side" exhibition did not receive the full support of Polish politicians until 2009. Prior to this, the conservative Polish government had stalled preparations for the exhibition since improving friendly relations with Germany was not the aim of their foreign policy until 2007.[21] Agreement between the countries' cultural ministries was finally reached when they decided the exhibition would be part of the official celebrations of the first Polish Presidency of the European Union, starting in the summer of 2011. Both agreed to host the exhibition at the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin. Martin-Gropius-Bau is still the most important space for temporary exhibitions in Germany and shows around ten exhibitions a year. Since 1980 several cultural, historical and art exhibitions exploring Germany's historical relations with its neighbours, including Russia and France, have been hosted here.[22]

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[19] See: Werner Schochow, *Bücherschicksale: die Verlagerungsgeschichte der Preußischen Staatsbibliothek. Auslagerung, Zerstörung, Entfremdung, Rückführung* (Berlin, 2003); Angelica Schwall-Düren, "Eine europäische Dimension. Offene Kulturgüterfragen zwischen Deutschland und Polen," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, März 25, 2010, accessed April 8, 2014, http://nzz.ch/aktuell/feuilleton/kunst_architektur/eine-europaeische-dimension-1.5292690, 15.2.2013.

[20] The exhibition "Side by Side. Poland–Germany. A thousand years of art and history" was called in german "Tür an Tür. Polen–Deutschland. 1000 Jahre Kunst und Geschichte" and in Polish "Obok. Polska - Niemcy. 1000 lat historii w sztuce". Catagloge: Omilanowksa, Malgorzata (ed.): Tür an Tür. Polen-Deutschland. 1000 Jahre Kunst und Geschichte, Köln 2011. http://archiv2.berlinerfestspiele.de/de/aktuell/festivals/11_gropiusbau/mgb_rueckblick/mgb_rueckblick_ausstellungen/mgb_rueckblick_ausst_2011/mgb11_aus-archiv_ProgrammlisteDetailSeite_16936.php; 30.01.2014.

[21] Rieger, Birgit/Wahjudi, Claudia: »Der Westen weiß nichts über Polen«. Die Kuratorin Anda Rottenberg über deutsch-polnische Beziehungen und ihre Schau Tür an Tür im Martin-Gropius-Bau, Zitty – Stadtmagazin, Berlin 22.9.2011; Bobiński, Krzysztof: Polish Foreign Policy 2005–2007, http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00003839/01/2005762298099892600119z005247.pdf, 30.1.2014.

[22] f. ex. the exhibitions *Berlin-Moskau 1900-1950* (Berlin 1996), *Berlin-Moskau 1950-2000* (Berlin 2004) and *Marianne und Germania* 1789-1989 (Berlin 1996), all at Martin-Gropius-Bau.

By the end of 2009, the Polish art historian, Anda Rottenberg, was nominated as curator for "Side by Side" and the exhibition team established offices in Berlin and Warsaw for research and preparation.

The exhibition concept was to narrate the history of the bi-national relations through hundreds of artworks from all periods. This meant that historical events would be visualized through both historical artefacts as well as by contemporary artworks. Historical objects and contemporary works were displayed alongside one another throughout the exhibition. In the first room, for example, a 1987 sculpture by Polish artist Mirosław Bałka capturing the legend of the holy Adalbert from late ninth century was displayed with other objects and documents from early medieval times.

Occupying 6000 square meters of space and comprising more than 800 objects, the exhibition led the visitor through centuries of shared German and Polish history. Nearly half of the exhibition space was reserved for the events of the 20th century. Beside stories and proofs of friendly relations, conflicts played a major role in the exhibition tour. The central courtyard that presented the middle and climax of the exhibition dealt with the topic of the Teutonic knights. In Poland the image of the cruel Teutonic knight epitomises the aggressive German neighbour stereotype. Conversely, in Germany the history of the Teutonic knights in Eastern Europe is largely forgotten and rarely taught at schools. This is but one example of the difference in Polish and German collective memory.

One very symbolic painting displayed in "Side by Side" was *The Prussian Hommage (Hold Pruski)*, by the famous 19th century painter Jan Matejko.[23] Showing the acceptance of defeat by a Prussian Duke at the foot of a Polish King, this painting has provoked marked controversy for decades. In the 19th century this was interpreted as an allegory of a Polish victory over the Germans. For this very reason the Nazis planned to destroy it during the occupation in the 1940s; the painting only survived because somebody successfully hid it in a small village and the Nazis never found it. Regarded as a symbol of Polish resistance against the German occupation, the painting today occupies a prestigious place in Polish identity. That Poland was prepared to loan this painting to Germany for "Side by Side" was a very significant symbolic gesture, even in 2011. The loan still provoked discussion, especially in more conservative Polish newspapers reluctant to establish friendly relations with the western neighbour.[24]

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[23] Prussian Hommage (Hołd Pruski) by Jan Matejko Krakow, Oil an Canvas; 388 x 785 cm Krakau, Zamek Królewski na Wawelu, Inv. 8323/1-2.

