

ICCFM

**THE SPECIAL VISITOR:
EACH AND EVERY
ONE OF US**

**LE VISITEUR
PARTICULIER:
CHACUN ET NIMPORTE
LEQUEL D'ENTRE NOUS**

**EL VISITANTE ESPECIAL:
TODOS Y CADA UNO DE
NOSOTROS**

Rio de Janeiro
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35^o Simposio anual del ICOFOM

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PRÉFACE

Toute langue porte une culture. En introduisant l'Icofom Study Series 41, le précédent volume de notre publication annuelle, je soulignais simultanément la difficulté pratique du multilinguisme et du multiculturalisme de notre comité, l'un découlant de l'autre, dans la mesure où, sauf rares exceptions, très peu de personnes ont la connaissance orale de plus de deux ou trois langues, quand ce n'est pas d'une seule. Encore faut-il que leur seconde langue soit l'une des trois langues de l'ICOM. Mais, lorsqu'il s'agit d'écrire un article et qu'aucune de ces trois langues n'est leur langue maternelle, ils doivent posséder suffisamment l'une de ces langues pour se faire comprendre – ou être capables de s'offrir les services d'un traducteur professionnel.

Mais je remarquais aussi que les contributions révélaient une « distorsion entre les initiatives les plus engagées dans l'action sociale et la routine de ceux qui [...] continuent à privilégier l'objet par rapport à l'être humain. » Nous trouvions là un décalage entre, d'une part, ceux qui mettent en avant la conservation, l'exposition, voire le culte du bel objet, sans trop se préoccuper de ce que le visiteur pourra tirer de son contact avec cet objet, et, d'autre part, ceux qui se préoccupent du rapport de l'objet avec l'homme qui l'a créé, utilisé, conservé, et aussi de la manière dont l'objet parlera avec celui qui le retrouve exposé dans le musée. Et je suggérais comme explication tantôt le manque de moyens, tantôt l'absence de sollicitation de la part des tutelles et des politiques, mais aussi parfois le culte exacerbé de la chose au mépris de l'humain.

Ce constat visait alors surtout le monde des musées occidentaux. Mais cette année, ce qui m'est apparu avec beaucoup plus d'évidence, c'est que ce même décalage se retrouve entre les cultures - entre, d'une part, disons pour simplifier, la culture occidentale qui a inventé le musée, et les autres cultures qui se sont ralliées à cette forme d'institution culturelle.

Jusqu'au début du 21^{ème} siècle, étaient jusqu'à présent actifs dans ICOFOM des membres européens, nord-américains, et sud-américains, mais aussi quelques rares membres du Japon, des Indes et d'Afrique équatoriale. Ce n'est que depuis quelques courtes années que des muséologues nous ont rejoints depuis la Chine. Et c'est cette arrivée de membres nouveaux qui a le plus mis en relief les différences. Une question se pose donc : cette « distorsion », ce « décalage » que nous remarquons proviennent-ils d'une différence de culture, d'une différence de conception du musée, ou d'une différence de degré dans les différents stades de son évolution ?

Abordant la question par le biais du problème linguistique il était tentant de penser que l'incompréhension des questions posées et de la forme proposée provenaient de la difficulté par une culture de comprendre les singularités d'une autre culture. Sans doute cette explication vaut-elle pour une part, car il ne doit pas être si simple de se plier à des règles formelles et de mise en page différents de ceux auxquels chacun a été formé. Mais, connaissant l'histoire des musées, nous sommes aussi enclins à penser que, plus qu'à une adaptation technique, nous avons affaire à un moment dans la connaissance de l'évolution de notre institution. Et l'histoire nous a appris que, si des musées sont nés pour servir le public, la tendance générale a vu évoluer le plus grand nombre vers un enfermement sur l'objet. C'est donc ce modèle qui a été découvert et emprunté par les autres cultures. Dans le meilleur des cas, ils auront renforcé la sécurité des choses et des personnes, amélioré le confort de la visite et adapté à une meilleure spécificité le cadre et les techniques de communication, afin de donner une cohérence à l'exposition et de rendre son discours plus efficace. C'est ce que font la

plupart des musées, car il est facile d'oublier l'homme et même le visiteur, surtout si les expôts sont beaux... ou s'ils ont une valeur marchande.

Dans ce contexte, comment donc reprocher aux nouveaux arrivants dans le train de la muséologie de ne pas avoir déjà étudié dans le détail la réception expographique, qu'elle soit celle du visiteur en général, que ce soit sa responsabilisation dans l'œuvre d'exposition, que ce soit la manière dont il dialogue (le « dialogisme »), ou que ce soit la perception du visiteur particulier, tous sous-thèmes des réflexions proposées ? Il n'y a pas plus de trois décennies, ne l'oublions pas, la préoccupation principale des gens de musée en Occident était encore l'étude des statistiques de fréquentation et du taux de satisfaction des visiteurs en général - et encore fallait-il qu'ils aient les moyens de financer des enquêtes de satisfaction afin que l'analyse en vaille la peine !

Laissons donc au temps de permettre aux nouveaux arrivants de rattraper leur retard dans la connaissance de la muséologie. Cela permettra peut-être aussi à nous-mêmes de découvrir des points de vue différents et d'apporter des nuances à nos façons de concevoir le musée - pour tous !

André Desvallées
Président du Comité de Lecture

FOREWORD

Each language has its own culture. When introducing ICOFOM Study Series 41, the volume of our annual publication that precedes this one, I pointed out the practical difficulty of our committee to be both multilingual and multicultural, the one leading to the other, in so far as, with rare exceptions, very few people can speak more than two or three languages, and at times only one. Even more difficult is that one of the other languages should be one of ICOM's official three. But, when writing an article and none of these three languages is the writer's mother tongue, authors must be able to know one of these official ICOM languages enough to be understood – or else be able to pay for the services of a professional translator.

But I also note that the papers show a “gap between the initiatives that are most committed to social action, and those which [...] continue to favor the same routine and objects over human beings.” We find here a gap between, on the one hand, those who ~~advance~~ promote conservation, exhibitions, even the cult of the beautiful object, without paying too much attention to what the visitor can get from contact with the object, and on the other hand, those who are concerned with the link between the object and the human being who created it, used it, preserved it, and thus the way in which the object speaks to the person who finds it displayed in a museum. I suggested that the explanation was partly the lack of resources, partly the expectations of the managerial or political governing bodies were at fault, and sometimes the excessive cult of the object to the detriment of the human.

This observation was especially aimed at Western museums. But this year, what appeared more clearly and with much more evidence, is that the same gap is to be found between cultures – between, if I may say so to simplify, western culture that invented the museum, and the other cultures that have rallied to this form of cultural institution.

Until the turn of the 21st century the active members of ICOFOM were European, North and South American, but few members were from Japan, India and Equatorial Africa. It is only in the last few years that more museologists have joined us from China. And this arrival of new members has emphasized the differences. An important question is raised: does this “distortion”, this “gap” that we have observed, come from a difference in culture, a difference in the concept of the museum, or a different degree in the various stages of museum development?

Tackling the issue from a linguistic point of view it is tempting to think that the lack of understanding of the questions raised by our themes and the form of asking them comes from the difficulty of one culture in understanding the particularities of another culture. Undoubtedly this explanation is partially true, because it is not so easy to comply with rules and layout styles for people who have not been trained to do so. But, knowing the history of museums, we are inclined to think that, more than a technical problem, we are dealing with a particular moment in the evolution of the museum institution. History has taught us that, if museums are born to serve the public, the general tendency over past generations has been that most of them focus on the object. It is this model that was discovered and has been borrowed by other cultures. In the best of circumstances, these other cultures will have strengthened the security of objects and people, improved the comfort of a visit and used communication technologies to better advantage, in order to bring coherence to the exhibition and make its language more effective. This is what most museums do, because it is easy to forget people and even the visitor when the exhibits are beautiful – or if they have a market value.

In this context how can we reproach new arrivals on the museological train for not having already studied in detail how a display is perceived, whether by visitors in general or not, what is the visitor's part of responsibility in the message of the work displayed, what is the manner in which he dialogues with it (dialogism), or what is the perception of the individual visitor, all sub-themes that were suggested for our thoughts this year? We must not forget that not even three decades ago the most important issue or museum people in the West was the study of visitor statistics and the satisfaction rate of visitors in general – and even then museums had to have the means to finance these enquiries if analyzing the results was to be worth the effort!

Let us take the time to allow new arrivals to catch up their museological knowledge. Perhaps this will allow us to discover different points of view and bring nuances to our way of conceiving museums – for everybody!

André Desvallées
Chair, Editorial Committee

PREFACIO

Toda lengua es manifestación de una cultura. Al prologar el precedente volumen de nuestra publicación anual, las Series de Estudio 41, subrayé simultáneamente las dificultades prácticas del multilingüismo y del multiculturalismo en nuestro comité, cada uno en estrecha relación con el otro, en la medida que, salvo raras excepciones, muy pocos tienen el conocimiento oral de más de dos o tres idiomas, cuando no uno sólo. Aun más difícil es que su segunda lengua sea una de las tres oficiales de nuestro comité. Al escribir un artículo cuando ninguno de esos tres idiomas es su lengua materna, debe, o poseer suficientes conocimientos de uno de esos idiomas para hacerse comprender, o tener la posibilidad de recurrir a los servicios de un traductor profesional.

Pero también recalqué que los autores revelaban una « distorsión entre iniciativas más comprometidas con la acción social, y la rutina de aquellos que (...) continúan privilegiando al objeto por sobre el ser humano. » Encontramos un desfasaje entre, por una parte, aquellos que ponen en un lugar preponderante a la conservación y a la exposición, como culto del bello objeto, sin preocuparse mucho de que el visitante pueda establecer contacto con ese objeto; y por otra parte aquellos que se preocupan por la relación del objeto con el hombre que lo ha creado, utilizado, conservado, como también la manera en que el objeto se comunica con aquel que lo encuentra expuesto en el museo. Y sugerí como explicación tanto la falta de medios, como la ausencia de interés por parte de los órganos de gobierno que establecen las políticas, pero también podría atribuirse al culto exacerbado de la cosa en detrimento de lo humano.

Esta es una constante en el mundo de los museos occidentales. Pero este año lo que se me ha hecho cada vez más evidente es que ese mismo desfasaje se encuentra entre las culturas -entre, dicho de una forma simplificada, la cultura occidental que ha inventado el museo y las otras culturas- que han incorporado esta forma de institución cultural.

Hasta principios del siglo 21 la mayor parte de los miembros activos del ICOFOM provenían de Europa, de Norte y Sudamérica, y algunos pocos de Japón, India y África Ecuatorial. Hace sólo unos pocos años que se han unido a nosotros profesionales de los museos de China. Y la llegada de estos nuevos miembros ha puesto de relieve las diferencias. Surge una pregunta: esta "distorsión", este "desfasaje" que remarcamos, proviene de una diferencia de culturas, de una diferencia en la concepción del museo, o una diferencia de grado en las diferentes etapas de su evolución?

Al abordar el asunto desde un punto de vista lingüístico, es tentador pensar que la falta de comprensión de las cuestiones planteadas en los temas y la forma de pedir las, proviene de la dificultad de una cultura en la comprensión de las singularidades de la otra. Sin duda, esta explicación es parcialmente valedera, porque no es tan fácil cumplir con normas y estilos de diseño cuando son diferentes de aquellas en que uno está entrenado. Pero, conociendo la historia de los museos, nos inclinamos a pensar que, más que un problema técnico, se trata de un momento particular de la evolución de nuestra institución. La historia nos ha enseñado que, si bien los museos han nacido para servir al público, la tendencia general a través de generaciones anteriores ha sido que la mayoría se han centrado en el objeto. Éste ha sido el modelo que fue conocido y adoptado por otras culturas. En el mejor de los casos se ha reforzado la seguridad de los objetos y las personas, la mejora de la comodidad de la visita y de las tecnologías de comunicación utilizadas, con el fin de dar coherencia a la exposición y hacer que su lenguaje sea más eficaz. Esto es lo que hacen la mayoría de los museos,

ya que es fácil olvidarse de las personas e incluso del visitante cuando las exposiciones son bellas... o si tienen un valor de mercado.

En este contexto, ¿cómo podemos reprochar a los recién llegados al tren museológico por no haber estudiado en detalle la recepción expográfica, ya sea aquella de los visitantes en general, o la de la responsabilidad en el mensaje de la obra representada, o la manera en la que dialoga con ella (dialogismo), o lo que es la percepción del visitante individual, todos sub-temas de reflexión propuestos este año? No hay que olvidar que no hace ni tres décadas, la preocupación principal de la gente de museos en Occidente fue el estudio de las estadísticas de frecuentación y el grado de satisfacción de los visitantes en general - e incluso entonces los museos debían tener los medios para financiar estas investigaciones, a fin de que el análisis valiera la pena!

Así que dejemos que el tiempo permita a los recién llegados ponerse al día en el conocimiento de la museología. Quizás esto nos permita descubrir diferentes puntos de vista y aportar nuevos matices a nuestras formas de concebir los museos - para todos!

André Desvallées
Presidente del Comité Editorial

35TH ANNUAL I COFOM SYMPOSIUM

The Special Visitor: Each and Every One of Us

Rio de Janeiro, 12-14 August, 2013

With this topic authors are asked to explore a theory or theories of the individual visitor. Here writers may consider the concept of the unique visitor as opposed to the system of categorizing visitors in groups by education or age. As in all ICOFOM work, this exploration of visitor individuality is not so much a study of “how” but much more an examination of “why.” One germane museum theory might be the work of John Falk. Another might be that of Michel Foucault, who, in *The History of Madness*, took issue with Western civilization’s willingness to demonize difference. Jean Vanier, in *Becoming Human*, made the case for equality. Other theories of individuality in education and communication, including social media, can be pertinent and fruitful. This topic is not about museum visitor studies, satisfaction rates and demographics. Papers on those topics do not address the issue of the individual and will be rejected. Those seeking examples of excellent articles based on theory might consider the work of Bruno Soares and Jennifer Harris in the last two issues of *ISS*, numbers 40 and 41, available on line at the ICOFOM website. In each of these papers a theory or theories have been identified and analysed and examples given of their museum application.

Every visitor brings to the museum his or her individual characteristics, histories, needs and desires. Museum visitors are unique and special in many ways. All visitors come with assets and liabilities, some of which might include cognitive, emotional or physical characteristics; interest or disinterest in the museum’s subject matter or focus; and amount of previous museum experience. Added to this each visitor carries the baggage, be it positive or negative, of her past and present, her language, religion, and culture; his education, knowledge and interests. This effort to identify and work with the individual, as opposed to the group, is increasingly recognized in a variety of fields. Educators are struggling with the reality and importance of individuality among students, acknowledging the need to treat each student as a distinct person. Might museums do the same thing? What theories can be identified and used to help museums recognize the unique characteristics of each visitor?

Ann Davis
November 2012

Ann Davis
The topic

35^e SYMPOSIUM ANNUEL DE L'ICOFOM

Le visiteur particulier : chacun et n'importe lequel d'entre nous

Rio de Janeiro, 12-14 août 2013

A partir de ce thème, les contributeurs sont invités à explorer une ou plusieurs théories autour de l'idée de la singularité du visiteur. Les auteurs pourront faire état de la notion de visiteur individuel par opposition à l'idée d'une catégorisation systématique des visiteurs par échantillon d'âge ou de niveau d'études. Approfondir le thème de l'individualité du visiteur ne revient pas tant à interroger le « pourquoi » que le « comment » du sujet, en cohérence avec les précédents travaux réalisés dans le cadre de l'ICOFOM. L'œuvre muséologique de John Falk est à ce titre pertinente à étudier, ainsi que l'ouvrage de Michel Foucault : *L'histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* qui conteste la tendance de la civilisation occidentale à diaboliser les différences, sans oublier celui de Jean Vanier : *Accueillir notre humanité*, qui plaide en faveur de l'égalité. L'exploration d'autres théories de l'individualité, issues des champs de la pédagogie et de la communication – les réseaux sociaux y compris – peut également se révéler profitable et fructueuse. En effet, le sujet ne concerne pas les études sur les visiteurs, les taux de satisfaction et les données statistiques. Les contributions qui porteront sur ces derniers thèmes ne seront pas retenues, puisqu'elles ne traiteront pas de la problématique de l'individualité du visiteur. Comme exemple, il est possible de se référer aux travaux théoriques remarquables de Bruno Soares et de Jennifer Harris, parus dans les dernières publications de l'ISS (numéros 40 et 41), disponible en ligne sur le site Internet de l'ICOFOM. Dans chacune de ces contributions, une ou plusieurs théories ont été identifiées et analysées avant de développer des exemples de leur application pratique dans les musées.

Chaque visiteur emporte au musée ses caractéristiques propres, son histoire, ses attentes et ses désirs. Les visiteurs de musée sont uniques et singuliers à plusieurs égards. Tous disposent en quelque sorte d'actifs et de passifs, à caractère cognitif, affectif ou physique ; d'un intérêt plus ou moins marqué pour l'objet de l'exposition ou de la vision que le musée en propose ; et d'une certaine expérience dans la fréquentation des musées. A cela s'ajoute le bagage, positif ou négatif, de son passé et de son présent, de sa langue, de sa religion ainsi que de sa culture ; de son éducation, de son savoir et de ses intérêts. De nombreuses disciplines font l'effort de se concentrer sur l'individu, par opposition au groupe, afin de mieux l'identifier pour mieux lui correspondre. Les professeurs, par exemple, s'efforcent de prendre en compte la réalité et l'importance de chaque étudiant en tant qu'individu. Ils reconnaissent ainsi la nécessité de traiter chaque étudiant comme une personne distincte. Les musées en seraient-ils un jour capables? Quelles théories peuvent être identifiées et utilisées à bon escient pour aider les musées à déterminer les caractéristiques uniques de chaque visiteur ?

Ann Davis
Novembre 2012

Ann Davis
Le thème

35º SIMPOSIO ANUAL DEL ICOFOM

El Visitante Especial: Todos y Cada Uno de Nosotros

Rio de Janeiro 12-14 de Agosto, 2013

A partir de esta premisa, los ponentes son invitados a explorar una o varias teorías sobre la singularidad del visitante. Los autores pueden valorar el concepto de visitante único en contraposición al sistema de clasificación de visitantes según grupos de edad o de nivel educativo. Al igual que en todos los trabajos realizados por el ICOFOM, esta exploración acerca de la individualidad del visitante no es tanto un estudio del “cómo” sino más bien un examen del “porqué”. En este sentido, la obra de John Falk resulta ser una teoría museográfica pertinente, como puede serlo la obra de Michel Foucault quien en *Historia de la locura en la época clásica* arremete contra la propensión de la civilización occidental a satanizar la diferencia, o también el trabajo de Jean Vanier, quien en *Acoger nuestra humanidad*, se pronuncia a favor de la igualdad. Diversas teorías que abordan el tema de la individualidad en la educación y la mediación –incluyendo las redes sociales- pueden ser igualmente oportunas y fructíferas. El tema no se enfoca ni en los estudios referentes a los visitantes de museos, ni en los índices de satisfacción; en consecuencia no serán aceptadas las ponencias enfocadas en estos tópicos, al no tratar la cuestión de la individualidad del visitante. Excelentes ejemplos de artículos destacados, con sustento teórico, son los trabajos de Bruno Soares y de Jennifer Harris, incluidos en las dos últimas publicaciones de ISS –ICOFOM Study Series, números 40 y 41- disponibles en línea en el sitio web del ICOFOM; donde varias teorías han sido identificadas y analizadas y se han proporcionado ejemplos de su aplicación práctica en museos.

Cada visitante asiste al museo con sus particularidades propias, sus historias, sus necesidades y anhelos. Los visitantes de museos son únicos y especiales en muchos aspectos. Todos ellos llegan con ‘activos y pasivos’ algunos de los cuales abarcan características cognitivas, emocionales o físicas; interés o apatía hacia la temática o el enfoque del museo; y una cierta experiencia museal previa. Adicionalmente, cada visitante trae un bagaje, positivo o negativo, de su pasado y presente, de su idioma, de su religión y su cultura; de su educación, sus conocimientos y sus aficiones. Cada vez más el esfuerzo por privilegiar el trabajo con el individuo antes que con el grupo es reconocido desde diversos campos disciplinarios. Los educadores que confrontan la realidad y la importancia de la individualidad entre los estudiantes, admiten la necesidad de tratar a cada estudiante como una persona distinta. ¿Deben los museos actuar en una misma dirección? ¿Qué teorías podrían ser reseñadas y empleadas con el fin de ayudar a los museos a reconocer las características propias de cada visitante?

Ann Davis
Noviembre de 2012

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EL MUSEO Y LA CIUDAD: EL CASO DEL MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO DE MEDELLÍN

Jorge Bejarano Barco¹

Director del Departamento de Educación y Cultura
del Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín

RESUMEN

El Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín MAMM² da cuenta de la transformación de un centro industrial de Medellín en un espacio de diálogo, un ecosistema creativo, dedicado a la reflexión, el debate, la producción, la formación y la socialización. Y se ha ido consolidando como lugar estratégico en la ciudad por su programa expositivo, pero ante todo educativo, cultura y de trabajo con las comunidades de la ciudad. La ponencia analiza el caso del MAMM en el contexto de la ciudad, de la readecuación de un edificio industrial, de la reconfiguración social y urbanística del sector de Ciudad del Río, y desde allí derivan reflexiones sobre algo que propongo llamar "Posmuseo".

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La historia de Colombia está teñida de décadas de violencia y conflictos armados. Medellín, la segunda ciudad más grande del país ha sido uno de los núcleos centrales de esta situación. Durante los Ochenta y parte de los Noventa, Medellín llegó a ser una de las ciudades más violentas del mundo: 381 homicidios cada 10.000 habitantes es sólo una muestra de esta situación social. Tráfico de drogas, guerrillas urbanas, células paramilitares y otras organizaciones criminales usaron a Medellín como centro de sus operaciones.

Como una barrera de resistencia a la complejidad de tan violenta realidad, la comunidad empezó a construir una fuerte y poderosa voluntad social y política, que derivó en una serie de planes, programas y estrategias en lo urbano, educacional, social y cultural que han contribuido a mejorar la calidad de vida, seguridad y desarrollo humano de la ciudad.

En ese contexto el MAMM trabaja cada año implementando programas educativos para mejorar la calidad de vida de los ciudadanos ofreciendo nuevas posibilidades para usar creativamente su tiempo libre. La misión del MAMM es crear espacios para las esferas menos afortunadas de la sociedad, allí donde el conocimiento y el disfrute pueden ayudar a crear una mejor y más diversa comunidad. Una comunidad más consciente de sus derechos sociales, civiles, políticos y culturales.

Hoy cobra sentido pensar el papel que las instituciones culturales –y en particular los museos– pueden jugar como escenarios propicios para reconfigurar una nueva relación con la creación, el patrimonio y la vida en comunidad. Los museos –en un papel que se acerca decididamente al de ‘centros culturales’ en el especial caso de Medellín –han entrado a jugar un papel importante al liderar programas y proyectos educativos, culturales y expositivos que hacia afuera traspasan los muros de la

¹ Jorge Bejarano Barco ha hecho parte de las dinámicas museísticas de la región de Antioquia (Colombia) desde el año 2007.

² www.elmamm.org

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institución para llegar a barrios, veredas, comunas y corregimientos. Y desde adentro reinventan continuamente las formas de relacionarse con sus públicos, de innovar en educación y en gestión cultural a partir de nuevas dinámicas con el patrimonio, el arte, las tecnologías, y el trabajo en red.

Por su parte el MAMM, -Adecuado en un antiguo taller de fundiciones de metal desde hace cuatro años en el sector de los Industriales - se ha ido consolidando como lugar estratégico en la ciudad por su programa expositivo, educativo y cultura. Y parece ser un lugar propicio formular la siguiente pregunta:

¿Cuáles con los vectores de transformación a los que las iniciativas culturales deberían responder para estar acorde con los retos del mundo actual? ¿Cuáles son los elementos para empezar a crear una nueva institucionalidad tomando como referente el museo?

-La búsqueda de respuestas a esta pregunta me lleva a proponer la construcción de confianza como uno de los principios orientadores: un fino, perseverante y delicado ejercicio de tejido y relacionamiento comunitario que se va dando a la par con el trabajo colaborativo y en red y que se puede ir viendo dibujado con la elaboración de cartografías de una escena cultural cada vez más expandida .

-Por medio de la construcción de mapas de la escena podemos ir creando relaciones de sentido entre los actores de la cultura en la ciudad, el continente y el mundo, buscando vincular cada vez a más grupos sociales, identitarios, profesionales, así como a instituciones, universidades, emprendimientos, proyectos y comunidades, para la movilización de ideales. La definición de una escena cultural es un instrumento fundamental en los procesos de creación cultural contemporánea.

-Otra búsqueda debe estar dirigida a la exploración de nuevas definiciones para lo que comúnmente llamamos gestión cultural, buscando conferirle a esta labor todo el poder creativo que alberga, a partir de modelos abiertos que permitan reinventar las relaciones de creación, circulación y apropiación; reconociendo que al igual que en las prácticas artísticas, en los proyectos culturales buena parte del trabajo radica en la misma gestión. Necesariamente esta situación ha de convocarnos también a repensar los roles y relaciones –entre quien crea, quien recibe, quien educa, quien exhibe y quien gestiona–, y a la par a repensar en una transformación de los campos disciplinares, (quizás de la transdisciplina a la extradisciplina).

-Otro elemento tiene que ver con vincular el trabajo cultural a las nuevas herramientas digitales, -más allá de los aspectos meramente técnicos– la herramientas que nos proporciona este momento, albergan nuevos formatos para la creación colaborativa, la educación, la gestión cultural, el activismo, la reorganización del trabajo y de la producción de los bienes comunes. Los procesos culturales y artísticos ligados a las la cultura digital son hoy territorios de límite, frontera y de cambio, y el museo es un lugar estratégico desde el cual activar estos procesos.

Una deriva más estaría orientada a generar diálogos creativos desde el museo o la institución con los movimientos e iniciativas independientes, que pueden ir desde residencias artísticas, circuitos de música y bares hasta espacios no convencionales de educación o de educación no formal con el propósito de sacar adelante proyectos desde la cooperación y el mutualismo . Podemos sintetizar este aspecto de la producción cultural desde la dupla 'Instituciones - Movimientos' asumiendo que el propósito es generar ambientes de diálogo, cocreación y oportunidades para ambas esferas.

Buscando una definición actual que reúna estas ideas, es Gerardo Mosquera, el curador y crítico cubano, quien sugiere la idea del Museo como Hub. Tomando el significado técnico del término un Hub es un concentrador, un centro de distribución, un equipo de redes que permite conectar entre sí otros equipos o dispositivos retransmitiendo los paquetes de datos desde cualquiera de ellos hacia todos los demás. Con este Hub podemos hacer un neologismo que abarca varias posibilidades para la 'institución Museo' como espacio post-utópico para desde allí, generar nuevos y alentadores agenciamientos.³

...“Habría que pensar en museos centrífugos en lugar de centrípetos, transformados de 'un espacio donde se muestra el mundo' en 'una acción en el mundo'. Así, en vez de halar el arte hacia un espacio aurático, el museo podría actuar en el sitio mismo donde ocurre la práctica artística. Sería un museo como hub, descentralizado, en movimiento, diseminado por todos lados; una entidad dinámica que participaría simultáneamente en una diversidad de proyectos en diferentes lugares. El nivel de intervención resultaría muy flexible y casuístico, consistiendo sobre todo en proyectos comunes de colaboraciones con otras instituciones, grupos artísticos, asociaciones informales e individuos, en diversos grados de participación. Las actividades incluirían muestras, comunicaciones, blogs, eventos, arte urbano, arte en la red, talleres, publicaciones, encuentros, debates.”(...) “Este museo como un hub desarrollaría así una red internacional de acciones e intercambios con los que estaría conectado dinámicamente, interviniendo en un flujo de información, proyectos y actividades de varias maneras y en distintas direcciones. El museo tendría su propia comunidad en expansión de artistas, curadores, educadores, activistas, y otras instituciones por todo el orbe”.

Desde esta perspectiva la función del museo es global y a la vez local, proporcionando un lugar de encuentro entre las múltiples capas y oficios de la creación contemporánea y potenciando el desarrollo de las subjetividades. Un lugar de encuentro, trabajo, producción e investigación además de exposición y divulgación, donde todos los elementos se mezclan y se nutren y desde el cual podría generarse una nueva institucionalidad y espacio al cual propongo llamar provisionalmente Posmuseo.

EL MUSEO, SUS PROGRAMAS Y SUS PUBLICOS

“Partimos de la comprensión de que la museología y los museos iberoamericanos están en movimiento y de que la renovación del campo museal tiene propiciado una mayor aproximación de los movimientos sociales. Su diferencial actual está ubicado en el compromiso con la educación, en la valorización de la función social de los museos y en el reconocimiento de que ellos son tecnologías y herramientas que necesitan ser democratizadas y utilizadas en favor de la dignidad humana y del desarrollo social.” (De la declaración de Bahía. 2007)⁴

Es objetivo del Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín es confirmar cada vez más su compromiso sociocultural; estableciendo un puente entre el público, las problemáticas de la sociedad y las manifestaciones artísticas. Ser un centro generador de vivencias, pensamiento, educación, formación y debate alrededor de las prácticas artísticas contemporáneas; artes plásticas, arquitectura, urbanismo, diseño, cine, video, música, literatura, lectura y escritura, teatro, danza, televisión, fotografía, gastronomía, medio

³ Gerardo Mosquera, *Arte y Política: Contradicciones, Disyuntivas, Posibilidades*, tenido acceso 3 Junio 2013

<http://servicios.abc.gov.ar/lainstitucion/sistemaeducativo/educacionartistica/34seminarios/htmls/descargas/bibliografia/problematikas-arte/14-Mosquera.pdf>

⁴ http://www.ibermuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/declaracion-de-la-ciudad-de-salvador_cast.pdf

ambiente, internet, nuevos medios y tecnología. Ser un Museo vivo que se desligue de las antiguas concepciones para convertirse en un centro de las artes actuales.

Desde la inauguración de la nueva sede del Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín, en el sector de Ciudad Del Río en el año 2009, hemos vivido la paulatina consolidación de un centro cultural que la ciudadanía reconoce, valora y participa activamente. Cada año aproximadamente 215.000 personas viven la experiencia MAMM, participando en sus diferentes programas, proyectos y actividades de forma gratuita. El MAMM cuenta con una estructura integral de varios departamentos y dos aéreas misionales: Curaduría y Educación y Cultura.

El Departamento de Curaduría se encarga de conservar, investigar, incrementar y difundir la colección de arte que es patrimonio de los colombianos, destacándose la colección de obras de la Maestra antioqueña Débora Arango, la donación del artista caleño Hernando Tejada, así como la de innumerables artistas antioqueños, colombianos y latinoamericanos que hoy hacen parte de la historia del arte moderno. De igual manera, el Departamento de Curaduría es el encargado de diseñar las exposiciones temporales que en esta nueva etapa han jugado un papel muy importante, al ofrecer a los públicos la oportunidad de disfrutar y aprender a partir de grandes exposiciones internacionales, nacionales, monográficas, temáticas y retrospectivas. El Museo también ha abierto las puertas a los nuevos creadores organizando diferentes convocatorias, muestras experimentales y acogiendo los Salones Regionales y Nacionales de Artistas. De igual manera, con el apoyo de otras instituciones, realiza más de cinco muestras al año en otros espacios de ciudad como bibliotecas y centros culturales amigos. El otro tanto en esta tarea de difusión y democratización del arte por toda la ciudad lo cumplen las exposiciones didácticas que el MAMM realiza en el marco de su programa Museo Móvil, por medio del cual se llevan a los espacios públicos diferentes muestras acompañadas de componentes pedagógicos.

Las dinámicas del Departamento de Educación y Cultura, de forma articulada con el área de curaduría, han llevado al Museo a contribuir a la democratización del arte, la cultura y el patrimonio. Los diferentes programas con metodologías pedagógicas tienden a la construcción de ciudadanía y a mejorar la convivencia.

Los públicos son muy diversos, tanto por sus rangos de edad como por filiaciones identitarias y temáticas: niños, jóvenes, adultos, tercera edad, población en situación de discapacidad visual, movimientos urbanos, redes de trabajo, cultura digital, grafiti, música contemporánea, jóvenes diseñadores, fotógrafos, arquitectos, entre otros. Este amplio colectivo social permite mantener una activación constante del Museo, no sólo en sus instalaciones sino por fuera de ellas a partir de diferentes proyectos de extensión.

Pasaporte al Arte, es un programa que ha logrado consolidarse a lo largo de los últimos años, llegando a su versión número 170; se concibe como un espacio para dialogar con los artistas y trabajadores de la cultura sobre sus proyectos y procesos más destacado. En este mismo orden de ideas se vienen realizando desde hace cuatro años el ciclo **Conversaciones en el MAMM** donde se invita a destacados pensadores del medio local a desarrollar conferencias sobre problemáticas actuales desde una perspectiva interdisciplinar.

Con la apertura de la nueva sede creamos varios programas, entre ellos **La Noche Extendida**, una vez al mes el Museo permanece abierto hasta las 10 de la noche para fomentar el sano esparcimiento a partir de una programación cultural de calidad que ha involucrado poesía, música, teatro, cine y artes vivas. De igual manera creamos los **Laboratorios de Arte Para Jóvenes**, espacios para motivar a las nuevas

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generaciones en los diferentes lenguajes creativos. En este programa, invitamos a un artista del medio local o internacional para guiar los grupos de jóvenes en los procesos de creación contemporánea.

Los niños han sido y serán uno de nuestros públicos más importantes, es por ello que con la franja de talleres **Creativos MAMM**, logramos convocar a niños de toda la ciudad para que de forma gratuita aprendan en una dinámica similar a las de los laboratorios. De igual manera el proyecto **La Ciudad y los Niños** ha permitido expandir la metodología de educación artística creada por el Museo a cuatro comunidades barriales de Medellín, que a partir del acompañamiento constante del equipo de mediadores del MAMM en temas de las artes plásticas y literatura logra que sean los más pequeños los que relaten la ciudad, sus vivencias y sus deseos de un futuro compartido.

El **Programa de Visitas y Talleres**, busca generar en los públicos visitantes del Museo, la activación de procesos reflexivos en torno arte moderno y contemporáneo, a partir de las exposiciones temporales y la colección del museo. Este programa es liderado por **La Escuela de Mediadores**. Esta escuela está integrada por un grupo de profesionales y también jóvenes universitarios, estudiantes de áreas afines a las artes y las humanidades. La escuela fue creada en el primer semestre del 2009 con el fin de conformar un equipo especializado de guías y talleristas que atendieran la demanda de visitas y la programación educativa del Museo, y se ha ido consolidando como un grupo de estudio que una vez por semana se reúne para estudiar las obras de la colección MAMM y las exposiciones temporales, así como para diseñar estrategias pedagógicas.

El proyecto **La Maleta Viajera** logra llevar a diferentes comunidades educativas de escuelas veredales del departamento toda una experiencia educativa compuesta por material didáctico, que comprende juegos, cartillas, reproducciones de la colección del Museo, bitácoras y herramientas de planeación para que los docentes enriquezcan el currículum a partir de la educación artística, la educación patrimonial ambiental, y el arte.

La población con capacidades especiales ha contado con un espacio en el MAMM, a través del programa **Representaciones**, dirigido a población en situación de discapacidad visual, donde se desarrollan diferentes ejercicios creativos a partir de la plástica, el cuerpo y la música.

Recientemente hemos creado sobre el formato de radio arte, el programa **Fundiciones MAMM**, en el cual damos cuenta del acontecer semanal del Museo a partir de entrevistas, testimonios, músicas y experimentación sonora para brindar más contenidos de calidad que acerquen a las personas al arte y la cultura.

Actualmente hemos abierto una línea de acción en torno al arte y la tecnología que tiene su origen en 2011 con la realización del **Encuentro Internacional de MediaLabs LabSurLab** www.labsurlab.co, y que hoy tiene su continuidad en **El Puerto**, www.elpuerto.co, proyecto propuesto sobre el modelo de Media Lab que tiene por objetivo crear un espacio para la investigación, creación y puesta en circulación de proyectos que integran arte, ciencia, ecología y medios digitales con fines comunitarios. El Puerto se concibe como un prototipo de laboratorio para la ciudad de Medellín que amplía las posibilidades y oportunidades de apropiación de la Tecnología mediante estrategias artísticas.

El Puerto es un espacio de confluencia del sector público y privado, de un amplio campo de disciplinas, de nuevas formas de gestión cultural, de nuevos enfoques de la educación, de flujos de información y redes. Establece alianzas con universidades,

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centros culturales, centros comunitarios, emprendimientos independientes y MediaLabs de Colombia y el mundo, para desarrollar proyectos de investigación y una amplia agenda educativa de programas, proyectos y actividades permanentes para diferentes públicos.

De forma consistente el museo se ha constituido en un espacio de diálogo superador de fuertes conflictos sociales.

THE MUSEUM AND THE CITY: THE CASE OF THE MEDELLÍN MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Jorge Bejarano Barco¹

Director of the Department of Education and Culture
Medellín Museum of Modern Art

ABSTRACT

The Museum of Modern Art of Medellín (MAMM)² has carried out the transformation of an industrial center of Medellín into a space for dialogue, a creative ecosystem, dedicated to reflection, discussion, production, training and socialization. It has become a strategic location in the city for its exhibition program, but above all education, culture and working with communities in the city. The paper analyzes the case of MAMM in the context of the city, the adaptation of an industrial building, reconfiguration of social and urban of the of “River City” sector of the city, and from there derives thoughts on something I propose to call the “Postmuseum”.

RÉSUMÉ

Le musée et la ville: l'exemple du Musée d'art moderne de Medellín

Le Musée d'art moderne de Medellín (MAMM) a réalisé la transformation d'un centre industriel de Medellín en une espace pour le dialogue, un éco-système de créativité, voué à la réflexion, à la discussion, à la production, à la formation et aux rencontres sociales. Ce centre est devenu un endroit stratégique dans la ville par son programme d'exposition, et surtout pour l'éducation, la culture, et le travail avec les communautés dans la ville. Cet article analyse le cas du MAMM dans le contexte de la ville, de l'adaptation d'un bâtiment industriel, d'une nouvelle configuration du centre social et urbain du secteur « Ville de la Rivière » et partant de là, sont développées quelques réflexions sur quelque chose que je propose d'appeler le « Postmusée ».

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Colombian history has been tainted by decades of violence and armed conflicts and Medellín, the second biggest city in the country, has been one of the nerve centers of such. During the 80s and part of the 90s, Medellín became one of the most violent cities in the world: 381 homicides per 100,000 citizens was just one example of the social issue. Drug trafficking, urban guerrillas, paramilitary cells and other criminal organizations used Medellín as a center for their operation.

As a barrier of resistance to the complexity of such a violent reality, the community started to build a strong and powerful social and political will that led to a series of urban, educational, social and cultural plans, programs and strategies that have improved the quality of life, security and human development in the city.

¹ Jorge Bejarano Barco has been part of the dynamics of the regional museums of Antioquia (Colombia) since 2007

² www.elmamm.org

Within this framework, the MAMM works every year to implement educational programs that improve the quality of life of citizens while offering new possibilities for how to invest their free time. The mission of the MAMM is to create spaces for less fortunate spheres of society where knowledge and enjoyment can help create a better and more diverse community. One that is aware of its civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights. Today it makes sense to think about the role that cultural institutions – and museums in particular – can play as scenarios for reconfiguring a new relationship with creativity, heritage and community life.

Museums, in a role that is decidedly one of a 'cultural center' in the special case of Medellín, have come to play an important role in leading educational, cultural and exhibition programs that break through the walls of the institution to reach the entire city, neighborhoods, villages, communes, and districts. From within they continually reinvent ways to engage with their audiences, to innovate in education and cultural management forming a new dynamics with heritage, art, technology, and networking.

Meanwhile the Museum of Modern Art of Medellín MAMM www.elmamm.org realizes the transformation of an industrial center of Medellín into a space of dialogue; it has become a creative ecosystem, dedicated to reflection, discussion, production, training and socialization. It has been consolidated as a strategic location in the city for its exhibition programs, but above all for education, culture and working with communities in the city.

MAMM is a fair that has been held for the past four years in an old metal foundry workshop in the industrial sector. It seems a suitable place to ask the question:

What transformation vectors with those cultural initiatives should respond to meet the challenges of today's world? What are the elements to start creating a new institution taking as reference the museum?

The search for answers to this question leads me to suggest that building confidence is one of the guiding principles: building a thin, persistent tissue and delicate exercise and community engagement on a par with collaborative work and networking can lead to foreseeing maps where developing a growing cultural scene can be expanded.

The construction of maps of the scene create a sense of the relations between the actors of culture in the city, the continent and the world, seeking to link more and more social groups, identity, professionals and institutions, universities, enterprises, projects and communities to mobilize ideals. The definition of a cultural scene is a key instrument in the process of contemporary cultural creation.

Another search should be directed to exploring new definitions of what is commonly called cultural management, seeking to confer upon this work all the creative power that has, from open models that will reinvent the relationship of creativity, circulation and appropriation, recognizing that, just as in artistic practices, much of the work in cultural projects lies in the same management. Necessarily this situation must also call upon us to rethink the roles and relationships between who creates, who receives, the educator, who exhibits and who manages, and then add to this rethinking a transformation of the disciplinary fields, (perhaps the transdisciplinary to the extradisciplinary).

Another element has to do with linking cultural work to new digital tools; beyond purely technical aspects the tools provided currently are home to new formats for collaborative creation, education, cultural management, activism, and the reorganization of work and the production of common goods. Cultural and artistic processes related to digital

culture are today border territories, frontiers with change, and the museum is a strategic location from which to activate these processes.

A drive would be aimed at generating more creative dialogue from the museum or institutions with independent movements and initiatives, which range from artistic residencies, music circuits and bars to unconventional spaces for education or non-formal education in order to move forward projects for cooperation and mutualism. We can summarize this aspect of cultural production from the duo 'Institutions – Movements' assuming that the purpose is to create environments for dialogue, co-creation and opportunities for both areas.

Seeking a current definition that meets these ideas is Gerardo Mosquera, the Cuban critic and curator, who suggested the idea of the Museum as Hub.³ Taking the technical meaning of the term a hub is a place or thing that forms the effective center of an activity, region, or network: a distribution center, a computer network that connects together other computers or devices transmitting data packets from any of them to everyone else. With this we can make a neologism: a Hub spanning several possibilities for the 'Museum institution' as post-utopian space from there, generating new and encouraging agency-makers / empowerments. Here I translate from the Spanish:⁴

... "We have to think of museums centrifugal rather than centripetal, transformed from 'a space showing the world' in 'an action in the world'. So instead of pulling into a space the auratic art, the museum could act on the spot where artistic practice occurs. It would be a museum as a hub, decentralized, moving, spread everywhere, a dynamic entity that simultaneously participate in a variety of projects in different places. The level of intervention would be very flexible and casuistry, consisting primarily of common projects collaborations with other institutions, arts groups, informal associations and individuals, in varying degrees of participation. Activities would include samples, communications, blogs, events, street art, net art, workshops, publications, meetings, debates. "(...)" The museum as a hub and develop an international network of actions and exchanges with which would dynamically connected by intervening in a flow of information, projects and activities in various ways and in different directions. The museum would have its own growing community of artists, curators, educators, activists, and other institutions around the globe."

From this perspective the role of the museum is global yet local, providing a meeting place between the multiple layers and crafts of contemporary art and promoting the development of subjectivities. A place to meet, to work, to produce and to research, as well as exposure and disclosure, where all elements are mixed and nourish and from which it could generate a new institutional and space which I provisionally propose to call Posmuseo.

The Medellín Museum of Modern Art, its Programmes and its Audience

"We start from the understanding that museology and Latin American museums are continuously moving and that a renewal in the museum field has led to a greater approach to social movements. Their main difference is the commitment to education

³ Gerardo Mosquera: "Seven Notes on the Museum-as-Hub", in *Re-Shuffle / Notions of an Itinerant Museum*, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York, 2006

⁴ Gerardo Mosquera, *Arte y Política: Contradicciones, Disyuntivas, Posibilidades*, tenido acceso 3 Junio 2013

<http://servicios.abc.gov.ar/lainstitucion/sistemaeducativo/educacionartistica/34seminarios/htmls/descargas/bibliografia/problematicas-arte/14-Mosquera.pdf>

to add value to the museums' social role and the acknowledgement that there are technologies and tools that need to be democratized and used to support human dignity and social development." (From the Statement of Bahia. 2007)⁵

The Museum of Modern Art of Medellín's main objective is to validate its cultural commitment, establishing a link uniting the public, our social problems and artistic expression. The museum is also a main source of experience, thought, education, training and discussion about contemporary art, architecture, urbanism, design, film, video, music, literature, reading and writing, theatre, dance, television, photography, gastronomy, environment, Internet, new media and technology. It is a living museum, detached from old conceptions to become a present-day arts centre.

Since the opening of the Museum of Modern Art of Medellín's new location, in the "Ciudad del Río" area in 2009, we have seen the establishment of a cultural centre that people appreciate and in which they dynamically participate. Each year, approximately 215,000 people live the MAMM experience, and participate in its different programs, projects and activities for free. The MAMM has a core structure of several departments and two mission areas: Curatorship and Education and Culture.

The Curatorial Department is responsible for preserving, researching, increasing and promoting our art collection that is of Colombian heritage, highlighting the collection of Antioquia artist Debora Arango's works, Cali artist Hernando Tejada's donation, as well as countless Antioquia, Colombian and Latin American artists that are part of current Modern Art history. Similarly, the Curatorial Department is in charge of designing the temporary exhibitions that have played a very important role in this new era by giving their audiences the opportunity of enjoying and learning from major international and national monographic, thematic and retrospective exhibitions of outstanding Colombian modern artists. The Museum has opened its doors to new creators by organizing different experimental exhibitions and Regional and National Arts Salons. Similarly, the Museum, with the support of other institutions, carries out more than five exhibitions per year in other public areas of the city such as libraries and cultural centres. The dissemination and democratization of art throughout the city is completed with educational exhibitions that MAMM carries out in its "**Museo Móvil**" programme that takes different exhibitions to public spaces along with pedagogical components.

The different programmes of the Curatorial and Educational departments have led the Museum to contribute greatly to the democratization of art, culture and heritage that forms citizenship and supports coexistence.

Audiences are very diverse, both in the range of their age groups as in their identity and thematic affiliations: children, youth, adults, seniors, visually disabled people, urban movements networks, digital culture, graffiti, contemporary music, young designers, photographers, and architects, among others. This vast group is a challenge to the Museum, not only challenging its facilities but inspiring different outreach projects.

Pasaporte al Arte, is a program conceived as a space for dialogue between artists and cultural workers about their most important projects and processes and which has grown over the years, and now is at version number 170. "**Conversaciones en el MAMM**" is a similar programme in which leading thinkers are invited to give talks on current issues from an interdisciplinary perspective.

With the opening of our new location we have set up several programs, including "**La noche Extendida**", in which, once a month, we open the Museum until 10 pm to

⁵ <http://www.ibermuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/declaration-of-the-city-of-salvador-1.pdf>

promote healthy entertainment from quality cultural programmes including poetry, music, theatre, cinema and live arts. Furthermore, we created “**Laboratorio de Arte para jóvenes**”, a space to motivate new generations in different creative languages. Here, we invite a local or international artist to guide the youth groups in contemporary creation processes.

Children will always be our most important visitors. We have managed to attract children from every corner of Medellín to take part in the MAMM Creative workshops, for free learning as we do in the labs. “**La Ciudad y los Niños**” disseminates our art education methodology to four communities in Medellín which, with support from MAMM interpreters in art and literature, leads the children to document the city, their experience and desire for a shared future.

The Visits and Workshops Program seeks to foster reflexive processes about modern and contemporary art in our public, using temporary exhibitions and the museum's collection. This program is led by **La Escuela de Mediadores**. This department consists of a group of young professionals and university students in areas related to the arts and humanities. It was founded in the first half of 2009, in order to shape a specialized team of guides and facilitators that would meet the demand for visits and the museum's educational programme and has been consolidated as a study group that meet once a week to study the MAMM collection and temporary exhibitions, as well as to design teaching strategies.

The “**La Maleta Viajera**” project, “the travelling suitcase” that goes to different communities of village schools, is an educational kit consisting of teaching materials that include games, booklets, reproductions of the Museum collection, journals and planning tools for teachers to enrich the curriculum in art, environment and heritage education.

The disabled population has also a space in MAMM through our “**Representaciones**” program, which is aimed at populations with visual disabilities to develop creative exercises in the fine arts, the body and music.

Recently we launched the radio program **Fundiciones MAMM**, a weekly report on the Museum activities. With interviews, personal experiences, music and sound experiments, we intend to provide a content of quality that can bring people closer to art and culture.

At present we have created a course of action around art and technology that originated in 2011 with the **International Meeting of Medialabs LabSurLab** www.labsurlab.co. and **El Puerto**, www.elpuerto.co, created following the Media Lab model. The purpose is to build a space for research, creation and circulation of projects that integrate art, science, ecology and digital media with community purposes. **El Puerto** is conceived as a lab prototype for Medellín, which expands the possibilities and opportunities of appropriation of technology through artistic strategies.

El Puerto is a space where audience and the private sector converge in a wide range of disciplines, new forms of cultural management, new education approaches, information flows and networks. It will build partnerships with universities, cultural centres, community centres, entrepreneurs and MediaLabs of Colombia and the world, to develop research projects and a broad educational agenda of programmes, projects and ongoing activities for different audiences.

We have consistently kept in mind that every citizen is special, and our diversity of programmes should ideally reach each and every one.

Jorge Bejarano Barco

The museum and the city: the case of the Medellín Museum of Modern Art

L'ÉCOMUSÉE ET SON PUBLIC : L'EXPÉRIENCE DU VISITEUR, ENTRE OBJECTIVITÉ ET SUBJECTIVITÉ

Bruno Brulon Soares

Universidade Federal Fluminense, Laboratório de Educação Patrimonial
Rio de Janeiro, Brésil

« *Les miroirs feraient bien de réfléchir un peu plus avant de renvoyer les images.* »
(Jean Cocteau, 1932.)

RÉSUMÉ

L'article propose une investigation théorique de la spécificité de l'écomusée au regard des expériences sur le patrimoine et sur les activités culturelles partagées par une population – les 'visiteurs' de cet établissement complexe – dans son espace social. Quand la muséalisation prend place sur un territoire et entre les gens qui vivent ce territoire dans le temps, les idées de subjectivité et d'objectivité sont mélangées dans un même contexte social. Dans le cas des écomusées, le public est confronté à sa propre image en tant que performance de soi. La mise en scène d'un territoire et la mise en scène de la vie en communauté rendent à ce public la possibilité d'avoir un regard distant sur lui-même – en tant que population et en tant que communauté en même temps que *public*. L'article propose de penser la question de l'unicité du visiteur dans ce contexte (en tant que visiteur particulier et comme collectivité), en considérant le rapport entre l'objet et le sujet muséalement construit. L'exemple de l'écomusée du Creusot nous montre comment, dans un musée qui a un but nettement social, la langage de l'art a été utilisé pour parler au public de manière subjective mais aussi objectivement. Dans ce cas, la *grammaire muséale* va faire exister le groupe comme représentation dans l'espace muséalisé, de manière à ce que les gens puissent expérimenter leur identité comme réalité mais aussi comme exercice de réflexion.

Mots-clés : Écomusée. Public. Visiteurs. Objectivité. Subjectivité.

ABSTRACT

The Ecomuseum and its public: the visitor's experience, between objectivity and subjectivity

This paper presents a theoretical study on the specificity of the ecomuseum considering its experience with the heritage and cultural activities shared by the local community – the 'visitors' in this complex institution – within its social space. Once the process of musealization is established in a territory and among the people who live this territory over time, the ideas of subjectivity and objectivity are evoked in this particular social context. In the case of ecomuseums, the public is confronted with its own image as a performance of the self. The (re)presentation of a territory and of life in community provides the visitors with the possibility of developing a distant look over themselves – as a group or community, as well as a *public*. The paper presents a reflection on the singularity of the visitor (as an individual as well as a collectivity), in this context,

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considering the museological relationship between the object and the subject – that is an artificial one. The example of the ecomuseum of the Creusot, in France shows how, in a museum with a clear social perspective, the language of art has been used to speak to the public in a subjective and an objective way. In this case, the *museal grammar* was responsible to make the group exist as a representation in a musealized space, allowing people to experience their identity as a reality but also as a reflexive exercise.

Keywords: Ecomuseum. Public. Visitor. Objectivity. Subjectivity.

RESUMO

O ecomuseu e seu público: a experiência do visitante, entre objetividade e subjetividade

O artigo propõe uma investigação teórica da especificidade do ecomuseu em relação às experiências com o patrimônio e as atividades culturais compartilhadas por uma população – os ‘visitantes’ desse estabelecimento complexo – em seu espaço social. Quando se dá a musealização sobre um território e entre as pessoas que vivem o território no tempo, as ideias de subjetividade e de objetividade são misturadas em um mesmo contexto social. No caso dos ecomuseus, o público é confrontado com a sua própria imagem como performance de si. A (re)apresentação de um território e da vida em comunidade oferece ao público a possibilidade de ter um olhar distanciado sobre si mesmo – enquanto população e comunidade, ao mesmo tempo que como *público*. O artigo propõe uma reflexão sobre a questão da unicidade do visitante (enquanto visitante singular e como coletividade), nesse contexto, tendo em vista a relação entre o objeto e o sujeito musealmente construída. O exemplo do ecomuseu do Creusot, na França, mostra como, em um museu com uma finalidade claramente social, a linguagem da arte foi utilizada para falar ao público de maneira subjetiva mas também objetiva. Nesse caso, a *gramática museal* faz com que o grupo exista como representação no espaço musealizado, de maneira que as pessoas possam experienciar a sua identidade como realidade mas também como um exercício reflexivo.

Palavras-chave: Ecomuseu. Público. Visitantes. Objetividade. Subjetividade.

* * *

Un musée est interprétation et réinterprétation. Un musée est représentation, c'est-à-dire, une *re-présentation* des choses du réel à un public réel dans un contexte muséal. Dans une approche sociale, la muséalisation du réel signifie, parfois, la muséalisation des choses et des gens du réel dans le réel. Si la muséologie est une science humaine « qui examine le rapport spécifique de l'homme avec la réalité¹ », on peut dire qu'elle prend comme objet ce rapport spécifique entre des subjectivités différentes – la subjectivité des sujets par rapport à la subjectivité investie dans les objets.

Dans le cas des musées qui sont dit *sociaux*, quand la muséalisation prend place sur un territoire et entre les gens qui vivent le territoire dans le temps, les idées de subjectivité et d'objectivité sont mélangées dans un même contexte. Quand, par exemple, dans le contexte des écomusées, le musée est la ville et ses visiteurs sont la communauté, ou les habitants, ils sont invités à penser la ville *en dehors* d'eux mêmes, en l'objectivant. Ils ont, quelquefois, « l'impression confuse d'être en retrait et en même

¹ Gregorová, A., « La muséologie – science ou seulement travail pratique du musée », MuWoP / DoTraM, n.1, p.19-21, 1980. p.20.

temps d'être ailleurs », ce qui rend le regard porté sur la communauté presque irréal, « comme si l'intérieur du musée ne nous menait pas au cœur de la ville mais nous offrait plutôt la certitude étrange de son éloignement² ». Ce regard éloigné est construit dans les publics et par les publics à l'intérieur du musée et même des écomusées que visent moins des *publics* que des *populations* (qui sont un public en elles-mêmes).

Pour cette analyse nous devons nous rappeler que la muséalisation implique deux changements : non seulement l'objet change de sens en changeant de contexte (même quand, comme dans le cas des écomusées, c'est le contexte qui change), mais en outre chaque individu qui regarde (habitant ou visiteur) porte un regard différent sur l'objet – et lui-même selon les moments où il le regarde et selon les expériences particuliers de l'individu. Ainsi, les musées sont des instruments qu'enveloppent les gens et les choses au même temps, de manière qu'on peut les appeler des '*choses sociales*'. L'idée de musée social, ici évoqué, a une relation directe avec le concept de « musée intégral »³ – qui a été proposé au cours de la Table ronde de Santiago du Chili, en 1972 – en tant que musée concerné par les questions sociales. Mais on peut dire aussi que tous les musées sont responsables de la rencontre entre des gens et des choses, et dans ce sens, alors, tous les musées sont sociaux.

Selon les théories de la performance, développées par des anthropologues tel que Turner et Schechner – dans un acte théâtral ou dans un « drame social⁴ », comme au musée – dans la rencontre avec l'objet l'individu est à la fois lui-même et un autre. L'individu est donc partagé entre l'être et le non être, dans une expérience réflexive et subjective. Victor Turner décrit la structure du drame social à partir de quatre actions essentielles : la rupture, la crise, l'action réparatrice, la réintégration. Cela veut dire que les éléments qui construisent la performance – aux musées ou dans les autres genres de la performance sociale – sont insérés dans le réel sans être le réel. Ils sont réinsérés dans le réel par l'action du musée (la muséalisation), et, donc, ils sont transformés – par la rencontre avec le visiteur dans un contexte muséal.

L'art de la performance est, ainsi, doublement inséré dans le corpus social et dans les activités culturelles développées par un groupe. Dans le cas des écomusées, le public est confronté à sa propre image en tant que performance de soi. La mise en scène d'un territoire et la mise en scène de la vie en communauté rendent à ce public la possibilité d'avoir un regard distant sur lui-même – en tant que population et en tant que communauté au même temps que *public*. Même si, comme a dit Hugues de Varine, les expériences des musées traditionnels ne peuvent se confondre avec l'écomusée parce-qu'ils se situent sur un autre plan dans lequel « l'homme est *visiteur* et non *acteur*⁵ », en fait, les visiteurs de l'écomusée, autrement dit la population local qui habite le territoire de la performance muséale, sont la raison d'être des actions de l'écomusée.

Cet article propose une investigation théorique de la spécificité de l'écomusée par rapport au regard des expériences sur le patrimoine et sur les activités culturelles partagés par une population – les visiteurs de cet établissement complexe – dans son

² Jeudy, Henri-Pierre, « *Quand le musée fait œuvre* », in: GONSETH, Marc-Olivier; HAINARD, Jacques & KAEHR, Roland (éd.), *Le musée cannibale*, GHK Éditeurs, Musée d'Ethnographie, Neuchâtel, 2002. p.250.

³ Table ronde de Santiago-du-Chili. Principes de Base du musée intégral. *Museum*. Le rôle des musées dans l'Amérique Latine d'aujourd'hui. Paris, UNESCO, v.XXV, n.3, p.198, 1973. Repris in : Desvallées, André ; De Barry, Marie Odile & Wasserman, Françoise (coord.), *Vagues: une anthologie de la Nouvelle Muséologie (vol. 1)*, Collection Museologia, Savigny-le-Temple : Éditions W-M.N.E.S., 1992. p.223-231.

⁴ Turner, Victor, *The Anthropology of Performance*, New York: PAJ Publications, 1988.

⁵ Varine, Hugues de, « L'écomusée (1978) », in : Desvallées, André ; De Barry, Marie Odile & Wasserman, Françoise (coord.), *Vagues: une anthologie de la Nouvelle Muséologie (vol. 1)*, Collection Museologia, Savigny-le-Temple : Éditions W-M.N.E.S., 1992. p.459.

espace social. L'écomusée est l'exemple le mieux connu d'expérience muséale qui donne à son public la possibilité d'un regard singulier sur *lui même* comme un *autre*, par l'expression réflexive d'un patrimoine. La question de l'unicité du visiteur, dans ce contexte, sera ici pensée vis à vis du rapport entre l'objet et le sujet muséalement construit.

1. La question de l'objet

Selon la philosophie, l'objet n'est pas une réalité en lui-même, mais « un produit, un résultat, ou un corrélat ». L'objet désigne ce qui est posé ou jeté face à un sujet, « qui le traite comme différent de lui, même lorsqu'il se prend lui-même comme objet⁶ ». Si la chose entretient avec le sujet un rapport de contiguïté ou d'ustensilité, l'objet, au contraire, représente une coupure entre la réalité et le sujet. En ce sens, un objet au musée est une chose muséalisée, c'est-à-dire une chose qui peut être définie comme toute espèce de réalité en général.

La muséalisation transforme les choses du réel en représentations de ces choses du réel. Le musée représente les choses comme objets, leurs donnant un statut différencié et une valeur. Ainsi, l'objet n'est en aucun cas « une réalité brute », au contraire :

il est un statut ontologique que va revêtir, dans certaines circonstances, telle ou telle chose, étant entendu que la même chose, dans d'autres circonstances, ne sera pas assimilable à un objet.⁷

Dans une perspective identitaire, l'objet est toujours ce que le sujet pose en face de lui comme distinct de lui – il est ce qui est « en face » et différent⁸. En effet, l'objet est le sujet au même temps qu'il est la rupture avec le sujet. En Occident, le clivage entre le sujet et l'objet⁹ a été formulé en rompant avec le mode de vie tribal, et cela a toujours été une caractéristique de l'action muséale insérée dans la Modernité. Ils n'y a pas des musées sans objet, même si l'objet est une idée, ou s'il est le clivage même qui permet aux sujets de se penser comme sujets, séparés et parfois uniques.

Dans le cas des écomusées, ce clivage a été intégré dans la relation même des gens – visiteurs ou communauté – avec l'image du groupe qui est devenu lui-même un objet. Il y a une croyance tautologique dans l'objet, qui fixe l'objet du voir, et qui fixe l'acte, le temps, et le sujet du voir¹⁰. En ce sens, l'objet et le sujet sont fixés dans la rencontre d'une population avec l'image muséalisée de cette population, parfois figée dans l'acte même de voir (voire, ici, dans un sens plus large en impliquant, d'une certaine manière, tous les sens).

2. La question du sujet

On peut dire que l'objet du musée n'existe qu'en relation aux sujets de l'observation. Toutefois, ces sujets ne peuvent pas être pensés comme des individus isolés, mais par rapport aux sociétés dans lesquelles ils sont insérés. Sur les visiteurs d'un musée, même quand ils sont perçus comme unique, il n'est pas possible d'oublier la nature sociale de leur présence et de leur perception. Le musée est une des institutions qui présentent un « système des schèmes de perception et d'appréciation, de jugement et

⁶ Desvallées, André & Mairesse, François (dir.), *Concepts clés de muséologie*, Paris : Armand Colin, 2010, p.59.

⁷ Desvallées & Mairesse, loc. cit.

⁸ Desvallées & Mairesse, loc. cit.

⁹ Descartes, Kant et, plus tard, McLuhan (1969) apud Desvallées & Mairesse, loc. cit.

¹⁰ Didi-Huberman, Georges, *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*, Paris : Les Éditions de Minuit, 1992. p.51.

de jouissance [...] acquis dans les pratiques de la vie quotidienne¹¹ », et qui sont responsables de produire et reproduire ce qu'on peut appeler le *regard collectif*.