[24] See: Tadeusz Marczak, "Jak byĐmy byli pod pruskim zaborem" ["As if we would still suffer Prussian occupation"], *Nasz Dziennik* 179 (2009) and Jerzy Robert Nowak, "PełzajĐca germanizacja Wrocławia" [The Creeping Germanization of Wrocław (2)], *Nasz Dziennik* 41 (2009)

After two years of preparation, the Polish and German Presidents, Boris Komorowski and Christian Wulff officially opened the exhibition in September 2011. Comprising more than 800 loans from over 200 lenders, the project was a milestone in terms of cultural relations and reconciliation between the two countries. Hundreds of artworks were loaned from Polish collections for display in Berlin without Germany laying claim to their ownership; this would have been impossible just a few years earlier. These exchanges were made possible by a series of special legal agreements between the lenders and the exhibition organizers. As well as abiding by the usual loan regulations and documents, *immunity from seizure* was also issued to the Polish lenders. An immunity from seizure from the German government guarantees the return of the object to Poland, even if German citizens made feasible claims to their ownership prior to 1945.[25]

The exhibition was generally well received by the public. Both the national and international press appreciated the scale of the cooperative project.[26] Many Polish people travelled to Berlin to visit the exhibition, although the number of visitors at approximately 55,000 was somewhat lower than anticipated.

However, the discussion about the shutdown of a controversial video of the Polish artist's Artur Zmijewski showed that views on history are still very different and emotional in Poland and Germany. About three weeks after the start of the exhibition the video work by the Polish artist Artur Zmijewski's "Berek"[27] was turned off and was not displayed until the end of the exhibition.

[25] As there are still some unclear and unsolved ownership cases, the German government performs several checks before issuing this immunity if the object is listed in a database called *LostArt* (www.lostart.de). *LostArt* is a project set up to establish the provenance of objects and lists unclear cases; it is a very important tool for researching objects lost in WW II.

[26] F. ex. the weekly Magazine *Die Zeit*, 22.11.2014: "Der Ausstellung gelingt ein wahres Kunststück: Sie sperrt die Geister der Geschichte ein. Und stellt sie aus. Die gesamte Schau ist solch ein kluges Spektakel."(engl.: "This exhibition is a real masterpiece. It locks in the ghosts of history. And exhibits them. The whole show is such a smart spectacle"), Scholter, Judith: Goldene Kronen, blutige Beile, in: *Die Zeit*, 22.9.2011, http://www.zeit.de/2011/39/Polen-Ausstellung, 30.1.2014; and the daily Newspaper BZ reported: „Mammutausstellung im Martin-Gropius-Bau - Polen, der Nachbar, der ein Bruder ist" (engl.: Mammoth-Exhibition at Martin-Gropius-Bau – Poland, the neighbour that is a brother"), *B.Z.* vom 22.9.2011; A summary of German, polish and international press reviews is published here: Albers Maria: Pressereaktionen auf die Ausstellung Tür an Tür, in: Ackermann, Felix/Boroffka, Anna/Gregor H. Lersch: Partizipative Erinnerungsräume – Dialogische Wissensbildung in Museen und Ausstellungen, Bielefeld 2013, p. 191–179.

[27] http://www.digitalartlab.org.il/ArchiveVideo.asp?id=36; 13.02.2014.

The video shows a group of naked people playing tag (pl. *berek*) in a cellar room. At the end of the projection the viewer is informed that the images are created in a private cellar and in a gas chamber of the former concentration camp at Auschwitz. After the opening, the Jewish community in Berlin expressed their digust towards that artwork and the director of the Martin -Gropius-Bau decided to turn off the video and to remove it from the exhibtion parcours. Reactions were ambivalent and ranged from positive reception to criticism of censorship.[28] The following debate rather discussed the ethics of arts and the way art is censored in the 21st Century; it did not focus especially on the Polish-German relationship as there were advocates and opponents on both sides.