Selon Nathalie Heinich:

Le regard collectif se repère à l'existence d'outils de perception et d'inscription du perçu, transmissibles dans l'espace et dans le temps, qui permettent à un nombre indéterminé de personnes de développer, face à un objet quelconque, un rapport visuel similaire.¹²

Le musée produit, donc, un regard sur les choses, avant même de produire un savoir sur ce qui est à voir¹³. Dans les plus petit musées qui développent une action plus locale, c'est, en fait, plus facile de normaliser les regards et les expériences variées et singuliers sur le patrimoine. L'action de ces musées, dans lesquels le regard collectif est plus facilement construit, est, ainsi, perçue comme plus effective, et le changement social peut être atteint plus rapidement.

Pour Heinich, dans la rencontre avec les choses du patrimoine, la confrontation avec l'objet n'est qu'un moment ponctuel et individuel, intermédiaire entre la phase d'acquisition des ressources communes et la phase ultérieure de restitution des conclusions. Elle va appeler ce moment comme le moment de la « reconnaissance », dans lequel « ce qui est vu actualise ce qui est su¹⁴ ». Ça veut dire que *voir* les choses, ou *sentir* les choses, ne se limite pas à la mise en présence d'un individu avec un objet. Au contraire, plus largement, la rencontre avec le patrimoine est faite de plusieurs moments différents dans le temps : l'avant, l'après, le partage avec les pairs dans l'espace du musée... Ainsi, le sujet n'est pas seulement un sujet tout seul, mais il n'est pas non plus simple le résultat d'une collectivité. Le sujet est singulier et partagé. Il est unique et particulier mais il est aussi un collectif individualisé.

Pour le visiteur d'un écomusée, les positions artificielles de sujet et d'objet sont incorporées dans une opération double de l'expérience intime avec sa propre communauté – en tant que sujet dans le discours écomuséal – et, en même temps, du développement d'un regard éloignée sur cette communauté – en tant qu'objet du musée.

Quand le visiteur est la population locale – parfois pensée comme « communauté » dans les discours du groupe – sujet et objet sont maintenus séparés, mais aussi incorporés aux gens, pour créer une prise de conscience nécessaire à la réflexion sur les identités et au pouvoir du groupe. Les relations des gens, en tant que groupe, peuvent être réaffirmées ou, au contraire, mis en question par l'action du musée.

3. L'individu et la communauté dans l'écomusée : l'expérience intime du visiteur

En entrant dans un musée – ou dans un espace social muséalisé – chaque visiteur apporte ses caractéristiques propres, son histoire, ses expériences et sa trajectoire de vie. La performance muséale est l'expérience de soi au musée ; elle est ainsi une *expérience identitaire*. Le « je » du visiteur est le résultat de la médiation réflexive sur le sujet et la représentation du sujet au sein du musée. L'écomusée représente une identité collective qui est vécue par les individus d'un groupe. La communauté se crée,

¹¹ Bourdieu, Pierre & Delsaut, Yvette, « Pour une sociologie de la perception », *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n. 40, 1981, p.5.

¹² Heinich, Nathalie, *La fabrique du patrimoine, De la cathédrale à la petite cuillère*, Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2009. p.123.

¹³ Ibidem, p.124.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p.130.

parfois, en même temps qu'elle est présentée dans le musée, de manière à ce que le groupe réel se voit et se perçoit comme une 'communauté'.

La singularité du visiteur s'est insérée dans la sociabilité de la communauté par l'action culturelle du musée. Comme l'a remarqué Paul Ricœur, la personne, en tant que chose que nous distinguons par « référence identifiante¹⁵ », fait la médiation entre subjectivité et objectivité dans le sujet. En revanche, la coupure entre sujet et objet est, en effet, artificielle et construite par l'appropriation du réel. Dans le cas des musées, elle est un phénomène historique et caractéristique de la Modernité en Occident. Comme a démontré Benoît de L'Estoile, par rapport à leur relation avec les identités, les musées peuvent être pensés comme « musées de soi » ou comme « musée de l'Autre¹⁶ ». Et il rappelle qu'avec le processus de colonisation, les grands musées européens ont approfondi ces constructions identitaires pour répondre à les deux questions essentielles, « qui sommes-nous ? » et « qui sont les Autres ? ».

Les écomusées n'ont pas rompu avec ce rapport identitaire, et ils ont été classifiés par les spécialistes comme des « musée de soi », même s'il sont aussi des « musées de l'Autre » car la relation avec l'autérité n'a jamais cessé d'exister en leur sein. Les écomusées et les musées locaux ont la particularité d'avoir leur action orientée vers l'identité d'un groupe spécifique. L'identité collective du groupe permet au musée d'avoir une action directe sur les expériences individuelles. L'expérience intime du visiteur est, donc, plus facilement atteinte par l'écomusée. Selon Hugues de Varine :

On pourrait dire que le musée classique conserve en vue de la délectation des individus, tandis que l'écomusée communautaire consomme en vue du développement du groupe.¹⁷

Cette notion de développement communautaire – chère aux théoriciens de la nouvelle muséologie – fait de l'écomusée un laboratoire d'expériences individuelles et collectives dans un groupe qui est lui même muséalisé par rapport à un patrimoine utilisé comme support et matériau de ces expériences.

3.1 Musées-experimentaux, musées-laboratoires

Au long de sa trajectoire dans les diverses institutions avec lesquelles il a développé sa muséologie, Georges Henri Rivière a expérimenté la formule du *musée-laboratoire*, qui était « à la fois centre de recherche, conservation, documentation, et, par ses expositions et présentations, établissement éducatif à l'intention des publics les plus variés »¹⁸. Avant de concevoir et de mettre en pratique l'écomusée, Rivière a conçu un « laboratoire permanent de terrain¹⁹ ». Puis, dans les années 1970 et 1980, il a pensé l'écomusée en tant que structure expérimentale pour l'expression de l'homme, fonctionnant « avec la participation de la population qui y trouve un moyen de prise de conscience et d'expression de son patrimoine et son développement²⁰ ».

¹⁵ Ricœur, Paul, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1990. p.39.

¹⁶ L'Estoile, Benoît de, *Le goût des Autres, De l'exposition coloniale aux arts premiers*, Paris: Flammarion, 2007, passim.

¹⁷ Varine, Hugues de, « L'écomusée (1978) », in : Desvallées, André ; De Barry, Marie Odile & Wasserman, Françoise (coord.), *Vagues: une anthologie de la Nouvelle Muséologie (vol. 1)*, Collection Museologia, Savigny-le-Temple : Éditions W-M.N.E.S., 1992. p.459.

¹⁸ Chiva, Isac. George Henri Rivière : un demi-siècle d'ethnologie de la France. *Terrain* [En ligne], 5, 1985. Disponible en: <<http://terrain.revues.org/288>>. p.2.

¹⁹ Rivière, Georges Henri. « L'écomusée, un modèle évolutif (1971-1980) », in : Desvallées, André ; De Barry, Marie Odile & Wasserman, Françoise (coord.), *Vagues: une anthologie de la Nouvelle Muséologie (vol. 1)*, Collection Museologia, Savigny-le-Temple : Éditions W-M.N.E.S., 1992. p.440.

²⁰ Ibidem, p.442.

Cependant, si Rivière a pensé l'écomusée comme un « *miroir* » où une population se regarde, pour s'y reconnaître, comme dans un *reflet*, on peut dire aujourd'hui, avec les dernières expériences connues d'écomusées, que ce que le concept illustre est moins un *reflet* qu'une *réflexion*. L'expérimentation de « soi » au sein d'une communauté, c'est ce que l'écomusée propose au public.

L'écomusée, « cette institution qui s'intéresse tout autant aux gens qu'aux choses²¹ », fait de la population une représentation évolutive du groupe, à savoir l'image réfléchie du groupe sur laquelle les gens peuvent affirmer leur identité communautaire.

Dans l'écomusée, un « régime de communauté » – un « régime de qualification » selon l'appellation d'Heinich – a été utilisé pour construire des valeurs à partir de ce qui est largement « partagé, nombreux, standard », au lieu d'un « régime de singularité » qui valorise ce qui est « rare, exceptionnel, hors du commun²² ». Dans un « régime de communauté » le groupe est amené à se reconnaître en tant que groupe ou communauté qui partage un patrimoine et qui existe en tant qu'objet central du musée. Ce sont les valeurs partagées, ainsi, que définies par l'opération de mise en patrimoine. La *grammaire muséale* va faire exister le groupe comme représentation dans l'espace muséalisé, de manière que les gens puissent expérimenter leur identité comme réalité mais aussi comme exercice de réflexion sociale.

3.2 L'art dans l'écomusée

L'acte de voir quelque chose au musée, et surtout dans l'écomusée, n'est pas simplement un acte de donner des évidences visibles, parce-que, dans l'encadrement de l'art, comme l'a proposé Georges Didi-Huberman, « donner à voir, c'est toujours inquiéter le voir, dans son acte, dans son sujet²³ ». Selon cette approche, voir est une expérience ouverte, car voir est toujours une opération de sujet. Pour cette raison, beaucoup de musées utilisent l'art en tant qu'outil d'encadrement de l'expérience du visiteur, et aussi, parfois, pour produire des réflexions.

Un musée ne peut jamais prescrire le voir. Ce que les visiteurs seront capable de voir et de sentir dans une exposition ou dans un espace muséalisé est toujours déterminé par les expériences sociales et culturelles passées de chaque individu. Toutefois, les musées utilisent généralement des langages spécifiques pour conduire le public à voir d'une manière ou d'une autre. La langage de l'art est notamment utilisée dans ce sens²⁴, même quand ça n'est pas très évident comme dans le cas des musées d'arts premiers ou des écomusées. Ici l'exemple de l'écomusée du Creusot peut être utilisé pour penser un musée social qui a fonctionné aussi comme un musée d'art – et qui a été connu comme un modèle à suivre pour d'autres écomusées dans le monde.

²¹ Desvallées, André, « L'écomusée : musée degré zéro ou musée hors les murs ? », *Terrain* [En ligne], n.5, 1985, mis en ligne le 23 juillet 2007, 06 avril 2012. URL : <http://terrain.revues.org/2889> ; DOI : 10.4000/terrain.2889. p.2.

²² Heinich, Nathalie. « Les émotions patrimoniales: de l'affect à l'axiologie », *Anthropologie Sociale*, n.20, 2012, p.31.

²³ Didi-Huberman, Georges, *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*, Paris : Les Éditions de Minuit, 1992. p.51.

²⁴ Ici on peut nous rappeler que les éléments qui structurent la perception esthétique ne sont pas donnés *a priori*, mais, historiquement produits et reproduits : « ils sont indissociables des conditions historiques de leur mise en œuvre ». De même, selon Bourdieu, « la disposition esthétique, qui constitue comme œuvre d'art les objets socialement désignés à son application » et « la compétence esthétique, avec ses catégories, ses concepts, ses taxinomies » sont des produits de toute l'histoire du champ qui doit être reproduit par un apprentissage spécifique. Bourdieu, Pierre, *Les règles de l'art, Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1998. p.486.

Quand, à la fin des années 1960, la municipalité du Creusot a proposé un projet qui s'inscrivait dans un esprit de décentralisation et d'animation culturelle²⁵, il a d'abord été créé un Centre d'Action Culturelle (le CAC du LARC – Loisirs, Arts, Rencontres et Culture) avec comme but l'accueil des artistes et la production artistique locale. En 1970, la municipalité, à l'initiative de quelques acteurs locaux, a demandé à Marcel Évrard – une personne extérieure à la ville, qui était venu présenter l'une de ses expositions sur l'art africain à LARC – de se charger de la création d'un musée²⁶. Le Centre national de Recherche d'Animation et de Création pour les Arts Plastiques (le CRACAP, créé cette même année) était la structure de base pour la création d'un musée où le discours sur l'art serait mélangé à celui que l'on tiendrait sur l'histoire locale.

L'écomusée du Creusot, créée et animée par le CRACAP au début des années 1970, a coupé avec une querelle traditionnelle dans les musées françaises entre d'une part les historiens d'art, pour qui un musée ne saurait être qu'un musée d'art, et d'autre part les ethnologues, « soucieux au contraire de réinsérer [...] le phénomène artistique au sein d'une praxis humaine plus générale »²⁷. Au contraire de l'approche traditionnelle qui sépare l'art de l'ethnologie dans les musées, l'écomusée a utilisé l'art en tant qu'outil social.

Dans l'écomusée l'art est donc insérée dans l'expérience des sujets, qui est perçue comme plus complexe que dans les musées traditionnels. L'exemple du Creusot nous montre comment, dans un musée qui a un but nettement social, la langue de l'art a été utilisée pour parler au public. Au Creusot, l'art – et surtout l'art contemporain local – a médiatisé la relation des gens avec leur patrimoine et leur mémoire dans un territoire déterminé.

Dans une perspective plus pragmatique des sciences sociales, on peut considérer ici – en prenant l'exemple d'une exposition – sujets et objets « en fonction de leurs capacité d'action, et non pas en tant qu'ils seraient les supports passifs de projections abstraites²⁸ ». En 1979, entre janvier et mars, l'exposition « Jardins du quotidien », organisée par la Maison des Arts et Loisirs du Creusot, a mobilisée la communauté urbaine autour d'un objet bien connu et partagé. Une enquête a été faite auprès des habitants pour extraire ce qui leur semblait le plus significatif du jardin populaire. À partir de tous les témoignages des gens du Creusot, « il ressort que le jardin n'est pas seulement un loisir, c'est-à-dire une activité après le travail », mais qu'il était « plutôt une activité complémentaire et quelquefois obligatoire pour assurer un appoint salarial...²⁹ ». Cependant, le jardin et l'habitude de jardiner ont profondément fait partie de la vie des habitants de la communauté.

Quelques témoignages recueillis pour apporter du sens à l'exposition donnent des indications sur le tournant du jardin potager au jardin décor :

Du décor, des haies, depuis 20, 25 ans, on a commencé. On nous a critiqués, les gens jetaient la pierre, disaient : tu ferais mieux de planter des patates à tes gamins, le gazon ça ne se mange pas... les allées larges, les allées larges, ce

²⁵ Debary, Octave, *La fin du Creusot ou L'art d'accommoder les restes*, Paris: CTHS, 2002, p.29.

²⁶ Ibidem, p.30.

²⁷ Clair, Jean, « Les origines de la notion d'écomusée », *Cracap / Informations*, n.2-3, p.2-4, 1976. p.2.

²⁸ Heinich, Nathalie. « Les émotions patrimoniales: de l'affect à l'axiologie », *Anthropologie Sociale*, n.20, 2012, p.20.

²⁹ Portet, François. « Ce que disent les jardiniers », in: CRACAP – Centre National de Recherche d'Animation et de Création pour les Arts Plastiques, *Jardins du quotidien*, Maison des Arts et Loisirs du Creusot, LARC, Le Creusot, 1979. p.1.

qui nous a fait développer ça, c'est les enfants, la famille, ils devaient profiter de ça.³⁰

En effet, au Creusot, le « tour du jardin » faisait partie de la vie : « Les copains quand on va se voir avant de rentrer à la maison, on va voir les légumes, les raies de légumes³¹ ». Au Creusot les jardins étaient, donc, tantôt un réseau d'échange avec les relations de travail et avec les voisins, tantôt des objets d'admiration et de contemplation. La sensibilité des idéalisateurs de l'exposition (le personnel du musée et les gens de la communauté) a permis l'appropriation d'un objet social complexe pour les sujets locaux. L'exposition a montrée aux visiteurs (le public de l'écomusée, à savoir la population locale) des paysages invisibles à eux-mêmes, leurs signes et leur paysages mentaux en tant qu'œuvre d'art.

Ainsi, l'art a servi pour re-signifier le territoire et les éléments du patrimoine du Creusot ; il a réparé les relations entre les individus et leur histoire. Il n'y a pas un objet au musée du Creusot qui ne serait défini comme œuvre d'art et aussi comme objet social et parfois utilitaire. Ces sont des *objets de réflexion* pour les sujets – les acteurs et les visiteurs du patrimoine.

4. Entre le miroir et la réflexion : quelques conclusions

Comme nous a rappelé André Desvallées, à partir de 1975, le thème du *miroir* apparaît dans la définition de l'écomusée : « Un miroir où cette population se regarde pour s'y reconnaître [...] »³². Le thème du miroir a servi de repère à la pensée de Georges Henri Rivière sur les écomusées pendant une grande partie de sa vie, et encore aujourd'hui, cette métaphore est évoquée par plusieurs auteurs pour parler de ces musées. Elle renvoie à l'idée selon laquelle un musée qui n'est pas centré sur les « vraies choses » peut muséifier une « vraie image » des gens sur un territoire. La croyance dans le fait que la séparation entre sujet et objet dans l'écomusée est naturelle peut réifier l'image créée.

Dans les lieux les plus variés du monde, l'action muséale a ainsi représenté l'application du clivage entre le sujet et l'objet, et aussi entre le réel et la représentation du réel, qui est un clivage artificiel mais qui n'est pas perçu comme artificiel dans les cas de la grande majorité des musées. Si, au contraire, le cinéma, le théâtre et la littérature ont exploré ce clivage de manière plus critique – comme un aspect de la performance en Occident – dans l'univers muséal nous avons l'habitude de la réifier.

L'apprentissage que les musées proposent en séparant le sujet de l'objet dans l'expérience muséale, c'est un apprentissage du regard, et un apprentissage du sentir. Par cette expérience, tous les musées nous mettent dans cette relation d'ambiguïté avec nous même et avec notre patrimoine. Nous sommes les détenteurs d'un patrimoine dont les détenteurs nous sont étrangers. Cette construction paradoxale nous fixe comme sujet et objet au même temps.

L'expérience sociale au musée est une expérience intégrale ; ce qui signifie que le *social-muséal* comprend tous les aspects de la vie humaine – l'art et la société entre eux. Plus généralement, les « musées sociaux » – terme utilisé surtout en Amérique Latine et en quelques pays d'Europe, comme le Portugal et l'Espagne – sont des musées qui manifestent une vocation pour transformer des sociétés et des questions et problèmes sociaux en objets, de manière réflexive ou non. Tous les musées peuvent

³⁰ Portet, loc. cit.

³¹ Portet, loc. cit.

³² Rivière (1975 apud Desvallées, 2000).

être pensés comme des musées sociaux³³ quand les visiteurs sont en même temps le public et le thème du discours muséal, c'est-à-dire, le sujet et l'objet du musée, et quand ces deux positions sont perçues moins comme des vérités muséales et plus comme des catégories sociales construites historiquement.

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³³ Et, dans ce sens, peuvent être pensés aussi comme des « musées soucieux ».

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THE ECOMUSEUM AND ITS AUDIENCE: THE VISITOR'S EXPERIENCE, BETWEEN OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

Bruno Brulon Soares

Universidade Federal Fluminense, Laboratório de Educação Patrimonial
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a theoretical study on the specificity of the ecomuseum considering the experiences with heritage and the cultural activities shared by the local community – the ‘visitors’ in this complex institution – within its social space. Once the process of musealization is established in a territory and among the people who live this territory over time, the ideas of subjectivity and objectivity are evoked in this particular social context. In the case of ecomuseums, the public is confronted with its own image as a performance of the self. The (re)presentation of a territory and of life in community provides the visitors with the possibility of developing a distant view of themselves – as a group or community, as well as a *public*. The paper presents a reflection over the singularity of the visitor (as an individual as well as a collectivity), in this context, considering the museological relationship between the object and the subject – that is an artificial one. The example of the ecomuseum of the Creusot, in France, shows how, in a museum with a clear social perspective, the art language has been used to speak to the public in a subjective and an objective way. In this case, the *museal grammar* was responsible to make the group exist as a representation in a musealized space, allowing people to experience their identity as a reality but also as a reflexive exercise.

Keywords: Ecomuseum. Public. Visitor. Objectivity. Subjectivity.

RÉSUMÉ

L'écomusée et son public : l'expérience du visiteur, entre l'objectivité et la subjectivité

L'article propose une investigation théorique de la spécificité de l'écomusée par rapport au regard des expériences sur le patrimoine et les activités culturelles partagés par une population – les ‘visiteurs’ de cet établissement complexe – dans son espace social. Quand la muséalisation prend place sur un territoire et entre les gens qui vivent le territoire dans le temps, les idées de subjectivité et d'objectivité sont mélangées dans un même contexte social. Dans le cas des écomusées, le public est confronté avec sa propre image en tant que performance de soi. La mise en scène d'un territoire et la mise en scène de la vie en communauté rendent à ce public la possibilité d'avoir un regard distant sur lui même – en tant que population et en tant que communauté au même temps que *public*. L'article propose penser la question de l'unicité du visiteur (en tant que visiteur particulier et comme collectivité), dans ce contexte, vis à vis le rapport entre l'objet et le sujet muséalement construit. L'exemple de l'écomusée du Creusot nous montre comment, dans un musée qui a un but nettement social, la langage de l'art a été utilisée pour parler au public de manière subjective mais aussi objectivement. Dans ce cas, la *grammaire muséale* va faire existé le groupe comme représentation dans l'espace muséalisé, de

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manière que les gens peuvent expérimenter leur identité comme réalité mais aussi comme un exercice de réflexion.

Mots-clés : Écomusée. Public. Visiteurs. Objectivité. Subjectivité.

RESUMEN

El museo y su público: la experiencia de los visitantes, entre objetividad y subjetividad

El artículo propone una investigación teórica sobre la especificidad del ecomuseo en relación a las experiencias con el patrimonio y las actividades culturales compartidas por una población – los ‘visitantes’ de ese establecimiento complejo – en su espacio social. Cuando el proceso de musealización tiene lugar en un territorio y entre las personas que viven en ese territorio en el tiempo, las ideas de subjetividad y de objetividad se mixturan en un mismo contexto social. En el caso de los ecomuseos, el público es confrontado con su propia imagen como “performance” de si mismo. La (re)presentación de un territorio y de la vida en comunidad ofrece al público la posibilidad de tener una mirada de si mismo desde otro lugar – tanto como población y comunidad como y al mismo tiempo como público. El artículo propone una reflexión sobre la cuestión de la unicidad del visitante (tanto como visitante singular y como colectividad), en ese contexto, teniendo en cuenta la relación musealmente construida entre el objeto y el sujeto. El ejemplo del ecomuseo de Creusot, en Francia, muestra como, en un museo con una finalidad claramente social, el lenguaje del arte fue utilizado para hablar al público de manera subjetiva pero también objetivamente. En ese caso, la gramática museal va a hacer existir al grupo como representación en el espacio musealizado, de manera que las personas puedan experimentar su identidad como realidad haciendo al mismo tiempo un ejercicio reflexivo.

Palabras clave: Ecomuseo. Público. Visitantes. Objetividad. Subjectividad

* * *

“Mirrors would do well think a bit more before sending back images.”¹

(Jean Cocteau, 1932.)

A museum is interpretation and re-interpretation. A museum is a representation, which means it is re-presenting the things in reality to a real audience in a museal context. From a social approach, the musealization of reality means the process of musealizing the things and persons of reality in reality. If museology is a human science that studies the “specific relations of man to reality”² we can infer its subject of study to be a specific relation between two different kinds of subjectivities – the subjectivity of individual subjects in relation to the subjectivity invested in the objects.

In museums that are so-called *social museums*, that is, when the musealization happens in a territory and between the people living in it in a certain period of time, the notions of subjectivity and objectivity are interchanged. For instance, when, in the case of ecomuseums, the museum *is* the place and its visitors are the local community, or its inhabitants, these visitors (or community) are invited to reflect on the sense of the local from the *outside*, objectifying the community in itself. They have, in a way, “the

¹ « *Les miroirs feraient bien de réfléchir un peu plus avant de renvoyer les images.* »

² Anna Gregorová, Museology – science or just practical museum work. *MuWoP / DoTraM*, n.1, p.21-22, 1980. p.21.

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confused impression of being there and elsewhere at the same time". The perspective regarding the community is almost unreal, "as if the interior of the museum wouldn't take us into the heart of the town, offering, on the contrary, a certainty of its strange distance"³. This distant gaze over the community is built in the audiences and by the audiences inside the museum, even in ecomuseums – that put in their center not the *audiences*, but the *locals* (that are an audience in itself).

For the present analysis we may remember that musealizing implies two simultaneous changes: it is not only the object that changes its meaning when its context is altered (even when, in the case of ecomuseums, what changes is the context), but also, furthermore, each individual that relates itself to the object (the traditional visitor or local) has a different perspective of this object – and of its own self, at the time when their perspective is determined by their previous experiences. Museums, in that sense, are social instruments that involve people and things at the same time, which allows us to call them "social things". The idea of the social museum that is mentioned here is directly related to the concept of the "total museum"⁴ – discussed in the Round Table of Santiago, in Chile, in 1972 – as a museum that is concerned with specific social issues. However, if all museums are responsible for a particular encounter between people and things, in this sense, all museums are social.

According to the theories of performance, developed by anthropologists such as Turner or Schechner, in a theatrical act or a "social drama"⁵, as well as in the museum, in the encounter with the object the individual is, at once, himself and another. The individual is, then, divided between being and not-being, in a reflexive and subjective experience. Victor Turner describes the structure of social drama in four different essential actions: breach, crisis, redress and reintegration. This means that the elements that are constitutive of performance – in museums as well as in different genres of social performance – are imbedded in reality, but are not reality *per se*. They are reincorporated in reality by the museum action (musealization), and, then, they are transformed by the encounter with the visitor in a museal context.

The art of performance is, in this sense, imbedded in the social body and in the cultural activities of certain groups. In ecomuseums, the audience is confronted with its own image as a performance of the collective self. The *mise en scène* of a territory and the theatrical representation of community life provide the audience with the possibility of a view of itself from a distance – as a local group as well as a community, and at the same time as a singular *audience*. Even if, as has stated Hugues de Varine, the experience of traditional museums cannot be confounded with the ecomuseum because they happen in a different level of reality, in which "man is a visitor and not an actor"⁶, in fact, the visitors of an ecomuseum, or the local inhabitants of a territory where the museal performance takes place, are the center of its action.

This paper presents a theoretical study on the specificity of the ecomuseum regarding the experiences with cultural heritage and the cultural activities shared by a distinct social group – the visitors of this complex institution – in its living space. The ecomuseum is the best example of a museal experience that provides its audiences with the possibility of a special view of itself as another, creating a reflexive expression

³ Henri-Pierre Jeudy, « *Quand le musée fait œuvre* », in: GONSETH, Marc-Olivier; HAINARD, Jacques & KAEHR, Roland (éd.), *Le musée cannibale*, GHK Éditeurs, Musée d'Ethnographie, Neuchâtel, 2002. p.250.

⁴ The round table of Santiago (Chile). Basic principles of the integral museum. *Museum*. The role of museums in today's Latin America. Paris, UNESCO, v.XXV, n.3, p.198, 1973.

⁵ Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, New York: PAJ Publications, 1988.

⁶ Hugues de Varine, « L'écomusée (1978) », in : Desvallées, André ; De Barry, Marie Odile & Wasserman, Françoise (coord.), *Vagues: une anthologie de la Nouvelle Muséologie (vol. 1)*, Collection Museologia, Savigny-le-Temple : Éditions W-M.N.E.S., 1992. p.459.

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of a shared heritage. The issue of the singularity of the visitor, in this particular context, will be presented regarding the relation between object and subject, that is constructed as a museal relation

1. The question of the object

In philosophy, the object is not a reality in itself, but “a product, a result or an equivalence”. The object is what is placed or thrown forward by a subject, “who treats it as different from himself, even if he considers himself as an object”⁷. In comparison, if the *thing* is an extension of the subject, or a tool, the object, on the contrary, represents a breach of the subject from reality. In a museum, the object is a thing that has been musealized, or, in other words, a thing that can be defined as a certain kind of reality in particular.

Musealization turns real things into representations of the things taken from reality. The museum represents things as objects, giving them a distinct status and a value. Hence, the object is not in any case “raw reality”, on the contrary:

It is an ontological status which, in given circumstances, a particular thing will assume on the understanding that the thing would not be considered an object in other circumstances.⁸

In an identity approach, the object will always be what the subject places in front of him/her as a distinct – it is what is “in front of” and what is different⁹. In fact, the object is the subject at the same time that it is a breach from the subject. In the West, this breach between subject and object¹⁰ has been produced from the moment societies began to distance themselves from a tribal way of life, and it has always been a characteristic of museal action throughout modern times. There are no museums without objects, even if the object is, in fact, an idea or a question, or if it is the breach in itself that allows subjects to think of themselves as a subject, separated and, sometimes, individualized.

In the case of ecomuseums, that breach has been incorporated to people’s relations – visitors or the community – producing an image of the group that becomes an object in itself. That is how museums fabricate a tautological belief in the object, fixing the object of observation, and the act, the time, as well as the subject, the observer¹¹. That way, object and subject are fixed in the encounter of a group of people with the musealized image of this same group that is sometimes frozen in the very act of seeing (and seeing here, in a wide perspective, involves all the other senses).

2. The question of the subject

We can say the object of a museum exists only in relation to the subjects of observation. However, these subjects cannot be considered isolated individuals, but they must be seen regarding the societies in which they live. Even when visitors in a museum are considered in their singular selves as individuals, we can’t ignore the social nature of their presence and perception. The museum is one of the institutions that present a “system of schemes of perception and appreciation, of the judgment of

⁷ André Desvallées & François Mairesse (eds.), *Key concepts of Museology*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2010, p.59.

⁸ Desvallées & Mairesse, loc. cit.

⁹ Desvallées & Mairesse, loc. cit.

¹⁰ Descartes, Kant and, later, McLuhan (1969) apud DESVALLEES & MAIRESSE, loc. cit.

¹¹ Georges Didi-Huberman, *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*, Paris : Les Éditions de Minuit, 1992. p.51.

pleasure [...] acquired in the practices of daily life¹² and it is responsible for producing and reproducing what we can call the *collective view* (*regard collectif*).

According to Nathalie Heinich:

The *collective view* is marked by the existence of tools of perception and recording of the perceived, which may be transmitted in space and in time, allowing an undetermined number of people to develop a similar visual relation towards a certain object.¹³

The museum produces, then, a certain view of things, even before producing the knowledge of things that are seen¹⁴. In small museums that develop a more local action towards heritage, it is easier to standardize the plural and singular experiences and ways of seeing. In these museums where the collective view is easily constructed, their action is usually perceived as more effective, and social change can be achieved in less time.

To Heinich, in the encounter with heritage, the confrontation with the object is a singular moment, responsible for the mediation between the stage of acquisition of common resources and the ulterior stage of restitution of conclusions. The author will call this moment as the moment of “recognition”, in which “what is seen will update what is known”¹⁵. This means that seeing things, or feeling things, isn’t only the mere presence of and individual in front of an object. On the contrary, in a wider sense, the encounter with heritage is made of different moments in time: the before, the after, the sharing with peers in the space of the museum... In that sense, the subject is not the singular individual, but he is also the entire result of a collectivity. The subject is, then, singular and shared. He is unique and particular but also a collectivity individualized.

To the visitor in an ecomuseum, the artificial positions of subject and object are incorporated into a double operation of an intimate experience with the community – as a subject imbedded in the ecomuseum discourse – and, at the same time, through the distant view constructed over this community – as the object of the museum.

When the visitor is the local group – sometimes thought as a “community” in the group discourse – subject and object are kept apart, but both instances are also incorporated to people, creating the necessary consciousness to a reflection on identities and the power within the group. That way, the relations between people, as a group, can be confirmed, or, on the contrary, put into question by the museum action.

3. The individual and the community in the ecomuseum: the visitor’s intimate experience

When entering a museum – or a musealized social space – visitors bring along their own character, their own history, experiences and life path. The museum performance is the experience of the self in a museum; it is, then, an identity experience. The visitor’s self is the result of the reflexive mediation of the subject and the subject representation in the museum. The ecomuseum, in particular, represents a collective identity that is lived by individuals in a group. The community is sometimes created and

¹² Pierre Bourdieu & Yvette Delsaut, « Pour une sociologie de la perception », *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n. 40, 1981, p.5.

¹³ “Le regard collectif se repère à l’existence d’outils de perception et d’inscription du perçu, transmissibles dans l’espace et dans le temps, qui permettent à un nombre indéterminé de personnes de développer, face à un objet quelconque, un rapport visuel similaire.” Nathalie Heinich, *La fabrique du patrimoine, De la cathédrale à la petite cuillère*, Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 2009. p.123.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p.124.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p.130.

presented at the same time in the museum, allowing the 'real' group to see itself as a 'community'.

The singularity of the visitor is imbedded in the sociality of the community by the museum cultural action. As noted by Paul Ricœur, the person, as a thing that distinguishes itself by an "identifying reference"¹⁶, is responsible for the mediation between subjectivity and objectivity within the subject. However, we may recollect that the breach between subject and object is, in fact, artificial and constructed by a particular appropriation of reality. In the case of museums, this breach is a historic phenomenon that distinguishes Modernity in the West. As presented by Benoît de L'Estoile, regarding the relation with identities, museums can be thought as "museums of the self" or "museums of the Other"¹⁷. And he points out that with the process of colonization, the big European museums have explored further the constructions of identities responding to two essential questions: "who are we?" and "who are the Others?"

Ecomuseums do not transcend these identity relations, and they have been considered by specialists as "museums of the self", even if they can also be thought of as "museums of the Other" because museums never stopped relating to difference. Ecomuseums and local museums present the particularity of having their actions oriented towards individual experiences. The intimate experience of the visitor is, then, more easily reached by the ecomuseum. According to Hugues de Varine:

We can say that the classic museum preserves for the contemplation of individuals, while the community ecomuseum uses for the development of the group.¹⁸

This notion of community development – dear to the theorists of New Museology – turns the ecomuseum into a laboratory of individual and collective experiences within a group that is musealized in relation to a heritage that is the material support for these same experiences.

3.1 Experimental-museums, laboratory-museums

Throughout the life of the many institutions in which he developed his own museology, Georges Henri Rivière experimented the model of the laboratory-museum that was "at the same time a center of research, conservation, documentation and, sometimes, a place for exhibitions and presentations, an establishment for the education of many different audiences"¹⁹. Before idealizing and putting into practice the ecomuseum, Rivière had conceived a "permanent field laboratory"²⁰. Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, he thought of the ecomuseum as an experimental structure for the expression of men, working "with the participation of the people that lives in it as an instrument for consciousness and the expression of its heritage and its development"²¹.

¹⁶ Paul Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1990. p.39.

¹⁷ Benoît de L'Estoile, *Le goût des Autres, De l'exposition coloniale aux arts premiers*, Paris: Flammarion, 2007, passim.

¹⁸ "On pourrait dire que le musée classique conserve en vue de la délectation des individus, tandis que l'écomusée communautaire consomme en vue du développement du groupe." Hugues de Varine « L'écomusée (1978) », in : André Desvallées; Marie Odile De Barry & Françoise Wasserman, (coord.), *Vagues: une anthologie de la Nouvelle Muséologie (vol. 1)*, Collection Museologia, Savigny-le-Temple : Éditions W-M.N.E.S., 1992. p.459.

¹⁹ Isaac Chiva, Georges Henri Rivière : un demi-siècle d'ethnologie de la France. *Terrain* [En ligne], 5, 1985. Disponible en: <<http://terrain.revues.org/288>>. p.2.

²⁰ Georges Henri Rivière, « L'écomusée, un modèle évolutif (1971-1980) », in : André Desvallées; Marie Odile De Barry & Françoise Wasserman, (coord.), *Vagues: une anthologie de la Nouvelle Muséologie (vol. 1)*, Collection Museologia, Savigny-le-Temple : Éditions W-M.N.E.S., 1992. p.440.

²¹ Ibidem, p.442.

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Even though Rivière had also thought of the ecomuseum as a “mirror” in which a group can look to see and to recognize itself as in a reflection, we can say today, after the last known ecomuseum experiences, that what the concept illustrates is more a *reflection* than a *reflex*. The experimentation of the “self” in a community is what the ecomuseum offers to its audiences.

The ecomuseum, “this institution that is interested in people as much as it is interested in things”²², turns the social group into an evolving representation, that is, into the reflected image of the group from which people can claim the identity of the community.

In an ecomuseum, a “community regime” – as a kind of “regime of qualification”, according to Heinich’s classification – has been used constructing certain values that are based on what is widely “shared, numbered, standard”. This “community regime” usually substitutes a “singularity regime” that values what is “rare, exceptional, unique”²³. In the first case, the group recognizes itself as a group or community that shares a heritage and that exists as the main object of the museum. These shared values, then, are defined by the process of recording things as heritage through musealization. The museal grammar will make the group exist as a representation in the musealized space in a way that people can experiment their identity as a reality, but also as an exercise of social reflection.

3.2 Art at the ecomuseum

Seeing something in a museum, and, particularly, in ecomuseums, isn’t simply an act of giving visitors visible evidences of reality. In the framework of art, according to Georges Didi-Huberman, “letting something be seen always means disturbing the very act of seeing in its subject”²⁴. According to this thought, seeing is an open experience, because seeing will always be an operation that is accomplish by a subject. For this reason, many museums resort to art as an instrument to frame the visitor’s experience and, sometimes, also to create a reflection.

A museum will never be able to prescribe how people see. What visitors see and what they feel in an exhibition or in a musealized space will be determined by the previous social and cultural experiences of each individual. However, museums generally resort to particular languages used to lead their audiences to see in a certain way. The language of art is, in particular, used to that specific end²⁵, even when not in an obvious way, as in the case of museums of primitive art or in ecomuseums. Here the example of the ecomuseum of Le Creusot can be evoked for an analysis of a ‘social museum’ that has been conceived simultaneously as a museum of art – and that was known as a model to be adopted by other ecomuseums in the world.

²² André Desvallées, André, « L'écomusée : musée degré zéro ou musée hors les murs ? », *Terrain* [En ligne], n.5, 1985, mis en ligne le 23 juillet 2007, 06 avril 2012. URL : <http://terrain.revues.org/2889> ; DOI : 10.4000/terrain.2889. p.2.

²³ Nathalie Heinich. « Les émotions patrimoniales: de l'affect à l'axiologie », *Anthropologie Sociale*, n.20, 2012, p.31.

²⁴ Georges Didi-Huberman, *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*, Paris : Les Éditions de Minuit, 1992. p.51.

²⁵ Here we can recall that the elements structuring the visual perception are not given *a priori*, but they are historically produced and reproduced: “they are inseparable from the historic conditions of their presentation”. In the same way, according to Bourdieu, “the aesthetic disposition, that builds as a work of art the objects that are socially assigned to that end” and the “aesthetic competence, along with its categories, concepts and taxonomies” are the products of the history of the field that must be reproduced by a particular learning experience. Pierre Bourdieu, *Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998. p.486.

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By the end of the 1960s, when the municipality of Le Creusot came up with a project created in the spirit of decentralization and cultural activities²⁶, it was initially created as the Center of Cultural Action (the CAC, in French, related to the LARC – Entertainment, Arts, Encounters and Culture)²⁷ having an agenda that envisioned receiving artists and the recognition of the local artistic production. In 1970, through a few local actors, the municipality asked Marcel Évrard – an outsider of the town who had been to Le Creusot to present his exhibitions of African art at LARC – to create a museum²⁸. The National Center of Research on Cultural Action and Art Creation (CRACAP, in French, created in the same year)²⁹ served as the basic structure for the creation of a museum in which the language of art would be combined with the discourse for the preservation of the local history.

The ecomuseum in the town of Le Creusot, created and sustained by CRACAP in the beginning of the 1970s, broke with the traditional argument among French museums between, on the one side, the art historians, to whom the museum would never be more than a museum of art, and, on the other, the ethnologists, who were “on the contrary, concerned with the reinsertion of the artistic phenomenon into the center of a wider human praxis”³⁰. Contradicting the traditional approach that separates art from ethnology in museums, the ecomuseum has been using art as a social tool.

In the ecomuseum, art is, then, in the center of the subjects’ experiences, which is perceived as a more complex one than in traditional museums. The example of Le Creusot shows how in a museum that has a clear social end, the language of art has been adopted as a tool to reach the audience. At Le Creusot, art – and contemporary local art, in particular – has been the medium between people and their heritage, as well as their memory in the museum territory.

In a more pragmatic perspective, particular to the social sciences, we can consider – in order to reflect on a specific exhibition case – subjects and objects “regarding their capacity of action, and not as passive supports for abstract projections”³¹. In 1979, from January to March, the exhibition “Gardens of daily life”, coordinated by the House of Arts and Leisure of Le Creusot³², has mobilized the urban community around a well-known and shared object. A research with the local inhabitants was organized to extract what could be considered more meaningful about the popular garden. From the results of the testimonies collected from the people living at Le Creusot, it was possible to conclude that “the garden isn’t only for leisure, or an activity after work”, but it would be “much more a complementary activity and sometimes necessary to obtain a supplement to the salary...”³³. Furthermore, the gardens and gardening at the industrial community of the Creusot were important parts of the life of its inhabitants in many ways.

Some testimonies collected to give meaning to this exhibition provide some clues to the transformation of the traditional kitchen garden into the ornamental garden, as a work of art in itself:

²⁶ Octave Debary, Octave, *La fin du Creusot ou L’art d’accommoder les restes*, Paris: CTHS, 2002, p.29.

²⁷ *Centre d’Action Culturelle (le CAC du LARC – Loisirs, Arts, Rencontres et Culture)*, in French.

²⁸ Debary, op. cit., p.30.

²⁹ *Centre national de Recherche d’Animation et de Création pour les Arts Plastiques (le CRACAP)*, in French.

³⁰ Jean Clair, « Les origines de la notion d’ecomusée », *Cracap / Informations*, n.2-3, p.2-4, 1976. p.2.

³¹ Nathalie Heinich, « Les émotions patrimoniales: de l’affect à l’axiologie », *Anthropologie Sociale*, n.20, 2012, p.20.

³² *Maison des Arts et Loisirs du Creusot*, in French.

³³ François Portet, « Ce que disent les jardiniers », in: CRACAP – Centre National de Recherche d’Animation et de Création pour les Arts Plastiques, *Jardins du quotidien*, Maison des Arts et Loisirs du Creusot, LARC, Le Creusot, 1979. p.1.

The decoration, the fences, we started 20 or 25 years ago. We were criticized; people used to blame us, saying: you would do better to plant potatoes for your kids, you can't eat grass... the wide corridors, what made us build them were the kids, the family. They should benefit from that.³⁴

In fact, at Le Creusot, the “visit to a garden” was part of daily life: “when we visit some friends, before entering home, we go see the vegetables growing, planting vegetables”³⁵. In that context the gardens were, then, an exchanging network related to work and to neighbors, as much as an object of admiration and contemplation shared by the community. The understanding of the organizers of such an exhibition (the museum staff and some people from the community) allowed the appropriation of a complex social object by the local subjects/actors. This exhibition has shown visitors (the audience of the ecomuseum, including the local inhabitants) the landscapes that are invisible even to themselves, their signs and mental landscapes seen as works of art.

In that way art has been used to re-signify the territory and the elements of the local heritage at Le Creusot; it has repaired the relations between individuals and their history. There is not a single object at Le Creusot that has not been defined as a work of art as well as a social object, and sometimes a utility. These objects are, at first, *objects of reflection* for the subjects – the actors and visitors of this heritage.

4. Between the mirror and the reflection: some closing thoughts

As pointed out by André Desvallées, first in 1975, the mirror theme appeared with the definition of the ecomuseum: “A mirror in which people look to recognize themselves in it [...]”³⁶. Georges Henri Rivière used the mirror theme to think ecomuseums during the largest part of his life, and this metaphor has been evoked by a number of theorists, still today, to speak of museums. However, the mirror can also be mentioned in a provocative way, to question the assumption that museums that are not centered on “real things” can musealize a “real image” of people living in a territory. The belief in the fact that there is an actual breach between subject and object in the ecomuseum is only natural when used in the name of the reification of the created image.

In different parts of the globe, museal action is employed to apply the subject/object breach that is also a breach between reality and its representation – an artificial breach, not perceived as artificial in the case of most museums. If, by contrast, cinema, theater and literature have exploited this separation in a critical manner, as an aspect of performance in the West, in the universe of museums we usually create its reification.

Learning what museums intend when separating subject from object in the museal experience is learning to see and to feel the museum in a certain way. With that experience all museums place us in an ambiguous relation with ourselves and our heritage. In other words, we own a heritage that can have unknown owners. This paradox makes us subjects and objects at the same time.

The social experience in a museum is an experience in its whole; the social-museal complex comprehends all aspects of human life – art and society among them. In a

³⁴ “Du décor, des haies, depuis 20, 25 ans, on a commencé. On nous a critiqués, les gens jetaient la pierre, disaient : tu ferais mieux de planter des patates à tes gamins, le gazon ça ne se mange pas... les allées larges, les allées larges, ce qui nous a fait développer ça, c'est les enfants, la famille, ils devaient profiter de ça”. Portet, loc. cit.

³⁵ Portet, loc. cit.

³⁶ Rivière (1975 apud Desvallées, 2000).

more general sense, the “social museums” – terminology that is currently used mainly in Latin America and other countries in Europe, such as Portugal and Spain – are museums that are interested in transforming societies and the social questions and issues into objects, in a reflective way or not. All museums can be considered social museums when visitors are, at the same time, the audience and the theme of the museal discourse, or, in other words, subject and object of the museum. And they can also be seen that way when these two positions are thought not so much as musealized truths, but more as social categories that are historically constructed.

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THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE: DISCUSSION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTEMPORARY MUSEUMS AND THEIR VISITORS

Manuelina Ma. Duarte Cândido

Federal University of Goiás – Brazil

Gabriela Aidar

Pinacoteca of the State of São Paulo – Brazil

Luciana Conrado Martins

Perceive | Research, consulting and educational training – Brazil

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article was to explore museum experience and discussions on the role of visitors in contemporary museums. We regard this experience as the relationship visitors have with museums and the ability of these institutions to cater to each individual visitor, creating meaningful, special and unique experiences. The current view is that audiences are no longer mere passive spectators but seek to have their identity and/or cultural needs recognized by museums. Against this background, we shall discuss the limits and challenges posed by the changes museums have undergone in the last few decades. The impact of these shifts on the relationship with visitors in terms of their expectations and personal agendas shall also be discussed. The discussion shall be based on theoretical references from the field of museum communication and education. Our goal is to contribute to the debate on the contemporary concept of museums in relation to their visitors.

RÉSUMÉ

L'expérience muséale : discussion sur la relation entre les musées contemporains et leurs visiteurs

Le but de cet article est d'étudier l'expérience muséale et les discussions autour du rôle des visiteurs dans les musées contemporains. Nous entendons cette expérience comme la relation que le visiteur établit avec les musées ainsi que l'aptitude de ces établissements à nourrir chaque visiteur individuel, en créant des expériences significatives, spéciales et uniques. Le point de vue actuel est que les publics ne sont plus de simples spectateurs passifs mais cherchent à avoir leur identité et/ou leurs besoins culturels reconnus par les musées. Devant cette situation, nous chercherons à discuter les limites et les défis provoqués par les transformations que les musées ont subies dans les dernières décennies. Nous discuterons aussi comment ces changements ont influencé la relation avec les visiteurs dans leurs attentes et leurs programmations personnels. La discussion sera appuyée sur des références théoriques provenant du domaine de la communication et de l'éducation muséales. Notre objectif est de contribuer au débat concernant le concept contemporain des musées en relation avec le visiteur.

Manuelina Ma. Duarte Cândido, Gabriela Aidar, Luciana Conrado Martins

*The museum experience: discussion on the relationship between contemporary museums
and their visitors*

RESUMEN

La experiencia de museo: discusión sobre la relación entre los museos contemporáneos y sus visitantes

El objetivo de este trabajo fue explorar la experiencia del museo y los debates sobre el papel de los visitantes en los museos contemporáneos. Consideramos esta experiencia como la relación que los visitantes tienen con los museos y la capacidad de estas instituciones para atender a cada visitante individual, creando experiencias significativas, especiales y únicas. La visión actual es que el público ya no es mas espectador pasivo, sino que busca que su identidad y / o sus necesidades culturales sean reconocidas por los museos. En este contexto, vamos a discutir los límites y los desafíos planteados por los cambios que los museos han experimentado en las últimas décadas. Se discutirá también el impacto de estos cambios en la relación con los visitantes en términos de sus expectativas y agendas personales. La discusión se basará en referencias teóricas del campo de la educación y de la comunicación de museo. Nuestro objetivo es contribuir al debate sobre el concepto contemporáneo de museos en relación con sus visitantes

* * *

Introduction

The aim of the present article was to discuss the ability of museums, as vehicles of communication often resembling mass communication, to address each visitor and promote meaningful, special and unique experiences for the individual. We understand that museums establish communication dynamics with their audiences based on different communication models, defined according to the priorities of each particular museum. These differences in the communication processes adopted by museums come to the fore in communicational and educational programs run by these institutions, where they influence a museum's relationship with its audiences.

The audiences in turn, are no longer limited to being mere passive spectators. Museums are increasingly expected to cater for the needs of specific groups that seek to have their identity and/or cultural needs recognized by museums. The response of museums – in an ever more competitive world in terms of media offerings – has been to cater for these needs by transforming their discourse and establishing new and compelling forms of communication with their audiences. But how far can this shift go? Can one envisage a museum in which visitors' expectations and personal agendas are totally satisfied? Could this represent the role of museums in the twenty-first century?

This article seeks to elaborate on this discussion drawing on theoretical references from the field of museum communication and education. Our goal is to contribute to the debate on the contemporary concept of museums in relation to their visitors.

Initial thoughts on the experience of museum audiences

The notion that museums are part of the mass media has been touched on by some authors and advocated by Pastor Homs¹. This author proposed a model which includes the typification of visitors as broad, undifferentiated, lacking in self-awareness, incapable of working as a group, and passive in nature, while defining communication as one-way from communicator to recipient. The authors does however, acknowledge

¹ Maria Immaculada Pastor Homs. [Pedagogia Museística](#). Barcelona: Ariel, 2004.

the coexistence of this model with exhibitions with a more didactic focus, based on a more interpersonal and interactive communication model, while recognizing that exhibitions are more commonly designed according to the first model, and whose narrative is adapted *a posteriori* by museum educators for different audiences. The interactive or interpersonal model is characterized by individual or small groups of visitors that are differentiated, self-aware, interconnected and active, for whom the communication proposed is based on a variety of methods and is constructed via a two-way process which shares power equally and includes feedback.

Along the same lines, Hooper-Greenhill² proposed an overview of the educational theoretical perspectives involved in the educational work of museums. According to this author, there are two distinct approaches based on the influence of theories of knowledge (epistemological) and of learning: a primary more positivist, or realistic, approach in which knowledge is viewed as external to the learning and accurately measurable; plus a secondary, more constructivist approach which construes knowledge as derived from the relationship between the learner and the media, and thus more processual and open to subjectivity.

With regard to the impact of these perspectives on the museum environment, Hooper-Greenhill cites a lack of consensus on the best approach for establishing an effective communication process between museum collections and their audiences, but confirms that both approaches figure in the work of museum professionals and in the way the public uses these spaces. However, the author highlights the need to establish investigative processes which consider the processes of reassigning meaning which the visitor makes in contact with the objects exhibited. In her view, the best way of capturing this process is by extrapolating quantitative instruments toward more sociological and qualitative approaches.

This perspective runs counter to that which museum professionals typically face in their everyday practice. In museum appraisal, particularly from an outsiders perspective (potential sponsors, governments, among others), a key indicator of the institutional success of museums always lies in visitation, normally determined using a quantitative approach. These institutions face a constant challenge balancing the need for good performance on these indicators while also creating a meaningful experience for visitors.

But what constitutes a meaningful experience for visitors at museums? Larrosa Bondía, proposes the following definition:

Experience is what we go through, what happens to us, what touches us. It is not what goes on, what happens or what touches. Countless things go on every day, yet little happens to us. It's almost as if everything that goes on is arranged so that nothing happens to us³.

The educator Milene Chiovatto, expounding on the ideas of the same author, in relation to fostering meaningful experiences in museums proposed that:

The experience, as we go through it, shapes *us* and changes *us*. Thus, "knowledge from experience" is what is acquired as we respond to what happens to us throughout life. It is the way we give meaning to events that

² Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (ed.), *The educational role of the museum*. London & New York: Routledge, 1994.

³ Jorge Larrosa Bondía, "Notas sobre a experiência e o saber de experiência". In: *Revista Brasileira de Educação* Jan/Fev/Mar/Abr 2002 N° 19, p. 21. Disponível online em: http://www.anped.org.br/rbe/rbedigital/rbde19/rbde19_04_jorge_larrosa_bondia.pdf, acesso em 13/02/2013.

happen to us, thereby forming a continuous cycle. Knowledge from experience is consequently particular, subjective, relative, contingent and personal.

These concepts of experience only apply if we view knowledge, and the learning processes based on it, from a more personal perspective, being included and consolidated in accordance with the subjectivities and particularities of the learner.⁴

To this end, in a bold statement, Mário Moutinho⁵ called on museums to “customize” i.e. to be a new museum for each visitor or client. According to this author, it is vital for museums that wish to serve society, to embody and adhere to what is expected of service providers, whose core operating characteristics include inseparability, variability, intangibility and perishability. Adopting these values implies a shift in the way museums function in society:

Inseparability: consumption does not involve keeping something, an exhibition for example, is “purchased” and used on the spot. The museum therefore, has a grace period in which to prove the visit was worthwhile and that the time/quality balance was positive.

Variability: services are variable depending on the provider and client (museum – visitor relationship). Museums that refuse to “customize” their services however, will be unable to adapt to the needs of each visitor.

Intangibility: services that are not tangible, for instance, the visitor’s experience at the museum is intangible.

Perishability: services are perishable in that they cannot be stored. Museums need to put on new exhibitions, for instance, as opposed to running the same exhibition for years.

Given this, possible innovations according to the author include expanding the field of ideas and minimizing the presentation of objects (intangible), recognizing there is limited time for museums to prove they are necessary (inseparability), acknowledging that there is a “sell by” date after which renewal is required (perishability), and becoming responsive to the needs of each visitor (variability).

Concerning the aspects of variability and intangibility on which we wish to focus our attention, these aspects are associated with the notion of a meaningful experience for the individual. Because it is the subjectivity of the individual that, in relation to the cultural references conveyed by the museum (polysemic objects) within a communication framework which refrains from imposing a one-way discourse and seeks processual construction of meanings together with the visitor, results in a singular experience for each visitor. And the meaningfulness of this experience is dictated by the intangibility – irrespective of objectives, strategies, appraisal – where the outcome of this experience for the individual is unpredictable.

Hence, this hinges not only on the museum having an educational offering and services differentiated to cater for their different publics, but also on reserving “spaces”

⁴ Mila Milene Chiovatto, “Educação líquida: reflexões sobre o processo educativo nos museus a partir das experiências do Núcleo de Ação Educativa da Pinacoteca do Estado.” In: Milene Chiovatto (coord.). *Anais do Encontro Internacional Diálogos em Educação, Museu e Arte [CD-ROM]*. São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2010. P. 15.

⁵ Moutinho, Mário Canova. *Os museus como instituições prestadoras de serviços in Revista Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias*, n. 12. Lisboa: Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, 2008.

for the experience of the visitor. These “spaces” may carry provocations, questions, or provide room for user participation, understood as “ownership” of the museum.

In this respect, the role of education in museums can be reviewed, no longer being regarded as a provider or “translator” of curatorial content, but as a mediator between the meanings constructed by visitors and those proposed by the museum. According to Lisa Roberts,

The once prevalent view that knowledge is objective and verifiable has been widely challenged by the notion that knowledge is socially constructed and shaped by individuals’ particular interests and values. Language about facts and certainties has been replaced by language about context, meaning, and discourse. [...] This shift has important implications for what museums are and do. It would appear that these onetime Towers of Babel comprise, as foretold, not a synopsis of wisdom but a multitude of voices. Objects, it follows, hold multiple stories and meanings, and, depending on the context, all of those stories and meanings are potentially valid.⁶

Nevertheless, it is important to consider that this view of the museum experience, as being constructed through interaction of the individual with the museum, is a recent concept among museum professionals. In the ensuing text, while discussing some possibilities of the relationship visitors establish with museums, we shall examine the modifications that have taken place over the last few decades and changed our perception of possibilities during a visit to museums, as well as of visitors’ roles.

Possibilities and meanings: paths toward shaping the museum experience

The shift in perspective concerning the role of audiences within museums is very recent and moves toward increasing empowerment of visitors. The literature on the subject, particularly from the 1990s, is substantial and provides key ideas such as an emphasis on the importance of public participation in all stages and activities in the museum operating chain, to encompass not only museum practices per se, but also involvement in the decision-making that shapes these practices and integrates them coherently.

The broadening of the possibilities of participation by all types of public in the decision-making process of museums brings with it a wider notion of culture, in which different cultural manifestations, particularly those from the economically underprivileged strata of the population, share space with the so-called “high culture”, historically the target of museum preservation. Models explaining the different levels of public participation can be found in the studies by the authors Anik Meunier and Virginie Soulier⁷ Cristina Bruno⁸ and Gerard Corsane⁹, whose proposals and analyses are grounded in the strong underlying of different audiences having a say in the decision over what should or should not be preserved and exhibited by museums. Discussions on multiculturalism, pluralism and cultural diversity figure strongly in the realm of museums posing new challenges to the institutions which should respond by implementing new

⁶ Lisa C. Roberts, *From knowledge to narrative: educators and the changing museum*. Washington & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997, pgs. 02 e 03.

⁷ Anik Meunier e Virginie Soulier, “Préfiguration du concept de muséologie citoyenne”. In: Cardin, Jean-François; Éthier, Marc-André; Meunier, Anik, *Histoire, musées et éducation à la citoyenneté*. Québec: MultiMondes, 2010. p. 309-330.

⁸ Maria Cristina Oliveira Bruno, “Museus e pedagogia museológica: os caminhos para a administração dos indicadores da memória”. In: MILDNER, Saul Eduardo Seiger (Org.) *As várias faces do patrimônio*. Santa Maria: Pallotti, 2006. p. 119-140.

⁹ Gerard Corsane, “Issues in heritage, museums and galleries: a brief introduction. In: Corsane, Gerard, *Heritage, museums and galleries. An introductory reader*. New York: Routledge, p. 1-14, 2005.

practices that meet the demands of society and of debates from the intellectual arena concerned.

Another aspect of the “democratizing” influences on the museum sphere is evident from debates on public participation in science, in the Science, Technology and Society movements and scientific contention, which seek to table for discussion the ways that science and technology are disseminated and made available to the population. In museums, these questions emerge through the existence of forms of communication and education that depict science not only as a “ready finished” product but as an arena of debates in which different positions can be taken. The incentive for public participation in this “decision-taking” is also the subject of recent studies and practices in museums of science and technology¹⁰.

This move toward greater public participation and a dialogic perspective can also be seen in art museums. In a study analyzing professional preparation and qualifications of art museum educators in the United States, David Ebitz highlighted the shift from the pedagogic model he refers to as the empty vessel – characterized by one-way, transmittable communication and education, the basis of Traditional Pedagogies – to a dialogue-based pedagogy, “in which the student is engaged in a personal and social process of discovery and construction of meanings.”¹¹ According to the author, this shift began in the latter quarter of the twentieth century due to the growing number of visitors and to the previously cited need for funding. “New and more diverse publics have different expectations – and sometimes demands – of the role art museums should play in their lives”¹².

With regards to educational actions, the author Melinda Meyer¹³ explains this shift by a radical “cultural shift” in the education sectors of the museums of visual arts. According to Meyer, this shift commenced in the 1970s, largely owing to the impact of what she terms the influence of post-modern theories on the field of the history of art and education, changing the way museum educators viewed the role of the public in these institutions. The post-structuralist reasoning, which entails dialogue on the so-called post-modern perspectives, according to Meyer, allows the construction of a new educational position in museums of visual arts which “transfers the construction of meanings from the object and artist to those interpreting it.”¹⁴

In this sense, it can be affirmed that education in art museums followed a similar path to education in museums of human sciences and museums of science and technology, toward broader access to the public. The transformation in the concept of the public as an “empty vessel” to a subject with prior knowledge and expectations is clear. This change reflects the extent to which visitors – with their habits, roles and personal expectations – gained importance for museum educators throughout the twentieth century. This idea led, in the early 1990s, to a widespread perception of the needs

¹⁰ Duncan F. Cameron, “Contentiousness and shifting knowledge paradigms: The roles of history and science museums in contemporary societies”. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 20, p. 213-233, 2005; Ann Mintz, “Science, society and science centres”. *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos*, Rio de Janeiro, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, v. 12 (suplemento), p. 267-280, 2005; Erminia. G. Pedretti, “Perspectives on learning through research on critical issues-based science center exhibitions”. *Science Education*, v. 88, issue S1, p. 34-47, 2004.

¹¹ David Ebitz. “Qualifications and the professional preparation and development of art museum educators”. *Studies in Art Education. A Journal of Issues and Research*, v. 46, n. 2, p. 150-169, 2005, p. 152.

¹² Idem, p. 151.

¹³ Melinda M. Meyer, “A postmodern puzzle: rewriting the place of the visitor in art museum education”. *Studies in Art Education. A Journal of Issues and Research*, 46, n. 4, 2005, p. 356-368.

¹⁴ Idem, p. 359.

stemming from “visual literacy”, as outlined by the previously cited author Melinda Meyer:

The role of the educator was to function like an ethnographer who has the task of interpreting the cultures of visitors and scholars for one another. Museum educators wanted to empower visitors as freely functioning agents not dependent on morsels of scholarly information in order to navigate the strange, labyrinth world of museums¹⁵.

Although, as Mayer pointed out, educational practices of museums have not kept pace with the theoretical tendencies driving them, their effects have led to a transformation in the educational habits of museums. The discourse of the expert is no longer the only voice heard in these spaces, in which the needs of the public are now also considered, while museum educators have taken on a major supporting role.

This same pattern of change and “empowerment” of publics can also be seen in museums of science and technology. While on the one hand Sibeles Cazelli and other authors¹⁶ point to the influence of the paradigms drawn from traditional pedagogies on the concept of exhibitions and educational actions of science and technology museums, on the other hand, the authors stress these institutions’ shift toward more innovative pedagogic precepts.

Thus, we reject the notion of museum audiences as a large homogenous mass, in favor of communities of interest, or the so-called interpretive communities. These communities can be identified by groups which share the same interpretative strategies, i.e. by groups that attribute meanings using common interpretative strategies.¹⁷ Considering these particularities has proven increasingly productive in the implementation of educational and communicational actions within museums, since they ensure recognition of the diversity and active participation of the visitor in the knowledge construction process, taking into account their prior knowledge, skills and personal motivation.

Working together with communities has been the main goal of museums inspired by the so-called New Museology and Social Museology. According to Victor,

... studies of publics applied to the reality of traditional museums, do not suffice to capture the essence of social museology, for which other sciences and tools should be recruited in pursuit of answers.¹⁸

Interventions resulting from these facets of Museology regard the museum as a space to cater for social needs, where museum professionals often act as catalysts and enablers in community-based projects. In many cases, it is acknowledged that all of a

¹⁵ Idem, p. 365.

¹⁶ Sibeles Cazelli et al. Tendências pedagógicas das exposições de um museu de ciência. In: Vanessa Guimarães; Gilson Antunes Silva, *Implantação de centros e museus de ciência*. Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ, 2002.

¹⁷ “Given that the process of interpretation involves prior knowledge, and that the world is known through culture, our interpretation will be that which fits our particular time and place in the world. What we know is what we need to know to enable us to take our place in a particular society or group [...] It is within interpretive communities that the meaning-making of an individual is tested, revised, supported and developed. The interpretive community both sets limits for and constrains meaning, and enables meaning. Interpretive communities are not stable, but may change as people move from one to another.” HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eileen (ed.). *The educational role of the museum*. Londres e NY: Routledge, 1994. Pgs. 49 e 50.

¹⁸ Isabel Victor. *Os museus e a qualidade - Distinguir entre museus com "qualidades" e a qualidade em museus*. Lisboa: Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, 2005. (Cadernos de Socio-museologia, 23). p. 167.

museum's public cannot be catered for concomitantly, but these broaden upon conducting a project for one social group and then another, thereby achieving a role which better represents the diversity of the local community.

Reiterating, this work is characterized by a focus on the social group as opposed to an emphasis on individuals. Therefore, the theme proposed by the ICOFOM in 2013 urges us to address the limits among "customization", exclusivity and educational commitment of museums. However, although communicational and educational actions of museums are devised with groups and communities in mind, the experiencing and taking part in experiences at museums shall always be individual and subjective in nature.

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MUSEO DE CADA UNO, MUSEOS DE TODOS NOSOTROS: REFLEXIONANDO SOBRE IDEAS Y POSIBLES PRÁCTICAS PARA UN DIÁLOGO EFECTIVO

Luciana Menezes de Carvalho

Tereza Scheiner

Programa de Postgrado en Museología y Patrimonio

PPG-PMUS - UNIRIO/MAST - Brasil

RESUMEN:

Pensando en la temática propuesta por el ICOFOM para este año: *El Visitante especial: todos y cada uno de nosotros*, el presente artículo tiene como objetivo reflexionar sobre las siguientes cuestiones: ¿Cómo pensar el individuo en un contexto de exhibiciones, en su mayoría tan genéricas, como en los grandes museos y sus grandiosas exhibiciones? ¿Cómo hablar del individuo en un contexto donde siempre se utilizó el amplio y ambiguo término “público”? ¿Para quién y con quién son construidos los museos? ¿Qué son, de hecho, los museos? Se buscará, ante todo, contestar a las preguntas relacionadas a los museos para finalmente focalizar las cuestiones acerca del tema. El objetivo es defender que, antes de tratar y reforzar que cada individuo es importante para los museos, es necesario considerar algunas premisas: 1) pensar al Museo desde una perspectiva fenomenológica (basados en la semiótica); 2) considerar *cómo* son constituidas las exhibiciones; 3) definir a quién los museos están conduciendo sus discursos; y 4) problematizar el tema de la democratización de los museos.

Palabras clave: Museo. Museología. Individuo. Diálogo

ABSTRACT:

Museum for each one and every one of us: reflecting about ideas and possible practices for an effective dialogue

Reflecting on ICOFOM's 2013 theme *The Special Visitor: Each and Every One of Us*, the paper presents thoughts about the following questions: How do we think of the individual in the context of exhibitions, mostly so generic, such as the big museums and their large exhibitions? How do we think of the individual visitor in a context where it is common to use the broad and ambiguous term “audience”? For whom and with whom are museums built? What are, in fact, museums? First of all, we intend to answer the questions about museums and then we talk about the theme. The objective is to indicate that before talking about the importance of the individual on museums, it is important to consider: 1) thinking of museum in a phenomenological approach (including semiotic reflections); 2) considering *how* the exhibitions are made; 3) defining to whom museums are addressed; and 4) discussing the democratization of museums.

Keywords: Museum. Museology. Individual. Dialogue.

Luciana Menezes de Carvalho & Tereza Scheiner

Museo de cada uno, museos de todos nosotros: reflexionando sobre ideas y posibles prácticas para un diálogo efectivo

RÉSUMÉ

Musée de chacun, musées de tous : réfléchissons sur les idées et les pratiques possibles pour un dialogue efficace

Lorsque nous réfléchissons au thème du colloque pour la réunion annuelle de l'ICOFOM 2013, *Le visiteur particulier : chacun et n'importe lequel d'entre nous*, notre pensée porte sur les questions suivantes : comment envisageons-nous l'individu dans le contexte des expositions, tellement passepartout, comme nous trouvons dans les grands musées et leurs énormes expositions ? Comment envisageons-nous le visiteur individuel dans un contexte où habituellement nous utilisons le terme large et ambigu qui est « audience » ? Pour qui et avec qui a-t-on construit les musées ? En fait, que sont les musées ? Nous voulons d'abord répondre aux questions qui ont trait aux musées, et ensuite parler du thème. Le but est de démontrer qu'avant de parler de l'importance du visiteur individuel en rapport avec les musées, il est important de ne pas omettre: 1) de réfléchir au musées sous l'angle phénoménologique (y compris par des considérations sémiotiques), 2) d'examiner comment on fait les expositions, 3) de définir à qui s'adressent les musées, 4) d'aborder la question de la démocratisation des musées.

Mots clé: Musées, Muséologie. Visiteur individuel. Dialogue

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Primeras consideraciones

A los museos contemporáneos son lanzados diferentes desafíos. En el discurso contemporáneo están incorporadas las cuestiones de democratización del acceso y de la manera de construir, idealmente, los museos. Sin embargo, el uso del término democratización puede transmitir la idea de que este proceso es una apertura de quienes detienen el poder hacia aquellos que no lo detienen. ¿Pero es así? ¿Los museos no serían construidos por lo social? Al considerar estas posibilidades tendremos dos premisas: o la democratización es efectiva ya; o los museos son construidos por entes que no hacen parte y/o no dialogan con la sociedad a la que se están refiriendo.

Los museos en su mayoría llevan un estigma, difícil de ser superado aún en la contemporaneidad, como declara Sepúlveda dos Santos:

Museos consolidan hábitos y costumbres, llevando el visitante a hablar bajo, caminar en pasos cortos, siguiendo trayectorias infinitas sin indagaciones o sorpresas. Reglas disciplinarias controlan los cuerpos y movimientos. Además, la suntuosidad de los objetos dispuestos, la falta de información sobre estos solo permite al visitante reverenciarlos, al revés de intentar comprenderlos. Museos muchas veces ocupan antiguos palacios pero, aun cuando creados para abrigar colecciones, reproducen la imponente de residencias majestosas. Sin duda, estas son características presentes en el Louvre y en el British Museum, pero asimismo en distintos museos brasileros. Estos no son necesariamente palacios extremadamente suntuosos, pero en su mayoría son labirintos poco señalados y capaces de constreñir cualquier ciudadano común que por la puerta central se aventure a una visita¹.

¹ Nuestra traducción. Myriam Sepúlveda dos Santos, "As megaexposições no Brasil: Democratização ou banalização da Arte?", In: *Cadernos de Sociomuseologia: Museu e Políticas de Memória*, 2002, p. 89.

Pensando en la temática propuesta por el ICOFOM para este año – *El Visitante especial: todos y cada uno de nosotros* – algunas cuestiones surgen: ¿Cómo pensar el individuo en un contexto de exhibiciones, en su mayoría tan genéricas, como en los grandes museos y sus grandiosas exhibiciones? ¿Cómo hablar del individuo en un contexto donde siempre se utilizó el amplio y ambiguo término “público”? ¿Para quién y con quién son construidos los museos? ¿Qué son, de hecho, los museos?

El presente artículo tiene como objetivo reflexionar sobre las cuestiones presentadas. Se buscará, ante todo, contestar a las preguntas relacionadas a los museos, para finalmente focalizar las cuestiones acerca del tema. El objetivo es defender que, antes de tratar y reforzar que cada individuo es importante para los museos, es necesario considerar algunas premisas: 1) pensar al Museo desde una perspectiva fenomenológica (basados en la semiótica); 2) considerar *cómo* son constituidas las exhibiciones; 3) definir a quién los museos están conduciendo sus discursos; y 4) problematizar el tema de la democratización de los museos.

“Museo de cada uno, patrimonios de todos nosotros”

Ese es el nombre de un proyecto de Educación Patrimonial, desarrollado por estudiantes de la Universidad Federal de Alfenas (*Universidade Federal de Alfenas*). Se ha implantado una propuesta que trabaja con los conceptos de Museo, Memoria y Patrimonio, como resultado de una acción interesada en la Educación Patrimonial. En efecto, durante los meses de agosto de 2012 y enero de 2013, un grupo conformado por profesores y estudiantes de los cursos de Historia y Ciencias Sociales y también por miembros de la comunidad externa a la Universidad, estableció un proyecto piloto sobre el tema. Después de dos meses de reflexiones teóricas sobre los conceptos presentados, el grupo, ejecutó cada paso de la propuesta, implementada en la Asociación Benéfica Cáritas², en los días 06, 20 y 26 de febrero de 2013.

El proyecto se dirige al público infantil porque se ha decidido que será necesario actuar de modos separados, sistemáticos y particulares con cada tipo de público; en esta acción específica, se desarrolla por medio de actividades con títeres, juegos y meriendas con comidas tradicionales. Se han idealizado actividades en el año de 2013 para los niños, con actividades propias para su edad y visando alcanzar un gran número de niños en la región. La propuesta es explicitar, en la práctica, como los distintos tipos de museos y de patrimonios son importantes, sean aquellos constituidos por la Universidad Federal de Alfenas o por los niños. Se objetiva aún reforzar que los patrimonios están en todos lugares, apenas esperando por su reconocimiento y valoración, que ocurre en la relación entre humano y mundo.

El título del proyecto permite, durante la realización de las actividades, desarrollar y reforzar la idea de que los museos dicen respecto a sus interesados – el grupo o comunidad a quien deben representar; y que los patrimonios son constituidos por todos nosotros – todos pueden identificar lo que es más importante para cada uno. Como señala Scheiner,

[...] gobiernos vienen y se van y, con ellos, sus políticas patrimoniales específicas; pero la población permanece, y permanecerá cuidando de lo que considera su patrimonio, con todo su corazón³.

² *Associação Beneficente Cáritas* – ONG (Organización no Gubernamental) que trabaja con niños de 6 hasta 15 años, con actividades de refuerzo escolar, juegos y deportes.

³ Nuestra traducción. Tereza Scheiner, “Museum, ecomuseum, antimuseum: new approaches to heritage, society and development”, In: *Communication and Exploration*, Trento, Assessorato alla Cultura della Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 2005, p. 81-90.

Reflexionando sobre el concepto de Museo, Scheiner presenta la dualidad existente en la esencia misma del Museo, por medio de dos mitos: **Apolo** y **Dioniso**. La dimensión racional del Museo es representada por Apolo – su lado clasificatorio, institucional, que almeja salvaguardar el producto y no el proceso – dimensión característica de la Modernidad. La dimensión emocional del Museo es representada por Dioniso – pasión, éxtasis, pulsión, el aspecto mutable y constituido en la relación – dimensión conocida en los discursos posmodernos. Ambos coexisten, constituyendo las dos facetas del Museo⁴.

Como influencia para el (re)descubrimiento de la manifestación dionisiaca del Museo, Scheiner indica la teoría nietzscheana y sus sucedáneos, que a su vez abren camino para el entendimiento del Museo como fenómeno. En la Contemporaneidad, donde la verdad no es más un concepto absoluto, es posible y coherente pensar un Museo libre y plural, que exista en cualquier espacio y cualquier tiempo. No existiría así una forma “ideal” de Museo: “[...] el Museo toma la forma posible en cada sociedad, bajo la influencia de sus valores y representaciones”⁵. El modelo tradicional de Museo no es anulado como resultado de esta constatación: él también constituye una manifestación del fenómeno Museo, representando a la sociedad que lo idealizó.

Soares *apud* Scheiner dice que “[...] ‘experimentar’ vence la batalla contra ‘contemplar’ – que tampoco deja de constituir una faceta de la experiencia”⁶. El **Museo es la experiencia en su misma esencia** – caracterizándose como fenómeno, teniendo en cuenta que siempre lo más importante en cualquier concepción de Museo es la relación – relación entre el Humano y las cosas del mundo, sus semejantes y él mismo y su inconsciente. Scheiner sigue adelante, señalando que las relaciones con el Museo se inician en la esfera del imaginario:

[...] Así es el Museo fundamental: fluido, aéreo, siempre en movimiento, proyectándose hacia el espacio a través del sueño y de los sentidos [...] trasciende el tiempo, en la infinita duración del movimiento⁷.

Y refuerza:

Museo es pues una poderosa construcción signíca, que se constituye e instituye por medio de percepciones identitarias, utilizando los juegos de memoria y expresándose bajo las más distintas formas, en el tiempo y espacio. Y si la percepción es el fondo sobre lo cual todos los actos se destacan, el mundo, más que objeto, es el medio natural y campo de todos los pensamientos y percepciones. Lo que importa es el sentido que aparece en la intersección de estas experiencias. **Más que representación, el Museo será así creador de sentidos**, en la relación: de los sentidos que aparecen en las intersecciones de todas esas sensaciones, actos y experiencias⁸.

Con base en dichas afirmativas, Gorgas define Museo como una construcción permanente en conjunto con la dinámica social, como un espacio de poder y como un

⁴ Tereza Scheiner, “As bases ontológicas do Museu e da Museologia”, In: Simpósio Museologia, Filosofia e Identidade na América Latina e Caribe, *ICOFOM LAM*, 1999, p. 139-140.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 156.

⁶ Nuestra traducción. Bruno César Brulon Soares, “Experimentando o Museu: A Museologia como campo disciplinar”, In: Workshop Museologia Como Campo Disciplinar, *ICOFOM LAM*, Rio de Janeiro, *ICOFOM LAM*, 2008.

⁷ Nuestra traducción. Tereza Scheiner, “Museologia e Patrimônio Intangível: A experiência virtual”, In: Simpósio Museologia e Patrimônio Intangível, *ICOFOM LAM*, Montevideo, 2002, p. 221.

⁸ Nuestra traducción. Tereza Scheiner, “Museologia y el Patrimonio Intangible”, In: Simpósio Museologia e Patrimônio Intangível, *ICOFOM LAM*, Montevideo, 2002, p. 125.

agente de dinamización cultural. Señala como dificultad la responsabilidad que los museos tienen en la construcción de su concepto ante la comunidad⁹. El patrimonio, a su vez, como dice Scheiner, es un acto comunicacional y posee un carácter fundamentalmente solidario, constitutivo de las identidades y de las dinámicas de los grupos que comparten ese substrato – como productores o consumidores¹⁰. Al reconocer el carácter fenoménico del Museo, creamos la posibilidad de que se lo pueda percibir a través de la experiencia de mundo de cada individuo, por medio de las diferentes, múltiples y complejas relaciones que cada humano o sociedad establece con el Real complejo.

Según Santaella:

Entendemos por fenómeno, palabra derivada del griego Phaneron, todo, cualquier cosa, que surge a la percepción y a la mente. La fenomenología tiene por función presentar categorías formales y universales de los modos como los fenómenos son percibidos por la mente¹¹.

Percibiendo al Museo como fenómeno con características polisémicas, podemos afirmar también que es un instrumento semiótico, vinculado a la idea de signo. ¿Pero, lo que es un signo? De acuerdo con Santaella, signo es una cosa de cualquier especie que representa una cosa, denominada *objeto de signo*, “[...] y que produce un efecto interpretativo en una mente real o potencial, efecto que es llamado de interpretante del signo”¹². Explica además: el signo puede ser cualquier cosa que esté presente en la mente. Signo es lo que da cuerpo al pensamiento, a las emociones, reacciones y que a su vez pueden ser externalizadas.

Basada en las teorías de Peirce, Santaella señala la necesidad de entender y reconocer las tres diferentes facetas del signo. La primera es el ícono, donde un aspecto de su calidad remete al objeto del signo. La segunda es el índice, que a pesar de tener existencia concreta, resulta de una conexión de fato con su objeto de signo (tenemos como buen ejemplo de índice la fotografía) y por último hay el símbolo, que representa su objeto de signo a través de una ley y/o convención social. Todos los signos están, de cierta forma, impregnados de las tres facetas, en cuanto cada una de ellas es predominante en un dado signo, en un dado espacio y tiempo, siempre por medio del entendimiento de quien lo interpreta¹³.

La primera cuestión a ser analizada es sobre los efectos que los signos pueden causar en aquél que los observa, considerando siempre el caso Museo. El primer efecto que un signo está apto a provocar es una simple calidad de sentimiento, o sea, el ámbito emocional. Íconos normalmente producen ese tipo de interpretante con más intensidad: músicas, poemas, películas, traen hacia el primer plan calidades de sentimiento. En cambio, los interpretantes emocionales están siempre presentes en cualquier interpretación, aun cuando no nos damos cuenta de ellos¹⁴.

En lo que se refiere al Museo, las relaciones en ámbito emocional ocurren con mayor frecuencia por medio de percepciones identitarias, que remeten a la memoria, sea

⁹ Mónica Risnicoff de Gorgas, “Desafíos profesionales para el futuro dos museos” In: Workshop Museologia Como Campo Disciplinar, *ICOFOM LAM*, Rio de Janeiro, 2008.

¹⁰ Tereza Scheiner, *Imagens do não-lugar: comunicação e os novos patrimônios*, tesis de doctorado, Universidad Federal del Rio de Janeiro, 2004.

¹¹ Nuestra traducción. Lúcia Santaella, *Semiótica aplicada*, São Paulo, Pioneira Thomson Learning, 2005, p. 7.

¹² Nuestra traducción. Lúcia Santaella, *Semiótica aplicada*, São Paulo, Pioneira Thomson Learning, 2005, p. 7.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

¹⁴ Lúcia Santaella, *Semiótica aplicada*, São Paulo, Pioneira Thomson Learning, 2005, p. 24-25.

individual o colectiva. Las representaciones de identidad tienen un atributo esencialmente afectivo, imbuido del carácter simbólico de la memoria personal y que gana significados en los dominios del imaginario, de la creación y del afecto¹⁵.

El segundo efecto de un signo es el energético, que corresponde a una acción física o mental, o sea, el interpretante exige un dispendio de energía de alguna especie. Índices tienden a producir este tipo de interpretante con más intensidad, ya que llaman nuestra atención, dirigen nuestra retina mental o nos mueven en la dirección del objeto que ellos indican¹⁶.

Pensando en la aplicabilidad de los efectos de los signos en el ámbito del signo Museo, el efecto energético ocurre por medio de una relación directa del individuo con lo que presentan los museos, a través del sentido de la visión, como demuestra Scheiner:

[...] una experiencia multidimensional, que no puede ser colocada en palabras: pues es el mirar que precede el toque y el habla, seduce el observador, le provoca los sentidos, le despierta la fantasía (esa poderosa arma contra el logos), vuelve cada visitante en un 'voyeur' en potencial. Por la mirada es posible al observador 'poseer' el objeto deseado, alcanzarlo a través del espacio, recorrer su superficie, trazar su contorno, explorar su textura, trazar un puente entre su cuerpo y el cuerpo del objeto¹⁷.

El tercer efecto de un signo es el interpretante lógico, o sea, cuando el signo es interpretado a través de una regla internalizada por el intérprete. Sin esas reglas interpretativas, los símbolos no podrían significar, pues el símbolo está asociado al objeto que representa por medio de un hábito asociativo que se procesa en la mente del intérprete y que lleva el símbolo a significar lo que significa¹⁸.

Como explicita Scheiner:

Así como la memoria, **la percepción del patrimonio** [y del Museo] **se inicia por el cuerpo** – y por las relaciones primordiales entre el cuerpo que tenemos, los modos y formas por medio de los cuales, con el cuerpo, aprehendemos al mundo y los modos y formas por medio de los cuales las cosas del mundo nos tocan y permanecen en nosotros. [...] En todos los casos, **el cuerpo es territorio identitario, espacio patrimonial primero, definidor de las múltiples relaciones biológicas y culturales que nos significan**¹⁹.

El proceso comunicacional y pedagógico del Museo no ocurre solamente por la vía formal de las operaciones didácticas controladas, oriundas del *logos*, sino que también pasa por una relación espontánea entre la capacidad imaginante del individuo y el discurso del Museo. El Museo establece, de este modo, un verdadero diálogo con el individuo, priorizando la emoción, la imaginación y el sentimiento para, por medio de ellos, ofrecer la razón. El Museo se constituye no apenas en el ambiente tangible en que las cosas existen, pero también en la relación, de forma espontánea²⁰.

¹⁵ ICOFOM LAM, Carta de Lima, In: *El pensamiento museológico latinoamericano* – los documentos del ICOFOM LAM, Córdoba, ICOFOM LAM, 2006, p. 90-91.

¹⁶ Santaella, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁷ Nuestra traducción. Tereza Scheiner, "Comunicação, Educação e Exposição: novos saberes, novos sentidos", *Semiosfera*, Rio de Janeiro, no. 4-5, 2001.

¹⁸ Santaella, loc.cit.

¹⁹ Tereza Scheiner, *Imagens do não-lugar: comunicação e os novos patrimônios*, tesis de doctorado, Universidad Federal del Rio de Janeiro, 2004, p. 56 y 59.

²⁰ Tereza Scheiner, *Apolo e Dionísio no templo das musas* – Museu: gênese, ideia e representações na cultura ocidental, Disertación (tesis) de Mestrado, Universidad Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 1998.

Se enfatiza aquí la definición de Museo del ICOFOM LAM, encontrada en las Conclusiones y Recomendaciones del primer encuentro (1992):

[...] Museo es un fenómeno social dinámico que se presenta de diversas maneras, acorde con las características y necesidades de la sociedad en que se encuentra;²¹

Como agentes permanentes de comunicación y educación no formal, los participantes de este primer encuentro señalaran la necesidad de los museos, cualquiera sea su tipología, de poseer la apertura necesaria para incorporar nuevas experiencias, actuando a su vez como centros generadores de conocimientos y comportamientos que impliquen el compromiso y la participación de la sociedad en su conjunto y de forma pluridisciplinaria²².

Es en este mismo ámbito que entra el espacio [geográfico y simbólico]. Según Scheiner, es **en la esfera local que cada grupo humano designa y define su identidad**. No hay, así, como hablar de individuo sin considerar la esfera local, donde el individuo se construye en común-idad – sea esta el barrio, la familia, la escuela, la iglesia y/u otro tipo de comunidad. Como señala Maffesoli²³, “el individuo solo puede ser definido en la multiplicidad de interferencias que establece con el mundo circundante.”

Es en nivel local que nos definimos, en primera instancia, como ‘culturas’, articulando nuestras singularidades biológicas y culturales en el constructor simbólico que nos identificará como ‘presencia’; y también donde son diseñadas las formas culturales, producto de las relaciones de parentesco o de lazos de vecindad. A tal efecto es necesario examinar la importancia de las identidades y de los patrimonios, a nivel local – donde los intercambios individuales aún tienen lugar²⁴.

Las prácticas locales – sean ellas tradicionales o no – no deben ser consideradas meras “curiosidades culturales”, sino como padrones culturales tan importantes cuanto a la literatura o las artes. Y es esa diferencia que se debe hacer en relación al siglo XX²⁵.

El Patrimonio, así como el Museo, es un fenómeno sociocultural, existe en y por medio de una relación muy específica entre las diferentes realidades, vinculado a la memoria y a la percepción de identidad - importantes instancias que definen y constituyen a los seres pensantes, con vidas e historias para transmitir, recontar y recrear. Preservar el sentido de presencia y pertenencia es pues un modo eficaz de garantizar el equilibrio social y un camino pacífico hacia el desarrollo económico.

En consecuencia, es necesario pensar si los museos están verdaderamente abiertos al diálogo con aquellos a quienes dirigen sus discursos. Y más: todos los museos podrían definir, en sus políticas y directrices, quién es su “comunidad” – aún mismo los museos de gran porte, como los conocidos “museos nacionales”. En este caso, esos museos que aún osan decir respecto a un todo idealizado y construido²⁶ precisan

²¹ ICOFOM LAM, “Conclusiones y Recomendaciones”. In: *El pensamiento museológico latinoamericano – los documentos del ICOFOM LAM*, Córdoba, ICOFOM LAM, 2006, p. 17.

²² Ibidem, p. 18.

²³ Nuestra traducción. Michel Maffesoli, *No fundo das aparências*, Rio de Janeiro, Vozes, 1996, p. 305.

²⁴ Nuestra traducción. Tereza Scheiner, “Museum, ecomuseum, antimuseum: new approaches to heritage, society and development”, In: *Communication and Exploration*, Trento, Assessorato alla Cultura della Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 2005, p. 81-90.

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ José Reginaldo Santos Gonçalves, *A Retórica da perda: os discursos do patrimônio cultural no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, UFRJ, 2002.

considerar los diferentes grupos que componen ese todo. Si no, ¿sobre quién y con quién los museos están realmente hablando?

Cuando es definida la comunidad o comunidades trabajadas, con todas sus especificidades culturales e identitarias, sus demandas y sus ansias, es más viable atingir cada uno de este grupo, o sea, el individuo.

“Nadie educa a nadie, nadie educa a sí mismo, los hombres se educan entre ellos, mediatizados por el mundo.”

La afirmación arriba es del conocido teórico de la Educación Paulo Freire. Freire indicaba un proceso educativo dialógico donde el educador, simultáneamente, educa y es educado – tanto educador como educando se cambian en sujetos del proceso²⁷. Podemos nos apropiarse de esa premisa e insertar en nuestro debate.

Según Scheiner, la exhibición es el principal vehículo de comunicación entre el museo y la sociedad, la principal instancia de mediación de los museos, la actividad que caracteriza y legitima su existencia tangible²⁸. La autora también señala que

Sin las exhibiciones, los museos podrían ser colecciones de estudio, centros de documentación, archivos, podrían también ser eficaces reservas técnicas, centros de pesquisa o laboratorios de conservación, o aún centros educativos llenos de recursos – pero no museos²⁹.

Es por medio de las exhibiciones que los museos elaboran y presentan una narrativa cultural que los define y significa, como agencias de representación sociocultural. Por las exhibiciones que los museos representan, analizan, comparan, simulan, construyen discursos específicos – cuyo principal motivo es narrar, para la sociedad, las cosas del mundo y las cosas del humano. Las exhibiciones sin duda constituyen un puente o lazo de conexión entre las cosas de la naturaleza y la cultura del humano, tales como son representadas en los museos. De esta forma, podemos entender cada exhibición como una representación de mundo, de un determinado museo, en un determinado momento³⁰. Las exhibiciones representan aspectos de la visión de mundo de los grupos sociales a quien se refieren, expresando, en lenguaje directo o metafórico, los valores y trazos culturales de esos grupos. Según esa autora, lo que es importante saber es como ocurre esa representación, por medio de la reflexión y reconocimiento de que modos y formas cada museo aprehende el Real³¹.

Cury propone que “[...] cabe a las exhibiciones de museos la mayor responsabilidad por mediar la relación entre el hombre y la cultura material”³². Observamos también en el punto de vista de Cury cuando la autora señala que la comunicación museológica es efectiva apenas cuando el discurso del museo es incorporado por el visitante e integrado en su cotidiano, bajo la forma de un nuevo discurso. El público de museos

²⁷ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1987, p. 39.

²⁸ Tereza Scheiner, “Museologia e apresentação da realidade”, In: Simpósio Museologia e Apresentação: Original/Real ou Virtual? *ICOFOM LAM*, Cuenca and Galápagos Islands, 2002.

²⁹ Nuestra traducción. Idem, “Museums and Exhibitions: Appointments for a theory of feeling”, In: Symposium The Language of Exhibitions, *ISS*, Vevey, 1991.

³⁰ Idem, “Museologia e apresentação da realidade”, In: Simpósio Museologia E Apresentação: Original/Real ou Virtual? *ICOFOM LAM*, Cuenca and Galápagos Islands, 2002.

³¹ Tereza Scheiner, “Museologia e apresentação da realidade”, In: Simpósio Museologia e Apresentação: Original/Real Ou Virtual? *ICOFOM LAM*, Cuenca and Galápagos Islands, 2002.

³² Marília Xavier Cury, “A busca pela autonomia: Museologia, museus e globalização”, In: Simpósio Museologia e Apresentação: Original/Real ou Virtual? *ICOFOM LAM*, Cuenca and Galápagos Islands, 2002.

apropiase del discurso museológico, lo (re) elabora, lo crea y lo difunde. Los actores (profesionales de museos) también participan de la construcción del discurso museológico que suple los discursos de la comunicación³³.

Relacionando la premisa señalada por Freire en el inicio de ese tópico con nuestras discusiones, cuando cuestionamos el hecho de que museos serían contruidos por el propio social, establecemos dos premisas: o la democratización ya es efectiva o los museos son contruidos por entes que están lejos de hacer parte y/o dialogar con la sociedad. De hecho museos son contruido por el social y no es una cosa u otra, pero sí algo que tramita entre esas premisas. Museos son contruidos en la acción de las personas que trabajan en sus espacios y principalmente en la relación que se establece en el exacto momento de la visitación de quien entra por sus puertas. Los primeros – los profesionales – están inseridos, de una forma u otra, en la sociedad que esos museos representan. Sin embargo no significa que los idealizadores dialogan, efectivamente, con cada uno que conoce la narrativa de un museo por medio de la esfera donde esta relación ocurre – las exhibiciones.

Sucede pues que, considerando Freire, los profesionales de museos en su mayoría crean narrativas – o exhibiciones – que no dialogan con algunos individuos porque no definen a quien están refiriéndose. Prefieren, aún, correr a términos tan amplios como “público”, “visitantes”, para no responsabilizarse en definir un grupo específico y poder elaborar exhibiciones de acuerdo con sus intereses personales. No invitan, de esta forma, nadie para contruyeren el proceso. Es, sin duda, una acción no democrática, una “expografía del opresor”, parafraseando Freire. Es como si fuera posible tornarse un ente no perteneciente al social, estableciendo una relación no dialéctica.

Esa idea de “democratizar el acceso” nos parece poseedora de un sentido de que somos los detentores del poder de habla y, específicamente en nuestro caso, de la construcción de narrativas expográficas y, gentilmente, permitimos que “los de fuera” participen del proceso. “Democratizar”, es, de hecho, a instauración de una relación justa, igualitaria, que corresponde, efectivamente, la constitución de museos que pertenecen al social.

Es importante decir que no estamos intentando promover una inversión de papeles, pues como Freire explica

El diálogo entre profesoras o profesores y alumnos o alumnas no los torna iguales, pero marca la posición democrática entre ellos o ellas. Los profesores no son iguales a los alumnos por varias razones entre ellas porque la diferencia entre ellos los hace ser como han sido. Si fuesen iguales, uno se cambiaría en el otro. El diálogo tiene significado precisamente porque los sujetos dialógicos no solamente conservan su identidad, pero también defiéndela y así crecen uno con el otro. El diálogo, por eso mismo, no nivela, no reduce uno a otro. Ni es táctica mañosa, envolvente, que uno usa para confundir el otro. Implica, mientras que, un respeto fundamental de los sujetos comprometidos en ese diálogo, que el autoritarismo rompe o no permite que se constituya.³⁴

Así, no se trata de “tornar iguales” profesionales e individuos, en una ingenuidad política, pero si propiciar que ambos puedan, de alguna forma, construir un diálogo que posibilite narrativas que tienen un poco de nosotros, de cada uno.

³³ Nuestra traducción. Idem, “Comunicação e pesquisa de percepção: uma perspectiva teórico-metodológica para os museus”, In: *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos*, Rio de Janeiro, 2005.

³⁴ Nuestra traducción. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia da Esperança*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1997, p. 117-118.

Intentando contestar a las cuestiones por nosotros señaladas, sobre pensar el individuo en el contexto del museo, tendríamos algunos caminos posibles para tal emprendimiento. El primero fue cuando definimos museo. Si comprendemos, en una amplitud del concepto, Museo como una relación específica ocurrida en las esferas del particular y social, entre “Yo” y “Otro”, en un proceso continuo de identidad/identificación, atemporal, **es posible comprender que cada persona se relacionará con el museo de forma particular, distinta**. Aún, si consideramos que cada museo corresponde a un tipo de sociedad/comunidad y si ese museo busca dialogar con su grupo, las chances del museo afectar – en el sentido literal del término – serán inúmeras.

De igual manera, museos necesitan siempre considerar diferentes tipos de visiones y abordajes sobre el mismo tema. Más una vez Paulo Freire indica el camino

El rol del educador o de la educadora progresista que no puede ni debe omitirse, al proponer “su lectura de mundo”, es resaltar que hay “otras lecturas de mundo”, distintas de sus lecturas y a veces antagónicas a ellas.³⁵

En resumidas cuentas, una exhibición puede ser presentada puntuando distintos modos de mirar aquel mismo tema, mostrando que toda narrativa es múltiple, ampliando las posibilidades de afectar la mayoría de las personas que entran en la exhibición.

Como otro posible paso, debemos conocer la comprensión de mundo que nuestras sociedades/comunidades tienen. Comprensión que puede cambiar por medio de las propias transformaciones de cada realidad³⁶. En otras palabras:

[...] comprensión de mundo que puede comenzar a cambiar en el momento mismo donde el desvelamiento de la realidad concreta ha dejado expuestas las razones de ser de la propia comprensión conocida hasta el momento.³⁷

En la búsqueda por la comprensión de mundo de cada sociedad, es necesario considerar que a las grandes mayorías populares falta una comprensión más crítica de sí mismas, no porque sean, como señala Freire, incapaces, pero por cuenta de las condiciones precarias en que viven y sobreviven y por cuenta de la alienación política e ideológica conveniente a los que detienen el poder. Tales factores impiden que hombres y mujeres se asuman como sujetos curiosos, indagadores, como sujetos en proceso permanente de búsqueda. Esa relación, que se da por medio de lo que Freire identifica como “lectura del mundo y lectura de la palabra”.³⁸

La intervención de un profesional es necesaria mismo en una relación democrática, principalmente si ese es capaz de conocer

[...] la sintaxis, con la semántica de los grupos populares, de entender como hacen su lectura de mundo, de percibir sus “mañas” indispensables a la cultura de resistencia que se va constituyendo y sin a la cual no pueden defenderse de la violencia a que están sometidos.³⁹

Con esta finalidad, ese diálogo debe ser constante para entendimiento de las necesidades de quien dirigimos nuestros discursos, además de sus ideas y lecturas de

³⁵ Nuestra traducción. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia da Esperança*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1997, p. 112-113.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 28-29.

³⁷ Nuestra traducción. Paulo Freire, *loc.cit.*

³⁸ Nuestra traducción. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia da Esperança*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1997, p. 106-107.

³⁹ Nuestra traducción. *Ibidem*, p. 107.

mundo, para que posemos establecer una conversación que se utiliza de un mismo lenguaje.

Consideraciones finales

Pensar que cada persona que adentra las puertas del museo es especial no es posible si no consideramos las cuestiones aquí señaladas y muchas otras – señaladas por otros autores o que aún están por ser desvendadas, delante de las necesidades expuestas por la relación museo-individuo. No hay como trazar un diálogo con cada uno sin considerar, por lo menos, un carácter fenomenológico de los museos y, principalmente, sin definir a quien cada museo dirige; aún, sin pensar en múltiples abordajes para cada exhibición; y sin invitar la sociedad/comunidad para tomar la palabra en la construcción del proceso efectivamente democrático.

De acuerdo con Maffesoli

[...] la persona se construye en la y por la comunicación. Además, sin dar a ese término un sentido más restricto, ella tiene un fuerte componente hedonista, o sea, todas las potencialidades humanas: la imaginación, los sentidos, el afecto, y no solamente la razón participan de esa construcción⁴⁰.

Con base en Bachelard, se entiende que la imaginación recrea mundos que son muy propios de los individuos, pues sin la transformación de las imágenes, no hay acción de imaginar⁴¹.

Es fascinante pensar el Museo como una instancia de vivencias, donde los íconos remeten a nuestras experiencias familiares y de infancias; los índices remeten a nuestras percepciones individuales de la realidad; los símbolos están impregnados de significados y experiencias compartidas por toda la comunidad. El Museo asumiría de vez su forma fluida, mutable, totalmente dependiente de la relación con el individuo. Así podremos poner en práctica lo que Bachelard señaló: “[...] a los fenómenos pediremos consejos de mudanza, lecciones de movilidad sustancial – en resumen, una física pormenor de la imaginación dinámica.”⁴²

En resumidas cuentas, cada uno, por medio de sus experiencias, podrá identificarse y establecer un diálogo coherente, considerando lo todo presentado. Dentro de esta perspectiva, no habrá “movimiento institucional que pueda disminuir la potencia de esta relación”⁴³.

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⁴⁰ Nuestra traducción. Michel Maffesoli, *No fundo das aparências*, Rio de Janeiro, Vozes, 1996, p. 310.

⁴¹ Gaston Bachelard, *O Ar e os Sonhos*, Ensaio sobre a Imaginação do Movimento, SP, Martins Fontes, 1990, p. 1.

⁴² Nuestra traducción. Gaston Bachelard, *O Ar e os Sonhos*, Ensaio sobre a Imaginação do Movimento, SP, Martins Fontes, 1990, p. 10.

⁴³ Nuestra traducción. Tereza Scheiner, *Imagens do não-lugar: comunicação e os novos patrimônios*, tesis de doctorado, Universidad Federal del Rio de Janeiro, 2004, p. 61.

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MUSEUMS FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US: REFLECTING ABOUT IDEAS AND POSSIBLE PRACTICES FOR AN EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE

Luciana Menezes de Carvalho

Tereza Scheiner

Graduate Program in Museology and Heritage - PPG-PMUS, UNIRIO/MAST, Brazil

ABSTRACT

Reflecting on ICOFOM's 2013 theme *The Special Visitor: Each and Every One of Us*, the paper presents thoughts about the following questions: How do we think of the individual in the context of exhibitions, mostly so standard, such as the big museums and their large exhibitions? How do we think of the individual visitor in a context where it is common to use the broad and ambiguous term "audience"? To whom and with whom are museums built? What are, in fact, museums? First of all, we intend to answer the questions about museums and then we talk about the theme. The objective is to indicate that before talking about the importance of the individual on museums, it is important to consider: 1) thinking of museum in a phenomenological approach (including semiotic reflections); 2) considering *how* the exhibitions are made; 3) defining to whom museums are addressed; and 4) discussing the democratization of museums.

Keywords: Museum. Museology. Individual. Dialogue.

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RÉSUMÉ

Musée de chacun, musées de tous : réfléchissons sur les idées et les pratiques possibles pour un dialogue efficace

Lorsque nous réfléchissons au thème du colloque pour la réunion annuelle de l'ICOFOM 2013, *Le visiteur particulier : chacun et n'importe lequel d'entre nous*, notre pensée porte sur les questions suivantes : comment envisageons-nous l'individu dans le contexte des expositions, tellement passepartout, comme nous trouvons dans les grands musées et leurs énormes expositions ? Comment envisageons-nous le visiteur individuel dans un contexte où habituellement nous utilisons le terme large et ambigu qui est « audience » ? Pour qui et avec qui a-t-on construit les musées ? En fait, que sont les musées ? Nous voulons d'abord répondre aux questions qui ont trait aux musées, et ensuite parler du thème. Le but est de démontrer qu'avant de parler de l'importance du visiteur individuel en rapport avec les musées, il est important de ne pas omettre: 1) de réfléchir au musées sous l'angle phénoménologique (y compris par des considérations sémiotiques), 2) d'examiner comment on fait les expositions, 3) de définir à qui s'adressent les musées, 4) d'aborder la question de la démocratisation des musées.

Mots clé: Musées, Muséologie. Visiteur individuel. Dialogue

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Luciana Menezes de Carvalho & Tereza Scheiner

Museums of each one, museums of everyone: reflecting about ideas and possible practices for an effective dialogue

Preliminary thoughts

Different challenges are presented to contemporary museums. Contemporary discourse incorporates issues on the democratization of access and the ideal ways of developing museums. Nevertheless, the use of the term “democratization” may give the idea that this process is an opening by those who detain power to those who do not have any. But is it true? Wouldn't museums be developed by society as a whole? By considering such possibilities we have two alternatives: either democratization is already in effect, or museums are developed by those who do not take part in and/or do not dialogue either with the society in question.

Museums, in their majority, carry a stigma that is very difficult to overcome in contemporary times, as identified by Sepúlveda dos Santos:

Museums consolidate habits and customs, which lead visitors to speak softly, walk in short steps, following a defined pathway without questions or surprises. Disciplinary rules control their bodies and movements. Furthermore the richness of the objects on display and the lack of information about them only allow the visitors to pay homage to them, instead of trying to understand them. Often museums occupy old palaces but even when created to shelter collections, they reproduce the importance of majestic residences. Such characteristics are undoubtedly present in the Louvre and the British Museum, as well as in different Brazilian museums. Those are not necessarily majestic palaces, yet in their majority they are labyrinths which lack proper signalization and can embarrass any common citizen who adventures a visit through their doors¹.

Taking into consideration the theme proposed by ICOFOM for this year: *The Special Visitor: Each and Every One of Us*, some questions arise: How can we consider the individual within the exhibition context? It is known that most exhibits are thoroughly standard, for example, big exhibitions in big museums. How to approach the individual in a context where the wide and ambiguous term “audience” has always been used? For whom and with whom are museums developed? What are museums, of all things?

This paper intends to approach some of these issues. First of all, we will try to answer the questions related to museums to finally focus on the questions related to the theme. The aim is to defend the idea that, before approaching and reinforcing that each individual is important to museums, it is necessary to consider some premises: 1) to perceive the Museum from a phenomenological perspective (based on semiotics); 2) to consider how exhibitions are developed; 3) to define who is the target of the museum discourse; and 4) to put in question the issue of museum democratization.

“Museum for each one, heritage of every one of us”

This is the name of the Project on Heritage Education, developed by students at the Federal University of Alfenas (*Universidade Federal de Alfenas*). The proposal considers the concepts of Museum, Memory and Heritage as the result of and action concerning heritage education. During the months of August 2012 and January 2013, a group composed of professors and students from the courses in History and the Social Sciences as well as members of the outreach community developed a pilot project on the theme of heritage education. After two months of theoretical reflection, the group

¹ Translated by the authors. Myriam Sepúlveda dos Santos, “As megaexposições no Brasil: Democratização ou banalização da Arte?”, In: *Cadernos de Sociomuseologia: Museu e Políticas de Memória*, 2002, p. 89.

carried out each step of the proposal in the Charitas Benedictinal Association², on February 6, 20 and 26, 2013.

The project addresses young audiences. Since it was decided that it is necessary to act in separate systematic and specific ways with each segment, activities with puppets, games and traditional foods were developed. Activities for children with appropriate games for their ages were planned for 2013, aiming at reaching a great number of children in the region. The proposal is to explain through practice how different kinds of museums and heritage are relevant, whether identified by the Federal University of Alfenas or by the children themselves. Another aim is to reinforce the idea that heritage is everywhere, only waiting to be recognized and evaluated - a movement that happens in the relationship between individuals and the world.

The title of the project enables the development and reinforcement of the idea that museums relate to the persons that are connected to them – as a specific group or the community they represent - and this happens while activities are under way. And also that heritage is built by all of us: everyone may identify with what is more important to him/herself. Scheiner mentions that

... governments come and go - and with them, their specific heritage policies; but the population remains, and will remain taking care, with all their heart, of what is considered their heritage³.

Reflecting on the concept of museum, Scheiner comments the duality that exists in the very essence of the Museum, by means of two myths: Apollo and Dionysus. The rational dimension of the Museum is represented by Apollo – its classificatory, institutional face, which aims at conserving the product, not the process – a characteristic feature of modernity; the emotional dimension of the Museum is represented by Dionysus – passion, ecstasies, pulsion, the fluctuating aspects which develop through human relationships: a dimension apprehended in the postmodern discourse. Both coexist, as part of the double face of the Museum⁴.

As a movement towards (re)discovering the Dionysian expression of the Museum, Scheiner indicates the theories of Nietzsche and consequent thoughts which, in turn, lead to understanding the Museum as a phenomenon. In contemporary times, when truth is no more an absolute concept, it is possible and coherent to think about a Museum that is free and plural, able to exist in every space and every time. Thus, an 'ideal' form of Museum does not exist "[...] the Museum assumes the shape that is possible in each society, under the influence of its values and representations"⁵. The traditional model of Museum is not annulled as a result of this conception: it is also a manifestation of the phenomenon, representing the society that has created it.

Soares (*apud* Scheiner) comments that "[...] 'experience' wins the battle against 'contemplation' – a feature that is also a facet of the experience"⁶. The Museum is experience in its own essence – it is a phenomenon, and takes into account that the

² *Associação Benéfica Cáritas* – ONG (NGO – Non-Governmental Organization) who works with children 6-15 years old, with activities like remediation, games and sports.

³ Translated by the authors. Tereza Scheiner, "Museum, ecomuseum, antimuseum: new approaches to heritage, society and development", In: *Communication and Exploration*, Trento, Assessorato alla Cultura della Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 2005, p. 81-90.

⁴ Tereza Scheiner, "As bases ontológicas do Museu e da Museologia", In: Simpósio Museologia, Filosofia e Identidade Na América Latina e Caribe, *ICOFOM LAM*, 1999, p. 139-140.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 156.

⁶ Translated by the authors. Bruno César Brulon Soares, "Experimentando o Museu: A Museologia como campo disciplinar", In: Workshop Museologia Como Campo Disciplinar, *ICOFOM LAM*, Rio de Janeiro, *ICOFOM LAM*, 2008.

most important trait in all concepts of Museum is the relationship – between human beings and the things of the world, between individuals and their similes, between the individual himself and the unconscious. Scheiner proceeds, indicating that the relationship with the Museum originates in the realm of the imagination:

... the fundamental Museum is fluid, ethereal, always in movement, projecting itself into space through dreams and the senses [...] it transcends time, in the infinite duration of movement⁷.

She adds:

Museum is thus a powerful symbolic construction, which takes form and develops by means of identity perceptions, using the games of memory and expressing itself over time and space, under the most diverse forms. And if perception is the background over which all acts gain relevance, the world is, more than a mere object, the natural environment and framework of all perceptions and thoughts. What really matters is the meaning that appears in the intersection of such experiences. More than representation, the Museum becomes, then, a creator of sense, based on relationships: of the meanings which appear in the intersections of all such sensations, acts and experiences⁸.

Based on these statements, Gorgas defines Museum as a permanent construction related to social dynamics, as a space of power and an agent for cultural dynamics. She specially emphasizes as a problem the responsibility of museums in the construction of their own image inside the community⁹. Heritage, in turn, says Scheiner, is a communicational act and as such, fundamentally supportive, constitutive of the identities and dynamics of the groups which share this substratum – either as producers or consumers¹⁰. When recognizing the phenomenological character of the Museum, we create the possibility that it is acknowledged through the world vision of each individual, by means of the different, multiple and complex interaction that each human being or society establishes with reality.

According to Santaella,

We understand as phenomenon, a term derived of the Greek work *Phaneron*, anything that appears to the perception and to the mind. Phenomenology has as function to present formal and universal categories, related to the ways by which phenomena are perceived by the mind¹¹.

Understanding the Museum as a phenomenon, with multisemic characteristics, we may affirm that it is a semiotic instrument, linked to the *idea of sign*. But, what is a sign? According to Santaella, sign is a thing of any kind which represents another thing, named *object of sign*, “[...] and which produces an interpretive effect in a real or potential mind, being such effect named as *interpretant* of the sign”¹². She adds: the sign may be anything that is present in the mind, sign is that which gives form to the thoughts, emotions and reactions which, by their turn, may be externalized.

⁷ Translated by the authors. Tereza Scheiner, “Museologia e Patrimônio Intangível: A experiência virtual”, In: Simpósio Museologia e Patrimônio Intangível, *ICOFOM LAM*, Montevideu, 2002, p. 221.

⁸ Translated by the authors. Tereza Scheiner, “Museología y el Patrimonio Intangible”, In: Simpósio Museologia e Patrimônio Intangível, *ICOFOM LAM*, Montevideu, 2002, p. 125.

⁹ Mônica Risnicoff de Gorgas, “Desafios profissionais para el futuro dos museos” In: Workshop Museologia Como Campo Disciplinar, *ICOFOM LAM*, Rio de Janeiro, 2008.

¹⁰ Tereza Scheiner, *Imagens do não-lugar: comunicação e os novos patrimônios*, PhD Thesis, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, 2004.

¹¹ Translated by the authors. Lúcia Santaella, *Semiótica aplicada*, São Paulo, Pioneira Thomson Learning, 2005, p. 7.

¹² Translated by the authors. Lúcia Santaella, op.cit.

Based on the theories of Pearce, Santaella notes the necessity of understanding and recognizing the three different facets of the sign. The first one is the *icon*, which is one aspect of its quality as related to the object of the sign. The second is the index, which despite having concrete existence, results from a real connection with the object of the sign (a good example of index is photography); and finally, there is the symbol, where the sign represents its object through a law and/or social convention. All signs are in some way imbued with the three facets, and while each of them predominates in a given sign, in a given space and time, they are always related to the perception and understanding of the interpreter¹³.

The first question to be analyzed relates to the effects that signs may have on the observer, always keeping in mind the case of the Museum. The first effect that a sign is apt to provoke is a simple quality of sentiment, that is, the emotional sphere. Icons usually produce this kind of interpretant, with more or less intensity: music, poems, films, bring first of all emotional reactions. However, emotional interpretants are always present in every interpretation, even when we do not acknowledge them¹⁴.

As for the Museum, emotional relations occur with greater frequency by means of identity perceptions, which refer to individual and collective memory. Identity representations have essentially emotional attributes, imbued with a symbolic character of personal memory, which gains significance in the domains of the imagination, creation and affection¹⁵.

The second effect of the sign is the energy, which corresponds to a physical or mental action, that is, the interpretant demands an expenditure of energy of some kind. Indexes tend to produce this kind of interpretant, with more or less intensity, since they call our attention, direct our mental sights, or move us towards the object they indicate¹⁶.

As for the applicability of the effects of the signs in the realm of the sign Museum, the energetic effect happens by means of a direct relation of the individual with what is presented in the museums, as mentioned by Scheiner:

... a multidimensional experience, that cannot be placed in words: vision that precedes the touch and the voice, seduces the senses, awakens fantasy (this powerful weapon against logos), turns each visitor into a potential 'voyeur'. By means of the vision the observer can "posses" the desired object, reach it in space, run through its surface, trace its contours, explore its texture, build a bridge between his/her body and the body of the object¹⁷.

The third effect of a sign is the logic interpretant, that is, when the sign is interpreted through a rule that has been internalized by the interpreter. Without such interpretive rules, signs could not signify, since the symbol is associated with the object that it represents by means of an associative habit which is processed in the mind of the interpreter and which leads the symbol to signifying what it signifies¹⁸.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 17.

¹⁴ Lúcia Santaella, *Semiótica aplicada*, São Paulo, Pioneira Thomson Learning, 2005, p. 24-25.

¹⁵ ICOFOM LAM, Carta de Lima, In: *El pensamiento museológico latinoamericano* – los documentos del ICOFOM LAM, Córdoba, ICOFOM LAM, 2006, p. 90-91.

¹⁶ Santaella, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁷ Translated by the authors. Tereza Scheiner, "Comunicação, Educação e Exposição: novos saberes, novos sentidos", *Semiosfera*, Rio de Janeiro, no. 4-5, 2001.

¹⁸ Santaella, loc.cit.

Scheiner explains that

Perception of heritage [and of the Museum], like memory, begins in the body – through the primeval relations between our body and the means and ways by which we apprehend the world, as well as the means and ways by which the things of the world touch us and remain in us. In all such cases, the body is a territory of identity, primordial patrimonial space, defining the multiple biological and cultural relations that signify us¹⁹.

The communicational and pedagogical processes of the Museum do not happen only in the formal pathway of controlled didactic operations derived of the *logos*, but also involve a spontaneous relationship between imagination and the museum discourse. The Museum establishes, thus, a true dialogue with the individual, prioritizing emotion, imagination and sentiments, through which it offers reason. The Museum gains form not only in the tangible environment of objects, but also through spontaneous relations²⁰.

Here we emphasize the definition of Museum of ICOFOM LAM, found in the Conclusions and Recommendations of its First Meeting (1992):

... Museum is a social and dynamic phenomenon, which may appear under different forms, according to the characteristics and necessities of the society where it exists²¹;

As standing agents of non-formal communication and education, the participants of that ICOFOM LAM meeting reinforced the obligation that different kinds of museums support and incorporate new experiences, acting as centers for the production of knowledge and behavior. It is thus necessary to ensure an ethical commitment to all of society and allow participation in a thorough, multidisciplinary way²².

In this sense it is necessary to consider space in both its symbolic and geographic forms. According to Scheiner, it is in the local sphere where every human group designates and defines identity. So, in order to speak about individuals within the museum context, it is necessary to consider the local sphere, where each person builds himself/herself in the community – at the level of the neighborhood or in the family, the school, the church and/or another kind of community. Maffesoli comments that “individuals can be only defined in the multiple interferences they establish with the surrounding world”²³.

It is at local level that we define ourselves essentially as 'cultures', articulating our biological and cultural singularities in the symbolic constructor where we identify as 'presence'; it is at that same level that cultural forms are designed, as a product of kinship relations or vicinity bonds. To such effect, it is necessary to examine the importance of identities and of heritage, at local level - where the individual interfaces still occur²⁴.

¹⁹ Tereza Scheiner, *Imagens do não-lugar: comunicação e os novos patrimônios*, PhD Thesis, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, 2004, p. 56 and 59.

²⁰ Tereza Scheiner, *Apolo e Dionísio no templo das musas – Museu: gênese, ideia e representações na cultura ocidental*, Master Thesis, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 1998.

²¹ ICOFOM LAM, “Conclusiones y Recomendaciones”. In: *El pensamiento museológico latinoamericano – los documentos del ICOFOM LAM*, Córdoba, ICOFOM LAM, 2006, p. 17.

²² Ibidem, p. 18.

²³ Translated by the authors. Michel Maffesoli, *No fundo das aparências*, Rio de Janeiro, Vozes, 1996, p. 305.

²⁴ Translated by the authors. Tereza Scheiner, “Museum, ecomuseum, antimuseum: new approaches to heritage, society and development”, In: *Communication and Exploration*, Trento, Assessorato alla Cultura della Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 2005, p. 81-90.

Local practices - traditional or not - may not be considered as mere 'cultural curiosities', but as cultural standards as important as literature and the arts. This difference must be made in relation to the 20th century²⁵.

Heritage, as a sociocultural phenomenon - like the Museum - exists in and through a very specific relation between different realities and their connection to identity and memory; these are important instances that define and constitute human beings and their personal lives and history, which must be transmitted, recreated and communicated. Thus, preserving the sense of presence and belonging is an effective way of ensuring social balance and a peaceful pathway towards economic development.

Therefore, it becomes necessary to ask if museums couldn't be open to dialogue with those to whom they offer their discourse. Furthermore, all museums, even the big ones and the so-called 'national museums', should define in their policies and goals, who is their 'community', especially those that still dare refer to an idealized and artificial totality²⁶; museums must consider the different groups that constitute this totality. Otherwise, of whom and to whom are they speaking?

From the moment the target community or communities are defined, with all their specific features of culture and identity, their hopes and demands, it becomes possible to reach everyone in every group, that is, the individual.

“No one educates anyone, no one educates him/herself, individuals educate each other, mediated by the world”

The above statement was made by the renowned theorist Paulo Freire, who defended a dialogic educational process where the educator simultaneously educates and is educated - and thus both participants become actors in the process²⁷. We can appropriate this premise and bring it into our debate.

According to Scheiner (2002), the exhibition is the main communication vehicle between museums and society – the main instance of mediation of museums, the activity that builds and legitimates their tangible existence²⁸. She also declares that "Without exhibitions, museums could be study collections, documentation centers, archives, efficient technical reserves, research centers or conservation labs, or even very resourceful educational centers - but not museums (1991)"²⁹.

Scheiner (2002) also believes that it is through exhibitions that museums build and present a cultural narrative that defines them and gives them significance as agencies for sociocultural representation. It is through exhibitions that museums re-present, analyze, compare, simulate, and build specific discourses - aiming to narrate to society the things of humankind and the things of the world. Exhibitions may thus constitute a bridge or link between nature and human culture as they are represented in museums. Every exhibition may thus be understood as a representation of the worldview of a

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ José Reginaldo Santos Gonçalves, *A Retórica da perda: os discursos do patrimônio cultural no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, UFRJ, 2002.

²⁷ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1987, p. 39.

²⁸ Tereza Scheiner, "Museologia e apresentação da realidade", In: Simpósio Museologia e Apresentação: Original/Real ou Virtual? *ICOFOM LAM*, Cuenca and Galápagos Islands, 2002.

²⁹ Translated by the authors. Idem, "Museums and Exhibitions: Appointments for a theory of feeling", In: Symposium The Language of Exhibitions, *ISS 19*, Vevey, 1991.

specific museum, in a specific moment³⁰. Exhibitions present aspects of the worldview of the different social groups to which they refer, expressing, in direct or metaphoric language, the values and cultural traits of such groups. What matters is to identify how such representations are built, as a reflection and recognition of the many ways through which museums apprehend reality³¹.

From the standpoint of Cury, "... museum exhibitions have a key responsibility to mediate the relationship between humankind and material culture"³². Another important issue in the author's discourse is when she declares that museum communication is only effective when the discourse of the museum is incorporated by the visitor and integrated in his/her everyday life, under the form of a new discourse. Museum visitors appropriate museological discourse which is then (re)elaborated, (re)created and disseminated; the actors (museum professionals) also participate in the shaping of museological discourse³³.

Relating Freire's ideas to what we have identified here, when we examine the fact that museums should be built by society, two different issues arise: either democratization is already effective or museums are built by entities that are far from taking part in and/or dialogue with the societies to which they refer. In fact, museums are created by society – and this means not one thing or the other, but something that moves throughout both of them. Museums are built in the interface between those who create them and the moment the visitor comes inside their doors. The first are somehow members of the society to which these museums relate; but this doesn't mean that those who create them have an effective dialogue with one and every individual that makes contact with the museum narrative, in the sphere where this relation occurs – the exhibition.

What happens, considering Freire's ideas and terms, is that most museum professionals create narratives - or exhibitions – that are unable to dialogue with the visitors because they do not define to whom they are addressed. They also prefer to use general terms such as 'public', 'audience', in order not to be responsible in defining a specific group and to be able to develop exhibitions according to their own interests. Nobody else is invited to the creative process. It is thus a non-democratic action, an 'expography of the oppressor' – as if it were possible to become an entity outside the social sphere through a non-dialectical relationship.

The idea of 'making access more democratic' seems to imply that we hold the power of speech – and specifically in our case, the power to build expographic narratives; and that we generously enable 'outsiders' to participate in the process. To democratize is, in fact, to make possible the development of a just, equalitarian relationship, truly related to the foundation of museums with a social vocation.

Notwithstanding we are not promoting a role reversal since, as Freire argues,

The dialogue between professors and students does not make them equal, but marks a democratic position between them. Professors are not equal to students for many reasons, among them because difference is what makes them be what they are. If they were equal, one would become the other.

³⁰ Idem, "Museologia e apresentação da realidade", In: Simpósio Museologia e Apresentação: Original/Real ou Virtual? *ICOFOM LAM*, Cuenca and Galápagos Islands, 2002.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² Marília Xavier Cury, "A busca pela autonomia: Museologia, museus e globalização", In: Simpósio Museologia e Apresentação: Original/Real ou Virtual? *ICOFOM LAM*, Cuenca and Galápagos Islands, 2002.

³³ Idem, "Comunicação e pesquisa de percepção: uma perspectiva teórico-metodológica para os museus", In: *História, Ciências, Saúde* – Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro, 2005.

Dialogue is thus significant precisely because the dialogic subjects not only retain their identities but defend them, and thus grow up one with the other. For this reason dialogue does not even or reduce one to the other. Nor it is a favor that one does to the other, or an encompassing tactic that one uses to confuse the other. On the contrary, it implies a fundamental respect of the subjects engaged in the process, a respect that is broken or made impossible by authoritarianism³⁴.

Therefore, it is not a matter of making professionals and individuals become 'equal', in an ingenuous practice, but of enabling them to somehow build a dialogue that makes possible [the development of] narratives that represent a little bit of each one.

Trying to answer the questions already identified about imagining the individual in the context of the museum, we could identify some possible pathways. The first one was already identified when we defined Museum. If we understand, amplifying the concept, Museum as a specific relationship occurred within the private and the social spheres, between Self and the Other, in a continuous and extemporal process of identity/identification, it is possible to understand that each individual will be related to the museum in a specific, distinct way. Moreover, if we consider that each museum corresponds to a specific society/community to which it tends to relate and dialogue, the chances of affecting individuals - in the literal sense of the term - will be many.

Museums must also consider different types of visions and approaches of the same proposed theme. Once more, Paulo Freire shows the way:

The role of the progressive educator, who cannot exclude him/herself when proposing his/her world-view, is to emphasize that there are other different, and perhaps opposite, 'readings of the world'³⁵.

In brief, an exhibition can be presented emphasizing different ways of seeing the same subject. This way we can show that every narrative is multiple, increasing the possibilities of affecting the biggest number of people who visit the exhibition.

Another possible step is to acknowledge the worldview of our societies / communities, and to understand that this perception can change through the transformation processes of reality³⁶. A "... world perception that may begin to change at the very moment when the unveiling of concrete reality reveals the reasons for the understanding which has existed so far"³⁷.

The search for understanding the world view of each society implies considering that the great popular majorities lack critical self-understanding, not because they are, as Freire points out, incapable, but because of the precarious conditions in which they live and survive, and also due to political and ideological alienation, convenient to those who detain the power. Such factors prevent men and women from becoming curious, demanding subjects, in a permanent process of self-search - a relation that happens by means of what Freire names as 'reading of the world and reading of the word'³⁸.

³⁴ Translated by the authors. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia da Esperança*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1997, p. 117-118.

³⁵ Translated by the authors. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia da Esperança*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1997, p. 112-113.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 28-29.

³⁷ Translated by the authors. Paulo Freire, *loc.cit.*

³⁸ Translated by the authors. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia da Esperança*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1997, p. 106-107.

The intervention of a professional is necessary even in a democratic relationship, mainly if this professional is able to become familiar with

...the syntax and the semantics of popular groups, and understanding how they achieve their world reading, perceiving their 'artfulness', essentials to building a culture of resistance without which they cannot defend themselves from the violence to which they have been submitted³⁹.

With this aim, the dialogue between museums and communities has to be persistent to enable the understanding of their needs, ideas and world readings, and to permit the establishment of a dialogue that uses the same language.