Tandem guided tours as intercultural tool

The significant question now facing the "Side by Side" team was, "how to convey the complex narrative of the exhibition to German and Polish visitors?" In an attempt to facilitate more nuanced interpretations, Martin-Gropius-Bau established so called tandem guided tours.[29] Since the late 1990s museums are more frequently understood as "Contact Zones", where diverse publics meet in colloborative activities and influence the contexts of display.[30] Based on that, authors like Nina Simon have argued convincingly and based on practical experience that museums suffer a lack of participation by visitors. Participation can improve the role of museums in social discourses.[31]

The design of the new format was based on a year long educational project developed together with two other partners: the *European University Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder,* a German-Polish university at the border, close to Berlin, and *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, a public service provider for education for museums based in Berlin.[32]

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[28] See following articles from newspapers: Uwe Rada, "Umstrittenes Kunst-Video verbannt. Kein Tanz mehr im KZ" ("Controversial Art Video banished. No more dancing in the concentration camp"), taz, October 30,2011; Sven Felix Kellerhoff, "Nacktes Spiel in der Gaskammer – zensiert?". ("Naked game in the gas chamber – censored ?"), *Die Welt*, November 1, 2011; "Gabriele Walde: Streit über ein entferntes KZ-Video eskaliert.". ["Dispute over a remote concentration camp video escalates"], *Berliner Morgenpost*, November 1, 2011; N.N., "Film Zmijewskiego o Holocauscie usuniety z wystawy w Berlinie" ("Zmijewskis Movie about the holocaust removed"), Gazeta Wyborcza, October 27, 2011; N.N., "Berek Đmijewskiego usuniĐty z wystawy w Berlinie" ("Đmijewskis Berek removed from Berlin-Exhibition"), Newsweek/PL, October 27, 2011; Dorota Jarecka, "Zdjeli niewygodnego Berka" ("They have removed the incomfortable Berek"), Gazeta Wyborcza, October 28, 2011; Piotr Jendroszczyk, "Polski film zdjĐty z wystawy" ("Polish movie removed from exhibition"), Rzeczpospolita, October 28, 2011; N.N.: "Niemieckie muzeum tłumaczy, dlaczego Berek musiał zniknĐĐ" ("The German museum explains why Berek had to be removed"), Wprost October 31, 2011. A summary is published in Albers Maria, "Pressereaktionen auf die Ausstellung Tür an Tür," in Partizipative Erinnerungsräume – Dialogische Wissensbildung in Museen und Ausstellungen, eds., Felix Ackermann, Anna Boroffka, Gregor H. Lersch (Bielefeld, 2013),175.

[29] The following is a summary of the essay by Felix Ackermann and Anna Boroffka, "Tandemführungen – Doppelt dialogische Wissensvermittlung in der Praxis," in *Partizipative Erinnerungsräume – Dialogische Wissensbildung in Museen und Ausstellungen*, eds., Felix Ackermann, Anna Boroffka, Gregor H. Lersch (Bielefeld, 2013),131 - 145.

[30] James Clifford, *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 188-219.

[31] Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010)

[32] http://www.europa-uni.de; http://www.kulturprojekte-berlin.de

The project concept was that a German and a Polish student would together guide visitors through the exhibition and offer multiple interpretations of each artefact or artwork, based on the perspective of their respective nation. The intention was to encourage space for open dialogue and several voices. These guided tours followed the principle of a *double-dialogue* where both moderators conduct the dialogue and offer several opportunities for the group to participate. The aim is not to produce a common interpretation, but rather to encourage participation and opportunities to reflect on and consider alternative perspectives as valid.[33] Duality and polyphony characterised this tandem format and proved effective in provoking reflection and discussion. Given the complex history of Germany and Poland, this was an opportunity for visitors to consider it from several points of view and from very different angles.[34]

The original idea, however, of a tandem tour led by one German and one Polish student quickly became problematic. Students did not identify themselves simply as "German" or "Polish" since their backgrounds were very diverse.[35] Since the Viadrina University is located directly at the German-Polish border at Frankfurt (Oder), many students unsurprisingly claimed mixed German and Polish heritage. Indeed, this group was the majority. Many students were born in Poland but had since moved with their parents to Germany and become integrated in German society. Yet, they retained a strong connection with the Polish culture, language and nation. Likewise, German students who had learned Polish as a foreign language and who had spent time during their studies or voluntary service in Poland claimed elements of Polish culture and language as their own.[36] A clear division between German and Polish students, therefore, made no sense and became impossible; already the project required participants to reflect critically upon issues of identity and heritage. Finally all project members decided against a linear updating of a national reconciliation story that ultimately rests on the assumption that everyone remains in his own culture and ultimately his own state.

[33] Bodo von Borries, "Lernende in Historischen Museen und Ausstellungen. Erhoffter Kompetenzerwerb und kritische Rückfragen," in *Historische Kompetenzen und Museen*, ed., Susanne Popp and Bernd Schönemann (Idstein 2009), 100–120.