Final Remarks

Facing the requirements pointed out in the relationship museum-individual, it is not possible to consider each individual who enters a museum as special, if we do not consider the above mentioned issues and many others – identified by other authors or still to be unveiled. There is no way to develop a dialogue with each individual without considering at least the phenomenological character of the Museum and without defining to whom each museum directs its discourse; without considering the multiple approaches of each exhibition; and without inviting the society/community to take the floor and help, in a democratic process of building narratives.

According to Maffesoli,

... the individual builds him/herself in and through communication. Moreover, without giving this term a more restricted sense, it has a strong hedonistic component, in other words, all human potentialities: imagination, senses, affect, and not only reason participate of such construction⁴⁰.

Based in Bachelard, we understand that imagination re-creates worlds that are very specific to each individual, since, without the transformation of images, there is no capacity to imagine⁴¹.

It is thus fascinating to perceive the Museum as an instance of experience, where icons refer to the familiar experiences of our childhood; the indexes, to our individual perception of reality; and the symbols are imbued with significance and experiences shared by the whole community. The Museum would definitely assume its fluid and changeable character, totally dependent on the relationship with the individual. Then it would be possible to put into practice what Bachelard has proposed: "... to phenomena we will ask advice about change, lessons of substantial mobility – in short, a detailed physics of dynamic imagination"⁴².

To conclude, and considering what has been presented in this paper, each one, by means of self-experience, will be able to identify and establish a coherent dialogue with museums. Based on this assumption there will be no "institutional movement that can reduce the power of this relation"⁴³.

³⁹ Translated by the authors. Ibidem, p. 107.

⁴⁰ Translated by the authors. Michel Maffesoli, *No fundo das aparências*, Rio de Janeiro, Vozes, 1996, p. 310.

⁴¹ Gaston Bachelard, *O Ar e os Sonhos*, Ensaio sobre a Imaginação do Movimento, SP, Martins Fontes, 1990, p. 1.

⁴² Translated by the authors. Ibidem, p. 10.

⁴³ Translated by the authors. Tereza Scheiner, *Imagens do não-lugar: comunicação e os novos patrimônios*, tesis de doctorado, Universidad Federal del Rio de Janeiro, 2004, p. 61.

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Luciana Menezes de Carvalho & Tereza Scheiner

Museums of each one, museums of everyone: reflecting about ideas and possible practices for an effective dialogue

Scheiner, Tereza. "Museums and Exhibitions: Appointments for a theory of feeling", In: Symposium: *The Language of Exhibitions*, ISS, Vevey, 1991, p. 109-113.

Scheiner, Tereza. "The Subjects of the Museum and the Public as a Subject", In: Symposium Museology and Audience, ISS, Calgary, ICOFOM, 2005, p. 115-121.

THE SPECIAL VISITOR: EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US

Supreo Chanda

Department of Museology, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, India

ABSTRACT

The author examines the topic in a critical view in terms of theory and practice. Visitors are paramount in today's museums to justify their existence. Museum communication has become vital. The paper tries to give an overview of different museum communication models propounded by various scholars over the period of the last six to seven decades. It would also try to point out the recent developments in Information and Communication Technologies and would make an attempt to understand the complex process of musealisation of objects and concepts for creative re-contextualisation of the collective memory in museums, relating hermeneutics and the semantics behind such processes and the resulting phenomenon.

Key-words: Communication Models, ICT in Museums, Decontextualisation, Musealisation, Memory & Learning, Hermeneutics, Semiotics, and Phenomenology of Mind.

RÉSUMÉ

Le visiteur particulier : chacun et n'importe lequel d'entre nous

L'auteur examine le sujet d'un point de vue critique en ce qui concerne la théorie et la pratique. Les visiteurs sont aujourd'hui indispensables pour justifier l'existence des musées. La communication muséale est devenue vitale. Cet article essaie de donner un aperçu de différents modèles de communication muséale proposée par plusieurs chercheurs au cours de la période des derniers six à sept décennies. Il voudrait aussi essayer de souligner les récents développements dans les Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication et voudrait essayer de comprendre le processus complexe de la muséalisation des objets & des concepts pour la re-contextualisation créative de la mémoire collective dans les musées, en rapport avec l'herméneutique et la sémantique de tels processus et le phénomène qui en résulte.

Mots clés : modèles de Communication, les TIC, dans les musées, la décontextualisation, la muséalisation, la mémoire et l'apprentissage, l'herméneutique, la sémiotique et la phénoménologie de l'esprit.

RESUMEN

El Visitante especial : todos y cada uno de nosotros

El autor examina el tema en una visión crítica en términos de teoría y práctica. Los visitantes son primordiales en los museos de hoy existencia justificada. Comunicación del Museo se ha convertido en vital. El libro trata de tener una visión general del Museo diferentes modelos de comunicación propugnada por varios estudiosos durante el período. Se trataría también señalar los progresos recientes en las tecnologías de la comunicación de información y haría un intento de entender el complejo proceso de musealización de objetos y conceptos creativo re-contextualización de la memoria colectiva en los museos relacionados con la hermenéutica y la semántica detrás de tal proceso del fenómeno resultante.

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Palabras clave: modelos de la comunicación, las TIC en museos, descontextualización, musealización, memoria & aprendizaje, hermenéutica, semiótica y fenomenología de la mente.

* * *

The premise “The Special Visitor: Each and Every One of Us”, sounds to be the most rational approach for museums in the post-modern global milieu. It is true that museum visitors, especially in a multi-cultural country like India, with continuous cross-cultural social interactions, do come with varied experiences and expectations. Cultural diversities, from macro to micro level, wide socio-economic variations, diverse educational levels, differing but valid cultural understandings, besides ranges of languages and physical attributes, including disabilities, make the situation more complex. Museums and museology curricula, in India, are facing the challenge, perhaps more critically than their counterparts in many of the countries of the world.

The speciality of the Indian society is in its peculiar phenomenon that can best be described as ‘*exclusive-inclusiveness*’, where despite so much apparent divergence, deprivation and inequality, like religion, class, caste, creed, poverty, gender discrimination, illiteracy, language, food habits, rituals, beliefs and oral history, the basic tenets of its culture are tolerance, mutual respect and integrity, in other terms, ‘*all-inclusiveness*’. Richard Sandell (2002:5) chalks out a process for museums to combat inequality (Fig. 1) that may be true in Indian context too.



Fig. 1. Museums and the combating of social inequality: impact and process.

I may quote Bhupendranath Datta (1956/1978:101-102) that may be relevant in the present context –

A devotion to the dead past and the dying culture in the name of ‘continuity’ and ‘specialness’ is not the desideratum... It is imperative that Indian art should wean away from the ideational stage formed in the name of ancient spirituality as well as mediaeval mysticism which is the by-product of foreign subjugation, and look into the socio-economic changes that through the forces of historical materialism are rapidly taking place.

By definition, the museum is a non-profit, permanent institution **in the service of society** and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves,

researches, communicates and exhibits the **tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment** for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.¹

One of the prime functions of the public museum is to present material culture to be viewed... In the museums, objects, or artefacts are put on display. They are there to be looked at (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000:14).

Susan M Pearce (1992:139–141) describes the process that transforms ‘material’ into ‘museum collection’ based on Saussurian semiotic insights –

... both objects and collections carry a two-fold nature which embraces a continuing real or metonymic relationship to their own time and place and a metaphorical relationship to their original context, which arises from the processes of selection and interpretation with which they have been involved. Material is transformed by the collecting process into a museum collection archive, and clearly it is transformed again as a further stage in the same sequence by the exhibition process.

Museology, may be defined as, the philosophy of visual interpretation of heritage, be it cultural, natural or scientific (Chanda, 2008:21–25). Naturally the principle focus of the museologists remained the ‘how’, i.e., the ways meaningful visuals could be created, rather than the ‘what’, ‘why’, ‘when’, ‘where’, etc., for which the academics could easily be approached. Kenneth Hudson (1998:50) rightly pointed out that the museum directors,

... are well educated, but not primarily scholars ... not much given to writing books. They are essentially communicators and organizers whose main interest lies in making their collections and exhibitions attractive and interesting to the general public.

Graham Black elaborates (2005: 271)

A museum can be a showpiece on the surface for everything modern, but what matters most is the depth and quality of the individual encounter with the ‘*real thing*’... the primary role of exhibitions and associated activities is to engage audiences directly with collections – to gain visitor attention, to hold it and to encourage reflection.

Sight took credence over other senses from the late medieval period, as Foucault, (1970:132–133) pointed out

Observation, from the seventeenth century onward, is a perceptible knowledge furnished with a series of systematically negative conditions. Hearsay is excluded ... too are taste and smell ... sense of touch is very narrowly limited ... which leaves sight with an almost privilege, being the sense by which we perceive extent and establish proof, and, in consequence ... acceptable to everyone.

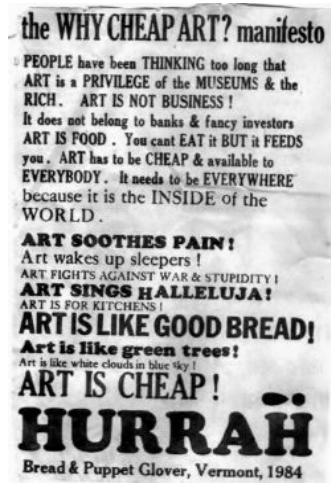
Edward Said (1995:36) rightly used the Foucauldian notion of the complicity of discourse in knowledge and power by saying –

... knowledge of subjected races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control.

¹ Article 3, Section 1 of the *ICOM Statutes*, adopted by the 22nd General Assembly at Vienna, Austria on 24 August 2007.

Museums are sites of spectacle, expository spaces where 'real objects' can be seen. Vision should be aligned with *interpretation* rather than perception. Interpretation of visual culture in museums, the themes of narrative, difference and identity arise in interpretative processes and museum pedagogy. These are complex and multi-layered matters, where meanings rooted in the past clash with contemporary interpretations that challenge their continued validity. Again, visual culture has emerged across a range of disciplines, including art history, film studies, comparative literature, anthropology and museology, as well as regional and cultural studies. The visible artefact arises out of a set of social and cultural exigencies that create the conditions for seeing that fit into a meaningful structure of information and knowledge. Perhaps the 'Cheap Art Manifesto' of the 'Bread and Puppet Theatre' in Vermont published in 1984 by Peter Schumann was the first attempt to bring out the 'high' art from the elite domain of the museums to the common public at large.

The concept of 'visual culture' allows the examination of all those signifying practices, representations and mediations that pertain to looking and seeing, and allows an analysis that is not shaped in advance by the values of high culture. 'Visual culture' as a concept and a methodology refuses to accept the distinction between high and mass culture (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000:14).



Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, again, relates the interpretation of visual culture to museum pedagogy (2000:1). Tony Bennett, quoting *Grundrisse*, by Karl Marx, explains the dialectics between production of art and production of aesthetics (1995:163).

The object of art – like every other product – creates a public which is sensitive to art and enjoys beauty. Production thus not only creates an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object. Thus production produces consumption ... (Marx, 1973:92)

The pressures of globalization have changed the socio-economic, political and cultural milieu.

'Bygones' and 'memorabilia', long relegated to Cinderella status in museum display, and treated as mere appendages in archaeological study, have emerged in recent years as market leaders in the auction room, bringing a whole new class of collectables into being. Bygones also enjoy pride of place in the new 'Heritage Centres' and local history museums (Samuel, 1994: 209).

Museums, like any other public institution, have always been the product of their own time. There has been a need to develop new museum audiences in order to cope with a paradigm shift that necessitates redefining museums as *contact zones*, an expression which J Clifford defines as "an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, whose trajectories now intersect". Heritage institutions, like other arts and culture institutions throughout the world, are confronted with the challenges of survival. This has had a catalytic effect on heritage institutions and museums in particular, and has galvanized them into action in search of a new identity. An identity that recognizes that cultural diversity is a historical and social reality at the local, regional, national and global levels and that museums should reflect the cultural diversity of the clientele communities. This has been characterized by inclusive museology, which has the

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capacity to address different contextual frameworks of cultural diversity including a multiplicity of interactions and cultural borders. These borders include race, ethnicity, colour, gender, class, age, physical ability, regions, location, language, faith, creed, economic status, and so on (Vusithemba Ndima, 2002).

There has been another parallel paradigm shift in thinking of the primary commodity of the museum as information rather than artefacts. The advantages include firstly, the intangible processes of culture (such as oral histories or processes of investigation and scholarship), and replicas and reconstructions can be considered of equal value to artefacts. Further, even by promoting the status of information the significance of the material objects is not compromised. Secondly, it positions the museum as an organisation of status in an information economy and society. This will ensure the survival of the museum. Thirdly, in the shift from artefact to information based museums, it will be easier to balance the traditional functions of collection, preservation, research and display, with the more recent mandate for education and communication. There are other modes of the museum that are equally important that include museum as symbol, vision, showcase, treasure-house, memory, communicator, mentor, celebration, host and resource (Sarah Kenderdine).

No one could boldly assert that the soul (the intangible) can exist without the body (the tangible) and thus it can be argued philosophically and perhaps logically that the intangible and the tangible are two sides of the same coin... the accepted conclusions of the UNESCO World Commission on Culture and Development which unequivocally states that in any partnership of the tangible and the intangible, 'The tangible can only be interpreted through the intangible' and not vice versa (Dawson, 2000).

Intangible elements are indispensable in supplementing the tangible elements preserved in the museums. Thereby the museums can develop a separate national character and identity.

Traditional art forms have survived for centuries and they will survive in the future due to their flexibility. They could be the media for social change in rural India. Folk arts being functional, interpersonal and having a contextual base would be able to carry the message of change, development and environmental awareness ... (Mukhopadhyay, 1994:3-4).

When carefully going through the above statements, it can be unmistakably noted that all the developments over a period of six-seven decades are directed to becoming more and more inclusive in nature; to include more information, to be socially and culturally inclusive, to include technology to infuse *reality* into so-called *unreal (!)* objects; and finally to include the entire gamut of the human heritage into the fold of a single institution, i.e., the museum, aiming to visually portray its development and achievements through the ages.

Being dedicated to the '*service of society and its development*', by default, museums cannot be politically incorrect in the display of its contents. It must be socially inclusive and dispense its social responsibilities. There is no point in denying that there have been many grey areas in the museum's functioning that need to be redressed soon if they are to survive as social institutions. Issues related to gender equality, if not rampant discrimination, child abuse, rights of the ethnic and religious minorities, disability rights, the socially and economically downtrodden, human rights of the migrants and refugees, environmental degradation vis-à-vis development, poverty and development, etc., ought to be approached with straightforward attitudes.

Seeing 'truth' and 'value', 'science' and 'politics', and 'knowledge' and 'power' as divided off from one another is characteristics of thinking which, in the

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Western tradition ... crystallized in the nineteenth century ... however, with thinkers such as Nietzsche and Heidegger, ... there has been a growing number of cultural and historical analyses which have sought to subject these divisions to critical analysis rather than take them as given (Macdonald, 1998:3).

Hilde Hein (2010: 53) provides an interesting insight on the outlook of the museums for women,

Consider The Smithsonian Institution: founded with a half million dollar bequest to the United States in 1829, by James Smithson, whose ghost still allegedly haunts the institution, and endowed in the city of Washington "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men".

Amy K Levin (2010:201) observes, that displays essentially on subjects of hard science are no exception –

Museum exhibits on human evolution and earth history are gendered in strange and complicated ways, too, which reveal social anxieties about sex and sexuality while policing gender norms.

Approximately 10% of the world's population are persons with disabilities (over 650 million persons). Approximately 80% of them live in developing countries. Although pre-existing human rights conventions offer considerable potential to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, this potential was not being tapped. Persons with disabilities continued being denied their human rights and were kept on the margins of society in all parts of the world. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2007, to which India is a signatory, sets out the legal obligations on States to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The Convention marks a 'paradigm shift' in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are not viewed as "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection; rather as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society. Universal recognition is to be emphasized on the dignity of persons with disabilities. Necessary adjustments are to be ensured to the persons with disabilities for enjoyment or exercise on equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. All activities must include the participation of persons with disabilities. Millennium Development Goals will not be achieved if persons with disabilities are not included.

It has to be clearly borne in mind that most of the above issues are either social constructs or creations of volatile political and economic situations. Museums can act as very strong media for social changes. Is there any justification in hiding the head in the sand, like an ostrich, pretending that everything is been fine all around? There are quite relevant contemporary issues affecting society and the construction of post-colonial socio-political history. To remain socially relevant, museums must change their policies to avoid being labelled as institutions of social exclusion.

There has been a strong opinion in certain quarters that historical development of museums gave them first and foremost a scientific function as the preservers of material and cultural heritage; teaching and supporting visitors and cultural integration have become important concerns of today's museum work, but,

Despite museums' self-promulgated aura of material omniscience, they only contain a fraction of what has been made, and that will always be the case. Scholars study, and tourists are shown, but fragments of a past which we can never recover ... (Boniface and Fowler, 1993:108).

ICOM's Strategic Plan 2008–2010 'Our Global Vision' states,

Museums are recognized as integral partners in sustainable development, advocating a greater respect and understanding of the importance of heritage to the source communities.

Communication has become one of the vital functions of museums nowadays. Different communication models to suit museums were designed and developed over the years by many scholars like Cameron (1968), Knez and Wright (1970), McQuail (1975), Miles (1985), etc., all essentially involving direct visiting experience, either pre or post, of the samples. Hooper-Greenhill (1994: 50–51) gives a holistic approach to museum communication based on the visitor's experience of the image of the museum that affects the perceptions and attitudes of the people determining the visit.

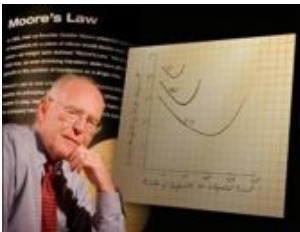
The great advancement in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is perhaps one of the major challenges for not only museums but also for most of



the visual media. Advancements in space research gave rise to geostationary communication satellites, which in turn, along with growing computer technology, created the Internet and World Wide Web (www). Developments in electronics, especially the transistors, integrated circuits (ICs), large scale & very large scale integrated circuits (VLIC), Microprocessors & Programmable Microprocessors made tremendous progress in data & information management, i.e.,

storage, retrieval and dissemination. Many dedicate the present century to the Information Technology (IT) and Biotechnology (BT).

Mini Computer, Personal Computer, Laptop computer, Notebook, Tablet, i-Pad, digital



organizer, cell phone, digital camera, digital camcorder, pen-drive, personal digital assistant (PDA), etc., make information management and communication instant, handy and highly flexible – turning the entire world into a *global village* – posing a great threat to the museums and museum visit of becoming redundant. In the year 1965, Henry Moore, one of the co-founders of the Intel Corporation, the largest chip producers, made a prophetic

prediction – came to be known as '*Moore's Law*' – that the processing power of computer chips will double approximately every 18 months. With the very rapid development of the processing speed of the microprocessors, the entire scenario of communication, direct or indirect, has gone into revolutionary transformation. Direct interpersonal communication is fast being replaced by communication through media, electronic or virtual. Analogue to Digital, Transistor Radio/ CRT-TV, Tape/Cassette Recorder, VCP, VCR, Rolled Film, Compact Discs, CD-ROM, Digital Video Discs (DVD), LCD/ LED Screens in Computers, TVs, Digital Cameras, i-Pod, Personal Digital Assistant, Memory Chip/ Card, WLL phones/ Cellular Phone, i-Phone, Smart phone, Internet, Wi-Fi Technology, Social Sites in the Web, are being extensively used by even the comparatively older generations, who are born in the 1980s (Gen-Y) or earlier. YouTube has 4 billion users per day, 800 million users (March 2012) for Facebook, Twitter has 500 million users (June 2012) and 187 million people use LinkedIn (November 2012).

The rapid developments particularly in information and communication technology, created major problems for museums. Having alternative and easily accessible media, both for education and entertainment, at hand, certain sections of potential museum visitors have grown reluctant to visit museums. Being able to directly compare with other such institutions, it has become very difficult to encourage repeat visits. Naturally visiting museums no longer remains a very necessary proposition to get information and has lost its importance as a potential space for learning.

Apart from information and communication technology, there have been many technological developments in other spheres also. Say for example, LASER technology, which is being used as cutting-edge tool in various industries for production, machining, cleaning, mapping, replication, labelling, lighting, entertainment, film shows, etc.; many of which might have direct bearing on different aspects of museum functioning. Nano-technology has ushered in revolutionary changes in museum display and conservation too.

It is not true that museums at large remained oblivious to the spurt of technological developments. Many such developments did make their forays into the domains of museum functioning, particularly in the exhibit fabrication, replication, security of objects, documentation, conservation and communication. Animated talking heads, animatronics, multi-screen projection systems, embedded chip for security, infra-red ray guided audio-aids, 3-D shows, context pick up mode information retrieval systems, are some of the relevant examples. But the uses are mostly confined to the more resourceful museums.

To cater to the growing demands of varied visitors, museums radically changed their display patterns. More and more museums are replacing the traditional Linear & Central display with Multi-layered, Participatory, Interactive, Hands-on, Minds-on, Hearts-on – Total Museology, Augmented Reality, Immersive Visualisation techniques. Walk-through Dioramas, Stage-settings, Animated Stage-settings, Multi-screen, Touch screen tables & walls, Multi-touch screens, Animatronics, Virtual reality, Holography, all become common experiences to attract visitors and serve individual needs. So much so that the age-old term 'museography' has been effectively replaced by 'scenography'. Collective memories of the society are dramatized to attract more and more visitors. A few illustrations of each kind have been provided below.





It is getting tougher to understand how people perceive, receive and respond to information in museums for many reasons, such as the shift in public expectations – new and different expectations emerged as a result of infotainment and edutainment competitions. The youthful generation has an unprecedented attachment to information and communication technology, This is a global phenomenon as a result of the Internet and cell phones, The basic characteristics of the young generation born in the 1990s or later (Gen-Z), are individualist, personalized, remote, connected and instantaneous. They are very curious and adept at effectively using technology, expect to be connected to the world, want to see themselves in the bigger picture, want to be in the

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driver's seat – to manipulate, remix and share content, want to create content, more importantly want to create the culture they want to consume. Then what does the future hold? Quite understandably it would definitely result in more mobility – access to information will be even quicker; 'my media' will catch up to and may even surpass 'mass media'. Ultimately the content creation will explode, all leading to greater hurdles for the museums.

Year born, age and population of age-groups from 1701 to the present

Generation ¹	Year born ¹	Age now (2010)	2010 Population (in billions) ²	% population
Generation Z	1995-2009 ³	1-15	1.80	26.57
Generation Y	1977-1994 ⁴	16-33	2.25	32.85
Generation X	1965-1976 ¹	44-34	0.95	13.87
Baby Boomers	1946-1964 ¹	44-34	1.30	18.98
Silent Generation	1929-1945 ¹	81-65	0.43	6.28
GI generation	1901-1924 ¹	86-109	0.10	1.46

Sources: Wikipedia¹, U.S. Census Bureau², The Sunday Telegraph³, and Wuest, Beth⁴.

Museums cannot ignore the virtual space to include the so-called 'non-visitors' into their fold. Modern museums in the West and the developed countries in Asia, like Japan, China, Singapore, etc., have already started adopting state-of-the-art communication technology in their routine functioning. Museum Communication (Stansfield 1994) includes 3 broader services –

1. Interpretive services, which includes display/ exhibition, publication, talks to local organizations and guided tours.
2. Information services – it includes all-those services provided *on demand* for individual visitors over telephone or in other ways.
3. Educational services.

Museums have changed from the classical concept as an archive of heritage to the concept of a social institution adapted and adjusted with the growing demand of Gen-Z. Museum – visitor Interface has also undergone massive change; museums are no longer places for passive interaction – it has become a 'contact zone', like a fair ground or theatre hall or maybe a market, where people of different identities, social or functional, like visitors, curators and others, meet to be engaged in interactions of a varied nature – educational, recreational, social, personal, entrepreneurial – among others. Visitor-museum relationship becomes closer.

In more and more museums visitors encounter people (staff or volunteers) who are in the galleries and museum classrooms specifically to interact with the visitors. Some are straightforward teachers; others may be in the guise of theatrical dress or mode, representing an alternative reality. Their role is to draw visitors in to the museum's subject, to engage him or her in an experience beyond passively viewing exhibitions (Alexander and Alexander, 2008: 276).

Now the ultimate role of a museum is a matter of professional debate mainly in relation to the uses of culture and heritage within the society. Today's museums became

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revolutionised due to the inclusion of the museum and society, cultural communication, infotainment, edutainment, and ICTs of different forms. Museum Functions too Redefined; museums now tend to visualise *memories* of the society through the exhibits, tangible or intangible, often by de-contextualisation of the cultural relics during musealisation process and provide a platform for *dialogic processes* between the objects and the visitors, visitors and the curators, objects and the curators; between the visitors; between the objects, utilising hermeneutics and semiotics and ultimately creating the desired *phenomenon* in the minds of the stakeholders. Jennifer Harris (2011:96) argues,

... that although aspects of dialogism are very attractive in the context of contemporary museums with their ideals of cultural leadership and visitor participation, it might simply be too difficult to implement.

Hegel pointed out in his book *Phenomenology of Spirit* (5th ed. 1952/ 1998:455),

The works of the Muse now lack the power of the Spirit, for the Spirit has gained its certainty of itself from the crushing of gods and men... It cannot give us the actual life in which they existed ... Fate does not restore their world to us along with the works of antique art ... but only the veiled recollection of that actual world. Our active enjoyment of them is therefore not an act of divine worship through which our consciousness might come to its perfect truth and fulfilment; it is an external activity ...

Michel Foucault (1972), in his book, *History of Madness*, shows how a non-teleological approach to historical phenomena can denaturalise through the study of forgotten archives, looking beyond phenomenology and towards structuralism.

Popular memory is on the face of it the very antithesis of written history... It measures change genealogically, in terms of generations rather than centuries, epochs or decades. It has no developmental sense of time, but assigns events to the mysticized 'good old days' (or 'bad old days') of workplace lore, or the 'once upon a time' of the storyteller. In place of the pedagogue's 'causes' and 'effects' or the scholar's pursuit of origins and climacterics, it deals in broad-brushed contrasts between 'now' and 'then', 'past' and 'present', the new-fangled and the old-fashioned (Samuel, 1994:6).

New communication strategies now focus on the meaning-making activities of museums and visitors. Complementary qualitative communication strategies on the needs, intention, interest and perception of 'user' and 'non-users' are essential.

Visitors make meaning in the museum, they learn by constructing their understandings. The issue for museums is to determine what meanings visitors make from their experiences, and then to shape the experience to the extent possible by the manipulation of the environment. Every museum building will send a message (or multiple messages); every exhibition will evoke feelings, memories and images; every encounter with an object brings about a reflection (even if it is only incomprehension and frustration); every social interaction reinforces connections, stimulates new ones, or triggers personal anxieties (Hein, 1998:54–55).

Falk and Dierking (2002: 5) seek “to understand museums from a visitor’s perspective”.



They define museum encounters through their Interactive Experience Model, which they divide into three contexts: personal, social, and physical. This model is used to demonstrate how each context interacts to create the visitor’s experience. They (Falk and Dierking) again (2000:10), put forward the Contextual Model of Learning as “a device for organizing the complexities of learning within free-choice settings.” The Contextual Model of Learning is not a model in its truest sense; it does not purport to make predictions other than that learning is always a complex phenomenon situated within a series of

contexts. More appropriately, the “model” can be thought of as a framework. The view of learning embodied in this framework is that learning can be conceptualized as a contextually driven effort to make meaning in order to survive and prosper within the world; an effort that is best viewed as a continuous, never-ending dialogue between the individual and his or her physical and socio-cultural environment. The Contextual Model of Learning portrays this contextually driven dialogue as the process/ product of the interactions between an individual’s (hypothetical) *personal*, *sociocultural*, and *physical* contexts over time. None of these three contexts are ever stable or constant; all are changing across the lifetime of the individual. As the museum examples help to clarify, the Contextual Model of Learning draws from constructivist, cognitive, as well as socio-cultural theories of learning. The key feature of this framework is the emphasis on context; a framework for thinking about learning.

So far and so forth, it seemed that museums are the superior agents with ‘pious’ duties and responsibilities to act as unilateral ‘big brotherly benefactors’ for the betterment and uplifting of the ‘poor’ subjects at large; and have nothing to get back from the general visitors. It should not be forgotten that the museum visitors are not liabilities alone – ever demanding to be pampered – they are assets too. Visitors bear collective memories of the societies; the traditional wisdom of the museum audiences, especially that of the subalterns, besides gentries, can also benefit the museums. The museum experience must be bilateral exchanges. Not only that *every visitor is with special needs*, every museum is also with special needs. The dialectical identities of museum visitors as individual and collective entities might evoke interesting challenges. One solution might be to segment the visitors at macro level and then to devise the services accordingly; or to take resort to modern technology to create immersive visualisation with several inputs at micro level and leave it to the audience to satiate individual needs. Whatsoever might be, for sure, memories are to be portrayed creatively to bring in social change.

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FROM REAL THING TO REAL EXPERIENCE – RETHINKING MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

Wan-Chen Chang

Taipei National University of Arts – Taiwan

ABSTRACT

Some museums, especially science museums, nowadays, make extensive use of technological reproductions as the main medium of their exhibitions, and the boundary between representation and reality becomes more and more confused. In this kind of contemporary environment, this article seeks to explore whether authenticity is important to the contemporary museum audience. What kind of significance does it carry?

The article takes as its foundation theories of experiential learning, museum experience and experience economy, and, as its case study, the dinosaur exhibition in the renowned Life Science Hall at the National Museum of Natural Science in Taichung, Taiwan. Through interviews with an expert and visitors, it attempts to investigate how visitors to science museums think about authenticity and how we should view the importance and significance of authenticity in relation to the acquisition of museum experience. The study argues that museums should distinguish between experience as an end and experience as a means, and should face up to the intrinsic nature of the museum audience's visiting experience.

Key words: Authenticity, Museum Visitor Experience, Experience Economy

RÉSUMÉ

De la vraie chose à la vraie expérience – repenser l'expérience muséale

De nos jours, certains musées – en particulier ceux de science – font une utilisation étendue des reproductions technologiques comme médias principaux de leurs expositions. La frontière entre la représentation et la réalité est devenue de plus en plus confuse. Dans une telle situation, cet article cherche à explorer si, pour le public du musée d'aujourd'hui, l'authenticité est toujours importante ? Quelle signification porte-t-elle ?

L'article s'appuie sur la théorie des études expérimentales sur l'apprentissage, sur l'expérience muséale et sur l'économie expérimentale, et il s'appuie, comme étude de cas, sur l'exposition des dinosaures de la fameuse galerie des sciences de la vie au musée national de science naturelle à Taichung, à Taiwan. En utilisant des entretiens avec un expert et des visiteurs du musée, il essaie d'étudier comment les visiteurs de musées scientifiques conçoivent l'authenticité et comment nous devrions considérer l'importance et la signification de l'authenticité au regard de ce qu'apporte l'expérience muséale. L'article assure que les musées devraient faire une distinction entre l'expérience comme but et l'expérience comme moyen, et qu'ils devraient s'intéresser à la nature intrinsèque de l'expérience de la visite du musée.

Mots clés : l'authenticité, l'expérience des visiteurs du musée, l'économie expérimentale

Wan-Chen Chang

From real thing to real experience: rethinking museum experience

RESUMEN

De la cosa verdadera a la experiencia verdadera – repensando la experiencia museal

Actualmente, algunos museos, especialmente los museos de ciencias, hacen un uso extensivo de reproducciones tecnológicas como el medio principal de sus exhibiciones, haciendo cada vez más confuso el límite entre representación y realidad. En este tipo de ambiente contemporáneo, este artículo trata de explorar en qué medida la autenticidad es importante para el público actual del museo. ¿Qué tipo de significado le es atribuido?

El artículo toma como base las teorías sobre de aprendizaje experiencial, experiencia del museo y la economía de la experiencia, y, como caso de estudio, propone la exposición de dinosaurios en el famoso Salón de Ciencias de la Vida en el Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales en Taichung, Taiwán. A través de entrevistas con expertos y visitantes, investiga que es lo que los visitantes de los museos de ciencia piensan acerca de la autenticidad y la forma en que debemos ver la importancia y trascendencia de la autenticidad en relación con la adquisición de experiencia de museo. El estudio sostiene que los museos deberían distinguir entre la experiencia como un fin y la experiencia como un medio, y debe enfrentar la naturaleza intrínseca de la experiencia del visitante de museo como público.

Palabras Clave: Autenticidad, Experiencia del visitante de museo, Experiencia en lo Económico

* * *

I. Introduction

Some museums, especially science museums, nowadays, make extensive use of technological reproductions as the main media of their exhibitions. When the means of expression is more and more visual and realistic, the boundary between representation and reality becomes more and more confused.¹ As is argued in the renowned theories of Jean Baudrillard, more and more of what we now consume are symbols or reproductions. Everyone knows it is simulated, and yet is eager to imitate and accept it². Umberto Eco believes that, in hyper-reality, simulations are more true to life than real things³.

The question that this article wishes to address is: Is authenticity still important to contemporary museum audiences? What significance, moreover, does authenticity hold for the audience's museum experience? The article takes as its case study the dinosaur display in the renowned Life Science Hall at the National Museum of Natural Science in Taichung, Taiwan, and attempts to investigate how visitors to science museums think about authenticity and what significance authenticity has for the acquisition of museum experience. By means of analysis of such concepts as "experience," "museum experience," "authenticity," and "the experience economy," accompanied by an audience survey conducted by the author at the science museum, the article offers research views on these matters.

¹ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze. Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, Sage Publications, 1990, p.85.

² Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, p. 167-184.

³ Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyper Reality*, Harvest, 1990.

II. Experience and Museum Experience

“Experience” is a term that has often been applied in recent years in the museum field, especially in research related to audience visits. The term “experience” has a complex etymology and implications, which is not the subject of this study. In general terms, however, “experience” can mean “practical contact with and observation of facts or events” or “an event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone.”⁴ Experience causes an individual in a certain situation to undergo an accumulation of certain knowledge or emotions because of something that happens to him or her in person. There is a developmental context to the attachment of value, by museum research, to experience. John Dewey’s *Experience and Education* emphasized that learning was a constant process of the restructuring and reorganization of experience, and advocated the integration of all kinds of experience into traditional educational models, establishing a milestone in experiential learning theory.⁵ This kind of theoretical tradition views “transformation of experience” and “construction of meaning” as its core meaning and value, and is a kind of holistic socio-cultural construct of experiential learning.⁶ When John Falk and Lynn Dierking introduced this concept of experiential learning into the museum field, it enabled museum experience to be seen as a kind of holistic learning influenced by socio-economic contexts.⁷

Falk and Dierking emphasize in their writings the necessity of museums attaching value to the individual experience of each visitor. They hold that, “Each visitor learns in a different way, and interprets information through the lens of previous knowledge, experience, and beliefs.”⁸ They also repeatedly call on museums squarely to face visitors’ motivations and expectations in visiting and previous experience of doing so, as well as the value of visiting a museum as a leisure choice (leisure values).⁹ This valuing of individual experience is in fact affirmed in the book *The Experience Economy*¹⁰. This book’s authors, James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II, regard experience as the critical point for consideration by the consumer as he consumes, and argue directly that the service of experience provision will henceforth be the locus of value in the economy. Their argument highlights the gray area between contemporary museums and the leisure and entertainments industry and the pro-activeness with which visitors (or consumers) choose between the two.

III. The Experience Economy and Authenticity

Gilmore and Pine further argue that authenticity has already become the most important quality sought by consumers in the experience economy.¹¹ As far as the two authors are concerned, though, experiencing authenticity does not mean that the person undergoing the experience necessarily possesses authenticity. In an article titled *Museums and Authenticity*, the two authors clearly state, “All museums, therefore – as with all businesses – are fake, fake, fake.”¹² At the same time, however, they

⁴ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/experience?q=experience>

(Retrieved 25/12/2012)

⁵ John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, New York: Collier Books.

⁶ Peter Jarvis, John Holford & Colin Griffin, *The Theory & Practice of Learning*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 46.

⁷ John H. Falk & Lynn D. Dierking, *The Museum Experience*, Washington: Whalesback Books, 1992.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 136.

⁹ John H. Falk & Lynn D. Dierking, *Learning from Museums*, Altamira, 2000, p. 69-89.

¹⁰ B. Joseph Pine II & James H. Gilmore, *Experience Economy: Work is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999.

¹¹ James H. Gilmore & B. Joseph Pine II, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007.

¹² B. Joseph Pine II & James H. Gilmore, “Museums and Authenticity”, *Museum News*, May/June, 2007, p. 78.

also emphasize that museums, just like all businesses, must render the audience's experience authentic:

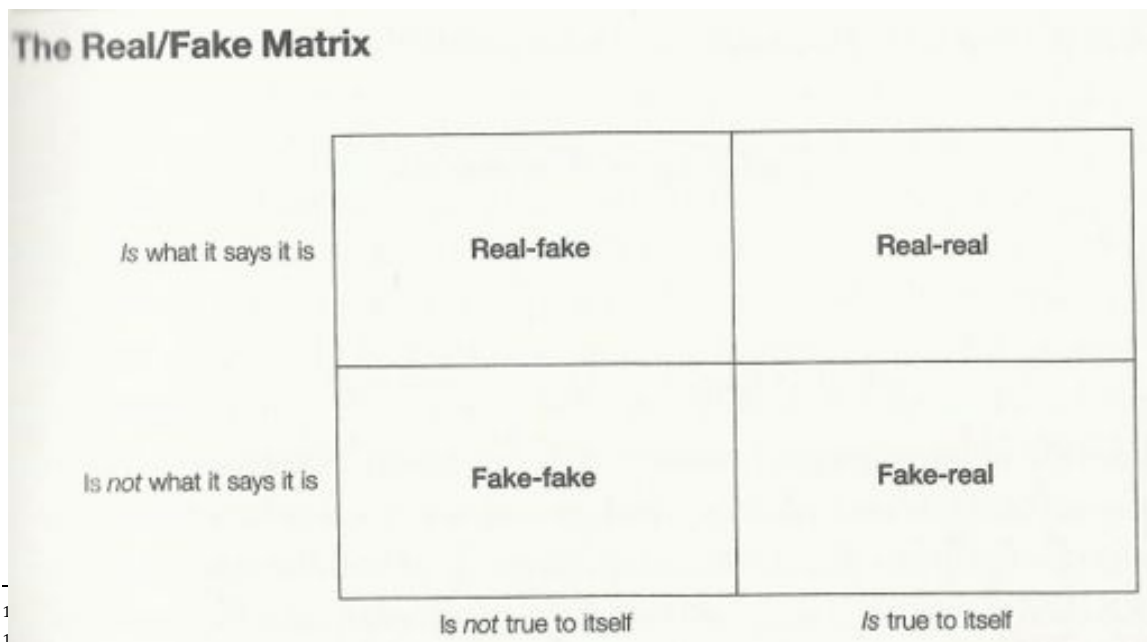
There is no such thing as an inauthentic experience because that experience happens inside of us. Therefore, as human beings we are free to view the experience with any artifact, any edifice and any encounter as authentic – or as inauthentic. That is why museums should focus on creating the perception of authenticity in the minds of people, and why precisely the right word to describe this process is the one we introduced earlier: render.¹³

They also suggest that, to render the audience's experience authentic, the secret of museums is not beyond either: One is being true to one's self. The other is being what you say you are to others.¹⁴ That is to say that, even though goods or services may be inauthentic, they can still deliver a feeling of authenticity. The two authors call this the Authenticity Paradox.¹⁵ One corollary of the Authenticity Paradox, moreover, is that the only decisive factor behind authenticity is the individual's experience of this product or service, but the consumer may be influenced or inspired.¹⁶ The two authors, indeed, established the Polonius Test, creating four types of authenticity: Real-real, real-fake, fake-real and fake-fake.¹⁷ Each type represents an acknowledgement of authenticity or inauthenticity on the part of the consumer at the time at which the latter faces a different product or service (fig 1). The two authors believe that, since authenticity is determined by the individual, the consumer can naturally decide for himself whether a product or service is: (i). Being true to one's own self. (ii). Being what you say you are to others. This kind of judgment stems from each individual's own self-image, as well as from the way in which this kind of image influences the individual's acceptance and understanding of products and services.¹⁸

To reflect on the two authors' theory is to observe that it is clearly an extremely significant one when applied to the field of museums. Traditionally museums have seen the authenticity of things as their core value. The authenticity of an item determines

Fig. 1 The Real/Fake Matrix (Gilmore & Pine II, 2007:97)

whether that item possesses collection or display value and it is on the basis of



¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

authenticity that museums develop their research, collection, exhibition and educational work.¹⁹ Cameron believes that “the real thing” is the core of all activities of the museum²⁰ and this view has always been revered as the paramount rule by the great majority of museum scholars. In museological discussions, the opposite of an authentic item is a replica or a substitute, but not necessarily a fake.²¹ These terms are different in meaning. Although there is a “no-choice” rationale about replicas and substitutes, or, at least, they do not present a problem in terms of museum ethics, we have to recognize that they do not possess the halo of authenticity; in the classification of Pine and Gilmore, they do not enjoy the status of “real-real.” In the case of a museum that utilizes replicas or substitutes, however, how should we create authentic experience? Does this effect work, moreover, and how should it be evaluated?

IV. The National Museum of Natural Sciences’ Dinosaur Exhibition

The National Museum of Natural Sciences in Taichung, Taiwan, can be said to be one of the museums in Taiwan with the most visitors.²² One of its extremely rich exhibitions, the Age of Dinosaurs, within the Life Science Hall, is particularly popular, and is frequently packed with visitors (photo .1). Apart from its fossils, the dinosaur exhibition’s robot dinosaurs, arrayed in the center of the venue’s main hall, are the focus of all visitors’ attention. Everyone knows that dinosaurs have long been extinct. The only things available for research are fossils. The apparently vital and dynamic, skin-bearing dinosaurs presented by the museum cannot possibly be “real.” But the visitors all seem to watch with relish.

The dinosaur hall is high and in the middle of it is a huge pair of tyrannosauruses, apparently mother and son, shaking their heads from time to time, whispering in each other’s ears, and emitting low-pitched, deep roars. Surrounding this leading couple on all four sides of the pavilion are many teams of smaller, static model dinosaurs, such as velociraptors, stegosauruses, and oviraptors. Through the glass, which extends down to the ground, one can still see the two more crudely constructed model dinosaurs, which, at a glance, also have a little *Jurassic Park* flavor, except that the backdrop is a little blander (photo 2). The postures of and illustration captions relating to these robot dinosaurs are extremely anthropomorphic; the introduction to the oviraptors, for example, adopts an extremely clear-cut title, commenting “Thief or Mother?” obviously making one receptive to the intimate intention of the design (photo 3).

On 18th August, 2011, the author interviewed this museum’s internationally renowned dinosaur researcher, Dr. Yen-Nien Cheng, in order to gain an understanding of the design intentions behind the dinosaur exhibition. To the author’s surprise, Dr. Cheng, from the outset, would not praise the museum’s purchase of robot dinosaurs and strictly criticized their use for the exhibit. He believed that this approach might convey inaccurate scientific information. He argued: “Truth is the sunset-tinged clouds on the horizon. Science is a different kind of conviction. Conviction determines our view of Mother Nature, and Mother Nature is mysterious.”²³ This implies that “All scientific conclusions, from hypotheses to established theories, to scientific laws, to universal laws, are ephemeral hypotheses.”²⁴ If scientific research and doctrines did not constantly evolve, museum exhibits would also be like this. To scientists who devote their entire lives to scientific research, there are only endless hypotheses to be tested

¹⁹ André Desvallées & François Mairesse (dirs), *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*, Paris : Armand Colin, p. 570.

²⁰ Duncan F. Cameron, “A Viewpoint: The Museum as a Communication System and Implications for Museum Education”, *Curator*, 11, 1968, p. 33-40.

²¹ Bernard Deloche, *Le Musée virtuel*, Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 2000.

²² See the museum’ official website : <http://www.nmns.edu.tw/>

²³ Author’s interview records☐

²⁴ *Id.*

and challenged; there are no so-called “conclusions” or “truth.” To audiences, however, the contents of museum exhibitions, which symbolize authority, can amount to absolute truth. As regards the core objectives of science exhibitions, therefore, Dr. Cheng believes that “Museums have traditionally served as temples providing definitive answers. It has already become the case that museums, through their rich collections of things and their delicate packaging, tell stories. The whereabouts of the audience raises critical questions and does not give definitive answers.”²⁵ It follows from this that a museum exhibit is truth and that it can only be a brief, temporary truth.

From the interview with Dr. Cheng, We can understand that, to a scientist, admittedly, there is no absolute truth, but museums should inspire audiences to reflect, not make them believe something and consider it true. The pursuit of truth is not tantamount to the experience of authenticity. The experience of authenticity in science museums must, in the eyes of scientists, be a process of devoting oneself to study and learning new things.

V. The Museum’s Visitors’ Views of the Dinosaur Exhibition

The author also interviewed eleven visitors to the dinosaur room on 20th July 2011 in order to gain an understanding of their opinions on its authenticity. The interviews comprised five principal questions, as follows:

- i. Do you believe the contents of the dinosaur exhibition are true, or fabricated/imaginary? (Continued from the above) Which of them are true? Which of them are fabricated/imaginary?
- ii. Do you believe it is important whether they are real or unreal? Does it affect your views of the exhibit?
- iii. After your visit to the dinosaur exhibition, which of its contents left the deepest impression on you?
- iv. After visiting the exhibition what do you think you learnt?

Having analyzed the transcripts word for word, the author made the following principal findings:

V-I. Visitors make up their own minds about authenticity

As regards interview question one, basically, the respondents had standards for determination of the authenticity or not of exhibits. First of all, many believed that the exhibited dinosaurs were “authentic visualizations.” Some of the visitors extrapolated on the basis of what they knew about dinosaurs. Others believed that the simulated exterior was not “authentic” enough:

“Highly authentic but I believe it’s fake because it couldn’t possibly live for so long. One might feel that it’s real because it can move, make a noise and is, generally, made to look very real.”

“False.” (Which do you think are real? Or are they all false?) The tyrannosaurus is very authentic.

“False.” (Which do you think are relatively realistic? Which do you think are relatively unrealistic?) “Those two velociraptors are relatively realistic. The tyrannosaurus is relatively unrealistic.”

“The way it looks and its sound must both be imaginary! It must be only the bones that are relatively authentic. Everything else is false!”

²⁵ *Id.*

"Fabricated. It's made to look very real, but one can easily tell it's fabricated. It looks very real, but in your heart you know it's absolutely not real. To children, it must be very authentic."

Although the author did not especially explain the concept of "authenticity" to the visitors at the time of the interviews, from their responses one can tell that they begin their reflections with the concept of "realism" rather than with the perspective of "authenticity." Although there were those who said that the fossils were real, not all visitors believed that the dinosaurs were real:

"Isn't this real? It's just that it's a model. The tyrannosaurus is quite real. Children like it. (Which part is imaginary?) Oh, it's all very real. (Including their movements and voices?) Yes."

"Of course it's real, because we study life sciences. Dinosaurs truly existed. It's just that the things behind us are based on conjecture. The tyrannosaurus's voice, for example, is simulated. The fossils are real. The movements and sounds may be fabricated and imaginary and the colors are false."

"Real. Of course there are parts that are fabricated and imaginary. Actually, of course, dinosaurs have existed. What is fabricated is their outer skin, their sounds; these are all imagined!"

We can tell from the interviews with the visitors that, in their minds, visitors have standards for determining whether robot dinosaurs that have swaying bodies and can emit sounds are real or fabricated. They do not go so far as to believe that the science museum commands time to reverse, and maintain an attitude of holding back as regards the techniques for explaining the robot dinosaurs.

V-II. The trusting attitude of museum visitors

Although visitors can clearly discern that robot dinosaurs involve a degree of fabrication, this apparently does not detract from the trust they have in the content of the museum's exhibition. As regards question two, the great majority of respondents, regardless of whether they answered "important" or "unimportant," believed that whether the dinosaurs were real or unreal did not affect their views of the museum. Here, the author interprets this as "not affecting one's trust in the contents of the museum's exhibition."

"Not important because it has characteristics."

"This is adequate. Otherwise, how real does it need to be? Whether something is real or unreal will not affect one's understanding of knowledge about dinosaurs."

"Important, because children will compare it with the books and videos they've seen in the past. (So it will affect their impressions of the exhibition?) Of course the more it moves and the more DIY it is the better. (Is that because you feel that things that move are more real?) What I mean is that children prefer things that they can manipulate. With dinosaurs, for example, you could use a few bones that they could assemble, and that would make them very happy."

Some of the visitors believed that the museum's exhibitions could serve as a basis for imagination or self-reflection, so whether they were real or unreal was not of absolute importance.

"It's just for reference. As regards everything else, one thinks one's own thoughts."

"Not important. It's a kind of theory. Exhibitions just raise one of the theories."

"Whether it's real or unreal is all the same to me; I don't believe it makes any difference. Because I'm an adult. I can tell the difference for myself."

"No. I believe that this is by its nature something one has to imagine. Because without imagination it's just a few bones; not very interesting."

But there were also visitors who believed that false dinosaurs were "safer."

"Important, because real dinosaurs would be relatively dangerous."

Summing up the visitors' views, we find that they rarely question the integrity of the content of the museum's exhibition. Although not "credulous," the interviewed visitors were "trusting."

V-III. The visitors did not attach much importance to whether the dinosaurs were real or unreal, but robot dinosaurs possess a certain entertainment value.

The visitors generally believed that robot dinosaurs possessed a certain entertainment value. As regards question three ("After your visit to the dinosaur exhibition, which of its contents left the deepest impression on you?"), apart from one visitor who answered "The velociraptor," all the other visitors said "The father and son tyrannosauruses." As to why the tyrannosauruses left the deepest impression, the most important reason was still their "movement," and tyrannosauruses are particularly attractive to children.

"The way the tyrannosaurus moves seems pretty good. At least it's not like machines used to be, starting to move and then getting stuck."

"I think the moving dinosaur model is so sweet! Is it new? I haven't been here since I was in elementary school. I think it's really sweet, but surely it might frighten small children! It's really very well made."

"Still that moving dinosaur."

"The tyrannosaurus. My child was staring at it constantly."

"The moving dinosaur. Its visual and aural effect is good. It leaves a deep impression on children."

Because of their life-like quality and motion, the realism of the dinosaurs, as far as some of the visitors were concerned, could still exert a certain psychological effect. Some of the visitors, for example, believed the tyrannosauruses were a little frightening:

"Now this tyrannosaurus, if you saw it at night, would certainly frighten you."

"I've seen it many times and am no longer scared of it."

As an emotion behind a reaction, "fear" or "dread" is also the fear or dread residing in a fabricated perspective, a kind of imaginary effect. Behind this emotion there is still an entertainment value:

"(Real or unreal) is not very important, as long as one is happy."

"Pure entertainment, right?"

Moving, life-like robot dinosaurs definitely exert an entertainment effect upon visitors and transmit to them a message that "This message delivers entertainment value."

V-IV. Museum visitors' motivations for visiting and objectives in visiting differ completely from each other by their very nature.

It is very difficult for museums to demand that everybody maintain an attitude of "conscientious study." In relation to question four, some visitors clearly stated that they hadn't planned to learn anything:

"I didn't learn anything, because I didn't look carefully. I just came in to kill time and take advantage of the air conditioning."

"Fortunately, I came in with a leisurely attitude."

"I can't have learnt anything because I've already been here umpteen times. The children must have learnt something."

"I don't seem to have learnt anything. Perhaps in the future, if I have children, I'll bring them here."

The visitors who were relatively "conscientious," however, mainly by reading the explanatory words at the venue "learnt" a few things about dinosaurs:

"Their (the dinosaurs') characteristics and the nature of their lives."

"Dinosaurs are already extinct."

"Just that some organisms evolved. Natural selection. This is just the way it is. There's no need for such painstaking questioning."

"The knowledge taught by the signage. You learn it. I don't have much feeling about most of it though."

"Oh yes, I learnt things. I think there's a hypothesis about it that we didn't really know before, which is that it actually had fur. Because we all thought it was like a crocodile. How could it have fur?" The velociraptor is the same and so is the child of the tyrannosaurus. This is something I've never seen before."

"As regards the past, what mankind can know is very limited. We need to see more things, discover more things, so that we can have more understanding and development in relation to both the past and the future."

Looking at it from the perspective of the visitors' answers, if there were no hypotheses, and one could rely only on the movements and sounds of the robot dinosaurs, it would be extremely difficult to get the audience to learn or reflect upon the characteristics, life habits and properties of this type of organism, the dinosaur. Exhibitions, however, should not rely solely on text for their expression; their visual and aural effects, each item's configuration within the exhibition space, should perform a certain role.

VI. Conclusion: false dinosaurs and real experiences

If we use Pine's and Gilmore's classifications, we would classify the science museum's dinosaur exhibition as an example of "Fake-real." "Fake-real" is perhaps inconsistent with what it outwardly proclaims, but it is absolutely faithful to itself. By creating fake

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From real thing to real experience: rethinking museum experience

reality, it conceals its inauthenticity. It must conceal its inauthenticity and create a product or service that is intrinsically perfect.²⁶ As far as the two authors are concerned, Disneyland is among their best examples.

To make a product “fake-real,” however, it is necessary to make it manifest the authenticity in which the consumer freely wishes to believe, i.e. to “create faith.”²⁷ According to much museological research, museums serve as disciplinary or ritual arenas, possessing considerable authority and legitimacy in relation to their visitors.²⁸ This kind of sense of trust can be said to establish a kind of senior-to-junior asymmetrical relationship, like that between father and son or teacher and student. On the basis of this logic, visitors should adopt an attitude of trust towards the dinosaur exhibition. Robot dinosaurs or verisimilitude, however, cannot possess “authenticity.” The interviews in the dinosaur room prove that, although visitors are clearly aware that robot dinosaurs are absolutely not “real,” this does not impair the tacit agreement of mutual approval established between the museum and the public. False dinosaurs can still give visitors authentic experiences, and visitors still trust the credibility of the contents of the museum’s exhibitions.

Although experience is real, however, this does not mean that the museum education objectives among the ideals of scientists can therefore be achieved. Whether museum exhibits should pursue “entertainification,” or even what is known as “Disneyfication,” is an issue already long debated by scholars.²⁹ Even if one wanted to turn a museum into Disneyland, however, that is not a straightforward matter. This is in fact a problem on which contemporary museums need to reflect. If, as far as this case-study is concerned, what we can confirm is that the realism of robot dinosaurs (apart from inducing surprised or fearful moods in visitors) fails to lead visitors to reflect truly effectively on problems and explore dimensions, unless the overall planning and commentary provided museums can be strengthened. This also means that it is different to provide visitors with authentic experiences in museums as an objective or an educational strategy.

A final point: Museum visitors enjoy completely different experiences from one another, and view and respond to things in completely different ways from one another, even in the same environment and under the same conditions. As regards “motivation for learning,” some maintain a learning attitude, while others are completely casual. Attitude in the face of robot dinosaurs is also something that differs from one person to another. The ways in which every individual utilizes the services provided by cultural institutions naturally varies with the ways in which the individual views his life, utilizes his resources and forges his values. Museums must, however, still provide possibilities for in-depth study in the course of entertaining experiences. The scholar, David Thelen, believes that

Individuals construct from time, place, and circumstance not determinants of their behavior but horizons of possibility and constraint, including relationships, pressures, and conventions from which they frame choices and take responsibility for them.³⁰

²⁶ Gilmore & Pine II, *Op.cit.*, p. 102.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 108-110.

²⁸ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, “The museum in the disciplinary society”. In: Susan M. Pearce (ed.), *Museum Studies in Material Culture*, Leicester and London: Leicester University Press; Washington, DC: Smithsonian University Press, 1989, p. 61-72.

²⁹ See for example, the no. 5 of *Culture & Musées* and also Serge Chaumier (dir), *Expoland. Ce que le pacte fait au musée: ambivalence des forms de l'exposition*, Paris : Editions Complicités, 2011.

³⁰ David Thelen, “Learning from the Past: Individual Experience and Re-Enactment”, *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 99, No. 2, June 2003, p. 159.

Museums must not eliminate the possibility for visitors to react in ideal ways to the contents of museum exhibitions, because the museum is stimulating and can cause the individual to place himself in an environment in which he can exchange experiences with others.

If the science museum's dinosaur room exhibit (although the robot dinosaurs it uses still succeed in making visitors believe in its "authenticity" and capable of enjoying interesting visitor experiences), fails effectively to induce visitors to explore the study of dinosaurs and ancient organisms the most important factor in all this must be that museums are incapable of distinguishing between experience as an end and experience as a means, and incapable of facing squarely up to the nature of the museum audience's visitor experience.

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LA VISITA INDIVIDUAL: EL DIÁLOGO DEL CUERPO

Sergio Fernández Reche

Museo de Málaga – España

RESUMEN

Frente a los recorridos seriados y masivos, la visita al museo también puede ser una opción personal de diálogo activo. Este diálogo singular es interpretado como un acontecimiento ético que requiere la respuesta responsable por parte del visitante, en la que implica su propio cuerpo. El análisis de esta experiencia de visita individual, y a la vez participativa, siguiendo las teorías dialógicas del círculo de Bakhtin permite una perspectiva de conjunto de la institución museística. Por otro lado la extensión de la visita al museo entendida como consumo, renueva la figura del *flâneur*, y con ella la visión que Benjamin desarrolló a partir del paseante solitario perplejo ante las muchedumbres. Estos dos ángulos sirven de enfoque conceptual para mostrar la tensión que vive el museo actual. Como medio de comunicación de masas que oferta un producto cultural, dirigido a un público lo más amplio posible. O bien como medio, que facilita a visitantes singulares desarrollar un proceso personal para formular sus propias preguntas con el fin de conocer la realidad.

ABSTRACT

The Individual visit: body dialogue

Even in the face of massive tourism, museum visits can also be a personal choice of active dialogue. This unique dialogue is interpreted as an event that requires ethical and responsible response by the visitor, which means your own body. The analysis of this individual visit experience, while participatory, following the dialogical theories of the Bakhtin Circle, allows an overall perspective of the museum institution. Nevertheless, the extent of the visit to the museum understood as consumption renews the figure of the *flâneur*, and therefore, the point that Benjamin developed of the solitary walker perplexed by the crowds. These two approaches provide a conceptual approach to show the tension experienced by the current museum. As one of mass media that offer a cultural product, the museum aims at an audience as broad as possible. Or else it is a means that allows visitors to develop a personal process to formulate their own questions in order to discover reality.

RÉSUMÉ

La visite individuelle : un dialogue du corps

Face au tourisme de masse, la visite au musée peut aussi être un choix personnel de dialogue actif. Ce dialogue personnel est interprété comme un événement qui exige une réponse éthique responsable de la part du visiteur, en impliquant son propre corps. L'analyse de cette expérience de visite individuelle, quoiqu'elle soit participative, d'après les théories dialogiques du Cercle Bakhtin, permet d'envisager l'institution muséale dans une perspective globale. Néanmoins, l'extension de la visite au musée, comprise comme une consommation, renouvelle la figure du *flâneur*, et donc le point que Benjamin développa sur le promeneur solitaire rendu perplexe par les foules. Ces deux angles de vue fournissent une approche conceptuelle pour montrer la tension

Sergio Fernández Reche

La visita individual: el diálogo del cuerpo

éprouvée par le musée actuel. Ou bien comme les mass-médias offrant un produit culturel, ce dernier a visé un public aussi large que possible. Ou bien c'est un moyen qui permet aux visiteurs de développer un processus personnel pour formuler leurs propres questions afin de connaître la réalité.

* * *

Frente a un plato con restos de comida, una jaula de pájaros, un secador de pelo... un joven se detiene, con extraña atención, mira cada objeto desde posiciones diversas, y después los fotografía. Su actitud ante estas insignificancias es ridícula para sus compañeros, que lo consideran una rareza.

Esto es lo que hace Miles Heller el personaje de la novela *Sunset Park*, de Paul Auster¹, cuando por su trabajo en una empresa de recogida de muebles, penetra en las casas de los desahuciados. Observa las cosas que encuentra de una manera especial, como si fueran únicas y conservaran todavía los sentimientos de los antiguos habitantes.

La mayoría de la gente que acude a las exposiciones de los grandes museos se comporta de forma considerada. Siguen un discurso expositivo que confiere un orden al espacio. Una graduación expositiva en la que hay piezas a las que se les da más aire, un determinado enfoque lumínico, una perspectiva frontal a la circulación, en definitiva se les otorga una situación de privilegio sobre los restantes objetos. Suele ser una jerarquía reservada para las piezas más espectaculares y reconocibles por la gente. Y casi siempre el público las reconoce, especialmente si se exponen de esta forma destacada, se detienen ante ellas para admirarlas y puede incluso que se formen grupos, allí donde se esperaba. Luego la circulación sigue el orden previsto, apoyándose en los paneles y las cartelas que facilitan el conocimiento. Deteniéndose donde el discurso determina y discurriendo fluidamente en los espacios donde los mensajes son de transición.

Mientras, los vigilantes pueden observar el sentido de esta marcha uniforme durante horas, y los mismos gestos repetidos una y otra vez.

Entre la gente que sigue el orden previsto hay una tendencia al comedimiento en la voz y las pisadas. En ciertos momentos de la visita casi arrastran los pies y con bastante probabilidad lo hacen cuando están obligados a guardar cola, algo cada vez más frecuente en los museos con éxito de público.

Pero en todo orden también hay excepciones, existen individuos que no siguen lo previsto, se paran en obras consideradas como menores, deambulan por las salas, las atraviesan en diagonal, o vuelven sobre sus pasos: Observan las piezas desde perspectivas poco habituales, miran con otra agudeza, y caminan como si encontraran algo. Estos sujetos incluso pueden llamar la atención de los vigilantes, que perciben la diferencia ante la rutinaria normalidad del fluir de la gente.

Los vigilantes son garantes directos del orden correcto en el museo, y pueden tener una función más importante de la que se suele pensar, pues tienen encomendada la mirada: de los objetos y de los que lo observan. De alguna forma pueden constituir el Otro, aquel que reconoce el diálogo establecido. La responsabilidad de todo ser humano implica la necesidad de respuesta cuando se produce un enunciado que interpela. El discurrir continuo, casi automatizado de la gente se hace insignificante, y por tanto es imposible la acción, pero ante el movimiento cargado de significado se

¹Paul Auster. *Sunset Park*. Anagrama, Barcelona, 2010.

produciría el acontecimiento, el acto ético del que hablara Bajtín, en el que el sujeto está obligado a la respuesta, aunque ésta sea la omisión.

1. El visitante individual

"Todos nuestros discursos interiores, es decir, nuestros pensamientos, son inevitablemente diálogos (...) El diálogo no es un compromiso entre el yo, que ya existe como tal, y el otro; al contrario, el diálogo es el compromiso que da lugar al yo"
Valentin N. Voloshinov²

La comprensión del significado solamente corresponde a un yo individual que actúa en un momento concreto, con una necesaria mirada interior que otorga al individuo la responsabilidad del acto ético.³ Pero paradójicamente para producir el conocimiento requiere además la acción, que necesariamente es participativa.⁴

En la exposición se puede producir una toma de conciencia, y la conciencia es material, adquiere forma de diálogo y se expresa en relación a significantes como pueden ser las piezas del museo.

La acción comunicativa de los individuos en el museo, reforzaría su relevancia como sujetos frente al mero transitar de gente. Por eso la visita comunicativa tenderían a realizarla especialmente visitantes que acuden al museo solos o que singularizan su visita, adquiriendo una actitud individual ante los objetos.

La comprensión es una actividad, que siempre genera otro enunciado.⁵ Pero la respuesta es desde el propio enunciado, de modo que introduciéndose en el sentido de la pieza, en el contexto, es como el visitante la comprende, la integra en su conciencia para generar un significado útil.

Para que se produzca la respuesta debe tener un significado para el sujeto, convertirse en enunciados que se incorporen a los propios discursos de los visitantes. Pues la respuesta siempre implica una valoración desde su propio punto de vista, desde su concepción social.⁶

Cada nuevo enunciado se pone en relación con el bagaje de enunciados que el sujeto atesora, es entonces cuando comprende e implica todo su ser en este instante concreto. Se produce su temporalización con el horizonte personal de previsiones, deseos y recuerdos del sujeto. Pero también se traslada al pasado de la pieza, en el que se encuentra el sentido de estos signos.

Entonces el visitante se incorpora a un diálogo sinfín, en el que adquiere identidad mediante una relación yo-tú de respuestas y preguntas, en las que el sentido permanece abierto.

2. La expresión del visitante

² Valentin N. Voloshinov. *El marxismo y la filosofía del lenguaje*. Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1992, p.26.

³ En cuanto a la responsabilidad "l'acte même de muséalisation est un acte de pouvoir et d'autonomisation de l'objet par rapport à des contextes originels – et, en même temps, c'est un acte d'autonomisation du regard. En revanche, il n'y a pas de muséalisation sans responsabilisation". Bruno Brulon Soares, "La muséologie du devenir: le pouvoir des musées comme écoles des regards". *ICOFOM Study Series ISS*, 41, p. 117.

⁴ "El propósito de Bajtín es justamente pensar la unidad de este acontecimiento singular e indivisible. El momento significativo no es una abstracción de la actividad productiva. Al contrario, el contenido semántico necesariamente tiene que ser remitido al acontecer de un yo individual que obra aquí y ahora". Adrián Bertorello "Bajtín: acontecimiento y lenguaje". *Revista Signa*, 18, 2009, p.137

⁵ Valentin N. Voloshinov. *Op. Cit.*

⁶ M. Bajtín. "De los apuntes de 1970-1971" *Estética de la creación verbal*. Siglo XXI, México, 1982, p. 364.

“Mis talones se irguieron, los dedos de mis pies escuchaban para comprenderte”

Friedrich Nietzsche⁷

Pero si toda comprensión de un signo es respondente, un visitante individual ¿cómo expresaría esa respuesta?

Sin duda estas personas construyen un discurso en su imaginación estableciendo una relación comunicativa con las piezas expuestas. Se trata de un diálogo interior, autorreflexivo, una conversación silenciosa, en la medida en que no se pronuncian palabras. Pero evidentemente se produce un reconocimiento del objeto y, la comprensión de un significado en las obras expuestas. La suya es una percepción ante signos, lo que da lugar a una disposición activa.

En la relación sujeto-objeto, el individuo penetra en el significado de la pieza, la hace signo para establecer una comunicación, que no puede expresarse mediante el lenguaje verbal porque está solo, pero las vivencias psíquicas adquieren materialidad, en los movimientos del visitante por las salas. La corporeidad sería también una manera de actuar. Ante el acontecimiento ético del signo daría respuesta responsable con esta acción participante en el espacio.⁸

Caminando un discurso silencioso va respondiendo corporalmente. Así el visitante imagina un relato con las piezas, se posiciona subjetivamente y físicamente, a medida que elabora enunciados en su interior, va construyendo al objeto, y al propio sujeto. En cuanto la pieza encarna un significado dentro de su pensamiento, se convierte en signo, a la vez que el individuo se identifica.⁹

De esta forma el visitante dispone su personal discurso a través de los objetos. La trayectoria física acaba ante las vitrinas o las peanas, pero las traspasa por medio de miradas que se convierten en enunciados. Pronuncia preguntas sin palabras, genera un diálogo callado, absolutamente replicante ante la visión inquisitiva de los objetos.

Curiosamente en el momento que por medio de la expresión corporal surge al exterior esta conciencia, es cuando podemos hablar de una interioridad del visitante, que queda incardinado por medio de una contestación gestual, en el encadenamiento discursivo, al que pueden dar respuesta otros sujetos.¹⁰

Además toda expresión de un ser humano tiene un tono emotivo, un deje personal, un estilo propio que permite traslucir un matiz valorativo, es decir la subjetividad que otorga el auténtico sentido a los enunciados. En este énfasis emocional con que se aprecia un signo o se pronuncia una palabra se encuentra la posición social de cada interlocutor. El acento tiene un componente que trasciende al individuo, es social. Por lo que ante cada pronunciación se produce una pugna por el sentido que cada fuerza social incorpora a los significantes.

Un ademán, un paso, contienen también las relaciones sociales profundas del sujeto y permiten expresar la conciencia interior mediante el discurso de los cuerpos. Para el visitante individual el acento sería un énfasis gestual.

⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche. *Así habló Zaratustra*. Edaf. Madrid, 2010.

⁸ Iris M. Zavala. “Como leer el síntoma social”. *La (di)famación de la palabra Ensayos polémicos de ética y cultura*. Anthropos, Barcelona, 2009.

⁹ “We explore ‘the role of discourse in the construction of objects and subjects, including the ‘self’, in terms of whether they constrain or facilitate particular subject positions”. Shirley Anne Tate. “Foucault, Bakhtin, Ethnomethodology: Accounting for Hybridity in Talk-in-Interaction” *FQS / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*. Volume 8, No. 2, Art. 10 – May 2007.

¹⁰ Valentin N. Voloshinov. *Op. Cit.*

Precisamente es la forma individual de actuar, de escuchar o de mirar lo que facilita asociar el sentido de los signos a nuestro horizonte personal, como parte una grupo social desde el que el signo puede ser comprendido.

Por ello tanto el acento como el movimiento del cuerpo están sujetos a normas y restricciones que encauzan la significación.

Sobre la importancia del acento se expresó Voloshinov con claridad: “La clase dominante busca adjudicar al signo ideológico un carácter eterno por encima de las clases sociales, pretende apagar y reducir al interior la lucha de valoraciones sociales que se verifica en él, trata de convertirlo en signo monoacentual”.¹¹

Evitar la capacidad significativa que va implícita en la pronunciación personal va unida al comedimiento gestual, a la desmaterialización del lenguaje.¹²

De hecho, la exposición puede ser tratada como una explicación monológica, como un texto ilustrado con piezas, en la que al visitante sólo le cabe la lectura descorporeizada, la visión desde una perspectiva y el espacio considerado como un medio para el tránsito, en el que la acción corporal diferenciada es una extravagancia. El museo entonces se diseña como un lugar para las circulaciones ordenadas, establecidas para el discurrir de la masa.

Pues la posición desde la que se percibe una pintura, aquella que permite ver el armazón que sustentan una pieza, o el bastidor de un lienzo, puede variar el sentido de los objetos. Al igual que el movimiento de un visitante que cambia el orden previsto de un discurso expositivo transforma el sentido de una exposición.¹³

Por ello el mantenimiento de un orden discursivo tiene que controlar, también por cuestiones de significación, la situación del observador. Esto se hace mediante la iluminación, por las perspectivas a la que obligan la ubicación en vitrinas y peanas; los enfoques determinados por la disposición entre piezas o por la distancia reservada a los espectadores, etc. En definitiva una panoplia de armas con las que se puede situar la pieza y al visitante en la posición correcta.

El control de la expresión corporal, no se trataría tanto de prohibiciones basadas en la seguridad de los fondos, aunque también estén presente, como de opciones museográficas que encauzan las perspectivas hacia un determinado discurso, y que incluso pueden contar con el apoyo de instrumentos tecnológicos como las audioguías que van dirigiendo al visitante hacia donde deben desplazarse, donde detenerse, qué mirar y qué deben juzgar como más importante. Pero con todo lo que sería determinante para condicionar la libre apreciación del sujeto, es la presencia abundante de visitantes, formando flujos constantes que siguen las circulaciones previstas en un determinado orden y se comportan de forma unívoca.

Si el movimiento corporal como medio de expresión individual puede cambiar la semántica de los signos, la relación con otros sujetos da lugar a un diálogo, donde el espacio cobra sentido. La exposición del museo es un punto de encuentro y de controversia. El visitante individual desarrolla su movimiento enunciativo en un

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 49-50.

¹² “El desconocimiento del esencial *acento valorativo* va junto con la descorporeización del lenguaje” José Luis Grosso. “Cuerpos del Discurso y Discurso de los Cuerpos: Nietzsche y Bajtin en nuestras relaciones interculturales” *Cuerpos, emociones y sociedad*, nº 1, Córdoba, 2009, p. 44-77.

¹³ “El sentido no puede (y no quiere) cambiar los fenómenos físicos, materiales y otros, no puede actuar como una fuerza material. Tampoco lo necesita: es más poderoso que cualquier fuerza, cambia el sentido total del acontecimiento y de la realidad sin cambiar ni un solo grano en su composición real, todo sigue siendo como era pero adquiere un sentido totalmente diferente (la transformación semántica del ser). Cada palabra del texto se transforma en un contexto nuevo”. M. Bajtín. “Hacia una metodología de las ciencias humanas” en *Estética de la creación verbal*. Siglo XXI, México, 1982, p. 387.

espacio compartido con objetos y con otros visitantes, la relación en el espacio expositivo permite establecer un intercambio discursivo, en el que por contraste, las distintas formas de ver y de caminar se evidencian y se identifican. Especialmente esta discusión en el espacio se produce entre el orden previsto, la circulación establecida y los otros.

Hay una diferencia entre el visitante que transita, sigue la circulación ante la seriación expositiva y el que se encamina hacia una pieza concreta que le llama la atención. Sería algo similar a lo que ocurre cuando alguien desplaza su cuerpo para escuchar a otro, que convierte el silencio del oyente en una escucha activa, y transforma con un gesto la percepción monológica de una voz, en un diálogo.¹⁴ Ese desplazarse y entrar a buscar el significado de la pieza, detenerse un tiempo ante ella y replicar con una expresión, está relacionado con el movimiento dialógico en el que el objeto se percibe como señal, acto seguido se valora con el horizonte propio, para responder activamente al significado y marcar un límite entre enunciados.

Así la voluntad se abre camino en las salas, los objetos se comprenden con los pies, y permite que la quietud física ante una pieza se entienda como respuesta.

Cuando el sujeto emite un mensaje mental. Cambia la posición psíquica, y también física respecto a la pieza y aguarda, aunque por supuesto sabe que no tendrá respuesta del objeto de museo, este tiempo le sirve para contradecir su discurso, va alternando el papel y las esperas marcarían la frontera a su propia contestación.

Tras cada enunciado se produce una frontera, se marca un silencio que genera en su término, un hueco, un vacío que suscita al otro, e impulsa el diálogo reclamando la réplica.

Pero si la exposición es una explicación constante sin solución de continuidad de piezas, textos y recursos museográficos; y por otro lado el público se incorpora a un circuito, a un discurrir continuo, el intercambio de sujetos discursivos se dificulta o directamente queda eliminada la posibilidad de contestación. Entonces el discurso expositivo no obtiene respuesta, queda en mera explicación, en un monólogo que da lugar a la pasividad.¹⁵

Por ello una parada ante una pieza se puede hacer acontecimiento significativo y constituirse en un acto ético del sujeto. Pues "Toda comprensión de un discurso vivo, de un enunciado" viviente, está preñada de respuesta. Aunque no siempre tiene lugar una contestación inmediata, pero tarde o temprano lo comprendido resurgirá en los discursos posteriores y en la conducta del oyente.¹⁶

3. El diálogo grotesco

"Todas las cartas de amor son ridículas. (...) Pero, al fin y al cabo, sólo las criaturas que nunca escribieron cartas de amor son ridículas"

F. Pessoa¹⁷

El final de cada enunciado determina la frontera donde se produce el cambio de los sujetos discursivos¹⁸. Antes de cada enunciado siempre ha habido otro y después siempre vendrá otro. "Cada réplica indica una posición que puede ser contestada

¹⁴ José Luis Grosso *Op. Cit.* p. 57

¹⁵ Valentin N. Voloshinov. *Op. Cit.* p.142.

¹⁶ M. Bajtín "El. problema de los géneros discursivos". *Estética de la creación verbal*. Siglo XXI, México, 1982, p. 250.

¹⁷ Fernando Pessoa "Todas las cartas de amor son ridículas" *Antología Poética*. Espasa, Madrid, 1997.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 260.

desde otra posición: esta “exotopía” o “extraposición”, ese “*encontrarse-fuera*”, tal vez es previsible hasta cierto punto, pero incontrolable”.¹⁹

El término “posición” o “posicionarse” ante alguien con que los sujetos se ubican subjetivamente ante los otros, se hace literal en el diálogo del museo y recoge la expresión del lenguaje cuando está corporeizado e implica un acto físico por parte de las personas, el diálogo en la exposición puede recuperar esa proximidad expresiva.

Las salas del museo son también un escenario de lucha por las posiciones ante las piezas. De aquellos que piensan que la experiencia estética invoca al campo colectivo de la condición humana y no tiene que estar mediatizada,²⁰ y los que consideran necesaria una intermediación.²¹

Que son también luchas por los significados, entre el orden del discurso expositivo que controla los cuerpos, y aquellos visitantes que se posicionan ante los objetos expuestos para apropiarse del sentido de las piezas incorporándolos a sus pensamientos.²²

Donde no se dirime solamente poder y la restricción generada por este poder frente a su resistencia, sino también el placer, que está en juego en el despliegue de todo discurso.²³

Es una lucha de lenguajes, entre el enunciativo que desnuda y el ideológico que encubre la realidad.

Y finalmente esta pugna da lugar a que en todo discurso siempre haya fracturas, por donde surge la polisemia, en el que se pueden encontrar otros significados, que producen una diversidad de diálogos una heteroglosia. En la medida que el resquebrajamiento del orden discursivo se produce, penetra la ironía del sujeto, y entonces el discurso ideológico que encubre, se hace ridículo a su mirada.

Entre tanto el sujeto también queda expuesto, de forma caricaturesca ante el Otro. La personalidad es diferencia y como decía Bajtín es grotesca. La identidad es un injerto.

La manera distinta de caminar por las salas del museo, la salida del orden habitual con que se mueven los flujos de público, puede ser vista como una rareza, algo que desentona, y en cierto modo extravagante.

Lo que identifica, lo diferente caricaturiza. Lo grotesco es una ruptura de la norma. Por tanto es una alteración de las relaciones de dominación.

De alguna forma son rasgos de locura, como decía Foucault “los locos son los “otros” que no encajan en la sociedad porque sus usos, costumbres, maneras de ser y de actuar dentro de ella, saltan de la esfera normalizada y se convierten en seres autónomos”.²⁴

¹⁹ José Luis Grosso *Op. Cit.* p. 58.

²⁰ Neil MacGregor habla de la experiencia sin mediatizar y el uso del museo como medio educativo en Neil MacGregor “Scholarship and the public” in Gaynor Kavanagh, edited by *Museum provision and professionalism*. Editorial Matter. New York, 1994.

²¹ Colin Trodd “The discipline of pleasure; or how art history looks at the art museum” *Museum and society*, 1. 2003, p. 18.

²² “La historia siempre ha sido territorio en disputa, y lograr escribirla, señal de dominio” Hooper-Greenhill, Hielen. *Los museos y sus visitantes*. Trea, Madrid. 1994, p. 28.

²³ Michel Foucault. *El orden del discurso*. Tusquets, Barcelona, 1999.

²⁴ Anel Hernández Sotelo. “Una reflexión sobre la ‘modernidad’ de Charles Baudelaire y Walter Benjamín”. *Boletín ENAH*, México, 2006, pp. 14-18.

Son visitantes que preguntan directamente a los fondos expuestos del museo, o al discurso de la exposición en función de sus intereses, que miran detrás de los montajes desde su propia posición. Seres autónomos que interpelan a los otros sujetos que construyen significados, considerados como seres concretos, en cuanto a pertenecientes a un grupo social y cultural, que fabricó las piezas o que diseñó la exposición. A cada pregunta destapan una capa, hacen un descubrimiento, que van incorporando a su discurso personal que se llena de sarcasmo conforme van quitando ropajes ideológicos.

Mientras que el discurso expositivo que se dirige a un “visitante medio” no dice nada, pues no está dirigido a nadie. Los discursos encaminados a un público en general se mueven entre lo superficial y lo esperpéntico, porque un ser sin una posición cultural y social determinada, no existe²⁵.

La comunicación museológica hacia un tipo abstracto que nadie ve, a un arquetipo cultural de lo medio, supuestamente dotado de sentimientos equidistantes, no puede generar respuestas. Es más la reiteración de estos mensajes impide el diálogo y genera un tipo inhibido, que camina sin hacer preguntas y se desplaza por las salas sin un sentido propio.

Sin el diálogo que conforma al sujeto, el individuo va quedando cosificado y se convierte en masa, muchedumbre. Por ello el visitante que se sale de este carril invisible adquiere personalidad, también ante la mirada del Otro. Así un vigilante de museo que identificara esta diferencia en la masa que circula por las salas, reflejaría una mirada también poética, que de algún modo recuerda a la de Baudelaire cuando descubrió al *flâneur* entre las muchedumbres que se movían por las calles de París.

4. La mirada singular

“El mirón, ante el influjo del espectáculo que ve, se convierte en un ser impersonal; ya no es un hombre: es público, es muchedumbre”.

Walter Benjamin²⁶

Hay más paralelos entre el visitante singular del museo actual, y el personaje de los poemas de Baudelaire, atónito ante el tráfico de gente sin destino, pero apresurada por las consignas del consumo y los horarios laborales. El redivivo *flâneur* encuentra en las salas de exposiciones actuales ese discurrir sin sentido del público. Un tráfico humano impulsado por el afán de reconocer piezas. Un público cada vez más masivo que acude a los museos para reconocer la obra cumbre de los libros de textos escolares. Viaja por el mundo hasta alcanzar una exposición. Y cuando lo consigue ignora cientos de piezas y sorteja otros turistas para satisfacer ese deseo profundo por reconocer, mediante el acto supremo de reconocimiento que entraña una fotografía a la obra emblemática.

A diferencia de la comprensión del significado del objeto, que lo elevaría a la categoría de signo, el reconocimiento sería aquella comprensión pasiva que se caracteriza por “privilegiar el aspecto de identidad del signo”, es decir la mera percepción como objeto, de su aspecto de señal, lo que genera una cosificación, o si se quiere reificación.²⁷

²⁵ “le populisme fait du tort et nos musées et galeries d’art sont à présent censés plaire, à tout moment, à la population toute entière de sorte que tout doit être organisé comme un jardin d’enfant” François Mairesse, “La Notion de Public” *ICOFOM Study Series ISS*, 35, 2005, p. 22.

²⁶ Walter Benjamin. *El libro de los pasajes*. “El *flâneur*”. Akal, Madrid, 2005, p.433.

²⁷ Valentin N. Voloshinov. *Op. Cit.* p. 105.

Ciertamente la gente está impelida a someterse a esta cosificación por numerosos motivos. Recordando a Baudrillard entre ellos estará aquel que proviene del miedo a quedar excluidos, aunque dentro lo que se produzca sea la alienación.²⁸

A gran velocidad a esa carrera por no quedarse fuera se lanzan tanto los visitantes dispuestos a formar parte de las masas, como los museos que luchan por poder recibirlas.

Son numerosas las instituciones orientadas a cumplir con esa consigna no escrita por la que los museos tienen que apresurarse a hacerse dinámicos e innovadores. Como si el movimiento y la novedad fueran un fin en sí mismo.

Y efectivamente se convierte en finalidad para los flujos comerciales, como indicaba Benjamin observando el París del XIX “lo nuevo es una cualidad independiente del valor de uso de la mercancía. Es el origen de ese halo intransferible de las imágenes que produce el inconsciente colectivo. Es la quinta-esencia de la consciencia falsa cuyo incansable agente es la moda. Este halo de lo nuevo se refleja, tal un espejo en otro, en el halo de lo-siempre-otra-vez-igual. El producto de esta reflexión es la fantasmagoría de la «historia de la cultura»²⁹

La quintaesencia de la mercantilización del museo, sería la exposición temporal entendida como acontecimiento de moda, mediante la que el museo se instala en esta carrera constante por la novedad como valor en sí mismo, que es necesario consumir para estar a la última. De modo que la institución que conserva lo antiguo, se convierten por esta extraña magia en paradigma de lo novedoso.³⁰

La mirada de Baudelaire trasladaba la perplejidad a Benjamin cuando veía como en el París del Imperio y la especulación “es ahora la mercancía quien utiliza al hombre, es la mercancía quien debe venerarse” e incluso el contenedor, el edificio es un emblema admirable cuando el hombre moderno “está empapado de fetiche de la mercancía”³¹.

Si los museos ofrecen productos quedan sometidos a las leyes que rigen para las relaciones económicas de producción, consumo y mercancía. De esta forma la mercancía cultural sigue la transformación que experimenta cualquier otra, un coche o un traje, cuando trasciende su valor de uso, e imprime a quien la compra otras virtudes. Se convierte en fetiche.

En los museos convertidos en fetiches de consumo Este efecto consistirá en que el museo produce cultura en quien paga la entrada. En este tránsito se cambian las tornas, la mercancía es enaltecida, adquiere atributos de sujeto hacedor y el ser humano se hace objeto, recibiendo el tratamiento de producto en cadena de montaje. El museo pasa de medio para conocer, a fin, a mensaje.

Quien consume este producto puede adquirir una imagen que resuelva sus problemas en el orden social, instalándose una visión de sí mismo coherente con el pasado de las clases superiores expuesto en los museos. Olvidando su propio pasado, el de su personalidad, ese tan poco “sofisticado” que le ancla en el medio social donde vive de forma cotidiana.

²⁸ “la peor de las alienaciones no es ser despojado por el otro, sino estar despojado del otro, es tener que producir al otro en su ausencia”. Adolfo Vásquez Rocca. “Baudrillard: Cultura, simulacro y régimen de mortandad en el Sistema de los objetos”. *Elkisia. Revista de Filosofía*. Año II. 9. 2007.

²⁹ Walter Benjamin. “París. Capital del siglo XIX”. *Iluminaciones II. Baudelaire un poeta en el esplendor del capitalismo*. Taurus, Madrid, 1972.

³⁰ Florence Pizzorni. “Public des musées : de la qualité de la visite à l’usage démocratique” *ICOFOM Study Series*, ISS, 41 p. 268

³¹ Anel Hernández Sotelo. *Op. Cit.* p. 6.

Para Benjamin las calles preciosas de París en las que deambulaba el *flâneur* eran también la del “siempre lo mismo” pues “generaba un modelo a repetirse no sólo de individuo en individuo sino de país en país, aplastando las emociones y los pensamientos humanos por el mero placer consumista; no importaba lo que se pensaba o lo que se sentía sino lo que se compraba”.³²

Actualmente dentro de la lógica de globalización, el museo forma parte de una enorme red de flujos culturales, comerciales, turísticos, en el que circulan las piezas, los visitantes y la idea.³³ Es un modelo que tiende a la uniformidad del discurso y del concepto de visitante.³⁴ En esta tendencia el museo está enfocado a la elaboración de un producto cultural. Con un fuerte componente mediático, de espectáculo, cada vez más vinculado al marketing empresarial, en el que el éxito de la institución estaría relacionado con el aumento de la audiencia.

Pero ante los procesos económicos desatados Baudelaire vio ese paseante cuya ociosidad es una “manifestación, contra la división del trabajo”.³⁵ La ociosidad significaba en el siglo XIX lo improductivo. Actualmente cuando el ocio entra en los procesos de consumo, tan contrario para lógica del mercado es quien no produce como quien no consume. Así el visitante que se sustrae a ese flujo posicionándose activamente ante las piezas del museo también se manifiesta.

Y tal vez el museo sea un lugar adecuado para manifestarse. Un medio de comunicación peculiar que no utiliza sólo palabras o elementos significantes, sino que emplea piezas. No son meras mercancías fabricadas para su consumo, sino objetos auténticos obras de arte, arqueológicas, etnográficas, o científicas, objetos en suma cargados de vida, de funciones previas, en los que a pesar de la distancia mediática a la que puedan someterlos siempre es posible encontrar huellas de significado de diálogos anteriores. Trozos de un cronotopo, un punto de acontecimiento, o el elemento afín de una inyunción en palabras de Derrida, de un espectro. Objetos dislocados pero con trazas de sus antiguos contextos, en los que es posible entrever una relación social en la que vivieron. Si conservan ese rasgo continuarán reclamando un acto interpretativo de un sujeto, activo y responsable.

Durante el siglo XIX y XX el museo ha tenido un carácter excepcional en la distribución de funciones y espacios, que le permitía sus atribuciones como aparato ideológico constructor del estado liberal. Quedaba encuadrado dentro de lo definido por Foucault como heterotopía. Un lugar dotado de unas condiciones espaciales ajenas al discurrir “normal” de la vida social y económica para que pudiera llevar a cabo la conservación del tiempo y la difusión de los modelos estéticos y culturales.³⁶

Sin embargo, las relaciones de producción se transforman más rápidamente que las formas de pensar, numerosos museos se ha adaptado con gran velocidad a esta uniformización. Y ha dejado la mirada helada del vigilante. De algún modo esta forma de actuar neomanchesteriana, se ha colado en una organización con unos fundamentos ideológicos peculiares, y deja el discurso de una apariencia “natural”, pero lleno de fisuras. En el momento en que un visitante cambia la dirección de la marcha, el discurso deja ver las grietas que lo recorren. Una mirada por estos resquicios puede dar sentido a todo el sinsentido de un montaje expositivo, dejando abiertas las fracturas donde anida la significación.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Moana Soto. “Os museus em e a Sociedade em Rede” *Museologia e Patrimônio* v.3 n.1 - jan/jun de 2010.

³⁴ Castells, Manuel “Museos en la Era de la Información” *Noticias del ICOM*, número especial, 2001.

³⁵ Walter Benjamin. *El libro de los pasajes*. “El *flâneur*”. Akal, Madrid, 2005.

³⁶ Michel Foucault. *Estética, ética y hermenéutica*. “Espacios diferentes”. Paidós, Barcelona, 1999.

“La calle conduce al *flâneur* a un tiempo desaparecido” “La luz de gas, que desciende iluminando las losetas, arroja una luz ambigua sobre este doble suelo.”³⁷ Es el suelo donde se aprecia el espacio y el pasado, el mismo que pisa el visitante singular del museo, que se pregunta por su identidad delante de una pieza.

Finalmente Miles Heller, el personaje de Auster, también es objeto de un desahucio. Será trasladado por la policía y sus cosas quedarán en la casa mostrando el instante en que la vida quedó paralizada. Heller no puede elegir ni el proceso histórico, ni la situación social en que tiene que desenvolverse, pero la respuesta moral que anteriormente dio a las cosas abandonadas en otras viviendas, lo posiciona de otra forma cuando la policía lo traslada como un mero objeto. En lo profundo él es un ser humano.

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³⁷Walter Benjamín. *El libro de los pasajes*. “El *flâneur*”. Akal, Madrid, 2005 p. 421.

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HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE INDIVIDUAL MUSEUM VISITOR

Jennifer Harris

Curtin University, Australia

ABSTRACT

This paper argues for a new museum ethics, one that foregrounds the human rights and narrative power of the individual visitor. Museums neglect the voices of individual visitors. Although in recent years attention has been paid to the role of the visitor in museums, it has been in terms of a limited idea of interaction which is usually predetermined by the curator. Speaking, having a voice, however, is fundamental to the expression of one's human rights. Museums are institutions which tell stories, but where are the stories of individual visitors? Museums have been very effective in promoting human rights topics in museums, but have done so by focussing on community aspects of human rights violations and have ignored the potential of individual responses. They have often highlighted the violation of human rights as experienced by communities, rather than individuals, and have often limited individual stories to illustration of the wider history of communities. One of the effects of doing this has been the emotional and moral reduction of histories to what Levy and Sznajder¹ call "universalized" narratives, that is, narratives which have lost their particularized qualities. Similarly, Schaffer and Smith² observe the entrenchment of the "ur-narrative" and its consequent denial of specific, real individual experiences. This paper draws on theories of narrative and human rights to argue for a greater narrative role of the individual visitor. It argues that fostering politicized, ethical reading and responses in museums is a human rights duty of museums which would enable far greater participation of individual visitors. It argues also that the individual visitor has a big role to play in tempering the universalized, frozen quality of many repetitious museum narratives.

RÉSUMÉ

Les droits de l'homme et le visiteur individuel

Cet article plaide pour une nouvelle éthique des musées qui mettrait l'accent sur les droits de l'homme des visiteurs individuels. Les musées ignorent la voix des visiteurs individuels, malgré le fait que la mise en récit soit fondamentale tant à leur mission qu'aux droits de l'homme. Récemment, on a commencé à prêter attention au rôle du visiteur avec une idée limitée d'interaction. En mettant en avant les thèmes concernant les droits de l'homme, les musées se sont focalisés sur les aspects collectifs des violations des droits de l'homme et ont ignoré les réponses individuelles. On a mis l'accent sur les violations des droits de l'homme au niveau collectif plutôt qu'au niveau individuel. Les récits individuels se sont en général bornés à enrichir les histoires collectives. L'une des conséquences a été que les récits se sont vu réduits tant du point de vue de l'émotion que de celui de la morale au niveau de ce que Lévy et Sznajder³ appellent des versions 'universalisées', c'est à dire des récits qui ont perdu leurs couleurs particulières. Cet article s'appuie sur les théories de la mise en récit et

¹ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, *Human Rights and Memory*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania, 2010.

² Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith, *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition*, New York and Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

³ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, 2010, *op.cit.*

Jennifer Harris

Human rights and the individual museum visitor

sur celles des droits de l'homme pour convaincre qu'un rôle plus important doit être accordé au visiteur individuel. Encourager une lecture et des réponses politisées et éthiques dans les musées est pour ceux-ci une responsabilité liée aux droits de l'homme, qui permettrait une implication bien plus considérable des individus. On insiste également sur le fait que le visiteur individuel a un grand rôle à jouer pour modérer le caractère universalisé et figé de nombreux récits répétitifs des musées.

RESUMEN

Los derechos humanos y el visitante individual

En este trabajo se presentan argumentos a favor de una nueva ética museal, que ponga de relieve los derechos humanos y el poder narrativo del visitante individual. Históricamente los museos no han escuchado las voces de los visitantes individuales. Aunque en años recientes se ha prestado atención al rol del visitante en los museos, ha sido en términos de una idea limitada de interacción, usualmente predeterminada por el curador. Sin embargo, el hablar, tener voz, es fundamental por ser expresión de un derecho humano. Los museos son instituciones que cuentan historias, pero ¿dónde están las historias de los visitantes individuales? Han sido muy efectivos al instalar en los museos el tema de los derechos humanos, pero lo han hecho centrándose en las violaciones de derechos humanos a ciertas comunidades, pasando por alto el potencial de ciertas respuestas individuales. Se han centrado en la violación de los derechos humanos experimentadas por las comunidades, no por individuos, limitando a menudo las historias individuales sólo como ilustraciones de la historia más amplia de las comunidades. Hacer esto ha tenido como efecto la disminución del valor emocional y moral de las historias, lo que Levy y Sznajder llaman narrativas "universalizadas", es decir narraciones que han perdido sus cualidades particulares. Del mismo modo, Schaffer y Smith observan el afianzamiento de la "ur-narrativa" y su consiguiente negación de las experiencias individuales concretas, reales. Este documento se basa en las teorías de la narración y de los derechos humanos para argumentar a favor de un papel más preponderante de la narrativa del visitante individual. Alienta lecturas y respuestas éticas y políticas en los museos como una responsabilidad ligada a los derechos humanos, que tendrá como resultado una participación mucho mayor de los visitantes individuales. Insiste también que el visitante individual tiene un gran rol que desempeñar atemperando el carácter universalizado y congelado de numerosas narrativas repetidas en los museos.

* * *

The rise of memory culture is usually understood in terms of communities and groups whereas the rise of human rights culture is usually understood in terms of individuals⁴. One of the effects of the conceptual gap between memory culture and human rights culture has been that the two have rarely been put together in western museum contexts. When western museums have responded to human rights demands it has usually been in accordance with the agenda of post colonialism concerning collective suffering and demands that museums repatriate artefacts that were obtained unethically. Further responses have seen museums mounting exhibitions about communities, often Indigenous communities, which were once routinely excluded from conceptions of history. Although museums have developed an exhibition strategy of including specific stories and quotations from individuals, the effects of such inclusions

⁴ See comments on the priority usually given to the individual in human rights by Cees Hamelink, *Human Rights for Communicators*, Cresskill, N. J., Hampton Press, 2004, p. 97.

have usually been simply to illustrate the wider exhibition theme rather than to foster the hearing of a specific voice of an individual. An Indigenous voice, for example, might be pitted against the memories of the colonizer. This has the effect of presenting the exhibition as apparently politically balanced and fair, the political reality of curatorial power being usually ignored. Very occasionally, the voice of an individual is an exhibition end in itself, but almost never is the voice of the individual visitor encouraged. Human rights theory, however, insists on the essential role of the voice in developing and protecting human rights. Should this not be an essential part of museums' responsibility towards the individual visitor?

Voices are expressed through narratives; museums are institutions that develop narratives. Narratives are about voices and voices are about individuals, but the voice of the individual visitor is all but missing from museums despite the importance now accorded to the status of the visitor in museums. This absence poses an intellectual quandary because, although museums have responded to the rise of human rights culture, they have mostly failed to see that these theories have applicability also to individual visitors. The neglect by museums of individual visitors in terms of narration now needs to be addressed in museum theory.

This paper explores the concept of the individual museum visitor within theories of human rights and narratives, areas that are massively under-theorized in relation to museums. Human rights and the individual have also been neglected in wider cultural heritage.⁵ I note that human rights have sometimes been regarded as aspects of western imperialism and, therefore, in order not to complicate the discussion, limit the paper to the western context.⁶ I acknowledge that institutional attention to the individual visitor is a growing element in western museums as they reconceptualize themselves away from simple display zones and towards postmodern narration and interaction. I work from the observation, however, that museum responses to the individual visitor have mostly been limited to ideas of self-directed learning.⁷ Self-directed learning tends to have an outcome which is self-focused. The concept of narrative, by contrast, embodies an outward focus as the narrative needs to be received by someone who is an entity beyond the teller of the story. It is also directed towards the future and the development of a sense of belonging.⁸ In narration, therefore, the enunciation of a voice is achieved by individuals and, through an ethical response of the reader or visitor, the narrator achieves recognition as the teller, a human being with rights.

Recognition of human status, via narration, is the key to the successful implementation of human rights in museums. This paper starts with a discussion of the rise of cultural rights as a part of human rights and then leads on to a short analysis of the role of voice in human rights theory. The paper then mounts two arguments concerning the individual museum visitor. The first concerns museums' narrative duties towards individual visitors and the second concerns museums' need of individual visitors in relation to mediation of entrenched, icon-like narratives. The abstract, frozen quality of decontextualized narratives is the norm in many museums and can be countered by specific visitors' responses. Both arguments are developed from the idea of the fundamental importance of the voice, and being heard, in human rights theory. This paper, therefore, looks for a new approach in museums, one that foregrounds the human rights and narrative power of the individual visitor.

⁵ See Hilary Charlesworth, 'Human rights and UNESCO Memory of the World Programme' in Langfield, Michele, Logan, William, and Craith, Mairead Nic (eds) *Cultural Diversity, Heritage and Human Rights: Intersections in Theory and Practice*, Abingdon and London, Routledge, 2010, p. 21.

⁶ See Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, *op.cit.* p. 17, and Hilary Charlesworth, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁷ See for example the work of John Falk and Lynn Dierking, *Learning From Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning*, Lanham, Altamira Press, 2000.

⁸ Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith, *op.cit.* p. 19.

Cultural rights, memory and human rights

Cultural rights are one aspect of human rights; they are often forgotten in the wider attention paid to torture and dispossession. Cultural rights, however, underpin the identities and survival of people and, therefore, are fundamental elements of wider human rights, especially in a world of rapid globalization and expanding commercialization.⁹ The roots of the intersection of human rights with concerns about representations of the past date back many decades, at least to two 1966 UN documents which cover cultural rights, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Logan, Langfield and Craith¹⁰ argue that although cultural heritage is not named specifically, Article 15 of the latter covenant is recognized to have relevance to cultural heritage management. Article 15 'affirms the States party to the Covenant "recognize the right of everyone to take part in cultural life" '. The writers note that UNESCO went further, also in 1966, in the *Declaration on the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation*: 'Every culture has a dignity and value which must be respected and preserved,' and 'Every people has the right and duty to develop its culture'¹¹. Cultural rights, however, have been slow to be taken up by governments. Logan *et al* say 'lack of action by governments... is probably the largest threat to cultural diversity, cultural heritage and culture rights'¹². Hamelink makes the same complaint: 'the mechanisms for the enforcement of cultural rights are soft and urgently need to be strengthened'¹³. By contrast to this critical observation, perusal of news sources suggests that governments are indeed becoming active in cultural rights, for example, stories of apology for past injustices are common. Governments' responses, however, are judged very often to be inadequate.

A complex situation exists: weak governmental responses to cultural rights are challenged by growing, vociferous demands for strong government action to protect culture. The demands emerge from the huge pressure created by the eruption of memory as a key aspect of cultural rights. On one hand, therefore, there is governmental scramble to appear to acknowledge the significance of memory and, on the other, governments are criticised for responding poorly to memories which are multiple, contradictory and emphasise private suffering. Memory's increasing fragmentation and privatization is analysed powerfully by Levy and Sznajder. They grapple with the conundrum of private and public spheres and the tension between state sponsored memory (sometimes collective) and private memory, and between acts of remembrance and memory.

The global proliferation of human rights norms is driven by the public and frequently ritualistic attention to memories of their persistent violations. The emergence of this global 'memory imperative' finds its expression in a set of political and normative expectations to engage with past injustices.¹⁴

The widespread attention by contemporary governments to apologizing for past injustices is very familiar in the west with apologies for abuse of Indigenous people, territorial occupations and removal of children from families being a well known part of political life. Levy and Sznajder take analysis beyond the evident historical satisfaction

⁹ Commercialization is listed as one of the core threats to cultural rights by Cees Hamelink, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁰ William Logan, Michele Langfield and Mairead Nic Craith, "Intersecting concepts and practices", in Logan, Michele, Logan, William, and Craith, Mairead Nic (eds) *Cultural Diversity, Heritage and Human Rights: Intersections in Theory and Practice*, Abingdon and London, Routledge, 2010, p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.* p. 9

¹³ Cees Hamelink, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

¹⁴ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, *Human Rights and Memory*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania, 2010, p. 4; Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, "Memory and human rights", in Cushman, Thomas (ed) *Handbook of Human Rights*, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, p. 492.

inherent in an apology, to argue that contemporary government legitimacy is substantially derived from the quality of governmental responses to previous human rights violations.

Memory politics of human rights has become a new form of political rationality and a prerequisite for state legitimacy. Sovereign rhetoric is increasingly evaluated by the extent to which it is related to the legal recognition of human rights.¹⁵

Using these insights, one can see that memory, especially private memory, is now a central element of everyday political life. Levy and Sznajder argue, however, that whereas once public memory was dominated by state approved memory, it is now changing from state-centred memory to private memory.

This focus on memories of past injustices is accompanied by another tendency; namely, the transition from *history politics*, which is characterized by a state-centric dynamic (through official commemorations, textbooks, etc) to *memory history*, which corresponds to the fragmentation of memories and their privatization... History is a particularized idea of temporal sequences articulating some form of (national) development. Memory, on the other hand, represents a coexistence of simultaneous phenomena and a multitude of pasts.¹⁶

'Memory history', in Levy and Sznajder's terms, abstracts numerous individual experiences and forms them into decontextualized events, for example, the Holocaust, the battle of the Somme, colonization and other history events which are routinely reduced to a single name which has the force of an icon. The vast multiplicity of the events are reduced to a singular name and suffering is abstracted to the point where individual experience seems inconsequential. This paper draws on the work of Levy and Sznajder who describe a new political reality in the realm of memory, what they call a new form of cosmopolitanism.¹⁷ Just as they argue that the idea of the heroic nature of the nation in the nineteenth century has given way to the legitimizing power of the acknowledgement of memory and past human rights abuses, they now argue similarly that the character of memory is shifting away from nation and ethnicity and towards a form of particularism. They use the term 'cosmopolitanism' to capture the intersection of the universalization of memory - very familiar from the work of the nation state - and the particular which is concrete and very often part of private memory. They argue that universalization of memory is produced by steady decontextualization and abstraction of the concrete particulars of a history and thus is, in ironic reality, a form of forgetting. Nation state-sponsored requirements for neat, containable, iconized memories function as a force of amnesia against individual memory.

The strength of human rights principles in a given national context is the product of the tenuous balance between particular (concrete) and universal (decontextualized) memories... we suggest that institutionalized memories of human rights abuses inexorably imply forgetting... Consequently, we are witness to a shift consisting of the institutionalization of the remembrance of barbarous acts at the expense of memories of the barbarity of the acts.¹⁸

A central argument of this paper, following on from the work of Levy and Sznajder, is that museums ought to be combating the decontextualizing of memory with its concomitant tragic forgetting. It is through the voices of individuals, including the huge *variety* of individual museum visitors, that state sponsored, universalized and

¹⁵ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, 2010, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹⁶ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, 2012, *op. cit.*, p. 494.

¹⁷ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, 2010, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

abstracted memory can be tempered. Individual, highly differentiated, visitor responses can work against the monolithic quality of decontextualized memory, restore individual experience to general remembrance and resist the tendency to the frozen icon quality of fixed nation memory. Although museums have drawn frequently on individual testaments in exhibitions, the effect in almost every case has been to support universalized remembrance. Further, the voices have been limited to those chosen by curators to support the museum narrative. The voices of individual visitors are scarcely heard, but they could be powerful counter-forces to the inevitable institutional drift towards public memory drained of specific experiences. I will return to this argument after consideration of the role of voice in human rights.

Voice

Museums of human rights are spreading around the world. This is consistent with the views of Levy and Sznajder regarding the legitimizing power for governments of human rights acknowledgement. Duffy¹⁹ describes some of the types: Holocaust and genocide, slavery, African-American civil rights and torture. The fact that Duffy is easily able to group them into types highlights the strength of the insights of Levy and Sznajder. Although the power of a museum visit might reside in listening to or reading an individual voice, its singularity or particularizing function is often lost to the visitor when s/he reflects on the visit because the visit took place in a framework of a universalized type of human rights violation and can easily result in forgetting. Rigorous museum attention to voice could alter the numbing effects of universalized history because voice is at the core of human rights affirmation. Research demonstrates that each visitor arrives in a museum with an 'entrance narrative'²⁰, stories and voices, therefore, are already activated, but museums make little attempt to draw them out.

Slaughter argues that the voice, through narration, is what rescues memory from being consigned to an essentialist stereotype. This is similar to the arguments of Levy and Sznajder about the deadening effect of universalization on memory. Slaughter says 'Reconceiving notions of human rights in terms of narratability offers some departure from the double bind of universalism and fundamentalism'²¹. Examining a variety of human rights laws and declarations, Slaughter concludes that the crucial element of human rights is

commitment to the voice, as a tool to guarantee recourse to individual narration... the individual, through self-narration, experiences herself as a distinct spatio-historical being... this sense of distinctiveness, of being conscious of the self, is precisely what human rights law should promote.²²

Bystrom adds: 'freedom of speech, including the ability to bear witness to one's own experience, is one of the fundamental guarantees of human rights'²³. Schaffer and Smith²⁴ argue that the claiming of new identities is also fundamental to the experience of voice, a comment that should be crucial for museums. Museums are political institutions, they have implicit strong power dimensions whether or not this aspect of the museum organization is highlighted in mission statements. They certainly work to raise awareness of political issues for visitors. New political awareness can very easily

¹⁹ Terence Duffy, 'Museums of "human suffering" and the struggle for human rights', in Bettina Messias Carbonell (ed), *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, Malden, Oxford and Carlton, Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

²⁰ John Falk and Lynn Dierking, *op.cit.*, p. 108.

²¹ Joseph Slaughter, 'A question of narration: the voice in international human rights law', *Human Rights Quarterly*, May, 1997, p. 412.

²² *Ibid.*, 429.

²³ Kerry Bystrom, 'Literature and human rights', in Cushman, Thomas (ed) *Handbook of Human Rights*, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, p. 638.

²⁴ Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

lead to new identities for a visitor. Museums, therefore, should aim to activate the individual visitor's voice as s/he negotiates emerging identities.

Aiming for greater recognition of the human subject in museums, this paper focuses on the role of the voice of the individual visitor. Recognition emerges from the power of individual narration, and empathy emerges from ethical listening. Resistance to incorporation into universalized public memory comes from activation of the individual voice. Schaffer and Smith describe the ever present threat of the incorporation of concrete, real stories into frozen narratives. Referring to anthologies of human rights abuses in China after the Tiananmen Square massacre, Schaffer and Smith insist on the power of the individualized story.

Personalizing human rights abuses in China, the anthologies call readers to a recognition of violations, enable empathy for and identification with the protestors and their claims, spur activism, and lend international support to western governments intent on pressing for continued reforms in China.²⁵

Of course, to bring about a practical response there needs to be a high number of stories of abuse before a government can respond. The decision in 2012, for example, of the Australian government to order a Royal Commission into the sexual abuse of children in institutional care followed more than two decades of harrowing individual stories flooding into the public arena. During the predicted decade of the life of the Royal Commission, investigations of abuse will be accompanied by the continued gathering of individual stories. In listening to the individual story resides the recognition of the abused person or survivor at the heart of what is in danger of becoming a generalized national memory. This paper does not set out to negate the power of a bureaucratized response, indeed a bureaucratized response gives hope to people who have never been heard before. What needs to be resisted is the universalization that undermines the concrete reality of human rights abuse.

Post modern fragmentation and the rise of fractured and contested memories, very often from individual people rather than from groups, characterize the new plane of memory. For example, the horror of the histories of the sex slaves of the Japanese Army during World War II burst into public consciousness in the early twenty-first century through just a handful of individual voices. Survivor women who had decided to make public their individual stories did so as individuals, not as part of a group. The stories were, therefore, highly varied and often changed emphasis with repetition. Schaffer and Smith are at pains to note the uneven quality in their stories reflecting the different sex prisons in which the women were held, whether they were raped by officers or enlisted men, the kinds of class and ethnic backgrounds from which they came, the contexts in which they finally told their stories and, also, the *multiple* contexts in which they told their stories.

Despite the reality of the fragmented nature of their witnessing, one can see from the events of making public these human rights violations that a new violation of memory occurred frequently, albeit with good intentions. The surviving women were in danger of being incorporated into a set, fixed history, what Schaffer and Smith call 'ur-narratives'²⁶.

A common story emerges out of the accumulation of voices telling stories that conform to a similar structure, thematically organized to invoke similar histories of abuse, violence, or degradation and utilizing similar modes of address that make any emotive appeal. These edited versions 'fix' the life and identity of the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

tellers in their victimhood, often locking the survivors' stories and lives to the past.²⁷

Although great sympathy and empathy were generated in the hearing of the wartime sex slavery stories, many of them were incorporated into the ur-narrative of crimes against humanity.

Rights activists require for their activism and expect from their informants a particular story of victimization: the ur-story of childhood poverty, abduction, forced sexual slavery, and lonely survival. Changing the story, going beyond the expected narrative, can be seen as a deviation from the work of collective remembering.²⁸

There is thus a highly problematic relationship between wider, iconized histories and concrete individual voices as described by Levy and Sznajder, and Schaffer and Smith. There is sustained to-ing and fro-ing between a fixed history offered for public consumption and its continual resistance via articulation of individual narratives, the intersection of which is the 'cosmopolitanism' of Levy and Sznajder.

Having established the centrality of voice in human rights and the dangers inherent in state sponsored history, this paper now turns to implications for the individual museum visitor. It argues, first, that s/he has a rightful place in museum narration and, secondly, a strategic role in tempering the frozen quality of 'ur-narratives'. If museums could grasp the great potential of the institutional role of the individual visitor then they could produce museum spaces of vibrant memories that protected the vivid quality of narratives and maintained that vividness in the present day through concrete, lived stories. Although museums have highlighted the role of narrative for several decades, because they have not grasped the essential textual role of the individual visitor, the narratives have been repetitious, often seeming flat, failing to fire our imaginations and empathy.

The individual museum visitor

On entering a museum, a visitor faces a host of stories, but where is the story of the visitor? Why has it been acceptable throughout the history of the institution of the museum to ignore the visitor's stories? Can we conceive of a fundamental narrative duty that a museum might have towards a visitor? After all, when we visit a museum we hear visitors all around us commenting on what they see. It is very common to hear visitors adding their own stories to the central, curatorially-determined narratives. Can we imagine somehow capturing those narratives? Given the discussion above concerning the fundamental nature of voice and narrative in supporting human rights, does it not seem appropriate that the visitor's 'narratibility'²⁹, as Slaughter calls it, should be respected here? We have many venues for telling fictional stories: television, film, radio and literature... Non-fiction tends to be heard more often via radio, talk back programmes are among the strongest way that people can hear the highly individualized stories of others. Museums are premier institutions for telling non-fiction stories, but apart from some limited public programmes there are few opportunities for visitors to talk back to the institution. Museums occupy a moral position among the cultural resources of a community; Ready and Navrud argue their value, saying that 'cultural heritage goods are similar to environmental goods in that they are typically

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

²⁹ Joseph Slaughter, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

*public goods*³⁰. It is surely the duty of museums to ensure that they develop fully all human rights aspects of their missions.

(i) Narrative duty of museums towards the individual visitor

It has been established in this paper that the speaking and hearing of individual voices are central to the protection of human rights. It follows from this that as museums are storytelling institutions they have a human rights duty to encourage the voices of individual visitors.

The first consideration is that in a postmodern era we recognize the plurality and fragmentation of narrative. Despite theories of active readership, the usual museum exhibition assumes implicitly a passive visitor because it allows few places for the visitor to talk back and respond to a story presented in an exhibition. What if reading an exhibition was re-conceptualized as risky? Then the role of the individual reading visitor would be taken seriously. Keenan argues, for example, for a politicized, dangerous approach to reading. In light of the highly sensitive topics often developed into exhibitions by museums, this should probably be assumed.

By 'reading' I mean our exposure to the singularity of a text, something that cannot be organized in advance, whose complexities cannot be settled or decided by 'theories' or the application of more or less mechanical programs. Reading, in this sense, is what happens we cannot apply the rules. This means that reading is an experience of responsibility, but that responsibility is not a moment of security or of cognitive certainty. Quite the contrary: the only responsibility worthy of the name comes with the removal of grounds, the withdrawal of the rules or the knowledge on which we might rely to make our decisions for us.³¹

Taking for granted that a museum visit ought to be confronting and invigorating, we could assume that reading exhibitions could involve risk to the visitor - moral, political... Museums should be encouraging responsible, ethical reading that refuses simple absorption of facts. They should insist on narrative engagements derived from the complex nature of what is encountered in a museum. Keenan says

This experience of intolerable complexity, linked with the ongoing inevitability of a decision... is what we call here, in a variety of registers, an openness to the other, impossibility, or simply difficulty. For a politics of difficulty.³²

The conceptualization of an individual visitor encountering an exhibition should, therefore, encompass the institutional ideal that the visitor would talk back following the challenging experience of reading and viewing. Bystrom expands on the concept of the engaged listener and argues for an ethics of reading with at its heart a

practice of critical analysis understood in an expansive way to include an interrogation of the written and spoken word in general... [and] close reading techniques [that form] the heart of a politics of accountability.³³

Not to listen to the response of the individual visitor is to deny the visitor the right of a voice, a human rights violation which is ethically incomprehensible in the museum

³⁰ Richard Ready and Stale Navrud, 'Why value cultural heritage?' in Ready, Richard and Navrud, Stale (eds), *Valuing Cultural Heritage: Applying Environmental Valuation Techniques to Historic Buildings, Monuments and Artifacts*, Cheltenham, UK and North Hampton, USA, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2002, p. 3.

³¹ Thomas Keenan, *Fables of Responsibility: Aberrations and Predicaments in Ethics and Politics*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 1.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³³ Kerry Bystrom, *op.cit.*, p. 644.

context because museums have a high priority of (albeit often limited) interaction and visitor engagement. Further, by not listening, the museum mutes for everyone the ethical responsibility of response to narration. Not only are museums, therefore, rarely hearing the voice of the individual visitor, they are also not hearing responses to their exhibitions. These responses could range from acquiescent acceptance of the curatorial position taken in the exhibition to radically opposing views that could be aberrant and even anarchistic. Some responses would reveal the ethical and political transformational possibilities of reading a fine exhibition. Where are those views currently heard in museums?

In writing this, I am not ignorant of the attempts of many museums to hear the visitor. Some museums offer books in which individual visitors are invited to respond, or even rooms on which to affix page responses to walls. Many of these types of spaces were developed under the impact of the New Museology with its demand for interactive museums, but this paper argues for a stronger, more active listening duty from museums which could make those individual responses the focus of public programmes. They could routinely hold debates around the individual voices that have been registered in response to exhibitions. Museums could also respond to individual comments. The current meaning effect of seeking out the individual visitor's voice is one of muffling and neutralization. Individual visitor responses should be archived, here is an opportunity for museums to gather responses in historical context. Smith's description of the extraordinary changes in the paradigm of texts when they are placed in radically changed historical contexts illustrates how useful this would be. She takes examples of the transformation of some U.S. narratives as they are read in different moments of history.

The long view on human rights narratives can be understood as a project of re-archivization... In the United States, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slave narratives and twentieth-century prison memoirs of black activists from the 1960s and 1970s have been rehistoricized as episodes of rights narration.³⁴

Imagine the wealth of paradigmatic knowledge to be had by examination of the archived individual responses of colonizing Europeans to an anthropological exhibition of 1960 compared to one of the twenty-first century! Sympathy is not a trans-historical experience, there is a history of the development of sympathetic responses to other people becoming absorbed into wider appropriate civilized behaviour.³⁵ Unfortunately, the museum gesture of an invitation to the individual visitor to respond to an exhibition has become a tokenistic aspect of wider exhibition work, 'lip service' paid to a barely grasped ethics of exhibition listening. In effect, museums pay scant attention to the fact that an exhibition has an historical context of viewing which is of enormous interest to museology, they could retrieve this lost understanding by listening to the individual visitor.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss issues surrounding sponsorship, but if museums listened seriously to the voices of individual visitors then questions concerning the ethics of sponsorship would need to be confronted. Visitor positions could often undermine the political and economic interests of sponsors thus revealing some unpalatable aspects of contemporary cultural life.

(ii) Tempering universalized stories

³⁴ Sidonie Smith 'Cultures of rescue and the global transit in human rights narratives', in Cushman, Thomas (ed) *Handbook of Human Rights*, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, p. 627.

³⁵ See comments by Levy and Sznajder, 2010, *op.cit.* p. 2 and Henrik Zipsane 'Lifelong learning through heritage and art', in Jarvis, Peter (ed) *The Routledge International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*, Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 175.

In this section, the role of the individual visitor is discussed in terms of helping to reduce existing, inherent museum narrative problems, that is, the voice of the visitor can be used to undercut textual difficulties. The individual visitor can play a powerful role in redressing the narrative problems discussed above by Levy and Sznajder³⁶ in which a universalized, decontextualized narrative usurps concrete reality and leads effectively to forgetting. A similar effect was described by Schaffer and Smith³⁷ in their analysis of the supplanting effect the 'ur-narrative' has on multiple stories, also discussed above. Individual visitors could be used to mediate between museum-produced 'ur narratives' and private memory. That is, to use the meanings of Levy and Sznajder,³⁸ the individual visitor can be used to keep *memory* alive despite the muting effects of *remembrance*. How would this occur? This would be one of the excellent flow-on effects of having the museum listen to the voice of the visitor. If the visitor were to add his or her own stories to the exhibition and to comment on memories in the exhibition, it would have the effect of resisting the institutional appropriation of memory. It would help to save private memory from the deadening act of remembrance inherent in the process by which the story is reduced to worn out iconicism and over-determined responses. The effects of this can be seen in relation to, for example, exhibitions on the Holocaust, African-American civil rights and Indigenous dispossession.

Intractable problems in narratives in museums derive also from their structures. Museum narratives are frequently realist, that is, they have certain inherent structures which produce certain meaning effects despite the details of the story. One of these problems concerns the centring of a protagonist; usually the reader cannot help but identify with this person. This means that the reader becomes emotionally involved with that person to the point of finding it difficult to disentangle emotional responses in order to permit a politically informed response. Schaffer and Smith note that very confronting stories are 'contained' and made less powerful in this way.

Some readers may respond to insecurities by enacting empathetic identification that recuperates stories of radical differences into their more familiar frameworks of meaning. Such acts of consumption of other people's lives enable some to dispel the fear of otherness by containing it.³⁹

One possible response to this textual trap is to hurl one story at another. If some visitors have personal stories that contest the stories chosen by the museum, then they are in a muscular position to critique. If those stories that counter the museum's choices are permitted to be heard, for example, via politically motivated public programmes, then some of the ensnarement of realist emotional involvement could be challenged.

Another problem deriving from realism concerns its narrative closure. Dominantly realist texts produce a definitive end, and the experience of that end is textually satisfying, very often cathartic. This is not to say that, for example, that the death of a central person in a Holocaust narrative produces happiness in the reader. The effect of that death, however, is to maintain the reader's or visitor's focus on that person and an implicit emotional belief that the story ends with that particular person. In the same way that emotional identification in a narrative, discussed above, functions to thwart political engagement, realist closure has the same effect. At the end, the narrative seems to come to a dead end, rather than appearing to be embedded in a wider history which necessarily demands our attention. Narratives which do not come to an end, and which remain open-ended, are far more likely to encourage us to ask critical questions.

³⁶ Levy and Sznajder, 2012, *op.cit.* p. 494.

³⁷ Schaffer and Smith, *op.cit.* p. 45.

³⁸ Levy and Sznajder, 2010, *op.cit.* p.16.

³⁹ Schaffer and Smith, *op.cit.* p. 25.

This paper argues, therefore, that in enabling the voice of the individual visitor, the problems of the predominance of realist narratives in museum would be likely to be ameliorated. If a visitor is given effective opportunities to speak back to the museum and its various publics this must have the effect of reducing the apolitical exhibition environment so often produced by realist closure. A further benefit would be that it would undermine the limited emotional identification of visitors with the people depicted in museum narratives and encourage visitors to think beyond the world of the exhibition.

Conclusion

This paper proposes that the individual museum visitor is neglected by the museum. It argues that it is the appropriate role of museums to comprehend that their duty to human rights implementation extends beyond the mounting of exhibitions which deal with relevant topics. The human rights duty of the museum extends also to listening to the individual visitor's voice because the voice is at the heart of human rights protection. Attending to the individual voice would also assist museums in tempering the hardened, iconized nature of their representations.

Embracing the voice of the visitor should not be difficult. Public programmes are already part of museum life, they simply need to be extended. The convergence of museums, libraries and community centres in many neighbourhoods also offer a host of opportunities for pushing human rights and the individual museum visitor to the front of museum work.

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LOS MUSEOS DESDE UNA PERSPECTIVA DE GÉNERO

Francisca Hernández Hernández

Universidad Complutense de Madrid-España

RESUMEN:

Ante una sociedad que ha vivido momentos históricos en los que los modelos atávicos de género impedían a las mujeres sentirse sujetos activos y creativos, tanto social y cultural como artística y museísticamente, hoy es preciso preguntarse si es o no preciso cambiar los esquemas mentales y estudiar el lugar que la mujer está ocupando en el desarrollo de las instituciones sociales, culturales y museísticas. Para ello, habrá que plantearse si es posible aplicar una metodología de género en los museos y analizar los espacios que las mujeres están ocupando dentro de ellos. En la medida que las mujeres vayan ocupando los espacios públicos y su presencia se haga más visible, constataremos cómo están contribuyendo en la construcción del patrimonio y la museología. De acuerdo con los Objetivos del Nuevo Milenio y en consonancia con las nuevas corrientes feministas, las mujeres museólogas están tomando conciencia de que es necesario que el patrimonio cultural de las mujeres se vaya recuperando, se visibilice y adquiera consistencia propia. A medida que descubramos la labor de las mujeres en los museos, caeremos en la cuenta de que es posible mirar de otra manera, pudiendo construir significados culturales nuevos y analizar las diferentes identidades de género. La museología ganará con ello mayor transparencia y autonomía y se verá más inclusiva y enriquecida.

Palabras Clave: Museos, espacios, metodología, género, participación, mujer.

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Introducción

Durante mucho tiempo, en las sociedades tradicionales han persistido los modelos atávicos de género, en los que las mujeres se han visto impelidas a mantenerse en un segundo plano e, incluso, a estar prácticamente ausentes de las narraciones de los diferentes movimientos culturales, sociales, artísticos y museísticos. Sin embargo, con el advenimiento de la modernidad se van abriendo nuevas posibilidades de acción y de compromiso para la mujer, que asume nuevos sistemas de representación en igualdad de condiciones que el hombre. Es el momento en que las mujeres luchan por conseguir un nuevo estatus tanto en el espacio público como privado, no exento de tensiones y enfrentamientos. Sintiendo discriminadas y marginadas, las mujeres han ido asumiendo su propio protagonismo y se han introducido discursiva y presencialmente en una dinámica que intenta sacarlas de los márgenes en los que las instituciones les habían colocado, con el propósito de abrirles un camino nuevo hacia su propio empoderamiento, dentro de una dinámica transformadora de las relaciones sociales entre hombres y mujeres. Proceso que implica desaprender y reconstruir determinados procesos y estructuras que durante mucho tiempo han reproducido la posición subordinada de la mujer como género (Bastidas, 2007) relegándola a la más estricta invisibilidad.