[34] Pascal Gielen, "Museumchronotopics: on the representation of the past in museums," *Museum and Society* 3 (2004): 147–160.

[35] Wolfgang Welsch, "Was ist eigentlich Transkulturalität?," in *Hochschule als transkultureller Raum? Beiträge zu Kultur, Bildung und Differenz*, eds., Lucyna Darowska and Claudia Machold (Bielefeld, 2009), 39–66.

[36] About the limits of multiple perspectives in educational work in the exhibition: Felix Ackermann, "Grenzen von Multiperspektivität," in *Partizipative Erinnerungsräume*, ed. Ackermann et al., 179-192.

The methodological consequence of the work with the students was that they were free to choose which focus they wanted to assume in the guided tours. They were able to develop an explicitly Polish or German perspective of their choosing during the exhibition tour. It was also possible to develop a strong biographical or hybrid perspective and to underpin this on the circuit by sharing stories about their own and those of their parents or grandparents. In addition, there was also the possibility to integrate fictitious debates, for example about the nationality of Nicolaus Copernicus or Mikolaj Koperni.[37] The students usually made their decisions based on how much of their own biography they wished to expose and contribute to the dialogue.[38]

Methodological requirements - elements of education for dialogue facilitation

The actual development of the tandem tours took place during a course at Viadrina University that focussed on intercultural historical-political education in museum spaces. The methodological aim of the course was to familiarize students with various museum and exhibition structures and the relevant intercultural exchange opportunities. The development of the Polish-German tandem tours was integrated as an empirical project in the seminar concept. The guides designed, tested, implemented and evaluated their ideas for the tours during the semester. The preparation for the tandem guides took place on an analytical, educational and empirical level. Together, different exhibition concepts were analysed and students worked independently in the exhibition areas to gain better knowledge about the behaviour of visitors in exhibition spaces. The challenge for the students was that they did not have access to the "Side by Side" exhibition space before the opening day and so preparations were made without knowing the exact space.

The combined analysis of theoretical aspects of intercultural historical-political education with the story of German-Polish relations underpinned the students' training. They were forced to leave the protected environment of the university seminar and were confronted with time pressure and multitasking.

[37] The nationality of Copernicus had been often claimed by both, Poles and Germans. See: Omilanowksa, *Tür an Tür. Polen-Deutschland*, 236-241.

[38] Dominic Busch, "Kultur als diskursives Produkt," in *Lehrbuch Kultur*, eds., Dietmar Treichel, and Claude-Hélène Mayer (Berlin, 2011),194–202.

Cooperation between the different parties in tandem project follows a principle of dialogue that is usually based on a high level of sharing and trust.[39] The most important methodological step for the tandem tours is the direct sequence of description, contextualization and discussion in the group.[40] Part of the University course was, therefore, focussed on developing a compendium for the guided tours that contained alternative perspectives on the main topics explored in the exhibition through studying academic approaches of museum work. As in the exhibition, history during the course was visualized by contemporary and historical works of art, studies of techniques of dialogic teaching of art and art analysis had been integrated in the preparation process.[41]

Essential for the tandem tour's success was the students' ability to simultaneously interpret objects and encourage visitor participation. Therefore it was important to learn how to distinguish between immanent and contextualized information. As practice, students spent time analysing exhibits in Berlin and the city of Görlitz. Additionally, a two-day workshop was hosted prior to the exhibition to familiarise students with moderating techniques. This was an important preliminary exercise for the subsequent dialogues in conversation with the tandem partners and visitors. The aim here was to raise awareness of nonverbal cues, such as body language and eye contact that help during the process of forming a group and to control the dialogue.

As a further prerequisite for performing the dialogue, the guides dealt also with questioning techniques, emphasising the significance of open questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. Students were also taught to formulate questions that could be answered according to experience of the interlocutors, rather than posing questions that seemed too intrusive, too complicated or too simple. The organizers of the workshops were coaches for guides in museums, actors and moderators experienced in conflict resolution processes, specialized in history of Central Eastern Europe.

A central element of the training was on teaching students to consciously repeat and/or summarise the contributions made by participants; this opened space for dialogue between moderators and visitors.

Following the successful completion of the workshop, the student guided German-Polish tandem tours were offered to the public at the Martin- Gropius-Bau on weekends.

[39] Karl-Martin Dietz and Thomas Kracht, *Dialogische Führung* (Frankfurt a. M., 2011)

[40] Marianna Adams, John H. Falk, and Lynn Dierking, "Things Change: Museums, Learning, and Research," in *Researching Visual Arts Education in Museums and Galleries: An International Reader*, eds., Maria Xanthoudaki, Les Tickle, Veronica Sekules (Dordrech, 2003), 15–32.