Nuestro propósito es analizar la visibilidad de la mujer en el campo de la museología y cómo su figura se ha ido concretando dentro de las estructuras museísticas para dejar

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de ser un sujeto de producción cultural ignorado y convertirse en un sujeto activo y productor de significados culturales. En la medida que estudiemos en profundidad el lugar que la mujer ha venido ocupando en el desarrollo de las instituciones museísticas, podremos descubrir qué elementos discriminatorios se han dado dentro de los museos y cuáles han sido las formas en las que se han plasmado y visibilizado determinadas ideologías patriarcales. Investigar desde una perspectiva de género cuál ha sido la participación de la mujer dentro de los museos, nos ha de llevar a descubrir en qué medida ha sido productora de significados culturales y de nuevos discursos que colocan a las mujeres dentro de una perspectiva feminista, que aboga por la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres. Conscientes de que hemos de acercarnos al estudio de género desde postulados posmodernos, no podemos dejar de analizar cuáles son los procesos de la ideología patriarcal que se han dado en las exposiciones de los museos y en la misma forma de concebir la dinámica de estos últimos.

Que la mujer se ha sentido discriminada durante mucho tiempo dentro del campo museístico, tanto como profesional y creadora, como aportadora de visiones artísticas distintas, es un dato que puede corroborarse en la medida que vayamos analizando los papeles que la mujer ha desarrollado o le han dejado desempeñar dentro de los museos, enmarcados a su vez en una ideología patriarcal que acepta de buena gana y sin reticencias la sumisión de un género a otro.

1. ¿Es posible aplicar una metodología de género en los museos?

Para poder aplicar una metodología de género dentro de los museos es preciso clarificar bien el concepto de género, evitando cualquier atisbo de ambigüedad, dado que, al ser un término complejo y polisémico, pueden dársele diferentes significados. Sin embargo, la forma más generalizada de entender el género suele ser aquella que lo considera como “una construcción cultural que rige las relaciones sociales entre los sexos y los códigos normativos” (Ramos, 1995: 88; Scott, 1990:23) y que, además, supone la existencia de unas relaciones de poder que no son simétricas e independientes, sino asimétricas y subordinadas. A lo largo de la historia, las sociedades se han ido organizando a partir de un concepto de género que implicaba la existencia de un sistema de relaciones sociales, simbólicas y psicológicas que delimitaban, de manera muy precisa, las características de hombres y mujeres, dejando muy clara la subordinación de la mujer al hombre.

Pero esto no tuvo que ser siempre así, ni hay porqué pensar que desde el principio las relaciones entre el hombre y la mujer fueron unas relaciones de poder. Como muy acertadamente ha estudiado Almudena Hernando (2012:43), la trayectoria histórica del ser humano se ha ido desarrollando siguiendo “un aumento gradual de los rasgos de individualización en los hombres”, mientras que las mujeres siguieron asumiendo “la misma identidad relacional” hasta la llegada de la modernidad. Por esa razón, podemos afirmar que el género bien entendido es relacional y vinculante, no se puede entender lo masculino independientemente de lo femenino ni al revés, porque tanto el hombre como la mujer han de considerarse como sujetos históricos que están llamados a realizarse en sociedad (Bastidas, 2008:81), pero han de hacerlo desde la autonomía, la individualización, la reflexión crítica, la responsabilidad y la reciprocidad.

La perspectiva de género ha de permitirnos hacer una revisión crítica del androcentrismo, definiendo bien las claves socioculturales sobre las que se fundamenta la dimensión masculina y femenina y tratando de modificar las asimetrías de poder que se han venido dando entre ambos géneros. Una metodología de género que, desde un punto de vista interdisciplinar, pretenda hacer un análisis epistemológico de las relaciones entre hombres y mujeres ha de estar fundamentada

en el deseo de construir una dinámica integradora capaz de hacer desaparecer cualquier mecanismo de exclusión, desigualdad, discriminación u opresión de la mujer o del hombre.

Podemos preguntarnos sobre cuál es la causa de esa disimetría entre los géneros. Robert J. Stoller (1968) sostenía que el sexo era biológico, mientras que el género es psicológico y cultural. Sin embargo, los estudios científicos del siglo XX tienden a afirmar que no es posible reducir el sexo a lo puramente biológico e inmutable, ni el género a lo meramente social y cultural y modificable porque ambos constituyen una realidad bastante compleja (Fernández, 2004:38). Eso explica la existencia de diferentes mecanismos biológicos y culturales que influyen en el proceso de maduración de la persona y que, en determinados casos, pueden conducir a crear mecanismos de poder entre los géneros. De hecho, observamos cómo el sistema patriarcal vigente ha delimitado muy claramente dos espacios: el público que le pertenece al hombre y el privado que se le aplica a la mujer.

Al hombre se le suele adjudicar un espacio público, unas relaciones de carácter formal y todos aquellos rasgos de la personalidad que tengan que ver con la iniciativa y autonomía. A la mujer, en cambio, se le designa el espacio de lo privado –la casa- que se caracteriza por las relaciones informales y un espacio privado donde su papel es de mera dependencia (Vázquez Antón, 1986:91). Ya desde Aristóteles, la actividad de la mujer se ve reducida a los espacios domésticos, íntimos o privados, como el cuidado de los hijos, y separada o excluida de los espacios de poder y dominación. La mujer siempre depende de alguien, por eso lo femenino se asocia con la sumisión y se le considera un sujeto productor devaluado, mientras que lo masculino se asocia siempre al poder, a lo excepcional y a lo público. Es evidente que todavía hoy existen prejuicios teóricos, ideológicos y políticos respecto al género, que es preciso eliminar.

Llegados a este punto podemos preguntarnos si, dentro de la metodología de género, es posible entender el museo como un espacio patrimonial donde la presencia de las mujeres constituya una realidad cargada de significado. Opinamos que sí lo es, a condición de que se tengan en cuenta dos actitudes críticas. Una, que se revisen los sistemas de catalogación, los criterios expositivos que se aplican y los textos escritos que acompañan a los materiales expuestos. Otra, que se generen nuevas interpretaciones sobre las obras expuestas, resaltando las presencias y ausencias de las mujeres o las relaciones de poder material y representativo que cada época ha desarrollado. Los museos han de reivindicar la presencia de las mujeres en las prácticas culturales como sujetos activos y participativos en los procesos históricos. La experiencia de las mujeres ha de incluirse, tanto en los procesos de interpretación como en los de creación de los textos de cultura, porque esto supone contar con un instrumento extraordinario para construir dentro de los museos nuevos discursos (Hein, 2010) que posibiliten los cambios necesarios para que se dé un tipo de vida más igualitario y más justo.

2. Los espacios de género en los museos

Situándonos desde la perspectiva de la museología social, observamos cómo *La Declaración de la ciudad del Salvador, Bahía* (Brasil, 2007), pretende resaltar la importancia que el proceso de musealización puede tener dentro de los nuevos contextos socioculturales en que nos movemos. Los artículos 5, 6 y 7 de dicha Declaración tratan de “valorizar el patrimonio cultural, la memoria y los museos” en cuanto que sirven como estrategias para poder representar la diversidad “étnica, social, cultural, lingüística, ideológica, de género, creencia y orientación sexual” (art.5). Además, ponen todo su esfuerzo en que “los museos sean territorios de salvaguardia

y difusión de los valores democráticos y de ciudadanía”, siempre al servicio de la sociedad y tratando de que todas las identidades puedan expresarse con libertad, al tiempo que se potencia una visión crítica y reflexiva de la realidad (art.6). Finalmente, se garantiza que los grupos y movimientos sociales puedan recuperar la memoria y se apoya cualquier acción encaminada a considerar el patrimonio como una realidad social, valorando los diferentes tipos de museos (art.7).

Dentro de dichos grupos pueden formar parte aquellas personas que, por ausentes, no dejan de ser importantes en cuanto que nos proporcionan, desde una perspectiva de género, la posibilidad de considerar los museos a partir de la visión que de ellos tienen las mujeres. Aquí podemos preguntarnos por qué en los espacios públicos, donde tiene lugar la construcción del patrimonio y su musealización, la presencia de mujeres resulta tan poco visible. Y, sin embargo, no podemos negar la importancia de las miradas femeninas que encontramos en muchos museos y en especial en los pequeños museos ubicados en el medio rural, donde la perspectiva de género fluye de forma natural y nos presenta el papel que la mujer ha desempeñado como protagonista activa y dinamizadora de todos los aspectos de la vida comunitaria. En definitiva, se trata de “musealizar la vida cotidiana”, como ha tratado de mostrar Martínez Latre (2007) en su estudio sobre los museos etnológicos del Alto Aragón. Otro ejemplo lo tenemos en el Museo Etnológico de San Juan de Plan (Sobrarbe, Huesca), un pueblo muy próximo a la frontera con Francia, que fue creado en 1982 por una serie de mujeres, lideradas por Josefina Loste, quien, siendo su directora, trató de recuperar el patrimonio local partiendo de un discurso expositivo de género basado en la clase de objetos que lograron reunir para su exposición (Roma, 2010).

Una forma de analizar los espacios de género es estudiar los fondos museísticos de los museos para saber cuál ha sido el método seguido en las adquisiciones de obras de arte y qué tratamiento se les ha dado, de manera que pueda demostrarse si han existido comportamientos discriminatorios como consecuencia de las mediaciones ideológicas institucionales que imponen unos determinados valores en el campo artístico y museológico. Un ejemplo práctico de lo dicho podemos encontrarlo en el análisis de los fondos audiovisuales del Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS) de Madrid, donde Rodríguez Collado (2010-2011:21) ha realizado un estudio, llegando a la conclusión de que las colecciones permanentes de los museos de arte contemporáneo presentan a la mujer como objeto de representación, pero su visibilidad como sujeto creativo es bastante escasa. De hecho, aunque el número de mujeres artistas ha ido aumentando poco a poco en relación con el de los hombres, sobre todo a partir del siglo XX, las colecciones de los museos de arte no reflejan en sus exposiciones las obras que las representan.

Queda mucho camino por recorrer hasta que puedan contemplarse dentro de los museos las obras de muchas de las artistas cuya valía se ha reconocido en los ambientes artísticos, pero que aún sigue siendo invisible. Prueba de ello es que en el MNCARS, frente a un 58% de obras pertenecientes a artistas varones españoles, tan solo existe un 6% de obras de artistas mujeres españolas, tal como indica la autora un poco más adelante. No cabe duda alguna de que es preciso cambiar nuestras miradas sobre la museología, escuchar las voces silenciadas por discursos excluyentes y analizar las visiones de nuestro patrimonio desde parámetros inclusivos. En concreto, podemos afirmar que el patrimonio español está en deuda con las mujeres creadoras y debe reconocer el protagonismo que han tenido a la hora de impulsar las colecciones, protegiéndolas y cuidándolas para que puedan ser contempladas, ya sea como productoras de conocimientos o como impulsoras del movimiento museístico. Tendríamos que preguntarnos por qué la mujer ha tardado tanto en ocupar un puesto dentro de la crítica y de la historia del arte en nuestro país. Además, desde una

perspectiva feminista, es necesario ver hasta qué punto existe un equilibrio entre mujeres y hombres dentro de las instituciones y estudios museísticos según los postulados posmodernos introducidos en los mismos. Por otra parte, es preciso examinar si la dinámica de las exposiciones sigue la línea de la identificación de procesos de ideología patriarcal dentro de la función didáctica de los museos, favoreciendo los intereses de subordinación de género.

Cuando en 1985, el Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) de Nueva York organizó la exposición de arte contemporáneo *An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture*, se pudo comprobar cómo de los 169 artistas que participaron en la misma, tan solo 13 (un 8%) eran mujeres (García Arias, 2008). Esto supuso un revulsivo para muchas mujeres pertenecientes al mundo de la cultura, el arte y la museología, que decidieron hacer frente a esa falta de presencia de la mujer en las instituciones artísticas y museísticas. Por ese motivo, en 1989, el grupo denominado "Guerrillas Girls" decidieron colocar un cartel frente al Metropolitan Museum de Nueva York cuyo eslogan era: "¿Tienen las mujeres que estar desnudas para entrar en el Museo Metropolitano? Menos del 5% de las artistas en las secciones de Arte Moderno son mujeres, pero un 85% de los desnudos son femeninos". Con la reproducción iconográfica de la Gran Odalisca de Ingres, cubierta la cabeza con un disfraz de gorila, pretendían reforzar la crítica a una visión reduccionista de la mujer, considerada como mero objeto de deseo, y reivindicaban su presencia en los museos y galerías de arte como agentes dinamizadores y creativos. Independientemente de que dicho grupo pudiera ser considerado radical, en el fondo no pretendía sino denunciar el aislamiento a que se veían obligadas las mujeres artistas y su imposibilidad de hacerse visibles dentro de los museos.

Urge, por tanto, plantear una estrategia de empoderamiento de la mujer en la que se denuncie su falta de reconocimiento en el campo cultural, dándole el lugar que se merece. Además, se ha de potenciar la búsqueda de visibilidad equitativa de la mujer en la museología porque, a veces, da la impresión de que suele estar ausente. No obstante, afirmar sin más que la historia de las mujeres en los museos es la historia de "una ausencia" (Bolaños, 2011: 36), sobre todo si se citan los dos volúmenes de *Vagues* sobre una antología de la Nueva Museología, y se afirma que no aparece ninguna mujer, no me parece justo porque, al menos, en el segundo volumen hay 9 aportaciones femeninas. Ya en los años 1980-81, la revista *Museological Working Paper* (MuWoP) contaba con 8 mujeres participando en los debates sobre museología y *ICOFOM Study Series*, desde su primer número publicado en 1981, admitía a una serie de mujeres para que pudieran expresar sus ideas y exponer sus proyectos. Es verdad que, el número de mujeres no era muy alto, pero ahí estaban presentes. Eso no quita para que, frente a las ideologías patriarcales, no estemos convencidos de que siempre son posibles las disidencias. Y eso habrá que hacerlo enfrentándose a los intentos de devaluar la producción artística y científica de la mujer en los circuitos del arte y de la museología, potenciando la construcción de marcos de producción alternativos a la tradición existente en Bellas Artes y la dinámica investigadora dentro del campo museológico.

Las mujeres tienen derecho a acceder a la información y a participar en la producción del conocimiento, y sus voces no se les puede dejar de lado porque tienen mucho que aportar. Si estamos convencidos de que las mujeres poseen un gran potencial creativo, capaz de transformar la realidad museológica del mundo entero, no podemos conformarnos con crear museos de la mujer donde se ponga de manifiesto el papel que ésta ha desarrollado en la historia y en el arte, por muy importante que esto sea. Nadie puede poner en duda el valor del patrimonio producido por las mujeres, que debe ser cuidado, conservado y dado a conocer. De hecho, a partir de los años 90 han

sido muchos los museos de la mujer que se han creado pudiendo constatar los diferentes modelos de mujer que nos muestran. Con todo, no creemos que esto sea lo más importante, puesto que existe una inquietud que nos ha de preocupar mucho más y es constatar si la presencia de la mujer en el ámbito de la cultura, del arte y de los museos es realmente efectiva y ha dejado de ser invisible.

Es verdad que muchos se preguntan cómo es posible que, existiendo numerosos museos dedicados al hombre, no exista igual cantidad de ellos tratando de contar y exponer las características específicas de la mujer. Pensamos que la mejor forma que tiene la museología, en nuestros días, de afrontar la temática de género, no es otra que la de la incorporación real y efectiva de la mujer a las actividades, tareas, proyectos, dirección, gestión, análisis e investigación que supone el campo museológico. Es ahí donde la mujer ha de aportar sus propias miradas y visiones, reinterpretando y reformando los estereotipos que sobre ellas se han creado a lo largo del tiempo. La museología necesita de la mujer para ser redescubierta, reinventada y reinterpretada, no desde una visión lineal y uniforme, sino desde el respeto a la pluralidad de identidades e individualidades independientes. Somos conscientes de que las relaciones entre los espacios y las imágenes que nos hacemos de ellas son distintas según el sexo. Los hombres y las mujeres podemos hacer una utilización global o fragmentada de los espacios, que puede verse reflejada en la organización espacial de los museos. Por eso, habrá que hacer un esfuerzo para no caer en la trampa de la “fantasía de la individualidad dependiente” (Hernando, 2012: 116) que niega la importancia de la emoción y trata de disociarla de la razón, con el único fin de someter a la mujer a una relación de carácter meramente subordinada respecto al hombre.

Los museos pueden ser organizados siguiendo un orden jerárquico en el que la distribución espacial de los objetos atribuidos a los hombres y mujeres sea el reflejo de la representación simbólica de los lugares que unos y otros tienen adjudicados en los espacios sociales. A veces, determinados mecanismos han contribuido a potenciar el dominio masculino hasta el punto de hacer ver que es algo natural, haciendo casi invisible dicha forma de dominación de género. Es evidente, además, que determinadas representaciones de los museos nos demuestran la situación de subordinación de la mujer. A pesar del paso del tiempo, seguimos contemplando cómo los espacios de los museos y los objetos expuestos en ellos, suelen ir asociados a las actividades que contribuyen a la reafirmación de los estereotipos femeninos: junto al marido, con los hijos o como meros objetos decorativos (Lagunas y Ramos, 2007: 128; Querol y Hornos, 2011). Sin embargo, no podemos seguir admitiendo que la dominación masculina convierta a las mujeres en objetos simbólicos, como si estuvieran “en un estado permanente de inseguridad corporal o de dependencia simbólica” (Bourdieu, 1998:86).

Hora es ya de desechar la idea de que existen actividades que han de estar asociadas necesariamente a los hombres y otras que solo pueden asignarse a las mujeres. Rechazamos cualquier tipo de objetivación y cosificación de la mujer porque estamos convencidos de que la mujer, al igual que el hombre, ha de considerarse como un ser individual e independiente que está llamado no solo a desarrollar su racionalidad, sino también a prestar mayor atención a su dimensión emocional y relacional. Solamente aquellas mujeres que sean capaces de situarse ante la realidad, convencidas de que ellas también están en condiciones de aportar y crear elementos culturales válidos para la sociedad, podrán llevar a cabo una transformación de los esquemas sociales, culturales y artísticos que, con frecuencia, se presentan distorsionados por la forma de presentación masculina en los museos. Necesitamos que las mujeres ocupen nuevos

espacios dentro de los museos y aporten su visión singular del mundo, plasmándola en las diferentes teorías museológicas y también en los espacios museísticos.

3. La participación de la mujer en los museos

Como en cualquier otro campo del saber, es importante conocer el papel que la mujer ha venido desarrollando dentro del ámbito de los museos y de la museología. La literatura dedicada expresamente a este tema va aumentando, poco a poco, y nos va mostrando el proceso que se ha ido desarrollando a lo largo del tiempo. La participación de la mujer en los museos hay que entroncarla con los primeros movimientos feministas surgidos durante el siglo XIX. Concretamente, fue en 1894 cuando se constituyó, en el Reino Unido, la asociación Women Heritage and Museum (Mujeres, Patrimonio y Museos) con el propósito de reunir todas aquellas personas que, según la breve nota sin autor, publicada en la Revista Museum (1991:159), tengan la inquietud de:

- Potenciar una imagen positiva de la mujer a través de las colecciones, exposiciones y actividades de los museos.
- Fomentar una buena formación de la mujer en los museos.
- Proporcionar un foro de debate para intercambiar ideas sobre el patrimonio de la mujer.
- Luchar contra el racismo y contra cualquier otro tipo de discriminación social y de trabajo que afecten fundamentalmente a las mujeres, bien como trabajadoras de los museos, bien en calidad de visitantes.

Afortunadamente, dicha asociación sigue viva hoy en el Reino Unido y quienes forman parte activa de ella continúan trabajando en la promoción de la mujer dentro de los museos. No obstante, hemos de hacer mención a las cuatro Conferencias Mundiales sobre la Mujer que tuvieron lugar entre 1975 y 1995, convocadas por las Naciones Unidas, y que contribuyeron de manera efectiva a poner en el centro del diálogo mundial la igualdad entre los géneros. La Primera Conferencia Mundial sobre la condición jurídica y social de la mujer se convocó en México D.F., en 1975, coincidiendo con el Año Internacional de la Mujer. Meses más tarde, se proclamó el Decenio de las Naciones Unidas para la Mujer (1976-1985), en el que se pretende promover el diálogo mundial sobre la igualdad entre los géneros. La mujer deja de ser considerada receptora pasiva de apoyo y asistencia para convertirse en socia plena y en igualdad de derechos y oportunidades que el hombre. En 1980 tiene lugar la Convención de Copenhague, denominada “la carta de los derechos humanos de la mujer”, resaltando la importancia que tenía para la mujer la igualdad de acceso a la educación, las oportunidades de empleo y servicios adecuados de atención a la salud. La tercera Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer se celebró en Nairobi durante 1985, favoreciendo lo que algunos han denominado “el nacimiento del feminismo a escala mundial”. En ella, viendo que los objetivos de la segunda mitad del Milenio no se habían cumplido, se definen las estrategias que se han de poner en práctica para el futuro de la mujer hasta el final del milenio. La igualdad de la mujer debía entenderse y extenderse a toda la esfera de la actividad humana. Finalmente, en 1995, tiene lugar la Conferencia de Beijin, donde se abre un nuevo capítulo en la lucha por la igualdad entre los hombres y las mujeres. Esta reconoce que es preciso trasladar el centro de la atención de la mujer al concepto de género. Se abren, así, las puertas a la potenciación del papel de la mujer, que ha de acelerarse durante el comienzo del siglo XXI. De hecho, Naciones Unidas organizó, en Nueva York, un periodo de sesiones, que tuvieron lugar del 5 al 9 de julio de 2000, con el lema “La mujer en el año 2000: igualdad entre los géneros, desarrollo y paz en el siglo XXI”. De esta manera se proclamaron los Objetivos del Nuevo Milenio, cuyo nº 3º propone “Promover la igualdad y el empoderamiento de la mujer”.

Francesca Hernández Hernández
Los museos desde una perspectiva de género

Siguiendo los Objetivos del Nuevo Milenio, las mujeres museólogas han tomado conciencia de que es preciso que el patrimonio cultural de las mujeres se visibilice, recupere, conceptualice y registre siguiendo unas pautas que tengan como objetivo prioritario evitar el silenciamiento de las desigualdades de género. La creación hecha por mujeres no debe estar ausente en nuestra cultura y sociedad porque eso supondría una gran pérdida, privando a la humanidad de una parte importante de su creatividad en el campo cultural y museístico. Lo repetimos una vez más: las mujeres tienen mucho que decir en el mundo de la cultura y de la museología. A veces, los museos transmiten esquemas y visiones sexistas y discriminatorios con respecto a las mujeres, que suelen silenciarlas y olvidarlas, anulándolas o ausentándolas. Sin embargo, la historia no puede concebirse sin la aportación cultural y patrimonial de las mujeres. Por tanto, la mujer no ha de estar silenciosa, callada y ausente, sino que ha de hablar porque tiene voz propia y mucho que decir a la sociedad.

Podemos destacar algunas experiencias internacionales que han tratado de estudiar el papel de las mujeres en la cultura. En Londres contamos con The Women's Library, creada en 1926, como Biblioteca de la Sociedad Londinense y dirigida por Millicent Fawcett. Actualmente, se encuentra en la London Guildhall University y su colección presenta diferentes temáticas relacionadas con la trayectoria de la mujer en Inglaterra. Además de numerosos libros, presenta los muchos objetos que posee y que reflejan las diferentes maneras de asumir las identidades femeninas y las relaciones sociales, culturales y simbólicas que se establecieron con los objetos en los diferentes espacios históricos. Por otra parte, el International Museum of Women (IMOW) de San Francisco (California) tuvo su origen en un principio, en 1985, con el nombre de Women's Heritage Museum. Durante unos diez años trató de ofrecer una serie de exposiciones y programas sobre la historia de las mujeres, que tuvieron gran éxito. Como consecuencia de ello, Elizabeth Colton, preocupada por enseñar a su hija la vida e historia de las mujeres, se puso en contacto con la activista feminista Gloria Steinem para ver si encontraban un espacio donde poder llevar a cabo dicha tarea. Al no encontrarlo, Colton decidió trabajar como voluntaria en el Women's Heritage Museum y, en 1997, contando con algunos miembros de la Junta, acordaron transformarlo en el International Museum of Women. Desde ese momento, la misión del museo no será otra que la de ofrecer una visión de la diversidad cultural y de los significados que todo lo relacionado con la mujer ha ido teniendo a lo largo de la historia (Offen y Colton, 2007; 2010). A partir de 2005, ha organizado un plan para crear un modelo de museo innovador que sea capaz de involucrar a las mujeres de todo el mundo a través de las exposiciones por Internet, pudiéndose resaltar la exposición *Imagining Ourselves*, que se ha servido de las nuevas tecnologías para favorecer y fomentar el cambio social de la mujer en todo el mundo (Goldman, 2007).

Existen otros muchos museos sobre las mujeres en distintos países, como son el Pioneer Women Museum en Oklahoma (EE.UU), The Women's Museum de Dallas (EE.UU), el Frauen Museum de Bonn (Alemania), el Museo Kunda (Museo de la Mujer) de Mali, el Hanoi Women's Museum de Hanoi (Vietnam), el National Museum of Woman in the Art de Washintong, el Museo de Mujeres Artistas Mexicanas, por poner solo unos ejemplos más representativos. También contamos con diferentes proyectos que están en vías de realización y, sobre todo, con la creación de la Red Woman in Museums, plataforma virtual creada en 2008 con el propósito de hacer visible la presencia de la mujer en los museos y potenciar el conocimiento y el intercambio de experiencias entre las mujeres que trabajan en los museos (www.womaninmuseum.com).

Todo ello nos demuestra que, dentro de los museos, debemos aprender a “mirar de otra manera”, construyendo significados culturales y analizando las identidades de género. Constatamos que se está dando un proceso de cambio en el que se analizan cuáles son las resistencias que se dan dentro de los museos con relación al conocimiento de las asimetrías de género. Se trata de aprender a hacer nuevos “recorridos espacio-temporales” (Bernárdez Rodal, 2012:56) desde una perspectiva de género, donde la mujer pueda tener una experiencia propia, personal, distinta y conforme a su peculiar forma de ser y estar en el mundo. Nadie debe decirle a la mujer cómo se ha de configurar su presencia ni cuáles han de ser sus espacios en los museos, porque ella sabe que no pueden reproducirse ni transmitirse al presente modelos heredados de otras épocas, que hoy resultan obsoletas y discriminatorias.

Es verdad que todavía existen resistencias a la hora de revisar la historia desde nuevas miradas interpretativas, o de estar dispuestos a aceptar narrativas distintas en la presentación de los fondos museísticos. Pero no hemos de olvidar que los museos son espacios y ámbitos de comunicación y de encuentro, ágoras de los gentiles donde todos, expertos y aficionados, intelectuales y gente sencilla, hombres y mujeres, son invitados a participar, de manera activa, crítica y transgresora, de otras formas nuevas de concebir la museología. En el recorrido que hemos realizado en estas páginas, hemos constatado que todavía existen muchas ausencias y silencios vergonzantes que han de superarse. Pero también hemos visto cómo han ido surgiendo nuevas propuestas de interpretación y de lectura de la realidad museística, donde se está desarrollando un discurso inclusivo en el que el papel de la mujer está tomando un verdadero protagonismo. Ciertamente, todavía estamos en camino y falta mucho por hacer, pero ya nadie podrá negar que la mujer es, al igual que el hombre, un sujeto capaz de producir significados culturales, sirviéndose para ello del discurso de la diferencia.

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MUSEUMS FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Francesca Hernández Hernandez

Universidad Complutense, Madrid

ABSTRACT

In a society that has lived through historical phases when atavistic gender models prevented women from feeling themselves to be active and creative subjects from a social, cultural, artistic and museological standpoint, it is necessary today to ask whether mental habits ought not to be changed, and whether the place now being occupied by woman in the development of social and cultural institutions and museums ought not to become an object of study. As women occupy public spaces and their presence becomes more visible, we shall observe how they are contributing to the construction of heritage and museology. In accordance with the Objectives of the New Millennium, and in consonance with new feminist tendencies, woman museologists are growing aware that it is necessary for the cultural heritage of women to be recovered, made visible, and allowed to acquire a consistency of its own. As we reveal the work performed by women at museums, we shall realise that it is possible to adopt a different gaze, to construct new cultural signifiers, and to analyse the different gender identities. Museology will thus gain in transparency and autonomy, and so become more inclusive and more greatly enriched.

Key words: Museums, spaces, methodology, gender, participation, women.

RÉSUMÉ

Les musées sous le regard de la femme

Dans une société qui a traversé des phases historiques quand le modèle atavique du genre empêchait les femmes de ressentir elles-mêmes pour être des sujets actifs et créatifs d'un point de vue social, culturel, artistique et muséologique, il est nécessaire de se demander aujourd'hui si les habitudes mentales ne doivent pas être changées et si la place occupée maintenant par la femme dans le développement des institutions sociales, culturelles et muséales ne devrait pas devenir un objet d'étude. Comme les femmes occupent des espaces publics et que leur présence devient plus visible, nous devons observer comment elles contribuent à la construction du patrimoine et de la muséologie. En accord avec les objectifs du nouveau millénaire et en concordance avec les nouvelles tendances féministe, les femmes muséologues sont en train de devenir conscientes de ce qu'il est nécessaire de récupérer le patrimoine culturel des femmes, de le rendre visible et qu'il soit autorisé à être acquis pour lui-même. Comme nous révélons le travail des femmes dans les musées, nous devons être conscients qu'il possible d'adopter un regard différent, construire de nouveaux signifiés culturels et analyser les différentes identités des hommes et des femmes. La muséologie gagnera ainsi en transparence et en autonomie et deviendra ainsi plus inclusive et énormément plus enrichie.

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Francesca Hernández Hernández
Museums from a gender perspective

Introduction

For a very long time, atavistic gender models have persisted in traditional societies, where women have been forced into a background role and practically excluded from the narratives of the different cultural, social, artistic and museological movements. With the advent of modernity, however, new possibilities have opened up for action and commitment among women, who have started to assume new systems of representation on an equal footing with men. This has been the period of women's struggle for a new status in both the public and the private spheres, and it has by no means been free of tensions and confrontations. Because they felt discriminated and marginalised, women have assumed their own protagonism and introduced themselves discursively and presentially into a dynamic that tries to extract them from the margins in which the institutions had placed them, the purpose being to open up a new path to their own empowerment within a process capable of transforming social relations between men and women. Such a process implies unlearning and reconstructing certain dynamics and structures that have long served to reproduce the subordinate position of woman as gender (Bastidas, 2007), relegating her to the strictest invisibility.

Our aim is to analyse the visibility of woman in the field of museology and show how her figure has taken concrete shape within museum structures, ceasing to be an ignored subject of cultural production and becoming instead an active and productive subject of cultural signifiers. As we look more closely at the place occupied by woman in the development of museum institutions, we can determine which discriminatory elements have existed in museums, and the ways in which certain patriarchal ideologies have been given visible form. By investigating the participation of woman in museums from a gender perspective, we expect to discover the extent to which she has been a producer of cultural signifiers and new discourses that place women within a feminist perspective, one which calls for equality between men and women. Aware as we are that the study of gender must be approached from postmodern postulates, it is important to analyse the processes of patriarchal ideology in museum exhibitions and in the very way their dynamics are conceived.

The fact that woman has long felt discriminated within the field of museums, both professionally and creatively as a contributor of different artistic visions, can be corroborated as we analyse the roles woman has fulfilled, or been allowed to fulfil, in museums, framed in their turn by a patriarchal ideology which willingly and unflinchingly accepts the submission of one gender to another.

1. Is it possible to apply a gender methodology in museums?

To be able to apply a gender methodology in museums, it is necessary first to clarify the concept of gender and leave it without any shade of ambiguity, since this is a complex and polysemous term which can be attributed different meanings. Even so, the most widespread understanding of gender is that which considers it as "a cultural construct which rules social relations between the sexes and normative codes" (Ramos, 1995: 88; Scott, 1990: 23), and which furthermore presupposes the existence of power relations that are not symmetrical and independent but asymmetrical and subordinate. Throughout history, societies have organised themselves around a concept of gender that implied the existence of a system of social, symbolic and psychological relations which delimited the characteristics of men and women with great precision, leaving the subordination of woman to man very much in evidence.

Nevertheless, this was not always necessarily so. There is no reason to assume that relations between man and woman have been power relations right from the very beginning. As Almudena Hernando (2012: 43) has convincingly shown, the historical trajectory of human beings has developed towards “a gradual increase in signs of individualisation in men”, while women continued to assume “the same relational identity” until the arrival of modernity. For this reason, we can affirm that gender, properly understood, is relational and binding. The masculine cannot be understood independently of the feminine or vice versa, because both man and woman have to be considered as historical subjects destined to realise themselves in society (Bastidas, 2008: 81), a process which should, however, take place on the basis of autonomy, individualisation, critical reflection, responsibility and reciprocity.

The gender perspective should allow us to perform a critical revision of androcentrism, clearly defining the sociocultural foundations of the masculine and feminine dimensions and seeking to modify the asymmetries of power that have held between the two genders. A gender methodology that attempts from an interdisciplinary viewpoint to carry out an epistemological analysis of relations between men and women must be based on the desire to construct an integrating dynamic capable of doing away with any mechanism of exclusion, inequality, discrimination or oppression of either man or woman.

It is worth inquiring into the cause of this asymmetry between the genders. Robert J. Stoller (1968) sustained that sex is biological while gender is psychological and cultural. However, scientific research in the twentieth century tends to affirm it is impossible to reduce sex to the purely biological and immutable, or gender to the merely social and cultural and modifiable, because the two constitute a rather complex reality (Fernández, 2004: 38). This explains the existence of different biological and cultural mechanisms that influence a person’s maturing process and, in certain cases, can lead to the creation of mechanisms of power between the genders. Indeed, it is clearly observed that the prevalent patriarchal system has clearly delimited two spaces: the public space, which belongs to man, and the private one, applied to woman.

Man is generally ascribed a public space, relations of a formal character, and all those personality features which have to do with initiative and autonomy. Woman, by contrast, is designated the private space of the home, which is characterised by informal relations and a spatial privacy in which her role is one of mere dependence (Vázquez Antón, 1986: 91). Ever since Aristotle, woman’s activity, such as raising children, has been limited to domestic, intimate or private spaces, and separated or excluded from spaces of power and domination. Woman always depends on somebody, so the feminine is associated with submission and woman is seen to be devalued as a productive subject, while the masculine is always associated with power, the exceptional and the public. It is evident that today there still exist theoretical, ideological and political prejudices with respect to gender which would be better eliminated.

At this point, we may ask ourselves whether it is possible within the methodology of gender to understand the museum as a patrimonial space where the presence of women constitutes a reality laden with significance. We believe it is, providing two critical attitudes are taken into account. One is the revision of the system of cataloguing, the criteria applied for exhibitions, and the written materials which accompany the materials on display. The other is the generation of new interpretations on the basis of the works exhibited, highlighting the presences or absences of women or the relations of material and representative power developed by each period.

Museums must vindicate the presence of women in cultural practices as active and participative subjects in historical processes. The experience of women must be included both in processes of interpretation and in the creation of cultural texts, since this will mean possessing an extraordinary instrument for building new discourses within museums (Hein, 2010) which will enable the necessary changes to take place for the emergence of a more just and egalitarian style of life.

2. Gender spaces in museums

If we adopt the perspective of social museology, we observe that the *Declaration of the City of Salvador de Bahia* (Brazil, 2007) tries to highlight the potential importance of the process of musealisation within the new sociocultural contexts that surround us. Articles 5, 6 and 7 of the Declaration attempt to “add value to the cultural heritage, memory and museums” in serving as strategies for the representation of diversity, whether “ethnic, cultural, linguistic, ideological, or pertaining to gender, belief or sexual orientation” (art. 5). Moreover, it is strongly emphasised that “museums should be territories for the safeguarding and diffusion of the values of democracy and citizenship”, always in the service of society and geared towards allowing all identities to express themselves in freedom while fostering a critical vision of, and reflection upon, reality (art. 6). Finally, the declaration offers guarantees that social groups and movements will be able to retrieve their memory, and support for any action destined to foster the consideration of heritage as a social reality by enhancing the value of different types of museum (art. 7).

It is possible for these groups to include those people who, while absent, are nonetheless important in that they provide us with a possibility of considering museums from a gender perspective, on the basis of the vision women have of them. We may ask ourselves at this juncture why there is so little visibility for the presence of women in public spaces, where the construction and musealisation of heritage takes place. Nevertheless, we cannot deny the importance of the feminine gazes we encounter in many museums, and especially in small museums located in the rural environment, where the gender perspective flows naturally and presents us with the role woman has played as an active and dynamising protagonist in all aspects of community life. In short, it is a question of the “musealisation of everyday life”, as Martínez Latre (2007) has tried to show in her study on the ethnological museums of the highlands of Aragon. Another example is found at the Museo Etnológico of San Juan de Plan (Sobrarbe, Huesca), a village very near the French border. The museum was created in 1982 by several women led by Josefina Loste, who attempted as its director to retrieve the local heritage on the basis of an expository discourse designed around the type of objects the group managed to gather for display (Roma, 2010).

One way to analyse gender spaces is to study museum collections in order to discover the method employed for the acquisition of artworks and their subsequent treatment, so showing whether discriminatory behaviour has existed as a consequence of the imposition of certain values in the artistic and museological fields through the ideological mediations of institutions. A practical example can be found in the analysis of the audiovisual collections at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS) in Madrid, where a study by Rodríguez Collado (2010-2011: 21) led to the conclusion that contemporary art museums present woman as an object of representation, but her visibility as a creative subject is rather low. In fact, although the number of woman artists has gradually increased in relation to that of men, especially from the twentieth century onwards, art museums do not reflect the works that represent them when displaying their collections.

There is a long way to go before the works of many of the woman artists whose worth has been recognised in artistic circles, but who still remain invisible, can be seen in museums. Proof of this is the fact that while 58% of the works held by the MNCARS are by Spanish male artists, only 6% are by Spanish woman artists, as the same author points out further on. There is no doubt that we need to change our views of museology, listen to the voices silenced by exclusive discourses, and analyse the visions of our heritage within inclusive parameters. In particular, it can be affirmed that the Spanish heritage is indebted to creative women, and should recognise their protagonism in enhancing, protecting and caring for collections so that they can be viewed, whether by producing knowledge or working on behalf of the museum movement. It is worth asking why woman has taken so long to occupy a place within Spanish art history and criticism. From a feminist perspective, it is furthermore necessary to see how far a balance exists between men and women in museum institutions and studies, in accordance with the postmodern postulates they have had introduced to them. In the meantime, it is necessary to examine whether the dynamic of exhibitions follows the identifying pattern of the processes of patriarchal ideology within the didactic function of museums, so favouring the interests of gender subordination.

When the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York organised the 1985 contemporary art exhibition entitled *An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture*, it was observed that of the 169 artists taking part, only 13 (8%) were women (García Arias, 2008). This came as a blow to many women in the world of culture, art and museology, who decided as a result to present opposition to the scant presence of woman in art institutions and museums. It was with this motive that the “Guerrilla Girls” group proceeded in 1989 to place a poster opposite the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York with the message: “Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum? Less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art sections are women, but 85% of the nudes are female.” By means of the iconographic reproduction of Ingres’ *Grande Odalisque*, her head covered with a mask from a gorilla suit, they tried to reinforce their critique of a reductionist vision of woman, considered as a mere object of desire, and to vindicate her presence in museums and art galleries as dynamising and creative agents. Regardless of whether the group may be considered radical, their fundamental aim was none other than to denounce the enforced isolation of woman artists and the impossibility of their making themselves visible inside museums.

It is therefore urgent to adopt a strategy for the empowerment of woman that will denounce her lack of recognition in the cultural field, giving her the place she merits. It is furthermore necessary to heighten the quest for equitable visibility for women in museology, from which they sometimes appear to be generally absent. However, I do not think it fair to claim simply that the history of women in museums is the history of “an absence” (Bolaños, 2011: 36), especially when citing Vagues’ two-volume anthology of the New Museology with the affirmation that no woman appears in it, since the second volume, at least, contains nine feminine contributions. In 1980-81, the periodical *Museological Working Paper* (MuWoP) had eight women participating in debates on museology, and the ICOFOM Study Series admitted a number of women from its very first edition in 1981, giving them the opportunity to express their ideas and present their projects. It is true that the number of women was not very high, but they were there. We remain persuaded nonetheless that dissidence from patriarchal ideologies is always possible, and that it should be carried out by confronting attempts to devalue the artistic and scientific production of woman in the art and museology

circuits, fostering the construction of alternative frameworks of production to those traditionally existing in the fine arts and the research dynamic of the museological field.

Women have a right to access information and share in the production of knowledge, and their voices cannot be ignored because they have a great deal to contribute. If we are persuaded that women possess great creative potential and the capability of transforming museological reality around the world, we cannot content ourselves with creating museums of woman that manifest the role she has played in history and in art, important though this may be. There is no doubt of the value of the heritage produced by women, which must be cared for, preserved and made known. In fact, many museums of woman have been created from the 1990s onwards, and it is possible to compare the different models of woman they show us. Even so, we do not regard this as the most important thing, since there is something which should concern us a great deal more. This is the task of determining whether the presence of woman in culture, art and museums is really effective and has ceased to be invisible.

With so many museums in existence dedicated to men, it is often asked why there is not an equal number trying to relate and display the specific characteristics of woman. In our view, the best way for museology today to approach the question of gender is none other than the real and effective incorporation of woman into the activities, tasks, projects, direction, management, analysis and research which the museological field involves. This is where women have to contribute their own gazes and visions, reinterpreting and reforming the stereotypes that have been formulated for them over the years. Museology needs woman in order to be rediscovered, reinvented and reinterpreted, not from a linear and uniform viewpoint but out of respect for the plurality of independent identities and individualities. We are aware that relations between spaces and the images we create of them differ according to sex. Both men and woman can make a global or fragmented use of spaces, which may be reflected in the spatial organisation of museums. That is why an effort will have to be made not to fall into the trap of the “fantasy of dependent individuality” (Hernando 2012: 116), which denies the importance of emotion and tries to dissociate it from reason with the sole aim of subjecting woman to a relation of mere subordination to man.

Museum organisation can follow a hierarchical order in which the spatial distribution of the objects attributed to men and women is the reflection of the symbolic representation of the places adjudicated to each in social spaces. Sometimes, certain mechanisms have helped to strengthen masculine dominion to the point where it appeared natural, making this form of gender domination almost invisible. It is moreover evident that certain representations of museums demonstrate the subordinate situation of woman. Despite the passage of time, we still see how museum spaces and the objects exhibited in them tend to be associated with activities which help to reaffirm female stereotypes, whether accompanying husbands and children or as mere decorative objects (Lagunas and Ramos, 2007: 128; Querol and Hornos, 2011). Nevertheless, we cannot continue to accept that male dominance converts women into symbolic objects, as if they were “in a permanent state of corporal insecurity or symbolic dependence” (Bourdieu, 1998: 86).

It is high time to discard the idea that there are activities which are necessarily to be associated with men and others which can only be assigned to women. We reject any type of reification of woman because we are convinced that woman, like man, must be considered as an individual and independent being who is under a calling not only to develop her rationality but also to pay greater attention to her emotional and relational dimension. Only those women who manage to face reality in the conviction that they

too are able to contribute and create cultural elements of validity to society will be able to carry out a transformation of social, cultural and artistic patterns, frequently distorted by the masculine mode of presentation in museums. We need women to occupy new spaces within museums and to contribute their singular vision of the world, giving shape to it in both museological theory and museum spaces themselves.

3. Woman's participation in museums

As in any other field of knowledge, it is important to ascertain the role woman has played within the sphere of museums and museology. The literature dedicated expressly to this subject is gradually increasing, showing us the process that has been taking place over the course of time. The participation of women in museums is linked at its roots with the first feminist movements to emerge in the nineteenth century. In particular, it was in 1894 that the Woman Heritage and Museum association was founded in the United Kingdom with the aim of bringing together all those who, according to the brief author's note published in *Museum* magazine (1991: 159), were eager to:

- Promote a positive image of woman through museum collections, exhibitions and activities.
- Encourage proper training for women in museums.
- Provide a forum for debate in which to exchange ideas on woman's heritage.
- Fight against racism and any other type of social or labour discrimination fundamentally affecting women, whether as museum workers or visitors.

The association fortunately still exists today in the United Kingdom, and its active members continue to work on behalf of the promotion of women in museums. Nevertheless, mention must also be made of the four World Conferences on Woman which took place between 1975 and 1995. Convened by the United Nations, they helped effectively to put gender equality at the centre of world dialogue. The First World Conference on the judicial and social condition of woman was held in Mexico City in 1975, coinciding with International Women's Year. Months later, the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) was proclaimed, the intention being to promote world dialogue on gender equality, whereby woman ceases to be considered as a passive recipient of support and assistance and becomes instead a full partner with man, with equal rights and opportunities. The 1980 Convention in Copenhagen produced the so-called "bill of rights for women", stressing the importance for women of equal access to education, job opportunities and adequate health care. The third World Conference on Woman was held in Nairobi in 1985, creating the conditions for what some have called "the birth of worldwide feminism". There, in view of the fact that the objectives for the second half of the millennium had not been fulfilled, strategies were defined for woman's future which were to be put into practice until the end of the millennium. The equality of woman was to be understood as extending to the entire sphere of human activity. Finally, in 1995, the Beijing Conference opened a new chapter in the struggle for equality between men and women, since it was recognised there that it was necessary to transfer the centre of attention onto the concept of gender. This opened the way for a strengthening of woman's role which accelerated at the start of the twenty-first century. Indeed, the United Nations organised a period of sessions in New York from 5 to 9 July 2000 under the title: "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace in the Twenty-first Century". In this way, the Objectives of the New Millennium were proclaimed, number 3 proposing the promotion of the "equality and empowerment of women".

Following the Objectives of the New Millennium, woman museologists have become increasingly aware of the need for the cultural heritage of women to be rendered visible, recovered, conceptualised and registered in accordance with guidelines whose prime objective would be to prevent the silencing of gender inequalities. Creation by women should not be absent from our culture and society, since this would mean a great loss that would deprive humanity of an important part of its creativity in the field of culture and museums. We insist once more that women have a great deal to say in the world of culture and museology. Museums sometimes transmit sexist and discriminatory patterns and visions of women, silencing them, forgetting them, annulling them or rendering them absent. Nevertheless, history cannot be conceived without the cultural and patrimonial contribution of women. There is no reason, then, for woman to be silent, withdrawn and absent. She should rather speak because she has her own voice and much to say to society.

Attention could be drawn to a number of international attempts to study the role of women in culture. In London, the Women's Library was created in 1926 as the Library of the London Society and directed by Millicent Fawcett. It is currently housed in London Guildhall University, and its collection covers various themes related to the story of woman in England. Besides numerous books, it displays its collection of many objects reflecting the different ways of assuming feminine identities and the social, cultural and symbolic relations that were established with objects in different historic spaces. On the other hand, the International Museum of Women (IMOW) in San Francisco (California) originated in 1985 under the name of the Women's Heritage Museum. It tried for about ten years to offer a series of exhibitions and programmes on the history of women, and these proved extremely successful. Elizabeth Colton, keen to teach her daughter about the life and history of women, consequently contacted the feminist activist Gloria Steinem to see if they could find a space where such a task could be carried out. Unable to locate one, Colton decided to work as a volunteer at the Women's Heritage Museum, and in 1997, with the acquiescence of some of its trustees, it was agreed to transform the centre into the International Museum of Women. Since then, the museum's mission has been none other than to offer a vision of the cultural diversity and different significances attached through history to everything related to women (Offen and Colton, 2007; 2010). Since 2005, it has implemented a plan to create a model of an innovative museum capable of securing the involvement of women all over the world by means of internet exhibitions. One outstanding example was the exhibition *Imagining Ourselves*, which used new technologies to foster and promote social change for woman all around the world (Goldman 2007).

There are many other museums dedicated to women in various countries, such as the Pioneer Women Museum in Oklahoma (USA), the Women's Museum in Dallas (USA), the Frauen Museum in Bonn (Germany), the Muso Kunda (Museum of Woman) in Mali, the Hanoi Women's Museum in Vietnam, the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington (USA), and the Museo de Mujeres Artistas Mexicanas (Mexico), to name only a few representative examples. Especially important among the various projects under way is the creation of the Women in Museum network, a virtual platform set up in 2008 with the aim of making the presence of women in museums visible and fostering the exchange of knowledge and experiences between the women who work in museums (www.womeninmuseum.net).

All this shows that we must learn inside museums to "look in a different way", constructing cultural signifiers and analysing gender identities. We observe that a process of change is taking place whereby resistance in museums to knowledge of

gender asymmetries is coming under analysis. This is a question of undertaking new “spatio-temporal surveys” (Bernárdez Rodal, 2012: 56) from a gender perspective, where woman can have a personal and distinct experience of her own in accordance with her peculiar way of being in the world. Nobody should tell woman how her presence is to be configured or which her spaces in museums are to be, because she knows that models inherited from other epochs, and today regarded as obsolete and discriminatory, cannot be reproduced or transmitted to the present.

It is true that there is still some resistance to the revision of history from new interpretive gazes, or to the acceptance of different narratives in the presentation of museum collections. We should not forget, however, that museums are spaces and ambiances of communication and encounter, agoras of the gentiles where everyone, whether experts or amateurs, intellectuals or simple folk, men or women, are invited to participate actively, critically and transgressively in new ways of conceiving museology. In these pages, we have ascertained that there are still many shameful silences and absences to be overcome. But we have also seen how new proposals have arisen for the interpretation and reading of the reality of museums, and that an inclusive discourse is being developed in which the role of woman is acquiring genuine protagonism. We are still on the road, and there is most certainly a large amount still to be done, but nobody can any longer deny that woman, like man, is a subject capable of producing cultural signifiers, and of employing the discourse of difference for the purpose.

Translation by Philip Sutton

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A VISITOR-CENTERED APPROACH: ENHANCING MUSEOLOGY WITH PERCEPTUAL THEORY

Anna Leshchenko

Russian State University for the Humanities, Museology Department
Moscow – Russia

ABSTRACT

Museum Visitor Studies have focused on studying demographics, behavior, satisfaction, leisure habits and potential learning outcomes for visitors moving around the museum space. This approach pays attention to outer effects, while multidisciplinary nature of museology allows us to apply the theory of perception and methods of psycholinguistics to find an inside-out way to see the visitor. By taking a look at the visitor's perception skills from psycholinguistic perspective, museologists can adapt a new way of understanding why each visitor who is allowed to become a creative agent within the participatory paradigm is more involved in museum communication and learns more.

The perceptual process is the one that enables visitors to interpret the information flows that are part of any exhibition. Some issues concerning perception should be taken into account by museum professionals in order to make the visiting process more communicatively efficient. This article attempts to see differences in visitors' perception and information-processing of exhibition content showing that each visitor has his own learning style and pace.

RÉSUMÉ

Une approche centrée sur le visiteur : l'amélioration de la muséologie au moyen de la théorie de la perception

Les *Études de Visiteurs de Musée* se sont concentrées sur l'étude du comportement de données démographiques, sur la satisfaction, les habitudes de loisir et l'apprentissage potentiel de résultats pour des visiteurs se déplaçant autour du musée. Cette approche prête attention aux effets extérieurs, alors que la nature pluridisciplinaire de la muséologie nous permet d'appliquer la théorie de la perception et les méthodes des psycholinguistes pour atteindre une manière inversée de voir le visiteur. En jetant un œil sur les techniques de perception du visiteur dans une perspective psycholinguistique, les muséologues peuvent adapter un nouveau moyen de comprendre pourquoi chaque visiteur, à qui l'on permet de devenir un agent créatif dans le cadre d'un paradigme de la participation, est plus impliqué dans la communication muséale et apprend davantage.

Le processus de la perception est celui qui rend les visiteurs capables d'interpréter les flux d'information qui font partie de n'importe quelle exposition. Quelques questions concernant la perception devraient être prises en compte par des professionnels de musée pour rendre la visite plus efficace quant à sa communication. Cet article essaye de voir les différences entre la perception des visiteurs et le contenu informatif de l'exposition, en montrant que chaque visiteur a son propre style d'étude et son propre rythme.

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A visitor-centered approach: enhancing museology with perceptual theory

RESUMEN

Un abordaje centrado en el visitante: mejorando la museología con la teoría de la percepción

Estudios de público se ha centrado en el estudio de la demografía, comportamiento, satisfacción, hábitos de ocio y potencial de los resultados del aprendizaje para un visitante recorriendo por el museo. Este enfoque presta atención a los efectos externos, mientras que el carácter multidisciplinar de museología nos permite utilizar la teoría de percepción y métodos de psicolingüística para encontrar una forma de ver estos procesos de adentro hacia afuera. Echando un vistazo en habilidades de percepción del visitante desde perspectiva psicolingüística, museólogos pueden adaptarse a una nueva forma de entender por qué cada visitante que puede convertirse en un agente creativo dentro del paradigma participativo está más involucrado en la comunicación museal y aprende más.

El proceso de percepción es el que permite al visitante interpretar los flujos de información que forman parte de cualquier exposición. Algunas cuestiones relativas a la percepción deben tenerse en cuenta por los profesionales de museos para hacer el proceso de visita más eficiente comunicativamente. Este artículo intenta ver las diferencias en la percepción y procesamiento de la información del contenido de la exposición que muestra que cada visitante tiene su propio estilo de aprendizaje y ritmo.

* * *

As a museologist by trade and a linguist by vocation, I have paid much attention to the areas which intersect and are studied by both museology and linguistics. One of the least researched issues, I'd like to address in this paper, is a visitor's capacity to 'read' encoded messages on display (and the museum narrative at large) and perception as a factor that influences greatly on the efficiency of museum communication. Museum-related researches tend to focus on visitors' behavior, which results in external observations, such as follows: visitors seldom read labels; children are more likely to engage with interactive exhibits than adults; visitors skip many elements, visiting on average only a third of them, etc.¹ As a result, this external approach may lead to disregard for visitors' personalities and understanding of *why* an individual would do one thing and would not do another. Besides, museum audiences themselves are not always aware of what contributes to their learning outcomes and what may cause instant fatigue.

Kenneth Hudson wrote back in 1975:

Unfortunately, there were no surveys carried out until very recently to discover how many museum visitors finished up with an awakened mind and an enlarged experience, and how many with a headache and sore feet².

Since then psychological and cognitive studies have advanced and there is no need in undertaking conventional surveys in museums to anticipate and deal with factors that

¹ For example: B.Serrell, "Paying Attention: The Duration and Allocation of Visitors' Time in Museum Exhibitions", in *Curator*, 40(2), 1997, p. 108-125. and G. Hein, *Learning in the Museum*. London: Routledge.

² Kenneth Hudson, *A Social History of Museums: What the Visitors Thought*, London, the Macmillan Press LTD, 1975, p. 71.

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may reduce fatigue as well as problems with 'decoding' the narrative presented through displayed objects.

Studies taken in this area concerning museum audiences are either not widely known or constitute overgeneralization. For example, the latter is evident in Russia, when it comes to visitors' capacity of keeping attention before getting tired during the guided tour, the same amount of time is prescribed to rather large age groups, e.g. 1.5 hours to adults and a maximum of 40 minutes to children³, while within this groups people of the same age have different traits that may cause fatigue earlier than anticipated.

These perceptual issues have long been neglected and even rejected for being too physical and abstract for museums. Nowadays, museologists and museum professionals have begun to turn to the physical bodily sensations of the visitor⁴ and reflect on how museums work with individual identities based on emotionally-rich stories generated by curators or visitors⁵. Since museums address visitor's emotions today, it would be logical to consider visitor's emotional and mental characteristics when studying visiting experience.

This paper is addressed to both museum professionals and museum-goers with an intention to help them recognize the uniqueness of cognitive and physical characteristics for each individual and enable them to find possible solutions to effective museum communication outcomes.

'Perception' seen philosophically, psychologically and physically

Cognitive psychologists and cognitive linguists have arrived at the conclusion that we do not *see* an object or *understand* the intended message it conveys, but we *perceive* and *interpret* them, relatively.

The philosophy of perception defines 'perception' as:

a process that in general leads to knowledge about objects, even if on occasion we may be misled as to the exact nature of our physical surroundings. [...] distance perception is an essentially dynamic process that is integrated with action. It does not merely lead to true belief, but to successful movement through an environment, allowing perceivers to satisfy their needs.⁶

Perception involves both the physical senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch) as well as the cognitive processes. Essentially, this is how museum visitors come to understand the encoded messages around them through interpretation.

In psychology, the notion of "apperception" is used to separate the conscious individual's perception from the general notion of 'perception' (apperception/perception)

³ calculated in the 1930s and still considered up-to-date by a number of Russian researchers, such as M. Yuhnevich in Юхневич Марина Ю., *"Я поведу тебя в музей"*, учебное пособие по музейной педагогике, Moscow, 2001, p. 60, and N. Nagajceva in Нагайцева Н.Д. "Современный музей – аспекты взаимоотношений с посетителем", in: *"Музей и посетитель: процесс, прогресс и протест"*, Irkutsk, 2012, p. 52.

⁴ Jennifer Harris, "Turning to the visitor's body: affective exhibition and the limits of representation", in: *ICOFOM Study Series*, 41, 2012, p. 199-210.

⁵ To name a few: Holocaust museums around the world are examples of working with effects that lead to visitors experiencing emotional release, close to the idea of catharsis; another example is a story about a Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History visitor missing a deceased relative and sharing this emotion with others, see Nina Simon's TED-talk video about "Memory Jars" exhibition that took place in 2012 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alcwIH1vZ9w>, min: 06:50-07:40.

⁶ Paul Coates, *the Metaphysics of Perception: Wilfrid Sellars, Critical Realism, and the Nature of Experience*, Routledge, NY, 2007, p. 59.

are related to each other as are the ideas of listening/hearing and looking/seeing, respectively.. Apperception studies deal with an individual's personality, his or her motivations, thought patterns and observational capacity.

Concerning specifics of apperception, Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist, pointed out back in 1971 that

any understanding is a non-understanding; that is to say, the thoughts instilled in us by someone's speech never coincide entirely with the thought in the mind of the speaker". Understanding as apperceived contains an infusion of reality and imagination, of objectivity and subjectivity.⁷

Thus, each visitor to the museum will 'read' a unique message by interpreting or probably misinterpreting it. That means we cannot talk about 'visitors' as a whole, we should talk about many individuals with their single sets of perceptual characteristics. From the psychological point of view, it is very unlikely that there would be two visitors that would see and understand the similar amount of information. Visitors come with their unique 'intellectual luggage' as well as their fatigue limits. Visitors' perception is shaped by their background knowledge and influenced by preferences, prejudice, judgments, which always lead to interpretations. As the readers of the same book do not read the same text because they are interpreting it in their way, so do the visitors of museums.

In physiology of perception the most interesting areas for museology are those that combine the psychological and the physical of the body. The factors that may ease physical and mental strengths put into perception are not difficult to calculate and apply. Museum rooms have plenty of texts, those actual texts used as a commentary and those that visitors are expected to decode through viewing the objects and using their background knowledge and the commentary they have just read. When it comes to the first stage of this process – perceiving the texts that the visitor is supposed to read, few museums pay attention to legibility and visual presentation. To ease the tedious visual tasks that manifest in eye strain, museums have to decide for typefaces with fewer serifs, which proved to be more legible, i.e. perceivable, as well as to illumination that not only highlights the objects but leads to visitor's reading comfort. In addition, psychophysicists recommend using dark texts on the light background for left-handed and light texts on dark background for right-handed people⁸. At this point, when moving from common to more individual in physiology of perception, the first conclusion that might come to mind is that it is impossible to create ideal conditions for each and every person. Nonetheless, most of the problems can be resolved with help of personal digital devices.

Theories of perception vary, and focus on different issues. Further, this paper will focus on the studies that can be applied when dealing with perception of visual and 'encoded' information within a museum space, i.e. a so called *External (or Sensory) Perception* that tells us about the world outside our bodies through our senses of sight, hearing etc., which are studied by psycholinguists.

Psycholinguistic Approach

Psycholinguistics and its branch *Neurolinguistics* are the fields of study of the psychological factors and mechanisms that enable us to acquire, comprehend and

⁷ Charlotte Hua Liu, *Vygotsky's Psycho-Semiotics: Theories, Instrument and Interpretive Analyses*, Bern, New York, London, 2011, p. 34.

⁸ Сиротюк А.Л. Обучение детей с учетом психофизиологии: Практическое руководство для учителей и родителей (Syrotyuk A.L. Teaching children considering psychophysics: Practitioner guide for teachers and parents), Moscow, 2001, p.16.

produce language. The part that can be useful for a better understanding of museum communication processes concerns the study of main sensory receivers known as VAK (stands for Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic), or VAKT (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile). For museum practices the VAKT model is more appropriate, since the distinction between *kinesthetic* and *tactile* is quite evident: when visiting a museum a kinesthetic person can stop understanding information if he stands still for a long time, that is why he needs more dynamic types of guided tours around museums, but he does not necessarily need to touch an object to 'understand' it better.

The VAKT is based on *modalities*, or channels by which we comprehend and process information. It is rare to find a person who would have all the modalities active while learning something new. Due to their intensive visual nature, museum expositions are easier to process for those who intake information visually. For an auditory visitor, a guide's comments or music will be the best support and they will not get tired if they listen to most of the information and do not have to read each label. That is why if a non-visual visitor comes to the museum, the extensive visual tension would provoke fatigue sooner as compared to other visitors.

The VAKT model suggests different combinations of active modalities; for a traditional museum the ideal visitor would be either a visual one or a combination of visual and auditory. Still there are other conditions that influence visitors' perception and the modalities that the visitor is more likely to possess. One of them is generation characteristics. In the first half of the 20th century generations used to change every 25 years, decreasing closer to the turn of the century. Today the generation gap issue is more evident and critical, since, mostly due to technological influences, a new generation emerges every 10 years. Each generation, referred to as Generation X, Millennials (Gen Y), iGeneration (Gen Z), have specific personality traits that condition the way the information is perceived. If we look at the work of art museums with adult visitors in the 20th century (say, "pre-participatory era") it looks like it was considered *a priori* that most of information was received by watching and listening. Visitor's perceptual styles have always been different, but possible failures in museum communications have never been evident, since they have not been easy to trace. The studies of generation differences show that watching and listening is not enough. In case museum personnel belongs to previous generations (X or Y) and transmits information within traditional museum communication framework using only traditionally elaborated methods, today's teenagers may remain *deaf* and *blind* to the museum narrative.

The Internet Generation (*iGeneration*, born from the mid or late 1990s) is mostly both *visual and kinesthetic* and presumably is less apt to read the label and more apt to touch plenty of buttons on the tablet:

The Net Gen is oriented toward inductive discovery or making observations, formulating hypotheses, and figuring out the rules. They crave interactivity. And the rapid pace with which they like to receive information means they often choose not to pay attention if a class is not interactive, unengaging, or simply too slow <...> The Net Gen is more comfortable in image-rich environments than with text. Researchers report Net Gen students will refuse to read large amounts of text, whether it involves a long reading assignment or lengthy instructions. In a study that altered instructions from a text-based step-by-step approach to one that used a graphic layout, refusals to do the assignment dropped and post-test scores increased.⁹

⁹ Diana G. Oblinger and James L. Oblinger, Is It Age or IT: First steps toward understanding the net generation, in: *Educating the Net Generation*, Educause, 2005, p. 25, <http://www.educause.edu/research-and-publications/books/educating-net-generation>

Interestingly, the quote shows how different visual learners of the last century generations are from visual learners of 2000s, manifesting preference for graphics instead of texts. We can also presume that digital devices, if designed properly, are not an obstacle between iGeneration and the museum object, which is one of the main concerns among Russian museum professionals, but is one of the ways that enables younger visitors to decode the texts successfully.

Since the perception is different for each person, it is highly unlikely that two visitors to the same museum will have the same communicative experience, 'reading' the same messages and receiving the exact information chunks that the creators of the exhibition put into it. What museums can do is to provide opportunities for engagement in different ways and to remember that there are still people who are not eager to participate and engage but would still prefer to watch and to listen. As for kinesthetic and tactile learners/visitors, they do not require only electronic devices; museums can find less costly ways of addressing their needs. For instance, visitors who were offered to do sketches as if they were naturalists filling in their field journals at the exhibition of Natural History at Carnegie Museum of Art in October 2012 received an opportunity to engage visually and kinesthetically¹⁰. Examples of this and many other engaging activities addressing all the VAKT modalities are part of participatory paradigm in museum world.

Participatory paradigm: perception and emotions

The emergence and rapid expansion of participatory paradigm in museum landscape might be a logical reaction to the visitors' willingness to take an active part in the engaging practices at the exposition, which might be due to above-mentioned Net Generation's characteristics as well as overall internet influences on attitudes of people actively engaged in online social networking.

Nina Simon in her book *The Participatory museum* (2010) suggests looking at visitors from a new prospective, that was new for museums and is still found controversial by many museum professionals. By referring to Forrester Research released in 2008 Nina draws our attention to the way people are used to engaging. They may participate as creators, critics, collectors, spectators, etc.¹¹ Although the Forrester Research was observing online audiences, it contributes greatly to museum practices and broadens views of how museums could work more efficiently with visitors.

This actions-based approach to museum audiences and the possibility to be active in a museum is directly linked to increase in perception and information processing. Firstly, it addresses the above mentioned problem of kinesthetic learners. And, secondly, information processing will be more efficient if the new information is somehow connected to visitors' emotions, because if we are asked to go through a new experience and share our exhibition-related stories with other visitors we are more attentive when we go through the museum rooms¹².

This new paradigm enables museums to start looking into what exhibition-related activities a visitor may participate in, which would address their best communicative and learning outcomes and will allow visitors who are not strictly visual or auditory to get involved.

¹⁰ To see the sketches visit museum's facebook account: <http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151170632301788.506434.38014611787&type=3>

¹¹ Nina Simon, *Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz; Museum 2.0, 2010, <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/chapter1/>

¹² Jonathan R. Zadra and Gerald L. Clore, "Emotion and perception: the role of affective information", in: *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science*, Volume 2, Issue 6, 2011, p. 676–685.

Conclusion

Considering both generation distinctions and multiplicity of VAKT combinations, the training of museum guides as well as writing and recordings of audio-guides should become versatile, giving each visitor an opportunity to choose whether to read printed texts, or to use tablets, or to listen. Museum exhibit designers and educators should be aware of how visitors perceive and process information in order to make learning and communication easier by working with their own style and pace, thus recognizing that each visitor will have his own set of learning preferences.

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OBJECTIVITY IN THE MUSEUM SETTING

Lynn Maranda

Curator Emerita, Museum of Vancouver, Canada

ABSTRACT

In addressing the topic of the special visitor, this paper excludes itself from extant theories on the subject of individualism and instead, questions if there is any value to be gained from focussing on uniqueness. While it takes a position that acknowledges that everyone is unique, it does, nevertheless, discuss such points as individuality, objectivity, subjectivity, knowledge and education. It questions why the museum would wish to go the problematic route to recognize the unique characteristics of each and every visitor and what would be the advantage of doing so. In the end, it suggests an exploratory look at why the museum might incorporate an inclusionary approach germane to each and every visitor.

RÉSUMÉ

l'objectivité dans le contexte muséal

En abordant le thème du visiteur particulier, cet article met de côté les théories existantes au sujet de l'individualisme et, au contraire, pose la question de savoir si on accroît la valeur de l'expérience muséale en misant sur la particularité du visiteur. Alors que l'article part du principe que chaque individu est unique, il examine pourtant les concepts tels que l'individualité, l'objectivité, la subjectivité, le savoir et l'éducation. Il met en cause le rationnel du pourquoi les musées voudraient prendre cette route si problématique qui est de reconnaître les caractéristiques uniques de tous et de chaque un des visiteurs, et quels seraient les avantages d'en faire ainsi. À la fin l'article propose un regard exploratoire sur le pourquoi d'incorporer au musée une approche inclusive propre à chacun et à tous les visiteurs.

RESUMEN

Objetividad en el contexto museal

Al abordar el tema del visitante especial, este documento evita atenerse a las teorías existentes sobre individualismo, y en su lugar, cuestiona si hay algún valor derivado de enfocarse en la singularidad. Al tiempo que toma posición reconociendo que cada persona es única, intenta poner en discusión puntos tales como individualidad, objetividad, subjetividad, conocimiento y educación. Plantea el interrogante sobre el motivo por el cual museo elige el camino problemático de reconocer las características únicas de cada visitante y cuál sería la ventaja de hacerlo. Finalmente, sugiere una mirada exploratoria al porqué el museo debería incorporar un enfoque inclusivo pertinente a cada visitante.

* * *

Individual

The notions in the topic are so simplistic that it is difficult to decide where and how to start. I have decided, therefore, to explore the basic concept of individualism believing that the idea of a special visitor is really an acknowledgement that individuals rather than generalities walk through museum galleries. So, what is an individual? We know that this term refers to a single human entity as distinct from any assemblage of human beings such as group, family or society. This concept is definitely something we all believe of ourselves, and we can see others as quite distinct from us. Similarly, the word "individual" can be used as an adjective, where it takes on such specificities as single, particular or special, in contrast to general or common. While initially seen as a stand-alone person, the individual can also be perceived in relation to a wide variety of composites, ranging from humanity as a whole to various groups with which the individual associates whether in familial or societal relationships. It is also interesting to note that, first and foremost, the individual has to be able to recognize itself as such, otherwise there would be no use treating people as individuals if they do not think of themselves as unique. That is, if we are all clones of the same process then it would be impossible for anyone to claim individuality. Another interesting extension of that thought must be the possibility of making a classification of "individuals" such as the *Oddball Society*, which is itself a group category of striking individuals seemingly contradicting the inherent attached meaning of uniqueness.

To complicate our notion of the individual, we recognize that everything is forever in a state of change, including the self: the physical self, the conscious self, the societal self. Experiences, along with the distant dynamics of the Universe, are constantly influencing us and transforming our many multitudes of individuals into new persons each and every morning and night. In argument, it could be said that if you sold a ticket to unique individual A, this would not be the same individual who walked into the museum. The parameters of change are what gives us the greatest challenges to our notions of what is important and how will or should our behaviour be judged. So it is that we question: Is there true value to be gained from a science or approach that recognizes unique characteristics of others that are in a constant mode of change?

We all know the identity of our specific individuality and, throughout our lives, struggle to maintain it, believing this a healthy thing to do. In fact, we find the notion of "Big Brother" taking over our lives an anathema even if it means creating a better and smoother running society. The TV series, *The Prisoner*, exploited our basic fears of losing our personalities wherein the hero, "Number Six", continually affirms that he is not a number but that he is a man, an individual who has a name and a persona.

Subjective

There are many experiences only known by the self. Consider the "personal" experiences embodied by words such as joy, sadness, beauty, to which individual response is unique. We only assume to mean and have met the same experience when we say, "I am sad," so that it is understood by all.

It is just these personal values that colour the individual as being inherently subjective. These are also the very qualities that the objective approach avoids. In addition, these values can stand the individual up against the popular masses, and in extreme political terms, set totalitarianism against collectivism. An even further extreme political subjectivism might swing towards anarchy and anti-social terrorism. The more common contrast with the subjective, however, is to be compared to the objective.

Objective

It has always been proudly acknowledged that we are individuals, and yet, we, as a race, through the persistence of many individuals, have struggled over thousands of years to discover and establish the objective laws that govern how the world works around us. The establishment of this knowledge has not been an easy evolution. With current social values and emotive mores being so powerful over our lives, the challenge has been, up to now, how to bring people together under the strength of universal laws and not to have them feel disenfranchised when surrounded by the successes of the scientific approach.

Objectivity is based upon found external facts of evidence, devoid of the individual emotive or prejudicial feelings. That is, facts that are determined external to the mind, outside of consciousness, contrary to the location of the subjective feelings that exist within the psyche. Its overwhelming success has accelerated the scientific approach to problems but, nonetheless, it has not been possible to keep all subjectivity out of the scientific equation. The real hallmark of objectivity has been its proven ability to create laws that provide the human race with the sound practices of prediction. These laws are recognized in applications that can be used anywhere, at any time, with the same results.

Similarly, the same dichotomy applies to the museum circumstance, where the visitor is surrounded by the results of the scientific-objective method. This is the scientific base through which emanates the knowledge that museums transfer to the public via their exhibitions and programmes and marks the foundation of their research value to students and professionals. Given the attendance quotient museums experience throughout the year, and given that many visitors limit their stay and/or do not return regularly, it is difficult to know what the museum circumstance could be. Whether the museum can transmit didactic materials outside its realm of objectivity and whether such materials can be tailored for reception on an individualistic and subjective basis is open for examination. If the museum can create a forum where visitors can express their individuality and be schooled to learn, would this contribute to our sense of general knowledge or would it be satisfied to render deeper subjective feelings as its accomplishment?

Education

To continue with that thought, but carrying it forward into the general realm of education, would the overall knowledge of the human race be better served by an approach that is tailored to the needs of each individual component of the society? It is interesting to think that it is important to find the basic root for every individual in order that this person can achieve something, whether simple satisfaction or the heights of genius, and that this approach would accrue in the overall betterment of society.

More recently, a growing concern in respect of the individuality of the student has occurred. In some quarters, this has led to the restructuring of the educational environment and curriculum to meet the pedagogical needs of individual learners, and to the establishment of "personalized learning" schools. Here, the individuality of each student is recognized and the program of learning personalized to meet the needs of each. Museums, on the other hand, have not yet travelled down this path and the logistical dynamics of such a course may be well outside the capability of museums and their ability to function effectively as purveyors of an individualized learning experience for each and every visitor.

Yet, the quest for individualism in other areas, and the perception that this may be the direction in which museums should go, may prompt the museum to question what the visitor wants that is not being supplied by the museum's objective method. Perhaps the visitor feels constrained by the formality of objectivity. Possibly a route can be found where there is an individual objectivity that is different from a collective objectivity. If both can achieve the same level of knowledge, then self-discipline would be pitted against social discipline. It may be that the visitor would prefer to seek a freedom such as that represented in art, where beauty and an appreciation for deconstruction allow for individualism. Can freedom provide a way to knowledge? The freedom in art, however, is in quite a different arena than that of science. For the museum, however, where the facts are known, there is science in the determination of these facts. It is this close alignment with science that has prompted the museum's objective methodology.

Plato's Meno

In the *Meno*¹, Plato writes the dialogue of a conversation that took place between Socrates and a young aristocrat named Meno in Athens in 401 B.C. The subject of the conversation centered around the philosophical concepts of virtue and knowledge, but the method of exploration was unique and illustrative. By drawing geometric figures in the sand, Socrates demonstrates that Meno's uneducated slave understands and therefore knows such figures and how to calculate square footage. It also illustrates that given the right teacher, an untrained individual, the slave boy, could demonstrate knowledge. A further conclusion that can be extracted from this dialogue is that, given individualistic attention, the slave exhibits the same truths of geometry as if he had been taught in a common classroom. This means that an intense study directed at an individual results in the same conclusions just as if the mathematical exploration had taken place in a general setting. It suggests that nothing different would be gained by such a focus on the individual, nothing that would result in a wildly challenging reconfiguration of the world, while there would be the benefit that the individual's personal education had expanded, which, of course, is a most worthy objective.

Lost or Gained

In Western culture, we promote individualism as linking to freedom and happiness. Yet we also promote the objective sciences, as we are proud of their achievements and abilities to provide food, fight disease, and steadily increase longevity. So, we are constantly debating over which method of education to choose: one that focuses on individuals, or one that promotes adherence to established universal laws. This debate has been underscored by the lives of many successful individuals who, as they grew, found that they did not fit into the societal norm and dropped out of school to undertake doing their own "thing" in their own way. A number of these individuals, such as van Gogh, Einstein, and Bill Gates, have ended up being classified as truly exceptional human beings. Other strong individuals, such as Galileo and Alfred Wegener, went against the then-current theories and trends of their day, while today they are acknowledged to have been right and have thus contributed greatly to our understanding of the world. Perhaps examples like these have created a fear that, unless everyone is treated as an individual, someone "exceptional" may slip through the cracks. So that this potential loss can be avoided, museums may feel that a new route to success requires a complete change in strategy in an effort to recognize and acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual.

There are reasons why formalized education is in place. It is not there to abolish individuality or demonize differences, but for other purposes. What is missing from the

¹ Plato, *Protagoras and Meno*, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, 1961.

current educational patterns that appears, to some, to exclude individuals? These patterns are there to communicate and to set standards of what is communicated, so that it is received and understood by all over a broad spectrum. This approach is also an issue of language and the transmission and comprehension of information. Knowledge has to be transportable to others, and this is done through language. The advancement of knowledge has been through the connected series of objective findings discovered by individuals and ratified collectively. Take music, for example, which is a highly disciplined undertaking with rules that are there for a reason. Such rules do not delete individualism, and numerous musicians rise to prominence and become famous virtuosos in their own right, while still maintaining strict regimens within the objective parameters of their art form. If we recognize that individuals are worthy of being educated as specific entities, it may be difficult to reconcile educating, for example, medical students to become doctors who learn anatomy by their own rules. Further, it may be a moot point to say that examinations can be individualized so all can pass. Again, it is not the goal of examination to fail people, but rather to ensure that individuals have acquired the necessary skills to be effective. This raises the point: are we missing good people because they are individuals, or do we want to tailor education to achieve something else? Embedded in this question are the major issues of social accountability and responsibility.

In particular, when examining the individuality of the museum visitor, there appears to be a latent reference in the populace which infers that there is something fundamentally wrong in the way that museums do business, in that they have neglected to address what visitors want in such a way that all visitors can like and understand what they see. The search therefore is to locate what is missing and then supply it within the confines of the museum. This is a difficult feat to accomplish given the truths that everyone is different and receives and processes data differently.

The Museum

When it comes to the museum, the question becomes: Why would we want to develop or reformat a museum where each visitor is treated as unique? The museum has built up a structure of knowledge that people have come to know and with which there is a familiarity. If the museum reconfigures itself, is the experience really going to be different if it keeps faith to its knowledge base? Museums, as extra-curricular knowledge sources, can be seen to have similar properties to the established educational systems that comprise schools, colleges, universities and other learning enterprises. In the case of museums, however, the tools and products differ significantly, but are nevertheless all geared towards the same outcome: to inspire the quest for and to disseminate knowledge for the end purpose of education. The methodologies utilized to reach the end product can be similar, in that the flow of information normally emanates from that body possessing the knowledge to those to whom it is being conveyed and who are in receipt of same. On the one side are teachers or museum curators who possess the knowledge, and on the other side, students or museum visitors to whom knowledge is being transmitted. Information travels in one direction from out-flow to in-take normally in a prescribed manner corresponding to the tools that educators have at their disposal. Established educational facilities have text books, while off-shoot learning based resources such as museums have collections. Both adhere to a methodology that is objective in nature, but how the knowledge each seeks to communicate is received is where the process becomes individual.

True, we are all individuals and, as such, we all would like our own idiosyncrasies addressed, but whether this is possible in the light of the scientific work undertaken by museums is in question. As a science-based institution, museums build and maintain collections of material culture and natural specimens that constitute the heritage of

humanity and about which they disseminate information gathered through the scientific method. In order to do this, museums progress their scientific course through objectifying experience rather than making it subjective. In light of the science of the discoveries, whether it be the objects or specimens themselves or their accompanying data, responding to individuality in the museum circumstance may well be impossible.

The acknowledgement of, and response to, individualization in formalized spheres of education would seem to be easier to realize where students are meant to be in attendance on an ongoing basis over a considerable period of time. This is not so for the museum experience, which could, in comparison, be described as fleeting. People visit museums for a wide range of reasons, with different expectations, and for relatively short periods of time. If such visits are repeated, the reasons, expectations, and the length of time spent may differ widely from that of any previous visitations. Under such circumstances, it may not be feasible or even logical for museums to devote valued resources to recognizing and addressing the unique characteristics of each visitor. Why might museums think this approach is important? Even though the answers might negate or dissuade proceeding along such lines of enterprise, the museum still might find and implement ways to incorporate an inclusionary approach germane to each and every museum visitor.

It might be argued that it is much easier, for example, to transform physical space to accommodate visitors with identifiable disabilities that can be considered to be a particularly unique characteristic. It is more difficult, however, when dealing with intellectual space involving truths and other informational data. While some of this can be tailored to span age, linguistic, cultural, or cognitive dimensions, it may not be possible that those of an individualistic nature can be attained. Perhaps museums need to open up their structure by reformatting themselves in an effort to effect a difference. In spite of being structured in its knowledge base, it may be seen that the museum is denying visitors access to that knowledge. By focusing on individuality, the museum may need to open up to allow all visitors access, thus permitting each and every person to bind themselves to the museum on their own terms. For the museum, it may result in objective changes to the museum's purpose. For the individual, however, would there be any net benefit under such circumstances? For the museum, there is a basic dilemma in that there are particular standards to maintain, and it is uncertain whether the museum can step outside of the skin of teaching knowledge, for to do so would compromise its inherent reason for being.

At one end of the scale, museum visitors are grouped together and offered a pre-determined experience with no option or occasion for individual exploration to satisfy individual wants, but which does allow for each to make a subjective connection. At the other end, the museum becomes a classroom with the knowledge provider and the knowledge recipient engaged face-to-face. Somewhere in between, the museum visitor could be introduced to a quasi-self-directed learning model that, while it is offered within the parameters of the museum's objective purview, appears to be unstructured but is coupled with multi-layering components to provide as wide a choice as possible, so visitors can find their own level of engagement with the museum. Given current electronic and computer-based capabilities, exhibitions, and by extension, accompanying programmes, can be mounted with many layers of information ranging from the general to the specific. It is possible to be singularly focused, multidimensional, limited in scope or far-reaching in nature, with added visuals and other didactic materials, but all available as exploratory options for each and every visitor. Extending from this can be an added capability, not only for visitor feedback, but also for the incorporation of multiple voices. Would such an approach constitute a move towards acknowledging and working with the individual, or is it the case that there are still too many variables to contemplate given the museum's own particular circumstance?

Again, the question to be asked is: Why would the museum wish to go the problematic route to recognize the unique characteristics of each and every visitor, and what is the advantage of doing so? Perhaps this focus would translate into a more approachable museum benefitting the visitor and society at large. Since the museum seeks to advance its objective work, it would need to find a route to maintain its professional work in light of the individuality of its visitors. Alternatively, this may just be a passing phase, a societal trend to which the museum feels obliged to give some attention in keeping with the times.

A parallel question is: Is the ability to recognize the unique characteristics of each visitor and fashion individualized responses something to which museums should devote valued resources? This becomes a question of singularity versus collectivity, of the individual versus the whole, of subjectivity versus objectivity. Museums communicate through language, a language to which the whole subscribes and by which knowledge is communicated. There is, therefore, already an objectivity imbedded within the formation and use of language without which communication is not possible.

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LE VISITEUR PARTICULIER : CHACUN ET N'IMPORTE LEQUEL D'ENTRE NOUS : IDIOSYNCRASIE DANS LES MUSEES DE SOCIETE

Florence Pizzorni

Ministère de la culture, Service des musées de France - France

« Donner la parole à ceux qui ne l'ont pas »

Projet de Georges Henri Rivière, le plus noble des Projets Scientifiques et Culturels, est plus que jamais d'actualité et d'urgence.

RÉSUMÉ

Le rapport du citoyen aux musées est plus riche et complexe qu'il n'y paraît. La visite est certes la plus normale des pratiques. Elle constitue l'aspect visible de nombreuses aspirations : la jouissance du « beau », l'accroissement des connaissances, la transmission transgénérationnelle, la remémoration et bien d'autres encore. Pour certains « usagers », elle s'apparente à la démarche pèlerine : ceux-là voient le musée comme un lieu sacré, un reliquaire où les objets choisis sont conservés pour l'éternité. L'histoire vécue racontée ici, met en scène un usager de musée dont la démarche est si singulière, qu'elle fut disqualifiée comme idiosyncrasique¹ ...Et pourtant cette singularité en fait précisément son efficacité à témoigner au sein de l'institution muséale de la présence dans la société des plus pauvres, les plus démunis face à la vie et face à la mort...Aussi unique qu'elle soit, elle en dit long sur la fonction symbolique du musée, la plus communément partagée.

* * *

Pour évoquer les pratiques singulières des visiteurs de musées, peut-on s'affranchir du style contraint des publications à caractère scientifique ? Oser la narration pour exposer une expérience unique et rare se rattachant pourtant à une perception partagée de l'institution muséale ? User de l'artifice de l'écriture du vécu pour faire comprendre la fonction symbolique du musée dans la société ...Après tout, certains musées ne sont-ils des lieux où se racontent des éclats de vie qui font écho à ceux de chacun des visiteurs pour construire la matière sensible qui fait l'histoire

1^{er} épisode – le vélo à volant d'Irénée

Madame, madame, un homme est là, à l'accueil, il vous demande. Il est...bizarre...

Petit et rond, veste et pantalon à carreaux dépareillés, la casquette sur le nombril, au garde-à-vous raide comme si ses souliers étaient trop petits, cet homme qui demande à parler à un conservateur n'est manifestement pas un habitué de notre temple muséal. Il a pris sur lui pour franchir le double seuil de verre du Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires.

¹ Qualifie un comportement ou un objet particulier qu'il est incertain de raccrocher à un contexte global, général

Florence Pizzorni

Le visiteur particulier, tout un chacun et pourtant unique :
Idiosyncrasie dans les musées de société

- Bonjour Madame, Je viens de la part du musée de la rue qui a mon nom. Je suis Monsieur Fourcaud, Irénée. Je voudrais vous donner mon vélo. Mais attention, pas n'importe quel vélo !! Mon vélo à volant ! Pour un Musée, vous comprenez....

Que dois-je comprendre ? Que cet homme, de toute apparence modeste, tente une aventure exceptionnelle dans son existence. Il franchit des obstacles, guidé par une série de signes pour parvenir au dessein inattendu, inespéré, inaccessible de trouver une place au musée, pour ses choses, pour lui. Soyons concrète : comment est-il arrivé là ? Une rue à Paris, Fourcaud ?...Foucaud ?...La Rochefoucauld, bien sûr ! Un musée rue de La Rochefoucauld ? Il s'agit de l'atelier du peintre Gustave Moreau devenu musée national:

- Je passais dans la rue, j'ai vu la plaque avec mon nom dessus et à côté, la porte d'un musée : j'ai pas pu m'empêcher d'entrer. J'ai réussi à voir une dame, un chef ! J'ai proposé de lui donner mon vélo. Elle pouvait pas le prendre, mais elle m'a dit que peut-être, chez vous ?....

Je ris d'imaginer la surprise embarrassée de ma collègue, éminente spécialiste de l'histoire de l'art, devant la proposition incongrue de cet individu improbable dans son monde. Je mesure sa présence d'esprit, quelque peu espiègle, quand elle lui suggère de faire ce don généreux au musée national des Arts et Traditions Populaires. Elle me joue un bon tour qui indique la diversité des enjeux portés par les missions des musées. Une galéjade qui se révélera, pourtant, extrêmement signifiante et fertile.

- Toute ma vie, j'ai eu un vélo. Mon premier cadeau c'est le vélo de ma communion offert par ma mère. Puis j'ai suivi les Tours de France et gagné de quoi manger en jouant de la musique aux étapes, j'ai roulé, roulé... Ils m'énervent tous au bistro. Ils sont là : et leur voiture par ci, et leur volant par là...Y'en a que pour leur volant....Alors j'ai décidé, moi aussi, d'en avoir un. J'ai transformé mon guidon en volant et maintenant j peux parler au comptoir !

Le récit d'Irénée révèle la popularité du vélo durant tout le 20^{ème} s. et en filigrane celle de la voiture. Comment en rendre compte dans un musée de société ? Une collection de bicyclettes relève plutôt d'un musée des techniques, musée Manufrance de Saint Etienne par exemple. Le vélo à volant d'Irénée pourrait s'avérer fort pertinent d'un point de vue muséographique.

J'me fais vieux, j'peux plus m'en servir. J'peux pas le jeter, j'l'ai toujours eu avec moi. Dans la cour on va m'le voler. Il s'rait tellement mieux gardé au musée.

Quand je lui propose de me le laisser, pour étude, son visage s'illumine de reconnaissance et l'idée lui vient d'un remerciement à la hauteur de sa gratitude.

Puisque vous êtes si gentille, je vous offrirai mon ami, mon ami René...en mousse plâtre...

2^{ème} épisode- L'ami René au cimetière des Indigents

Des mois ont passé, l'oubli sous la multitude des diverses tâches du conservateur a recouvert l'énigmatique offrande d'Irénée. Une feuille pliée, déposée à la main dans la pile du courrier :

au seuil de cette nouvelle annee je vous souhaite tous mes bons vœux de joie boneur sante prosperite xtr je suis content que mon velo soit au musee. maintenant je desire faire un deuxieme cadeau au musee. notre copain qui est decede cela fait 3 ans et demi r....b...je vais le faire en mousse platre xtx et quand il sera fait j'espere vous le livre assi sur une chaise avec l'accordeon sur les genoux.

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avant de vous le livre je compte aller boire l'apéro dans quelques bistros comme on faisait avant quand il était bon vivant. puis aller lui faire jouer l'accordeon à la butte montmartre ou il jouait avant près de l'église.

cependant je n'ai pas commencé encore.....[...] je vous donnerais des nouvelles plus tard. [...] »²

30 octobre, au plus près de la fête des morts, alors que cette histoire est profondément nichée dans ma mémoire, j'apprends que René « est prêt » par un simple appel téléphonique. Fidèle à la promesse donnée quelques temps auparavant, l'équipe du musée se mobilise et rendez-vous est fixé aux « Puces », un quartier très modeste de Paris. Irénée y occupe une petite pièce en étage. Dans ce réduit, son squat, il a confectionné une statue de polystyrène enduite de plâtre qui figure son ami René. L'œuvre est grandeur nature, peinte aux couleurs de la vie et coiffée de véritables cheveux recueillis après la coupe d'Irénée, habillée de vêtements propres donnés par une blanchisseuse, chemise et veste qu'il a décousues dans le dos pour enfiler les manches à René définitivement figé dans la pose du joueur d'accordéon. Il faut le descendre par l'escalier étroit et branlant, l'installer à l'avant d'une voiture. « – Attention, il faut l'attacher, il pourrait se blesser... la place du mort, en voiture, c'est dangereux » Irénée ordonne de sangler la ceinture de sécurité, épreuve à laquelle quelques doigts graciles de René ne résistent pas.

Imaginez le cortège fellinien dans les ruelles escarpées de Montmartre, caméraman et photographe, ethnomusicologue et conservateur, Irénée portant à bout de bras son ami pesant et fragile, objet de toutes ses attentions, et quelques copains. Des arrêts rituels marquent les sites où tous deux avaient l'habitude de s'installer pour recueillir quelques pièces des passants intrigués par leur musique et les bistros, où nous levons nos verres à la mémoire des soifs étanchées, René lui-même levant son verre à l'ivresse de l'amitié. Devant les grilles de la basilique, ils ont joué ensemble, dans une dernière mise en scène.³

Puis Irénée a accompagné René et son accordéon jusqu'au musée où il l'a installé « pour l'éternité ».

René, décédé quatre ans plus tôt, avait été inhumé au cimetière des indigents, à Thiais. Sa place ne devait rester identifiée que peu de temps. Son corps, comme celui de tous les hommes qui ne peuvent assumer le prix d'une sépulture personnalisée, avait été mêlé à des dizaines d'autres, dans la fosse commune. Irénée souffre profondément de l'effacement de toute trace matérielle de son ami ; il lui est douloureux de ne pas avoir un lieu sanctuarisé pour se recueillir. Pourtant, si le cimetière lui est refusé il se souvient que le musée est un sanctuaire ; Irénée le sait qui vient d'immortaliser son vélo à volant par un acte de don. Mais comment faire entrer au musée, temple des œuvres d'art, l'amitié et le souvenir de la vie ? Le musée reçoit des peintures et des sculptures... Il faut donc leur donner forme et matière. L'amitié et la mémoire de René statufiées sous ses doigts patients et tendres, trouveront au musée une demeure éternelle.

3^{ème} épisode - Idiosyncrasie et collections des Musées de France

Cependant la procédure officielle pour inscrire un objet à l'inventaire d'une collection publique est beaucoup plus complexe que ne l'imagine Irénée. Elle impose sa présentation devant une commission scientifique, le Conseil. Assemblée très savante

² Le texte est retranscrit à l'identique, avec les fautes de frappe et d'orthographe.

³ Vidéo « Cortège funèbre ». Vidéo DVD MuCEM inv 011.

et solennelle, constituée des représentants des Grands Départements du Louvre, des représentants des musées nationaux et de la direction des patrimoines au Ministère de la Culture ainsi que de plusieurs sommités du monde de l'histoire de l'art, choisies par le Ministre.

A l'ordre du jour du Conseil de ce matin là, seront inscrits, briguant l'honneur d'être considérés comme des trésors nationaux : la délicieuse Maternité de Renoir, un Goya, de précieux plats émaillés Renaissance pour le musée d'Ecouen...un vélo à volant et la sculpture de René en mousse-plâtre! La Commission est habituée aux propositions toujours sympathiques du Musée national des Arts et Traditions Populaires, qu'elle examine avec condescendance comme les élucubrations du « vilain petit canard qu'on aime bien quand même ». Les cuillères en bois ouvragées de la belle province de Bretagne ravivent des souvenirs d'enfance, des parfums de grand-mère qui attendrissent les savants et nourrissent une connivence sensible propice à l'assentiment. Mais cette fois, quelle extravagance !

...Le conservateur du MnATP qui devra défendre cette acquisition vit un véritable cauchemar : quelle corde pourra-t-il faire vibrer aux oreilles des membres de la docte assemblée pour provoquer une familiarité positive avec ces objets totalement hors champs, non académiques et quelque peu miteux ?!

Au préalable, une pré-commission interne à l'établissement, examine les objets et prépare les arguments. Chaque membre du personnel scientifique y apporte son avis et l'objet n'est soumis au Conseil que s'il est agréé lors de cet examen. La présentation enthousiaste et passionnée de l'expérience ethnographique aux côtés d'Irénée Fourcault laisse certains collègues perplexes. Après un long silence l'un des conservateurs prend la parole: « - Epistémologiquement parlant, ces objets sont idiosyncrasiques⁴ »

Les dés sont jetés ; l'opprobre scientifique proférée. La singularité de ces objets et l'originalité de la relation d'Irénée à l'institution muséale, pourtant porteuse de sens commun, sonnent le glas de leur admission dans la glorieuse cohorte de la liste d'inventaire des trésors nationaux⁵.

Comment Irénée raconterait-il l'idiosyncrasie au comptoir du bistro et quel genre d'accessoire en ajouterait-il à son vélo?

4^{ème} épisode– La Carriole culturelle de Parlez-moi d'Alger- L'intimité constituante de l'histoire

Changement de décor : Marseille 2003, « Dzazaïr, Année de l'Algérie en France ». Dans la tour du Roi René, seul lieu accessible du Fort Saint-Jean, on assiste aux premiers feux du Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée. L'exposition Parlez-moi d'Alger, Marseille-Alger au miroir des mémoires, tente de faire sentir que le Musée est un lieu qui s'adresse à tous et où chacun peut s'exprimer. Cette fois, nous aimerions recueillir les voix des Marseillais qui ont une part d'eux-mêmes de l'autre côté de la Méditerranée. Ce public-là vient peu au Musée, peut-être vaut-il mieux aller vers lui. On expérimente alors une Carriole culturelle. Poussée par Claire⁶, médiatrice, cette charrette, chargée de quelques objets-amorce liés à l'exposition du Fort Saint-Jean, se déplace dans les centres sociaux des quartiers nord de Marseille, invitant ceux qui en ont envie à venir partager des morceaux de souvenirs en présentant un objet qui le relie à la ville sœur, au-delà du temps et de la distance.

⁴ Qualifie un comportement ou un objet particulier qu'il est incertain de raccrocher à un contexte global, général

⁵Les objets ont été finalement inventoriés rétroactivement dans le cadre du chantier des collections (du MnATP Paris au MuCEM Marseille) inv 2005.20

⁶Voir Saez Claire, rapport *Carriole Culturelle de parlez-moi d'Alger*, MuCEM, 2004 np

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Objets pousse-mémoire, qui rappellent autant d'aventures individuelles nouant indissociablement Alger et Marseille dans les cœurs et souvent dans les chairs. Au centre social et culturel Kalliste de la Granière (Marseille, 15^{ème}) les femmes sont venues, plus nombreuses que les hommes. Certaines d'entre elles ont déjà participé dans un autre centre, quelques semaines plus tôt, à l'une des rencontres de la Carriole, dont le chargement se gonfle peu à peu, comme boule de neige qui roule.

Zohra ouvre la boîte aux précieuses reliques, elle est venue avec un bijou : le symbole kabyle rehaussé de deux petits cœurs (Marseille-Alger à ses yeux) choisi comme cadeau par sa fille lors de vacances en Algérie, Fatima exhibe un plateau de fête utilisé à la fois pour les fêtes chrétiennes et les fêtes musulmanes et Maria, les sapins d'une crèche chrétienne algéroise ramenés et utilisés à Marseille. Samia est artiste, elle a assemblé en une seule œuvre à Marseille des moulages cassés récupérés dans la Casbah. Les photos de famille raniment le cortège nostalgique de ceux qui sont partis. Elles nous disent que c'est aux deux extrémités de la vie que s'exprime avec le plus d'acuité la nécessité des choix des valeurs symboliques et spirituelles. La double appartenance dont on s'est souvent accommodé au quotidien ne peut plus s'assumer quand il faut choisir, dans la solitude, selon quel rite et en quelle terre sera traitée notre mortelle dépouille.

Zoure nous dit son émotion devant le cercueil plombé de son père, inhumé à Alger, après une vie passée à Marseille. Avec son ballon de foot signé, sorti du sac Belzunce, Ali nous raconte avec ses mots de la cité, que c'est à la même impérieuse déchirure que la jeunesse est confrontée dans l'accomplissement des nouveaux rituels collectifs qui se déroulent dans les stades et les rues investies après les matchs de foot. Des héros émergent incarnant l'accomplissement du « mélange » (Zizou), mais des événements paroxystiques mettent rituellement en scène le duel (match France-Algérie). La sacralisation du profane va de pair avec l'intensification des pratiques religieuses: pratique rigoureuse du ramadan, port du voile. Il est temps d'alléger l'atmosphère, Zorha qui est aussi créatrice de mode présente son costume « le ville d'Alger-Marseille », costume algérois revu à la mode marseillaise, porté par Zoure en top modèle !!

Le moment est venu du thé. Parfums et saveurs éveillent à la mémoire l'écume des sens dont jaillit la terre d'Alger, définitivement celle du paradis d'une enfance en liberté dans l'abondance et la diversité des propositions sensuelles : les pâtisseries, le thé à la menthe, les parfums, le jasmin, la rose, les épices, le cumin, la coriandre mais aussi le grésil, odeur du propre méditerranéen et le chant du chardonneret qui agrmente toutes les maisons et dont la virtuosité suscite chez enfants et adolescents jeux et paris lucratifs. Selim a apporté la cage à oiseau de sa jeunesse et quelques cassettes pirates de MC Solar, IAM ou Alliance Ethnic liant aujourd'hui les jeunesses qui se retrouvent dans une même rébellion.

Avec une émotion mal contenue et par l'intercession de ces objets choisis, ils parlent de leur vie, pâte levée pétrie de terribles violences et de voluptés sensuelles, dans le sel humide des larmes et de la Méditerranée. Toutes ces mémoires croisées à Marseille nous disent bien d'autres choses encore qui mêlent tolérance et acceptation de l'autre ou haine de l'alter ego.

Le contenu de la Carriole, grossi à chacune de ses étapes, termine son périple dans l'exposition « officielle ». C'est une exposition dans l'exposition : Zorha, Fatima, Zoure, Ali, Selim et les autres sont dans le Musée comme des hôtes et non comme des consommateurs. Ils y sont les acteurs de leur propre mémoire. Ce sont eux qui ont choisi les objets qui font sens. Ils les ont désignés pour entrer dans les collections du musée et qu'ils soient partagés dans le pot commun de la mémoire collective. Leur intimité devient partie constituante de l'histoire.

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Le visiteur particulier, tout un chacun et pourtant unique :
Indiosyncrasie dans les musées de société

Epilogue – Du « je » au « nous »

Dans les sociétés occidentales contemporaines, le paysage culturel urbain ne se conçoit plus sans le musée. Les musées de société, silo-conservatoire d'objets, sont des lieux où est explorée la question de nos relations à l'autre au sein des espaces de culture que sont les sociétés humaines. Le rapport essentiel, existentiel, entre l'objet et nous s'y exacerbe, étroitement lié à la question fondamentale « nous et les autres », l'altérité étant fondée comme concept moteur de la production et de la perception des objets matériels. Il s'y joue, l'esthétique du lien social, la commutation des expériences individuelles en mémoire collective dans sa traduction objectale. C'est le lieu identifié qui permet la reconnaissance des mémoires individuelles comme partie constitutive d'un discours mémoriel collectif.

La mission de la muséographie justifie, au présent, l'acte de conservation : choisir, présenter et faire parler les productions plastiques, les objets-témoins de la vie quotidienne, de la faune et de la flore ou les objets techniques et scientifiques. Les musées sont les alambics de l'usage sociétal de la mémoire, procédant à la transmutation d'un simple ensemble d'objets en corpus patrimonial. L'un des éléments de cette alchimie est le consensus populaire ou l'appropriation par le corps social. Comment mieux faciliter le développement de la conscience sociale autour de la question patrimoniale, qu'en engageant la population dans la constitution des collections, par l'encouragement aux dons.

Nous ne devons pas nous étonner que les musées constituent des recours lorsque l'altérité « fait mal » dans notre société. De même que les cimetières sont sépultures des corps des hommes, le musée devient l'unique lieu où des objets qui nous sont chers peuvent être assurés de se constituer en mémoire. La garantie offerte par le musée de permettre à des traces matérielles de transcender le temps, sacralise en quelque sorte sa mission. Il n'est, pour s'en convaincre, que d'observer l'expérience des musées de proximité (de quartier, de village) où les citoyens apportent leur « videgrenier familial » en réclamant que soient exposés avec leur nom de famille, les objets qu'ils ne peuvent pas jeter car ils ont appartenu à des êtres chers qui les ont manipulés, utilisés et qui leur ont imprimé un peu de leur existence, leur conférant ainsi une valeur affective.

Les musées peuvent assurer cette nouvelle mission par l'écoute des publics et l'acceptation du partage de la responsabilité de la constitution des collections.⁷ Les nouveaux champs de recherche, axés sur l'observation des systèmes de représentation contemporains, positionnent le corps social comme acteur. Les informateurs d'antan deviennent eux-mêmes les indicateurs de documents témoins. Les objets ainsi choisis par les communautés patrimoniales⁸ deviennent objets de collection dont la meilleure part est le don de soi⁹.

Historiquement, les institutions patrimoniales ne donnaient à voir que la part de la production communément admise comme expression de la norme: du beau (musées des beaux-arts) comme du conventionnel (musées des traditions populaires, musées

⁷Pizzorni F., *Public des musées : de la qualité de la visite à l'usage démocratique*, ISS (Icofom Study series), n°41, oct.2012

⁸La communauté patrimoniale a été définie par la Commission Européenne dans la convention de Faro (2005)

⁹ Sur Recherche et musée voir Pizzorni F., « Le contemporain du MnATP au MuCEM, une articulation entre recherche et patrimonialisation », in *Que reste-t-il du présent ? Collecter le contemporain dans les musées de société*, Coédition Musée Basque et de l'histoire de Bayonne / Société des Amis du Musée Basque / Fédération des écomusées et musées de société / Editions Le Festin, 2012

d'histoire). Elles doivent ouvrir leurs portes, aujourd'hui, aux productions marginales et à celles qui marquent les différences.

« *Donner la parole à ceux qui ne l'ont pas* », le projet de Georges Henri Rivière, le plus noble des PSC (Projet Scientifique et Culturel), est plus que jamais d'actualité et d'urgence.

Le Musée, caisse de résonance du patrimoine immatériel enfin reconnu, est l'arbre à palabres où se distille la poésie du patrimoine. Il est l'oxymore du dérisoire essentiel, le grand reliquaire laïc des vies ordinaires, uniques et pourtant partagées.

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MUSEUM VISITORS – ALL ALIKE AND YET UNIQUE IDIOSYNCRASIES IN SOCIETAL MUSEUMS

Florence Pizzorni

Ministère de la culture, Service des musées de France – France

“To give a voice to those who do not have one”

The goal of Georges Henri Rivière, the most noble of cultural and scientific projects, has become urgent now more than ever.

ABSTRACT

The relationship between citizens and their museums is richer and more complex than it appears. The visit itself is the most ordinary of activities. It is the visible aspect of numerous aspirations: delight in “beauty,” the increase of knowledge, transmission between generations, remembrance and many other things. For certain “museum users,” it can seem like a pilgrimage: such people see the museum as a sacred place, a reliquary where the selected objects are kept for eternity. The true story told here describes a museum visitor whose approach was so unique that it was disqualified as idiosyncratic¹... and yet this singularity is precisely what makes it useful testimony within the framework of institutional museums concerning the existence in society of the poorest and the most powerless in the face of life and death. As unique as it is, it speaks volumes about the symbolic function of the museum, which is the most commonly shared aspect.

RESUMEN

**Visitantes de Museo - todos similares y sin embargo únicos:
Idiosincrasias en museos sociales**

La relación entre los ciudadanos y sus museos es más rica y más compleja de lo que parece. La visita en sí es la más común de las actividades. Es el aspecto visible de numerosas aspiraciones: deleitarse en “belleza”, aumento de conocimientos, transmisión entre generaciones, recuerdos y muchas otras cosas. Para algunos “usuarios de museo”, puede parecer como una peregrinación: estas personas ven al museo como un lugar sagrado, un relicario donde los objetos seleccionados se guardan para toda la eternidad. La verdadera historia que aquí contamos describe un visitante de museo cuyo enfoque era tan único que fue descalificado como idiosincrásico... y sin embargo, esta singularidad es precisamente lo que hace que sea un testimonio útil dentro del marco de museos institucionales que se ocupan de la existencia en la sociedad de los más pobres y los más débiles al enfrentar la vida y la muerte. Tan único como es, dice mucho acerca de la función simbólica del museo, que es el aspecto más compartido.

* * *

¹ This term defines a behaviour or a specific object that cannot fit into a general or global context..

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To evoke the peculiar practices of museum visitors is it possible to cast off the stilted style of scientific publications? To dare a narration to relate a rare and unique experience, yet totally related to a shared perception of the museum? To use the artifice of storytelling in order to facilitate the understanding of the symbolic function of museums in society? After all, aren't some museums places full of fragments of life which echo the lives of individual visitors to assemble the sensitive material that creates history?

Episode 1 – Irénée's steering wheel bicycle

“Madame, madame, there's a man at the desk who is asking for you. He's... strange.” Short and rotund, wearing a mismatched checkered jacket and trousers, cap held over his navel and standing stiffly at attention as though his shoes were too small, the man asking to speak to a curator is clearly not a regular at our temple of culture. It took a major effort for him to enter the double glass doors of the *Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires*.

“Good morning, Madame. I've been sent to see you by the museum on the street with my name. I'm Mr. Fourcaud, Irénée Fourcaud! I would like to donate my bicycle. But it's not just any kind of bike! It's a steering wheel bike! It's a real museum piece, you know...”

What is going on? This man, clearly of modest means, has embarked on an exceptional adventure in his life. He has overcome barriers, guided by a series of signs to achieve this unplanned, unforeseen, inaccessible goal of finding a place for his possessions in a museum and, in fact, a place for himself. But let's figure this out: how did he end up here? A street in Paris, Fourcaud? Foucaud? La Rochefoucauld, of course! A museum located rue de la Rochefoucauld? In fact, it is the studio of the painter Gustave Moreau which has become a national museum.

“I was walking down the street; I saw the plaque with my name on it and right next to it was a museum entrance. I couldn't help but go inside. I managed to see a lady, a manager! I offered to donate my bicycle. She couldn't take it, but she told me that you perhaps...?”

I laugh, imagining the embarrassed surprise of my colleague, a leading expert in art history, facing this incongruous proposal from an improbable visitor to her world. I measure her presence of mind, obviously a bit playful, when she suggests that he make this generous gift to the *Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires*. She's playing a good trick which shows the diversity of the issues that are part of a museum's mission. But this joke turns out to be extremely meaningful and fruitful.

“I've had a bike all my life. My first present was the bike that my mother gave me for my first communion. And I followed all of the *Tours de France* and earned enough to eat by playing music at each stage. I rode and rode... They made me mad at the café. There they are – their car this and their steering wheel that... They're always talking about their steering wheels. So I decided to have one, too. I turned my handlebars into a steering wheel and now I can talk about it at the bar, too!”

Irénée's story reveals the popularity of the bicycle all through the 20th century and, as a subtext, also of the automobile. How can a museum that deals with society talk about it? A bicycle collection is more appropriate in a technical museum, such as the

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Manufrance museum in Saint Etienne, for example. Irénée's steering wheel bicycle could be quite relevant from a museum's perspective.

"I'm getting old. I can't use it anymore and I can't throw it away. I've always had it with me. In the courtyard, it will just get stolen. I would be so much safer in a museum."

When I suggest that he leave it with me for further study, his face lights up with gratitude and he gets an idea for an appropriate way to thank me.

"Because you've been so nice, I'm going to give you my friend, my friend René, in plaster foam..."

Episode 2 – “my friend René” at the pauper’s cemetery

Months later, the multitude of various responsibilities of a curator have caused Irénée's enigmatic gift to fall into oblivion. Then, a folded sheet of paper, hand delivered in the pile of mail:

At the start of this new year, here are my best wishes for joy, happiness, health and prosperity. I'm happy that my bike is in the museum. Now I would like to make my second gift to the museum. Our friend who has been dead for three and a half years, I'm going to make him in plaster foam and when he is ready I'll deliver him to you sitting on a chair with the accordion in his lap.

Before the delivery, I'm going to make the round of the bars like we used to do back when he like to have a good time. And then have him play the accordion in Montmartre where he used to play near the church.

But I haven't started yet [...] I'll let you know how it's going later [...].²

On October 30th, just before the Day of the Dead, with this story still deeply tucked away in my memory, I receive a phone call and learn that René “is ready.” Faithful to the promise given some time ago, the museum team is mobilized and a rendezvous is made at the flea market, in a very working class area of Paris. Irénée lives there in a little upstairs room. In this squatter's hovel, he has crafted a statue of Styrofoam covered with plaster representing his friend René. It is life-sized and flesh colored with a head of real hair collected from Irénée's haircuts, dressed in clean clothes donated by a laundress. The shirt and jacket have been unstitched in the back to be able to put the sleeves on René, who is permanently frozen into the position of an accordion player. He must be taken down the narrow, rickety stairs. “Watch out, you have to attach him; he could get injured. The death seat is really dangerous in a car.” Irénée makes sure that the seatbelt is attached, an ordeal which a few of René's slender fingers do not survive.

Try to imagine the Felliniesque procession on the steep and narrow streets of Montmartre, cameraman and photographer, ethnomusicologist and curator, Irénée giving his full attention to his unwieldy and fragile friend whom he carries at arm's length, and a few friends. Ritual stops are made at the places where both would sit and collect a few coins from passersby intrigued by the music, and also at the bars where we raise our glasses to the memory of all the thirsts quenched over the years.

² Written phonetically and laboriously in popular French.

Even René raises his glass to honor intoxication and friendship. Outside the gates of the basilica, they played together in a final recreated moment.³

Afterwards, Irénée accompanied René and his accordion to the museum where he could remain “forever.”

René, who had died four years earlier, was buried in the indigent section of the Thiais cemetery. His burial site and nameplate were only temporary. His body, like that of all of the people who cannot afford a personal tombstone, had been mixed with dozens of others in a common grave. Irénée suffers enormously from the erasure of all material evidence of his friend. It is painful not to have a sanctuary where he can mourn. However, if the cemetery turns its back on him, he knows that the museum is also a sanctuary; Irénée has just immortalized his steering wheel bicycle through his donation. But how is it possible to bring friendship and the memories of a life into a museum, which is a temple of artworks? Museums receive paintings and sculptures... that is therefore the form that must be used. Friendship and the memory of René needed to be transformed into a statue by his loving and careful hands so that they could find a final resting place in the museum.

Episode 3 – idiosyncrasies and the collections of the *Musées de France*

It must be pointed out that the official procedure to register an item in the inventory of a public collection is much more complex than Irénée imagined. It must be presented to a scientific commission, the *Conseil*. This learned and solemn assembly is composed of representatives of the sections of the *Grand Louvre*, representatives of the national museums and the managers of the heritage section of the Ministry of Culture as well as a number of luminaries from the world of art history, chosen by the Minister of Culture.

On the agenda of the *Conseil* this morning, the following items will be competing for the honor of being considered national treasures: Renoir’s delightful “Maternity,” a work by Goya, precious Renaissance enamel dishes for the museum of Ecoen and... a steering wheel bicycle and the sculpture of René in foam plaster! The commission is accustomed to the always charming propositions of the National Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions, which it examines condescendingly as the weird proposals of the “ugly duckling that we like anyway.” Wooden spoons carved lovingly from the beautiful province of Brittany rekindle childhood memories and the scent of grandmothers. They soften the scholars and nourish positive sensibilities conducive to assent. But this time, to be so audacious!

The curator of *Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires* who has to defend this acquisition is experiencing a nightmare: what spin can possibly be put on these items to soften the attitude of this learned assembly, to create a positive vibe regarding these completely outlandish articles, completely non academic and somewhat shabby?

Beforehand, an internal “pre-commission” examines the items and prepares their defense. Each scientific member gives an opinion and the object is only submitted to the Council if it passes this first test. The enthusiastic and passionate presentation of this ethnological experience in the company of Irénée Fourcault leaves some of the colleagues perplexed. After a long period of silence, one of the curators takes the floor:

³ Vidéo « Cortège funèbre » [Funeral procession]. Vidéo DVD MuCEM inv 011.

“Speaking epistemologically, these items are idiosyncratic.”⁴

The die is cast: scientific stigma has been proclaimed. The uniqueness of these objects and the originality of Irénée’s relationship with the world of museums, in spite of spanning a cultural gulf, receives the death knell of their admission into the glorious cohort of the inventory list of national treasures.⁵

How would Irénée explain idiosyncrasy at his local bar and what sort of accessory could he add to his bicycle?

Episode 4: The cultural cart of “Tell me about Algiers” – the binding intimacy of history

Change of scene: Marseille 2003, “Djazair, Year of Algeria in France.”

In the tower of King René, the only accessible spot of Fort Saint-Jean, the first highlights of the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations are being presented. The exhibition, *Tell Me about Algiers, Mirrored Memories of Marseille-Algiers*, does its best to make it feel that the museum is a place for everybody and where everybody can express himself. This time our goal is to collect the voices of Marseille residents who have left a part of themselves on the other side of the Mediterranean. Such people do not come to museums much, so it is perhaps best to go to them instead. We decide to experiment with a cultural cart. Pushed by Claire⁶, a mediator, the cart is loaded with various symbolic objects linked to the exhibition at Fort Saint-Jean. It gets taken to the community centers of the northern districts of Marseille, inviting those who wish to come and share some scraps of memory by presenting objects linking them to the sister city, breaking the barriers of time and distance. These items are memory triggers, bringing forth all sorts of personal adventures inextricably binding Algiers to Marseille in hearts and often in bodies. At the Kalliste de la Granière social and cultural center (Marseille 15th), more women than men came. Some of them had already participated at an event with the cart a few weeks earlier at another center. And the contents of the cart were increasing like a snowball rolling downhill.

Zohra opens the box of precious relics. She has come with a jewel: the *Kabyle* symbol with two little hearts on top (Marseille-Algiers to her), chosen as a gift by her daughter during a holiday in Algeria. Fatima shows a serving platter used for both Christian and Muslim holidays, and Maria has the fir trees from a Christian nativity scene from Algiers, brought over and used in Marseille. Samia is an artist and has assembled into one artwork broken moldings collected from the Casbah. Family photos bring life to the nostalgic parade of those who are no longer with us. She tells us that it is at the two extremities of life that one finds the most intense expressions of symbolic and spiritual values. The dual heritage to which it is generally easy to adjust in daily life can no longer be counted upon when the time comes, in solitude, to decide on the type of ceremony and in which ground one’s mortal remains will find their final resting place.

Zoure tells of her emotion in front of her father’s lead-lined casket, buried in Algiers after a life spent in Marseille. With his autographed soccer ball, carried in a bag from

⁴ This term defines a behaviour or a specific object that cannot fit into a general or global context.

⁵ These objects were finally accessioned and retroactively placed in the collections’ worksite. (from the MnATP (National Museum of Arts and Traditions) Paris to the MuCEM in Marseille (recently opened Museum of the Civilisations of Europe and the Mediterranean) inventory 2005.20)

⁶ See : Claire Saenz, Report : *Carriole Culturelle de parlez-moi d’Alger [The Cultural Cart, tell me about Algiers]*, MuCEM, 2004 np

the Belzunce neighborhood, Ali, using the vocabulary of the *'hood*, talks about how young people are torn apart the same way in the new collective rituals that take place in the stadiums and among the throngs in the streets after the match. Heroes have appeared to incarnate the fulfillment of the merged cultures (Zinedine Zidane), but certain events create a paroxysm of ritualistic duels (the France vs. Algeria match). Regarding the profane as sacred goes hand in hand with the increase of religious practices: rigorous observance of Ramadan fasting or wearing a veil. It is time to lighten the atmosphere. Zohra, who is also a fashion designer, displays her "Algiers-Marseille City" costume, a typical Algiers-style dress revisited through the eyes of Marseille fashion, modeled by Zoure!

The time has come for tea. Flavors and fragrances awaken the memory of a bouquet of senses flowing from the earth of Algiers, a paradise of childhood freedom with the abundance and diversity of sensual delights: the pastries, the mint tea, the aromas of jasmine, rose, spices such as cumin, coriander, but also the clean fresh spray of the Mediterranean and the song of the goldfinch which fills each home and whose virtuosity inspires children and teens to invent games and lucrative bets concerning them. Selim has brought the birdcage of his childhood and a few pirated cassettes of MC Solaar, IAM or Alliance Ethnik bonding today the various youths in a shared rebellion.

With barely suppressed emotion, using the catalyst of these chosen objects, they talk about their lives, a sort of rising dough kneaded by both terrible violence and sensual pleasures with the damp salt of tears and the spray of the Mediterranean. All of these memories encountered across Marseille contain information about many other things, including tolerance and the acceptance of others or, sometimes, hatred of the alter ego.

The contents of the cart, which have grown at every stop along the way, reach their ultimate destination at the "official" exhibition. It is an exhibition within an exhibition: Zohra, Fatima, Zoure, Ali, Selim and the others are hosts within the museum and not just visitors. They are the actors of their own memory. They are the ones who chose the meaningful objects. They designated them to enter the museum collections so that they can be shared in the melting pot of collective memory. Their intimacy becomes part of history.

Epilogue – transition from "I" to "we"

In contemporary Western society, we cannot conceive of an urban cultural landscape without museums. Societal museums, "silo-conservatories" of objects, become places to explore the aspects of our relations with others in the cultural zone which constitutes human society. The essential and existential relationship between the object displayed and the viewer is magnified, fused into the fundamental question of "us and the others," the otherness being the driving force behind creation and the perception of material objects. The aesthetics of social ties are engaged with the mutation of individual experiences into the collective memory as a fundamental part of its transformation to the concrete. It is the identification of a situation which permits the recognition of individual memories as a cornerstone of the collective expression.

The mission of the museum justifies, in the present, the act of conservation: to choose, present and bring to life the arts, the testimonial objects of daily life, fauna and flora or technical and scientific items. Museums are distilleries of society's memory, responsible for transforming a simple collection of objects into a patrimonial corpus.

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One element of this alchemy is popular consensus or the appropriation by society. How better to facilitate the development of social conscience regarding the question of heritage than by having the population participate in the creation of collections through encouraging donations?

We should not be surprised that museums become a social recourse when “otherness” becomes painful in our society. In the same way that cemeteries are repositories of the remains of men and women, museums have become the only places where objects that we treasure can be kept in safekeeping for our memory. The fact that museums offer a guarantee that material traces can transcend time makes their mission all the more sacred. To find convincing evidence, one need look no farther than the experience of local museums (neighborhood, village) where the citizens “empty their attics” while demanding that the items be exposed with a plaque in the name of their family, because they are things that could not be thrown away, having belonged to beloved family members who touched them, used them and imparted on them a bit of their existence, transforming them into sentimental relics.

Museums can carry out this new mission by being attentive to the public and by accepting to share responsibility for collection building.⁷ New fields of research, focused on the observation of current systems of exposure, include the social corps as a participant. Informants of olden times become scouts for testimonial items. The objects selected by heritage communities become part of the collection, the best part being having given of oneself.

Historically, patrimonial institutions only used to display items generally accepted as an expression of the norm: beautiful (art museums) or conventional (folk museums, history museums). Today they must open our doors to more marginal manifestations and to those which break away from the standards.

“To give a voice to those who do not have one,” the project of Georges Henri Rivière, the most noble of scientific and cultural projects, has become urgent now more than ever.

The museum, amplifier of intangible heritage which has at last been recognized, is the *arbre à palabres* – the baobab whose shade attracts traditional African storytellers – a place where poetry springs from the patrimony. It is the oxymoron of the necessary dose of the ridiculous, a great secular reliquary of ordinary lives, all unique and yet all shared.

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LA TEORÍA DE LAS REPRESENTACIONES SOCIALES Y LOS VISITANTES DE MUSEOS

Aida Rechena

Museo Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior – Portugal

RESUMEN

Proponemos la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales como marco conceptual de análisis del proceso de comunicación, que se da en los museos, entre los/las visitantes y los bienes patrimoniales presentados en las exposiciones museológicas. Las representaciones sociales son un fenómeno cognitivo y un sistema de interpretación y están presentes en todos los momentos de interacción entre los individuos y, entre estos y la realidad. Por un lado, son las representaciones sociales las que posibilitan la comunicación entre las personas y, por otro, es la comunicación entre los individuos que provoca la aparición de nuevas representaciones sociales. Siendo los museos y las exposiciones museológicas un medio de comunicación, tenemos que admitir que, como fenómeno social, son también espacios donde las representaciones sociales interactúan, se alteran y probablemente emergen. Las exposiciones museológicas, como comunicación y como representación, hacen que se enfrenten las representaciones sociales de quién construyó la exposición – los/las museólogos/as – y las representaciones sociales de quién observa – los visitantes.

ABSTRACT

The theory of social representation in museum visitors

We propose the Theory of Social Representations as a conceptual frame of analysis of the communication process, which occurs in museums, between the visitors and cultural heritage. Social representations are a cognitive phenomenon and a system of interpretation, and are present at all moments of interaction between individuals, and between these and reality. If social representations make possible the communication between people, they are generated in the communication process. Considering museums and museological exhibitions as a mean of communication, we admit that, as a social phenomenon, they are also places where social representations interact, are altered and emerge. Museal exhibitions, as communication process and a representation, bring together the social representations of the museologists that constructed the exhibition, and the social representations of the visitors.

RÉSUMÉ

La théorie de la représentation du social chez les visiteurs de musée

Nous proposons une théorie de la représentation du social en tant que cadre pour l'analyse du processus de la communication qui a lieu dans les musées entre les visiteurs et le patrimoine culturel. Les représentations du social sont un phénomène cognitif et un système d'interprétation, et sont présentes à tout moment d'interaction entre les individus eux-mêmes et entre ceux-ci et la réalité. Si les représentations du social rendent possible la communication entre personnes, elles ont leur origine dans le processus de la communication.

Aida Rechena

La teoría de las representaciones sociales y los visitantes de museos

Compte tenu de ce que les musées et les expositions muséales sont un moyen de communication, nous admettons que, en tant que phénomène social, ils sont aussi les lieux où les représentations du social agissent entre elles, sont modifiées, et peuvent émerger. Les expositions muséales, étant à la fois une représentation et un processus de la communication, rassemblent les représentations du social des muséologues qui ont monté l'exposition, et les représentations du social par les visiteurs.

RESUMO

Propomos a Teoria das Representações Sociais como quadro conceptual de análise do processo de comunicação, que ocorre nos museus, entre os/as visitantes e os bens patrimoniais apresentados nas exposições museológicas. As representações sociais são um fenómeno cognitivo e um sistema de interpretação e estão presentes em todos os momentos de interação entre os indivíduos e, entre estes e a realidade. Por um lado, são as representações sociais que possibilitam a comunicação entre as pessoas e, por outro, é a comunicação entre os/as indivíduos/as que provoca o surgimento de novas representações sociais. Sendo os museus e as exposições museológicas um meio de comunicação, temos de admitir que, enquanto fenómeno social, são também espaços onde as representações sociais interagem, se alteram e provavelmente emergem. As exposições museológicas, como comunicação e como representação, colocam em confronto as representações sociais de quem construiu a exposição – os/as museólogos/as - e as representações sociais de quem observa – os/as visitantes.

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1. Las representaciones sociales y cada uno de nosotros

Cada individuo alberga su propio museo; cada persona está formada, llena y constantemente influenciada por contracorrientes de impulsos a lo largo de su vida y, en consecuencia, es representativa de un lugar, de una edad, de una generación. *Per Uno Agren*, 2001.¹

Las palabras de Per Uno Agren llaman nuestra atención para dos hechos distintos, pero que se complementan: cada individuo se distingue de todos los otros por sus especificidades, pero cada individuo está integrado en un grupo, en un espacio y en un tiempo, con el cual comparte “contracorrientes de impulsos” a lo largo de su vida. Continuando con esta línea de pensamiento sucede que, el museo, para considerar a los visitantes como “especiales”, tiene que tener en consideración estas dos realidades: su dimensión individual y su dimensión social.