[41] See about analyzing works of art: Erwin Panowsky, *Sinn und Deutung in der bildenden Kunst* (Köln, 1978); Wolfgang Kemp, ed., *Der Betrachter ist im Bild. Kunstwissenschaft und Rezeptionsästhetik* (Berlin, 1992)

Tandem tours and their implications for creating knowledge

Visitor feedback suggests the pilot tour was well received: participants reported finding the dialogue experience both "pleasant" and "entertaining".[42] Since students were not presented as "expert" guides, visitors seemed less inhibited and willing to contribute to the dialogue. It quickly became clear that the majority of participants had a personal connection to the German-Polish topic and so were willing to share their own story. These tours gave visitors far greater scope to engage with the exhibition and feel part of it; in the exhibition itself, there was little space for visitor voices since participation was largely limited to passively reflecting upon the stories told by artists and curators. The tandem guided tours, however, created situations in which participation, dialogue and exchange was made possible.

A key reason for the positive public reactions was the perceived "authenticity" of the students, achieved by their own experience navigating complex heritages and being at the Polish-German European University Viadrina. Visitors felt this qualified students to give both legitimate and unique interpretations of German-Polish history. It also gave them an opportunity to discuss more sensitive issues and so the dialogue-based knowledge became a more coherent, participatory knowledge building process.

The success of this transition towards a more coherent knowledge formation relied to a great extent on the willingness of visitors to engage in this unusual first guided tour model. Most visitors had made a conscious decision to participate in a tandem leadership but there were also visitors who did not know quite what to expect, or those who came to the tours with no prior knowledge. But there were also visitors who made no secret of the fact that they were not satisfied with the interactive guiding and who would have preferred a more classical tour format.[43]

The mostly positive feedback of the tandem tours as well as the importance of the personal background of the student tandems show that this form of dialogue was not working alone on a meta level. In a way, the tandems played the role of reporting past events from different perspectives and linking them to the contemporary experience of the visitor. Additionally, the feedback of the tandems tour showed that visitors partially for the first time shared their specific national experience in Germany.[44]

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[42] Anne Wanitschek, "Anregung durch Andersdenkende," in *Partizipative Erinnerungsräume*, ed. Ackermann et al., 131-146.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Feedback mostly given orally after the tours and without written testimonies.

It happened several times that German-Polish couples did start to discuss historical events and facts, something they said they had never done before. The dialogue of the guiding Polish-German students did, it seems, generate dialogue between visitors as intended.

The tandem tours complemented and extended the exhibits of the show. They were not only perceived as enriching the exhibition, but also as part of the continuing dialogue around German-Polish relations between the younger generations.

Conclusions

The history of the German-Polish reconciliation process shows the complexity of space, borders and cultural exchange in Central Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. Thus, cultural exchange between Poland and the western part of Germany was more fluid than political relations. Cultural institutions continued or restarted their communication with one another, even in the absence of official relations and at a time when resentments on both sites were dominant.

These events were indications for on-going communication processes and paved the way for easier communication in the difficult reconciliation period after WWII. Though some projects of cultural exchange in the 1960s suggest a pre-existing dialogue, the impact of these cultural events on the process of approximation from Poles and Germans can hardly measured from today's perspective.

A real and sustainable dialogue needs the involvement and the participation of people from Poland and Germany, a fact that was not given in Polish-German art exhibitions from 1945 to 2011. Though the numerous contacts, even beside official politics, it can be stated that cultural exchange in the field of museums from 1945-2011 was rather an *indicator* of the current situation, rather than a *generator* of new and sustainable dialogue.

The organizers of the exhibition "Side by Side" in the year 2011 were convinced that dialogue can only be improved by the involvement and the participation of visitors. This was the main thought by implementing the German-Polish tandem tours. The usual format of a guided tour with just one guide would not have given the opportunity to reflect about the complexity of German-Polish relations in a multiple perspective way; sustainable and bi-national dialogue must be provoked through more radical means, such as the tandem tour. The design of this dialogue was developed around principles of a critical museum theory, educational work and conflict resolution. As visitor reports feedback suggests, museums can become spaces for real dialogue that shifts perspectives and increases understanding and empathy between previously conflicting parties. Converting into spaces of dialogue museums and exhibitions can change their role in communication processes from an indicator to a generator of reconciliation.

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"Nearly all creators of utopia have resembled the man who has toothache, and therefore thinks happiness consists in not having toothache... whoever tries to imagine perfection simply reveals his own emptiness."
George Orwell

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