Situando estas preocupaciones en el área de la apropiación del conocimiento, de la categorización del mundo y de la construcción de la consciencia individual y colectiva, nos apropiamos de la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales (TRS), desarrollada en la psicología social, y la utilizamos como marco conceptual para comprender el proceso de comunicación que ocurre en los museos, concretamente en las exposiciones museológicas en espacio museal.

Pero, ¿cómo puede el concepto de representación social servir a la museología? Más

¹ Per Uno Agren, Reflexões sobre a Rede Portuguesa de Museus, in: *Actas do Fórum Internacional Redes de Museus*, Lisboa, Instituto Português de Museus, 2001.

concretamente, ¿cómo puede ser utilizado en el análisis del proceso de comunicación en museos y sobre los papeles del visitante y del museólogo en ese proceso?

El significado etimológico nos indica que “representar” o una “representación” implica la acción de mostrar o aclarar algo que no está presente, sea por palabras habladas o escritas, por acciones, por imágenes, sea mentalmente o simbólicamente.

Las representaciones empezaron por ser un objeto de estudio de la sociología con los trabajos de Émile Durkheim² que desarrolló el concepto de Representaciones Colectivas. Para Durkheim, las representaciones colectivas eran externas a las consciencias individuales y derivaban no de los individuos tomados aisladamente, sino de la relación entre ellos. Las representaciones colectivas designaban, para Durkheim, una vasta clase de formas mentales tales como las ciencias, las religiones, los mitos, el tiempo y el espacio, pero también las opiniones y los conocimientos.

Consideraba el sociólogo que las representaciones colectivas se perpetúan en la sociedad, tienen una existencia propia y actúan directamente unas con las otras, mezclándose y originando otras representaciones. No reconocía, de esta manera, un papel activo al individuo en la formación de las representaciones colectivas, dado que los fenómenos sociales no dependían de la naturaleza personal, sino de realidades de naturaleza colectiva.

Basándose en el trabajo de Durkheim, Serge Moscovici se apropia del concepto de representaciones colectivas, pero se aparta de la idea original al atribuir a la persona un papel activo en la formación y en la comunicación de las representaciones que él clasifica de “sociales”.

Moscovici publicó su primer trabajo sobre representaciones sociales en 1961³ al estudiar la forma de aprehensión y de entendimiento del psicoanálisis en Francia y las definió como:

Un sistema de valores, ideas y prácticas, con una doble función: primero, establecer un orden que posibilitará a las personas orientarse en su mundo material y social y controlarlo; y, en segundo lugar, posibilitar que la comunicación sea posible entre los miembros de una comunidad, proporcionándoles un código para nombrar y clasificar, sin ambigüedad, los varios aspectos de su mundo y de su historia individual y social.⁴

Las representaciones sociales son, para Moscovici, un pensamiento social elaborado por los miembros de un grupo, que les permite comprender el mundo y establecer la comunicación entre ellos.

La investigadora Denise Jodelet, que analizó la investigación y la teoría de Moscovici, consideró que una representación social convierte en presente un objeto cuando está ausente, siendo el representante mental del objeto que ella repone simbólicamente. Jodelet definió representaciones sociales como:

(...) una forma de conocimiento socialmente elaborado y compartido, con un objetivo práctico y participando en la construcción de una realidad común a un conjunto social (...) La representación social es siempre la representación de alguna cosa (el objeto) y de alguien (el sujeto). Las características del sujeto y del objeto tendrán una incidencia sobre aquello que ella es.⁵

Para Jodelet las representaciones sociales son una forma de conocimiento

² Émile Durkheim, “Représentations individuelles et représentations collectives”, in: *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, tomo VI, Edição electrónica de 2002, Québec, http://www.uqac.quebec.ca/zone30/Classiques_des_sciences_sociales/index.htm. Consultado el 18 de julio de 2009.

³ Serge Moscovici, *La psychanalyse, son image et son publique*, Paris, PUF, 1961.

⁴ Serge Moscovici, *Representações sociais. Investigações em psicologia social*, Petrópolis, Editora Vozes, 2004, p. 21.

⁵ Denise Jodelet, *Les représentations sociales*, Paris, PUF, 1994, p. 36-37 e 43.

socialmente elaborada y compartida, y la autora establece los límites que definen el concepto: un *sujeto* portador de la representación, un *objeto* que es representado y un *contexto* de un grupo social en el cual la representación adquiere significado. Sin embargo, para la autora, las características de cada uno de estos elementos – sujeto – objeto – contexto – influyen las representaciones sociales que se constituyen, ampliando el papel activo no sólo al sujeto sino también al objeto y al contexto. Esta tríada (sujeto – objeto – contexto) fue designada por Bauer e Gaskell⁶ el “toblerone” de las representaciones sociales, atribuyéndole una estructura matricial ternaria a la cual añadirán la tridimensionalidad: son representaciones de sujetos, representaciones de objetos y representaciones de contextos o proyectos, que se multiplican y desdoblan siempre que cambia el enfoque y las relaciones entre el sujeto, el objeto y el contexto.

Para ampliar nuestra comprensión de la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales introducimos la definición de la psicóloga brasileña Angela Arruda que relaciona la representación social con el mundo simbólico colectivo:

(...) al ser producción simbólica destinada a comprender y delimitar el mundo, [la representación social] proviene de un sujeto activo y creativo, tiene un carácter cognitivo y autónomo y configura la construcción social de la realidad. La acción y la comunicación son su origen y base: de ellas proviene y a ellas retorna la representación social.⁷

Para la autora, las representaciones sociales no son la realidad en sí misma, sino una construcción social simbólica producida por las personas y reproducida a través de la comunicación, permitiendo introducir aquí un paralelismo entre las representaciones sociales y la capacidad de representación de los bienes culturales en exposiciones museológicas.

Para comprender como se forman las representaciones sociales, volvamos de nuevo a las propuestas de Jodelet. Ante un nuevo acontecimiento en contexto social⁸ surgen distintas reacciones que pueden ser de expectativa, de miedo, de euforia, de aplauso. Ese acontecimiento moviliza una actividad cognitiva para comprenderlo, dominar y defenderse de él (representaciones como fenómeno cognitivo).

En esta primera fase, la falta de información favorece la emergencia de representaciones que circulan de boca en boca y a través de los *media*. Elaboradas con los medios y las informaciones disponibles, estas representaciones se inscriben en marcos de pensamiento preexistentes – yendo al encuentro de las afirmaciones de Moscovici - que permiten su interpretación (moral, religiosa, médica, etc.). A veces, surgen nuevos vocablos que posibilitan describir la representación y, finalmente, las representaciones forman sistemas y dan lugar a teorías espontáneas, versiones de la realidad, que encarnan imágenes o que condensan palabras, unas y otras cargadas de significados.

⁶ Martin Bauer, George Gaskell, Towards a paradigm for research on social representations, in: *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 29:2, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1999, p. 163-186.

⁷ Ângela Arruda, *Teoria das representações sociais e teorias do gênero*. In: *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, n.º 117, 2002, p.142, <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/cp/n117/15555.pdf>. Consultado el 13 de junio de 2008.

⁸ La autora da como ejemplo la aparición del SIDA. Cuando surgió la enfermedad, los *media* y las conversaciones se referían a ella como una tragedia y una fatalidad. Antes de las aclaraciones científicas, las personas elaboraron “teorías” (conocimiento del sentido común) apoyadas en los datos disponibles relacionados con los portadores (drogadictos, hemofílicos, homosexuales) y los vectores del mal (sangre y esperma). En esta primera interpretación el SIDA fue considerada una enfermedad -castigo. Se trató de una interpretación moral espontánea que condujo a un estigma social que provocó el ostracismo y el rechazo. Estas primeras representaciones sociales del SIDA transmitidas de boca en boca se inscribieron en los marcos de pensamiento preexistentes relacionados con la moral social y surgieron palabras como “*sidoso*”, con evidente carga peyorativa, para referirse a los enfermos (Denise Jodelet, op. cit, 1994, p. 32-35).

Al surgir una nueva representación, se convierte en conocimiento compartido por un grupo social (representación como sistema de interpretación) y en una estructura que consiguió una estabilidad, a través de la transformación de una estructura anterior.

En este proceso social de producción del conocimiento, la formación de la representación presenta una secuencia de dos mecanismos – el anclaje y la objetivación – desarrollados teóricamente por Moscovici. El primero, el anclaje, a través del cual se intenta colocar en un contexto familiar ideas extrañas y reducirlas a categorías e imágenes comunes, o sea, haciendo familiares objetos desconocidos. El segundo, la objetivación, a través de la cual se transforma algo abstracto en algo casi concreto, algo que está en la mente en algo que existe en el mundo físico. En la objetivación, las personas acoplan a los nuevos esquemas conceptuales, imágenes reales, concretas y comprensibles, retiradas de lo cotidiano. Es por eso que Moscovici afirma que “toda la representación = imagen/significación”, o “en otras palabras, la representación equipara toda imagen a una idea y toda idea a una imagen”⁹.

Se deduce de los autores mencionados que las representaciones sociales son un sistema complejo que se desarrolla en las dimensiones cognitiva, afectiva y social: cognitiva porque tiene que ver con la construcción de conocimientos sociales; afectiva por traer implícito el carácter simbólico e imaginativo de esos conocimientos sociales; y social porque tanto la cognición como los afectos tienen por base la realidad social y todas las formas de interacción y de comunicación entre las personas.

Nos interesa retener que las representaciones sociales son, por un lado, un fenómeno cognitivo, constructor de conocimientos sociales y una manera de conocimiento compartido por un determinado grupo social. Por otro lado, las representaciones sociales son un sistema de interpretación, que rige nuestra relación con el mundo y con los otros, que orienta y organiza las conductas y posibilita la comunicación social. Las representaciones sociales son una forma de aprehensión y descodificación del mundo y, después de constituidas, se integran en el sistema de valores, actitudes, ideas, normas, prejuicios y estereotipos con los cuales categorizamos e interpretamos el mundo, este proceso está asentado en una estructura mental preexistente, que posibilita la comunicación con los miembros de nuestra comunidad.

Es Moscovici, al hablar de representaciones sociales, quien llama la atención hacia el aspecto esencial de la comunicación entre los individuos porque, según él, “todas las interacciones humanas, surjan entre dos personas o entre dos grupos, presuponen representaciones”.¹⁰

El autor, secundado por Guareschi y Jovchelovitch¹¹, identifica las representaciones sociales en distintos fenómenos, tales como en las conversaciones, en las calles, en los medios de comunicación de masa, en los canales informales de comunicación social, en los movimientos sociales, en los actos de resistencia y en todos los lugares sociales, entre los cuales podemos incluir los museos¹². El papel de la comunicación en la emergencia, en la formación de las dimensiones de las representaciones sociales y en sus consecuencias¹³ es para Moscovici un dato fundamental en la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales.

⁹ Serge Moscovici, op. cit, 2004, p. 46.

¹⁰ Serge Moscovici, op. cit, 2004, p. 40.

¹¹ Pedrinho Guareschi y Sandra Jovchelovitch, (Orgs.) *Textos em representações sociais*. Petrópolis, Editora Vozes, 2008.

¹² Consideramos los museos como un lugar social al definirlos como el espacio donde ocurre la relación entre las personas con el patrimonio cultural.

¹³ Las consecuencias de las representaciones son los estereotipos, las actitudes y las opiniones (Bauer y Gaskell, op. cit, 1999, p. 165).

Siendo los museos y las exposiciones museológicas un medio de comunicación y un espacio de representación, tenemos que admitir que, como fenómeno social, los museos son también locales donde las representaciones sociales interaccionan, se alteran y probablemente emergen.

1. Museos y cada uno de nosotros

Al transponer el concepto de representaciones sociales (como fenómeno cognitivo y sistema de interpretación y comunicación) para la esfera museológica, concretamente para la comunicación efectuada a través de las exposiciones museológicas, asumimos que el ser humano utiliza representaciones sociales en los momentos en que se relaciona con el patrimonio cultural.

Son las representaciones sociales de cada persona (compartidas con el grupo, pero relacionadas con la esfera individual específica en que son originadas) las que le permiten interpretar una exposición museológica y apropiarse del patrimonio cultural *musealizado*, integrándolo en su marco de pensamiento o estructura mental preexistente.

Es el papel activo del sujeto en la producción y transmisión de las representaciones sociales, defendido tanto por Moscovici, como por Jodelet, que nos posibilita aplicar la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales a la museología y al estudio del papel del visitante de museos. Afirma Moscovici:

Lo que estamos sugiriendo (...) es que personas y grupos, lejos de ser receptores pasivos, piensan por sí mismos, producen y comunican incesantemente sus propias y específicas representaciones y soluciones a las cuestiones que ellas mismas plantean. En las calles, bares, oficinas, hospitales, laboratorios, etc. las personas analizan, comentan, formulan “filosofías” espontáneas, no oficiales, que tienen un impacto decisivo en sus relaciones sociales, en sus elecciones, en la manera como ellas educan a sus hijos, como planean su futuro, etc. Los acontecimientos, las ciencias y las ideologías, apenas les proveen el “alimento” para el pensamiento.¹⁴

Tanto en la definición de museología, como en el proceso de comunicación que es el museo/exposición, la persona desempeña un papel esencial. Si el sujeto está representado en los museos a través del patrimonio allí preservado, también asume un papel activo, como visitante, en la apropiación de ese patrimonio recontextualizado e interpretado en el espacio museal. Si en una representación social siempre están presentes un “sujeto, un objeto y un contexto” (como afirma Jodelet) lo mismo ocurre en el contexto museal, espacio donde se da la relación entre el sujeto con los bienes culturales que son interpretados recurriendo a las representaciones sociales.

De esta manera, el visitante es un actor fundamental en la interpretación de la exposición museológica, construyendo significados, estableciendo negociaciones de sentidos, integrándola en su sistema simbólico y afectivo y en su marco mental de pensamiento. El museo se vuelve un espacio de negociación, un local de confrontación entre el observador (= visitante del museo), el observado (= la exposición museológica y los bienes patrimoniales), y el productor (= profesionales del museo). El museo se convierte en un lugar de contacto entre representaciones sociales: las del museólogo, las del visitante y las contenidas en los objetos museológicos expuestos, surgiendo como un terreno propicio para la alteración o formación de nuevas representaciones sociales.

¹⁴ Serge Moscovici, op. cit, 1994, p. 45.

Las personas que entran en un museo llevan consigo “(...) el resto de sus vidas, sus propias razones para visitar y su experiencia anterior específica”.¹⁵ Eso significa que cada persona o grupo, interpreta una exposición museológica de forma distinta a otras personas y grupos, o sea, distintas categorías de personas interpretan la exposición según sus aspiraciones y autoconocimiento, haciendo interpretaciones subjetivas. Cada una hace una utilización personal de los mensajes comunicados, interpretándolos recurriendo a un conjunto de factores de orden cultural, social y personal¹⁶, que hacen la comunicación bidireccional.

Aparentemente, la presencia de estos diferentes niveles de representaciones sociales en el proceso de comunicación, que es la exposición museológica, dificultaría la comunicación. Y, de hecho, muchas veces el mensaje que los museos pretenden comunicar no es entendido por los visitantes, o estos interpretan la exposición de una manera inesperada para el museólogo que la concibió.

Sin embargo, al considerar la existencia, en cada persona, de un referencial común de pensamiento preexistente, como propone Moscovici, las representaciones sociales constituyen un límite a la construcción y a la interpretación individualizada de una exposición museológica, evitando que este proceso sea una pulverización infinita de lecturas subjetivas. Esta idea va al encuentro de las limitaciones apuntadas por Martine Joly¹⁷ a la interpretación subjetiva de las obras de arte, esas limitaciones están constituidas por nuestras expectativas y por nuestros prejuicios y estereotipos sociales, o sea, por nuestras representaciones sociales.

En su estudio sobre teoría de la imagen, Joly considera que parte de nuestra interpretación, en la vida adulta, ya está, en parte, construida antes de que tengamos acceso a las imágenes, porque sobreponemos “a los signos producidos por la imagen los estereotipos de su propia recepción”.¹⁸ Al mirar una imagen la asociamos a algo que ya tiene representación previa en nuestra mente - representaciones sociales, estereotipos, prejuicios – a través de aquello que la autora llama “transferencia”.

Es la limitación impuesta por las representaciones sociales la que explica por qué un determinado sujeto, o grupo, valora e interpreta un elemento patrimonial¹⁹ de forma distinta de la de otro sujeto o grupo social.

Volvamos en este punto a la teorización de Jodelet, cuando afirma que las representaciones sociales, como conocimiento socialmente elaborado y compartido, tienen como intervinientes en su construcción un “sujeto, un objeto, un contexto” y constituyen una visión consensual de la realidad dentro de un determinado grupo social. El objetivo de las representaciones sociales es, para la autora, que la persona se abstraiga del sentido del mundo e introduzca en él orden y percepción. Pero, como estructuras dinámicas transportan siempre la marca del sujeto y del grupo social que las produce, operando en un conjunto de relaciones y de comportamientos que surgen y desaparecen junto con las representaciones sociales.

Esta dinámica de las representaciones sociales se inscribe en el proceso más vasto de la comunicación, también definido por la intervención de un sujeto, un objeto y un contexto, situación que nos transporta al espacio museal y los procesos de

¹⁵ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (ed.), *Museum, media, message*. London and New York, Routledge, 1999, p. 5.

¹⁶ A lo que Santiago Palomero llama “nuestras islas de percepción y conocimiento.” Santiago Palomero Plaza, *Un atlas para las musas: patrimonio en femenino*. In: *Patrimonio en Femenino*. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 2011.

¹⁷ Martine Joly, *A imagem e a sua interpretação*, Lisboa, Edições 70, 2002.

¹⁸ Martine Joly, op, cit, p. 83-89.

¹⁹ Consideramos elemento patrimonial en un sentido estricto, desde los objetos patrimoniales, a los rituales, tradiciones, sistemas simbólicos, o sea, todo aquello que pueda estar representado en un museo.

comunicación en museología.

Hemos visto que las representaciones sociales se forman en las calles, en las conversaciones, en los medios de comunicación y también cuando alguien se coloca ante la herencia histórico-cultural. Como espacios públicos, los museos surgen como lugar posible para la conducción del pensamiento y de los sentidos, de forma que posibiliten la construcción o la alteración de las representaciones sociales dominantes. Esta posibilidad nos lleva a preguntarnos el papel del museólogo en el proceso de comunicación en museos. Si el visitante interpreta una exposición de acuerdo con sus conocimientos previos y con la sensibilidad que ya posee, ¿eso no produce un discurso expositivo incoherente, incapaz de influenciar a los visitantes? Y, en este caso, ¿cuál es la función de los museólogos en el proceso de comunicación? O, en otras palabras, ¿cómo se garantiza la interacción entre el museo y sus visitantes?

Para encontrar una respuesta que nos permita conciliar la dimensión subjetiva con la dimensión social del visitante de museos y cuál es el papel de los museólogos en el proceso de comunicación museológica, seguimos dos líneas de pensamiento distintas, pero que se complementan: la propuesta de los museos como instituciones prestadoras de servicios, presentada por el museólogo portugués Mário Moutinho²⁰ y la propuesta de los museos participativos, de la norteamericana Nina Simon²¹.

1.1 Museos como instituciones prestadoras de servicios

La clasificación de los museos como entidades prestadoras de servicios ha sido defendida por la sociomuseología. Esta es una vertiente reciente de la museología, con enfoque en las personas, en las comunidades y en sus necesidades.

Partiendo de la definición de museología como la relación entre el sujeto y los bienes culturales, relación que puede ocurrir en el espacio museo, la sociomuseología centra su atención en el sujeto.

Uno de los principales teóricos de la sociomuseología, Mário Moutinho, afirma que, el que distingue el planteamiento sociomuseológico es el “reconocimiento de la museología como recurso para el desarrollo sostenible de la humanidad, basado en la igualdad de oportunidades y en la inclusión social y económica”.²² La sociomuseología presupone la intervención en el patrimonio cultural (tangibles e intangibles) y natural, reconociendo la hibridación, la sobreposición y la coexistencia de múltiples culturas/identidades y de varios territorios sociales, articulándose o no en un mismo territorio espacial. Afirma el autor:

Lo que caracteriza a la Sociomuseología no es propiamente la naturaleza de sus suposiciones y de sus objetivos, como ocurre en otras áreas del conocimiento, sino la interacción con la que apela a áreas del conocimiento perfectamente consolidadas y las relaciona con la Museología propiamente dicha.²³

Para Moutinho, las principales preocupaciones de la sociomuseología son: el reconocimiento de una responsabilidad global sobre el patrimonio cultural; la centralización de las preguntas relativas al desarrollo, ampliando su ámbito al plano nacional y al internacional; la actuación de los museos vinculada al cambio social

²⁰ Mário Moutinho, Os museus como instituições prestadoras de serviços, in: *Revista Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias*, n.º 12. Lisboa, ULHT, 2008.

²¹ Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz, Museum 2.0, 2010, <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/>.

²² Mário Moutinho, *Definição evolutiva de sociomuseologia. Proposta para reflexão*, MINOM, ULHT, Lisboa, 2007.

²³ Mário Moutinho, op. cit, 2007, p. 1.

permanente; la necesidad de una formación profesional que sobrepase el dominio de las técnicas centradas en las colecciones, creando profesionales comprometidos con las comunidades locales. Como última preocupación, Moutinho afirma que la sociomuseología asume los museos como entidades prestadores de servicios, lo que implica dar una atención mayor a la relación de los museos con los visitantes.

Desarrollando esta última propuesta – los museos como prestadores de servicios – el autor destaca el papel del visitante en la interpretación de las exposiciones museológicas y reconoce la expografía como una escritura autónoma que utiliza el patrimonio con el objetivo de producir conocimiento y pensamiento críticos. Considera que aplicar las características de los servicios (inseparabilidad, variabilidad, intangibilidad y carácter efímero²⁴) a los museos, traería consecuencias relevantes en su actuación y en la relación con los visitantes.

La primera consecuencia se relaciona con la *inseparabilidad*, o sea, el momento de simultaneidad entre la producción del servicio y su consumo. En un museo, la simultaneidad se concretiza en el momento en que el visitante del museo visita la exposición. El momento de la simultaneidad entre la producción y el consumo de una exposición museológica es también el momento en que el público del museo evalúa el servicio prestado. Considerándose como un prestador de servicios, el museo tendría que preocuparse más con este momento, a veces fugaz, en que su trabajo es “consumido” por aquellos a quien se dirige el servicio: el visitante, la comunidad, los investigadores. Perdido el impacto positivo de ese momento, el resultado se traduce de forma negativa en la imagen pública del museo.

Otro impacto resultante del entendimiento de los museos como prestadores de servicios se relaciona, según Mário Moutinho, con la característica de la *variabilidad*. Las instituciones prestadoras de servicios intentan adecuarse a cada cliente buscando la adaptación, la personalización y la atención diferenciada a sus clientes. Si los museos fuesen asumidos como instituciones prestadoras de servicios tendrían que ver cómo adecuarse a cada utilizador, grupo de visitantes, estudiantes, investigadores, evitando presentar exposiciones construidas para agradar al mayor número posible de visitantes. Eso conduciría al reconocimiento de una mayor autonomía, de las personas que visitan los museos, en la interpretación de la comunicación museal.

Una tercera consecuencia, mencionada por el autor, se relaciona con la característica de la *intangibilidad* de los servicios, que Moutinho identifica en el espacio museal al equiparar los espacios museológicos a espacios de ocio. El consumo de las exposiciones es intangible, o sea, el consumidor no lleva con él la exposición propiamente dicha, sino sólo lo intangible relacionado con el aprendizaje, la comunicación, el sentimiento, el ocio y la fruición. En ese sentido, las exposiciones museológicas deberían trabajar con los sentimientos, las sensaciones y menos con la rareza, la antigüedad y la estética de los objetos. Solamente descodifica un objeto en su plenitud aquel observador que ya tiene en su poder, informaciones sobre aquel objeto u otro semejante. Utilizar el recurso a las sensaciones y a los sentimientos es una forma de ampliar la relación del visitante con aquel objeto o asunto específico.

Finalmente, la cuarta característica, el *carácter efímero*. El autor considera que la prestación de servicios, en una exposición museológica, cesa en el momento del consumo. Pero esta característica no se aplica a la exposición permanente o de larga duración, en que el mismo producto está disponible durante mucho tiempo. Moutinho propone que las exposiciones tengan un tiempo de vida limitado, o tiempo de vida útil para mantener el impacto, el significado y el poder de comunicación.

Considerar los museos como prestadores de servicios, coloca la responsabilidad de la

²⁴ Mário Moutinho, op, cit, 2008.

comunicación en los profesionales de museos. Estos dejan de asumir posturas homologatorias y discursos técnicos e intentan aproximarse a las necesidades de los visitantes.

Aplicar la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales a la propuesta de Mário Moutinho, para considerar los museos como instituciones prestadoras de servicios, exige que los museos centren su actividad en los visitantes, exigiendo profesionales de museos que sean “trabajadores sociales”, con capacidad de producir contenidos capaces de provocar sensaciones, ideas, estimular recuerdos, generar dudas.

Tal como propone la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales, también en la propuesta de museos como entidades prestadoras de servicios, se considera esencial el papel del visitante en la interpretación de una exposición museológica, se atribuye una mayor autonomía al visitante en el proceso de comunicación y se acepta la existencia de un marco de pensamiento previo, que hace posible la comunicación y la interpretación.

1.2. Los museos participativos

La propuesta de Nina Simon de museos participativos, se aproxima a la de Mário Moutinho, en el sentido de que toda la acción museológica se centra en las personas que van a los museos y no en las colecciones de objetos.

Pero, si en los museos que actúan como entidades prestadoras de servicios, la responsabilidad de la gestión de la comunicación y de la producción de contenidos es de los profesionales de los museos, en los museos participativos, la responsabilidad es compartida entre los museólogos y los visitantes, contribuyendo estos a la construcción del proceso comunicativo y al resultado final de las exposiciones museológicas.

Partiendo de tres ideas fundamentales: el museo es una institución centrada en los visitantes; son los visitantes los que construyen el significado de sus experiencias culturales; las opiniones de los utilizadores pueden informar y revivir el proyecto y los programas en museos, Nina Simon define una institución cultural participativa como:

(...) un lugar donde los visitantes pueden crear, compartir y relacionarse unos con los otros alrededor de un contenido. Crear significa que los visitantes contribuyen con sus propias ideas, objetos, y expresión creativa, para la institución y para cada uno. Compartir significa que las personas discuten, se llevan a casa, mezclan y redistribuyen tanto aquello que ven como aquello que hacen durante la visita. Relacionarse significa que los visitantes socializan con otras personas - equipo y visitantes – que comparten sus intereses particulares. Alrededor de un contenido quiere decir que las conversaciones y las creaciones de los visitantes, se centran en los vestigios, objetos e ideas más importantes de la institución en causa.²⁵

La principal alteración en la relación entre el museo y los visitantes, está en el hecho del museo atribuirles la responsabilidad de la coautoría de los contenidos presentados en una exposición museológica.

En vez de producir contenidos para consumo de los visitantes, como sucede en el proceso tradicional de comunicación de los museos, ahora el museo sirve de plataforma de unión entre los visitantes, que son simultáneamente creadores de

²⁵ Nina Simon, op, cit, p. 2

contenidos, proveedores, consumidores, críticos y colaboradores.

Al solicitar al visitante “crear, compartir y relacionarse con los otros visitantes y con el contenido”, el museo está solicitando al visitante que traiga para el espacio expositivo sus representaciones sociales y con ellas construya un discurso museológico y establezca un diálogo con los contenidos, el patrimonio cultural y con otras personas. De esta manera, el museo se transforma efectivamente en un local social, donde las representaciones sociales se manifiestan, evolucionan y emergen en el acto de comunicación entre las personas.

Esta manera de trabajar en museos exige que las instituciones tengan “un genuino respeto e interés por las historias y capacidades del visitante”, abdicando del control del proceso creativo y de comunicación. Porque, como afirma Simon:

Las personas usan la institución como lugar de encuentro para el diálogo sobre los contenidos presentados. En vez de ser “sobre” algo o “para” alguien, las instituciones participativas son creadas e gestionadas “con” los visitantes.²⁶

Esta transformación de una museología “sobre” algo o “para” alguien, en una museología “con” las personas produce museos como espacios de diálogo, de producción multivariada, espacios de confrontación entre representaciones sociales y, en consecuencia, el lugar propicio para la aparición de nuevas representaciones sociales.

2. El visitante especial: Todos Nosotros

Al traer la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales al espacio museal, consideramos que el visitante de museos no es un receptor pasivo: cada uno transporta sus representaciones sociales – visiones del mundo, creencias, mitos, religiones, normas, valores y estereotipos - que pone en acción ante la exposición museológica y el patrimonio allí preservado, interpretándolo a su manera. El sujeto tiene un papel activo en el proceso de comunicación y cada uno representa un papel en la elaboración, comunicación y transformación de las representaciones sociales, que emana de sus propias categorías cognitivas, del medio cultural y de las experiencias personales.

Según la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales, cada uno de nosotros posee un conocimiento social compartido con los demás que posibilita la comunicación en el espacio museal. En el proceso comunicacional que ocurre en los museos (concretamente en las exposiciones museológicas), la comunicación no tiene un recorrido unidireccional: ella se da siempre entre quién comunica y quién recibe la comunicación.

Es importante discutir el hecho de que el patrimonio musealizado resulte de representaciones sociales comunes a determinada comunidad, que atribuye valor a aquel grupo específico de bienes. O sea, el proceso de selección patrimonial está sujeto al mismo tipo de comprensión y categorización a la que toda la realidad está sujeta, lo que explica la razón de en determinadas épocas o sociedades valorarse determinado recorte patrimonial y en otras valorar un recorte distinto.

Basándonos en esta línea de pensamiento, fue posible identificar algunos puntos de contacto entre los museos, como medio de comunicación y espacios de representación, y las representaciones sociales, como sistema cognitivo y de comunicación:

1. Los museos establecen sistemas de categorización de parcelas de la realidad (los bienes culturales/objetos), contribuyendo a la comprensión del mundo

²⁶ Nina Simon, op, cit, p.8

- (como constructores de conocimientos), permitiendo que las personas se orienten y relacionen con el patrimonio cultural preservado;
2. Los museos, como espacios de representación, trabajan con modos de fijación simbólica de la realidad y no con la realidad en si misma;
 3. Los museos, definidos como espacios de relación entre las personas con el patrimonio cultural, atribuyen a la persona un papel determinante en el proceso de comunicación.
 4. Tal como las representaciones sociales están localizadas en el tiempo y en el espacio, también la relación de las personas con el patrimonio cultural es específica y característica de un tiempo y un espacio.

Traer las propuestas de la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales al campo museológico, permite transformar a cada visitante en una persona especial, ya sea trabajando con los museos como instituciones prestadoras de servicios, quedando en este caso la responsabilidad de la comunicación en los museólogos, o trabajando con los museos participativos, quedando la responsabilidad de la comunicación en el visitante, del cual depende la construcción gradual de la comunicación.

Sea cual sea la opción, trabajar en museos orientados para los visitantes exige profesionales de museos comprometidos con lo social y conscientes de los procesos de comunicación y del papel de las representaciones sociales en este proceso.

Queremos referir, para concluir, que algunas representaciones sociales tienen prejuicios y son promotoras de desigualdades sociales, como aquellas asociadas a las interpretaciones de las categorías raza o género, por ejemplo. La misión de los museos debe ser, también, contribuir a alterar estas representaciones sociales desfavorables y de impactos negativos en la sociedad.

Los museos son hoy definidos y vividos como instituciones sociales activas que reflejan y transmiten aquello que pasa en su entorno, integrados en la dinámica histórica y fundamental en la modelación de las identidades sociales. Son considerados participantes activos y no observadores pasivos, responsables por la mediación de las estrategias de identificación y apropiación del patrimonio y no meros lugares de almacenamiento de colecciones o memorias.

Hoy los museos reflejan por encima de la hibridación cultural, la multiculturalidad, la relación entre la memoria y el poder, los impactos de la globalización en los patrimonios culturales que deben ser preservados y su objeto de estudio ya no es solamente la investigación sobre las colecciones, ni las colecciones en sí, no es el Objeto, sino la Persona. Y las representaciones sociales son una parte importante de la relación entre las personas y de la manera como comprenden el mundo.

Conseguir hacer especial a cada visitante, es traer a las personas para todas las acciones museológicas, con sus especificidades, con sus ambiciones, desilusiones, expectativas, sentimientos, afectos, sueños, representaciones sociales, contribuyendo para una sociedad igualmente compartida y vivida por todos NOSOTROS.

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MUSEOLOGÍA DE LA LIBERACIÓN, ENTRE EL INDIVIDUO Y EL INDIVIDUALISMO

Freire Rodríguez Saldaña¹

Coordinación Nacional de Museos y Exposiciones
Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia
México

RESUMEN

En este texto nos aproximamos al *proceso museal* construyendo lentes que nos permitan mirarlo de adentro hacia su exterioridad, la exhibición, punto nodal que nos engarza con sus contextos donde miran al museo desde múltiples ángulos.

Desde estas miradas extremas, de adentro hacia afuera y de afuera hacia adentro, mediando su exterioridad; buscamos analizar el museo con énfasis en la relación con sus visitantes, entendidos como sujetos/colectivos que construyen su individualidad en su relación con otros y en lucha con el individualismo.

La definición de un museo parte de su ser y de la relación con diversos actores, proceso que se desarrolla entre el ejercicio de poder y libertad en lucha por el establecimiento (o no), en distintos niveles, de la sociedad disciplinaria. El desarrollo de una museología de la liberación para la generación de procesos museales que respondan a sus contextos sociales tendrá entonces que mirar para muchos lugares con muchos lentes

Palabras claves: museología de la liberación, visitantes de museos, poder.

ABSTRACT

Liberation museology, between the individual and individualism

In this paper we approach the “museal process” by building frameworks that allow us to see it from within outwards, to its public face, the exhibition, a focal point that links us with its contexts to look at the museum from multiple angles.

From these extreme perspectives, inwards to outwards and outside to within, we seek to analyze the museum, stressing its relationship with visitors who are seen as subjects/collectives who construct their individuality in relation with others and in a struggle with individualism.

The definition of a museum starts with itself and its relation to other actors, a process that develops between the exercise of power and freedom in the struggle to establish [or not] a “disciplinary society” at various levels. Developing a liberation museology approach, in order to generate museal processes that respond to their contexts, will, therefore, have to look at many places with many lenses.

Key words. Liberation museology, museum visitors, power.

¹ Jefe de Estudios de Público de la Coordinación Nacional de Museos y Exposiciones. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia y actual presidente del ICOFOM – México.

RÉSUMÉ

Muséologie de la libération, entre l'individu et l'individualisme

Dans cet article, nous abordons le *processus muséal* par la construction de lentilles théoriques qui permettent voir depuis l'intérieur vers l'extérieur : L'exposition, le point focal qui relie les contextes spécifiques d'où nous pouvons voir le musée sous ses angles multiples.

Depuis ces points de vue externes, qui vont de l'intérieur vers l'extérieur, son extériorisation lui servant d'intermédiaire, nous cherchons à analyser le musée en accentuant ses relations avec les visiteurs, ces derniers étant compris comme des personnes / des groupes qui construisent leur individualité par rapport aux autres et en luttant contre l'individualisme.

La définition du musée commence en lui-même et dans sa relation avec les divers acteurs, un processus qui se développe entre l'exercice du pouvoir et de la liberté dans la lutte pour la mise en place (ou non), à différents niveaux, d'une société disciplinaire. Le développement d'une muséologie de nature libératrice, par la création de processus muséaux qui répondent à ses contextes sociaux, devrait alors tendre à regarder en de nombreux endroits à travers de nombreuses lentilles.

Mots clés Muséologie de la libération, les visiteurs du musée, le pouvoir

* * *

¿Son los museos espacios para la utopía² y la libertad para cada uno de quienes los visitan?, ¿qué pasa con quienes no lo hacen? ¿Hasta qué punto, actualmente, cumplen las funciones sociales que les reclaman sus diversos contextos?, ¿las acciones museales a quién buscan atraer y con qué fin?

Mirar el museo de adentro hacia su exterioridad, la exhibición.

Para comenzar a construir las respuestas, de por sí varias, a estas interrogantes nos parece necesario, primero, colocarnos en un lugar desde el cual mirar al interior de los espacios museales. Esto nos lo permite la lente que enfoca la realidad de los museos a partir del tipo y orientación de la organización que se establece, así como de sus actores, primordialmente los trabajadores de museos.

Hay en las dinámicas laborales que se establecen en cada espacio museal una relación directa, que se da en diferentes niveles para contribuir al establecimiento de la sociedad disciplinaria (Foucault). La orientación mayor o menor de una visión del mundo disciplinaria o libertaria, declarada o no, se define desde los cimientos de una organización, es decir desde sus valores, y son estos el inicio que abre la posibilidad de generar diálogo y reflexión al interior o no propiciarlo, es allí en donde podemos observar de manera velada o abierta la dirección del actuar de los museos.

Se parte de la base ética que orienta la acción, así los *postulados*³, planteados por Felipe Lacouture como parte inicial del proceso museal, que contemplan además

² Se habla de la *función utópica del museo* al abordarse el concepto *Museal* en el texto: Conceptos Fundamentales de Museología editado por el ICOFOM.

³ Los postulados, acciones y consecuencias conforman el proceso museal, concepto desarrollado por Felipe Lacouture y otros museólogos como parte de la, por Pierre Mayrand llamada, revolución museológica mexicana, puede consultarse en el suplemento número 1 de la Gaceta de Museos.

posicionamientos teóricos y filosóficos, normas técnicas, planteamientos educativos y museográficos, u otros de acuerdo a las necesidades del proyecto.

A la par de ello, hay un elemento que se manifiesta en las interacciones de los campos y los sujetos que se dan cita al interior de cada museo, este es el poder. Algunos de los actores, presentes en el museo, provienen de campos externos, fronterizos o interconectados pero en los hechos se constituyen como representantes de poderes manifestándose al interior de los museos, poderes que suponen formas de mirar el mundo y que lo configuran con mayor o menor grado de influencia.

Es así que la voz, la letra, las ideas, los valores; *los postulados* se transforman en acción, segunda fase del proceso museal. En este actuar lo subjetivo da forma a los objetivos planteados. Los actores sean la estructura operativa, los mecenas, los voluntarios, el patronato, curadores, arquitectos, la dependencia estatal, comunitaria o empresarial, sus sindicatos, entre otros actores, todos ellos influidos, o deberían estarlo por su público, son quienes dan congruencia o desvirtúan los principios planteados para algún museo.

Planteamos que determinado tipo de gestión de una organización museística propicia formas diferentes de relación con cada uno de los trabajadores; desde el punto de vista organizacional, es determinante la orientación administrativa con la que se gestione. Así, en organizaciones con orientaciones democráticas, atravesadas por visiones que incorporan la calidad de vida o los derechos humanos, en teoría, se propicia la creación de espacios armónicos, que en su traspaso al área pública del museo suponen la generación de espacios de libertad, utopía y comunicación.

Podemos encontrar espacios museales con montajes tradicionales y orientaciones administrativas disciplinarias, controladoras y jerárquicas que presentan exposiciones temporales con enfoque descolonial, aunque quizá sea menos probable que ocurra lo contrario, es decir, que en un museo con unos valores acordes con los nuevos enfoques museológicos y orientaciones administrativas se presente una exposición temporal conservadora o tradicional.

Al mirar desde dentro hacia fuera al museo sea virtual, imaginario, territorial o acotado por la arquitectura pensamos que debe existir congruencia para su creación y gestión durante el desarrollo del proceso museal que integra los *postulados, acciones y consecuencias*; para así reflejar en su interior lo que para el exterior pregonan cuando se habla de acción dialogal o derechos culturales, es decir democratización. Entonces la dinámica que se da en los museos en su interior por su orientación en la gestión definirá, en mucho, la que se genere en las salas de exhibición, la cual como hecho social debería estar transformando al museo en su interior, al retroalimentarse con los visitantes, pero además teniendo impacto en otros espacios sociales y otros sujetos/colectivos.

Para el análisis de la dinámica laboral en las organizaciones, desde los años setentas del siglo pasado se ha incorporado el concepto calidad de vida, que ha buscado propiciar mejoras en las organizaciones, al respecto rescatamos un acercamiento al debate dado entre dos corrientes:

En definitiva, ambos enfoques pese a compartir la meta común de mejorar la calidad de la vida laboral discrepan en cuanto a los objetivos perseguidos. La perspectiva denominada CVL [Calidad de vida laboral] psicológica persigue fundamentalmente la satisfacción, la salud y el bienestar del trabajador anteponiendo los intereses individuales a los de la organización. Sin embargo, la perspectiva de la calidad de vida del entorno de trabajo mantiene la postura contraria: alcanzar una mayor productividad y eficacia organizacionales como

paso previo sin el cual no sería posible satisfacer las necesidades y demandas de cada trabajador.⁴

Entonces se debatió si para una mayor calidad de vida en las organizaciones es más determinante el tipo de organización, es decir las condiciones ambientales en las que se realiza el trabajo o la percepción subjetiva de cada trabajador. Al respecto, otro estudio nos señala lo siguiente:

Se concluye que la Calidad de Vida percibida es una propiedad de la relación entre las personas y sus ambientes, y que la actitud proactiva hacia la participación es el factor que media dicha interrelación.⁵

La calidad de vida en las organizaciones es un fenómeno complejo dado por la interacción entre los sujetos y su contexto laboral inmediato, por lo que podemos decir que tanto el individuo forma a la organización como la organización al sujeto, laboralmente claro, aunque el nivel de participación de este es una diferencia fundamental para el logro del bienestar.

En las nuevas orientaciones de gestión para las organizaciones, calidad de vida hace referencia a la creación de ambientes armónicos, de motivación, en los que hay formación permanente, perspectivas de futuro, estabilidad laboral, respeto a los derechos humanos, donde hay preocupación por las necesidades e intereses de cada colaborador y todos son importantes. Con el cumplimiento de estas condiciones se estarán propiciando de mejor y mayor manera espacios de utopía, libertad y comunicación laborales que se replicarán en los espacios expositivos y estos a su vez en otros espacios, es decir tendrán un impacto social.

Aunque en un primer momento el análisis de estas bondades administrativas, con nuevos conceptos como la gestión del talento humano, parece ofrecer mejoras que además consideramos indispensables, existen ciertos cuestionamientos como la “explotación humanizada”; o al mirar el abismo que separa los escritos teóricos y jurídicos con la actual crisis global, declarada permanente; la precariedad del trabajo de una gran mayoría que incluye también a un amplio sector de trabajadores de museos, nos enfrentamos al reto, que plantea el preguntarnos, ¿cómo salir de la lógica que nombra progreso a la más obvia destrucción de nuestra madre tierra?

El museo se observa entonces en medio de una realidad económica establecida desde el modelo neoliberal que supone la flexibilización del trabajo, reformas a leyes laborales que disminuyen los derechos colectivos conquistados y promueven los individuales, y que se corresponden con el crecimiento exponencial del sector de servicios que incluye a la cultura o al menos algunas de sus expresiones, sobre todo las más lucrativas.

Los espacios museales se debaten entre responder a las presiones políticas y económicas para las que parece más beneficioso tratarlas como industrias del ocio, de la conciencia, culturales, del espectáculo, más cercanos al mercado del arte o pertenecientes a las grandes rutas del turismo y, por otra parte reconocer los principios de la sociedad democrática, los planteamientos de los movimientos sociales y organizaciones civiles como la visión ecológica.

⁴ Segurado Torres, Almudena y Agulló Tomás, Esteban. Calidad de vida laboral: hacia un enfoque integrador desde la Psicología Social. Revista Psicothema 2002, Vol. 14, no. 4, p.p. 828-836. ISSN 0214 – 9915 CODEN PSOTEG.

⁵ Hernández-Ponce, Luis E. y Reimel de Carrasquel. Calidad de Vida y Participación Comunitaria: Evaluación Psicosocial de Proyectos Urbanísticos en Barrios Pobres. Revista Interamericana de Psicología. 2004, Vol. 38, Núm. 1, p.p. 73-86.

Por ello, los museos deben ser creativos para, por una parte conservar el patrimonio, dar cabida a las nuevas expresiones del arte muchas veces críticas y a si mismo promover el desarrollo, por supuesto desde una visión de equidad social y respeto a la naturaleza.

Si estamos hablando de museos insertos en estas lógicas podremos también hablar de un cierto tipo de sujetos/colectivos que le corresponden, hay una diversidad que se manifiestan tanto al interior como al exterior del museo.

Mirar el museo desde muchos afuera. ¿Voy al museo por que otros lo hacen?

Los museos son organizaciones en constante transformación desde hace más de 200 años, movimiento que les ha permitido mantenerse entre las opciones de visita de cada vez más comunidades de la población sea por ocio, uso de su tiempo libre, por entretenimiento, educación o deleite, entre muchas otras motivaciones individuales como: acompañar a alguien, interés en el tema o artista, por encargo escolar o por casualidad, es decir, al pasar.

Cada museo es diferente, sea por su historia, su origen, su vocación, su emplazamiento, su tipología y su relación con las comunidades, su programa, su proyecto, sus colaboradores, sus alianzas y desencuentros, a pesar de ello podemos mostrar valores que, por consenso han sido definidos por quienes trabajan o han pensado en los museos, mostrando una clara orientación social desde mediados de los años sesenta del siglo pasado.

Algunos de estos valores los encontramos en la definición que el Consejo Internacional de Museos ha elaborado, así tenemos que se le considera como tal cuando:

Un museo es una institución permanente, sin fines de lucro, al servicio de la sociedad y abierta al público, que adquiere, conserva, estudia, expone y difunde el patrimonio material e inmaterial de la humanidad con fines de estudio, educación y recreo.⁶

Esta definición actúa en un contexto mundial globalizado, interconectado, multicultural y en el caso del arte desterritorializado, de acuerdo con García Canclini; por su parte De Varine habla de descolonizar al museo y a la museología⁷, se problematiza la representación del otro, se habla de diversidad cultural y natural, se cuestiona al museo como un neutralizador o como una forma de adoctrinamiento, también como *instrumento privilegiado para la administración de significados del arte*⁸ (aunque no sólo), que contiene potencialidades pocas veces activadas o no es su totalidad liberadora. Estos puntos de análisis colocan al museo en una encrucijada que se debate entre poderes y libertades, entre críticas y elogios, entre espacios de diálogo o de silencio, entre la opresión y la libertad.

A la relación contradictoria y compleja entre museos, poderes y libertades agregamos ahora el papel de los visitantes, la sociedad, que desde las varias declaraciones de la

⁶ <http://icom.museum/la-vision/definicion-del-museo/L/1/>

⁷ De Varine, Hugues. Descolonizar la Museología. En noticias del ICOM, Ética y Patrimonio. No. 3, 2005. http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/ICOM_News/2005-3/SPA/p3_2005-3.pdf

⁸ Ezequiel Bondone, Tomás. Museología e Historia. El Arte y la Memoria. Algunas reflexiones. ICOFOM Study Series – 35. Editado por Hildegard K. Vieregg, Mónica Risnicoff de Gorgas, Regina Schiller. ICOM Munich/Germany and Alta Gracia, Córdoba/Argentina 2006.

nueva museología los colocan con mayor énfasis en el papel central del proceso museal para que este tenga sentido.

El proceso museal nos parece un marco de actuación que organiza el quehacer de los museos pero que sin un enfoque museológico pierde su fortaleza. En este texto nos orientamos hacia la *museología de la liberación*⁹, en la que nos parecen imprescindible para orientar los postulados y las acciones museales: la comunicación y la ética¹⁰, aspectos que toman cuerpo en el discurso museológico intencionado que emite el museo, el cual partiendo de estos dos conceptos debe generarse como un sistema complejo de comunicación que atienda a diversos públicos con diferentes niveles cognitivos y medios de comunicación para ofrecer información e interacción diferenciada así como, para realizar un trabajo ético, marcado por la necesidad de mostrar la verdad o la problemática para llegar a ella, buscando no desvirtuar la vocación del espacio museal.

Al respecto en uno de los análisis del ICOFOM se describe la actuación de los públicos al confrontarse con el discurso, como sigue:

...a recepção é entendida como um processo que antecede e sucede a visita a uma exposição museológica. No museu, o público interpreta a partir dos seus referenciais e podemos dizer que a comunicação museológica só se efetiva quando o discurso do museu é incorporado pelo visitante e integrado ao seu cotidiano em forma de um novo discurso. O público do museu se apropria – a sua maneira – do discurso museológico, (re)elabora-o – de maneira particular para satisfazer as suas necessidades –, e então cria e difunde um novo discurso e o processo recomeça, ... nos fazemos sujeitos na interação como outros sujeitos, isto porque a comunicação provoca o estabelecimento de vínculos e os vínculos só são possíveis com a comunicação de sentidos. Assim, a recepção não é um ato isolado e sim compartilhado. A comunicação é uma construção dialogística, fundamentada em vínculos de afetividade e não em vínculos artificiais e/ou de submissão.¹¹

Como mencionamos antes, al mirar al museo de adentro hacia su exterioridad notamos que la calidad de vida en las organizaciones depende en mucho del grado de participación. Ahora cuando abordamos los muchos afuera, es decir, las miradas de cada uno de los visitantes que ven al museo desde formas únicas, notamos que cada una de estas personas con su presencia y participación, activa la propuesta museal. Con una mayor participación social, debiera hacerlo en cuanto a la definición del museo, su programa, su curaduría.

Por otro lado, sabemos que, los museos, o en su gran mayoría, no tienen la capacidad de dar atención personalizada, también destaca el conflicto existente entre otorgar una experiencia significativa frente a la visita masiva.

Los visitantes como sujetos/colectivos nos muestran que la vida de los seres humanos no se da sin la interacción con los otros, somos eminentemente un ser social y por ende político, que se crea y recrea en la intersubjetividad. El contacto con los otros

⁹ Esta museología ha sido planteada por Odalise Prosti en Brasil como resultado de las acciones museales comunitarias y nos parece pertinente ya que coloca al museo en una posición clara de su actuar por lo que hemos planteado sus bases y algunos conceptos que orienten el actuar, lo cual se puede consultar en Bases para una necesaria museología de la liberación y en el texto que abajo se señala del autor de este texto.

¹⁰ Rodríguez Saldaña, Freire. Sures hacia una museología de la liberación. Ponencia presentada en el Simposio Internacional de Museología. Nuevas Prácticas, Nuevas Audiencias a 40 años de la Mesa de Santiago. 2012.

¹¹ Xavier Cury, Marília. O visitante como sujeito da exposição. Museologia – un Campo del Conocimiento. Museología e História. ICOFOM Study Series – 35. Editado por Hildegard K. Vierregg, Mónica Risnicoff de Gorgas, Regina Schiller. ICOM Munich/Germany and Alta Gracia, Córdoba/Argentina 2006.

define lo que somos y llegamos a ser por lo que cada uno de los visitantes del museo o exposición es parte fundamental de su existencia.

Vemos entonces que las mujeres y los hombres, los jóvenes, los menores y los más viejos, los diversos son sujetos con una biografía, condiciones actuales particulares y proyecciones de futuro propias, todos ellos poseen individualidad pero a su vez forman parte de grupos y pueden tener diversas identidades de acuerdo a las funciones que los distintos espacios y relaciones sociales les determinan. Para acercarnos a un fenómeno social buscamos agrupaciones, construimos categorías que nos permitan manejar un universo tan amplio. Entonces cabe preguntarnos por qué, si tenemos individualidades únicas e irrepetibles, el encuentro y la interacción con los otros en determinado espacio y con un cierto código nos dan pertenencia, puedo ser: de la orquesta, fan de un equipo deportivo, gente de la calle, consumidor en un centro comercial, vacacionista, campesino, estudiante, obrero, ciudadano de determinado país, de un pueblo originario, extranjero, políticamente incorrecto, de derecha o de izquierda, ciclista o automovilista e incluso... visitante de museo.

Entonces, ser visitante de museo es un *habitus de clase* retomando a Bourdieu; una decisión o una posibilidad. Respecto del primer concepto, el autor señala:

La sociología trata como idénticos a todos los individuos biológicos que, siendo el producto de las mismas condiciones objetivas, están dotados de los mismos *habitus*: clase de condiciones de existencia y de condicionamientos idénticos o semejantes, la clase social (en sí) es inseparablemente una clase de individuos biológicos dotados del mismo *habitus*, como sistema de disposiciones común a todos los productos de los mismos condicionamientos. Si está excluido que todos los miembros de la misma clase (o incluso dos de ellos) hayan tenido las mismas experiencias y en el mismo orden, es cierto que todo miembro de la misma clase tiene probabilidades más grandes que cualquier miembro de otra clase de encontrarse confrontado con las situaciones más frecuentes para los miembros de esta clase.¹²

Qué clase social tiene el hábito para asistir a propuestas museales de manera "natural", la revisión de las críticas al museo, o al menos en un cierto tipo de ellos que creemos es la mayoría; así como la percepción popular, lo colocaría como un espacio elitista en el que se sienten cómodos los miembros de la clase alta y otros de la cada vez menor clase media. Por otra parte si el visitante de museo lo es porque tomó la decisión de hacerlo, nos encontraríamos frente a espacios museales en los que no se restringe el acceso y que tendría una mayor inclusión social ya que podrían acudir también los primeros y también se sentirían cómodos otros.

Pero al analizar al visitante de museo como una posibilidad debemos cuestionarnos quién tiene la posibilidad de ir y quién no, miremos un contexto. En México poco menos de la mitad de la población se encuentra sumida en la pobreza, los cinturones de miseria alrededor de las ciudades nos muestran condiciones de vida precarias con falta de acceso a servicios básicos, alto nivel de deserción escolar, la calle como extensión de la casa, drogadicción, alcoholismo, actuación de grupos de delincuentes, en donde la niñez es apagada por el trabajo rutinario y mal pagado, cuando los padres no tienen la posibilidad y en ocasiones ni el interés de dar un regalo o por lo menos muestras de afecto, el ir a un museo se plantea como una imposibilidad ya que, de entrada, por su historia se le vincula de mayor manera a las élites que, a la población abajo en la escala social, sobre todo la marginada. ¿Entonces por qué ir a un museo?

Llegados a este punto nos interesa destacar qué acciones museales se están realizando para la atracción de visitantes, para conocerlas habrá que identificar las

¹² Bourdieu, Pierre. El sentido práctico. Editorial Taurus, Madrid 1991. P.p. 9

intenciones y los valores que están detrás de ellas. Desde el enfoque de la museología de liberación, las acciones que se tendrían que estar realizando, no únicamente en el museo sino fuera de sus muros tendrían que estar tocando temas de alta sensibilidad social así como la construcción de discursos complejos y problematizados en los que cada uno de los visitantes pueda sentirse relacionado de manera personal, casi íntima logrando que tomen conciencia de la posibilidad de un mundo mejor construido por todos.

Desde afuera las muchas miradas observan al museo con distintas lentes, es una organización que tiene múltiples formas de relacionarse con cada sujeto/colectivo, vemos que cada uno es atraído por diversos intereses, tiene expectativas propias, conocimientos previos únicos y vive una experiencia en el espacio museal personal e irrepetible.

Los sujetos/colectivos se construyen en el permanente conflicto que representa el desarrollo de la individualidad frente al individualismo, ninguno de los visitantes a un museo es una isla y nadie apareció por creación espontánea, todos estamos influenciados e influenciamos a los otros, acercarnos en las acciones museales a cada uno de los visitantes de museos puede parecer una tarea imposible, pero parece necesario hacerlo tomando en cuenta que aunque cada uno tenemos una biografía que nos determina, contamos con elementos que nos cohesionan, los otros.

En el museo como espacio de utopía y libertad, bajo un enfoque museológico liberador nos preguntamos cómo crear conciencia en las personas que visitan estos espacios y en los que no lo hacen ya que creemos que los roles de opresión o de concentración excesiva del poder económico y político, tienen necesariamente que cambiar, de igual modo los que se encuentra abajo en la organización social pueden tomar conciencia de la posibilidad de cambio social obteniendo herramientas utópicas en el museo, todos debemos cambiar en beneficio del nosotros¹³.

En el espacio museal cada persona debe poder aprehender algo de la historia, del arte, del otro cultural, por ello el enfoque, es decir las intenciones, desde donde se construye un discurso son determinantes e impactaran en la definición del sistema complejo de comunicación para que todos y cada uno de quienes acudimos él podamos pensar un mundo mejor, construido desde un museo mejor.

Finalmente aún falta responder cómo atraeremos a quienes no tienen la posibilidad de asistir al museo por su condición social marginal, cómo hacer que esas historias de vida se sientan reflejadas en el museo, que sea para ell@s un espacio donde sentirse cómodos; esta es una interrogante que debemos tener presente quiénes trabajamos en los museos, sabemos que nos miran desde afuera, pero no sólo queremos ser mirados, debemos poder crear esos espacios de utopía, libertad y comunicación tan necesarios para entendernos los diversos.

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¹³ Nosotridad es un concepto extraído de la lengua Tojolaval (Chiapas, México) que integra a todos los seres humanos pero no sólo, también a las plantas y animales, al agua y el aire e incluso las piedras como entes subjetivos y en igualdad de importancia.

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DÉCRIRE ET COMPRENDRE L'EXPÉRIENCE DES VISITEURS

Daniel Schmitt

Université de Strasbourg – France

RÉSUMÉ

Pouvons-nous accéder à l'expérience intime des visiteurs dans un musée ? Pouvons-nous décrire et comprendre ces expériences ? En particulier, pouvons-nous saisir les enchaînements corporels et cognitifs à travers lesquels nous construisons des connaissances dans les musées ? Nous abordons ici l'expérience des visiteurs à partir d'une perspective énaïve comme ce qui fait sens du point de vue du visiteur dans le cours de sa visite. Les résultats portent sur une méthode d'investigation originale dans le champ muséal, qui autorise un nouveau point de vue sur l'expérience des visiteurs dans les musées. L'analyse du cours d'expérience réalisée à partir d'un entretien en re-situ subjectif permet de décrire et de comprendre les unités élémentaires de l'expérience des visiteurs, ainsi que l'expérience globale de visite avec précision, finesse et profondeur. Nous mettons en évidence les actions et les cheminements cognitifs des visiteurs qui concourent à la construction de leurs connaissances. Cette approche nous permet d'imaginer des nouvelles démarches de médiation à l'intention des visiteurs et ainsi enrichir la dynamique expérientielle proposée par les musées.

Mots clés : musée, exposition, expérience de visite, cours d'expérience, énaïon, connaissance, entretien en re-situ subjectif.

ABSTRACT

Describe and understand museum visitors' experience

Can we gain access to the experience of museum visitors? Can we describe and understand their experiences? In particular, can we grasp the physical and cognitive processes through which knowledge is constructed in museums? We focus on the visitor experience from an enactive perspective, i.e., that which makes sense from the point of view of visitors during their visit. We shows that an analysis of the visitor's "course of experience" carried out by means of a subjective re-situ interview allows us to describe and understand the basic units of the visitors' experiences as well as the overall experience of the visit with precision, finesse, and depth. The actions and cognitive paths of visitors, which contribute to the construction of the knowledge, are also highlighted. This approach allows us to imagine new perspectives of mediation toward visitors and thus to enrich the experience dynamics offered by museums.

Key words: museum, exhibition, visitor experience, course of experience, enaction, knowledge, subjective re-situ interview.

RESUMEN

Describir y comprender la experiencia de los visitantes del museo

Se puede tener acceso a la experiencia de los visitantes del museo? ¿Podemos describir y comprender sus experiencias? En particular, podemos entender los procesos físicos y cognitivos a través de los cuales se construye el conocimiento en los museos? Nos centramos en la experiencia de los visitantes

Daniel Schmitt

Décrire et comprendre l'expérience des visiteurs

desde la perspectiva de una puesta en acción, por ejemplo, aquello que tiene sentido desde el punto de vista de los visitantes durante su visita. Mostramos que un análisis del "curso de la experiencia" del visitante llevada a cabo por medio de una entrevista re-situ. subjetiva nos permite describir y comprender las unidades básicas de la experiencia de los visitantes, así como la experiencia general de la visita con la precisión, finura y profundidad. Las acciones y los caminos cognitivos de visitantes, que contribuyen a la construcción de los conocimientos, también se ponen de relieve. Este enfoque nos permite imaginar nuevas perspectivas de mediación con los visitantes y por lo tanto enriquecer la experiencia dinámica que ofrecen los museos.

Palabras clave: museos, exposiciones, experiencia de los visitantes, curso de la experiencia, promulgación, conocimiento, la entrevista subjetiva re-situ..

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1. Le(s) public(s) en questions

Nous savons aujourd'hui que la référence au public de musées en tant que groupe homogène ayant des attentes similaires, relève d'un public-fiction construit par des enquêtes qui transforment les visiteurs en consommateurs de biens et services culturels, ayant des attentes et des comportements de consommateurs¹. Malgré tout, il n'est pas rare de croiser des professionnels de musées qui affirment sincèrement connaître leur public et cette conviction constitue peut-être l'un des obstacles majeurs à la prise en compte réelle des visiteurs. En effet, cette pseudo connaissance du public installe et diffuse le mythe du « visiteur moyen² », du « grand public » consommateur de prestations culturelles et privilégie les messages simples et les effets muséographiques spectaculaires en occultant tout ce que les visiteurs pourraient désirer vivre et savoir en tant qu'êtres doués de raison autonome et de trajectoire de vie singulière.

Si nous saisissons assez bien les motivations des visiteurs, ce que l'on apprend au musée³, l'importance des « impacts » sur les visiteurs⁴, l'importance des émotions à travers des mises en scènes, des effets spéciaux et des technologies d'immersion⁵, il subsiste en revanche des questions importantes pour lesquelles nous commençons à peine à esquisser des réponses : peut-on accéder à l'expérience intime des visiteurs en situation naturelle dans le cours de leur visite sans perturber significativement le cours de cette expérience ? Et si oui, que se passe-t-il vraiment du point de vue du visiteur lorsqu'il visite une exposition ? Qu'est-ce qui fait sens pour lui à tout instant de sa visite ? Comment les visiteurs construisent-ils des connaissances ?

De notre point de vue, saisir et comprendre avec précision l'expérience des visiteurs en situation naturelle de visite pourrait transformer radicalement les représentations que nous nous faisons des publics et enrichir la conception des musées et expositions.

¹ Le Marec, J., 2007, *Publics et musées, la confiance éprouvée*, Paris, L'Harmattan, p. 200.

² Comme le fait remarquer Schiele dans L'invention simultanée du visiteur et de l'exposition, 1992, le visiteur moyen a été délaissé au profit des audiences segmentées, mais il s'agit toujours de la même intention : caractériser la relation des visiteurs à l'institution.

³ Falk, J., & Dierking, L., 1992, *The museum experience*, Whalesback Books.

⁴ Guichard, J., & Martinand, J.-L., 2000, *Médiatique des Sciences*, PUF.

⁵ Bélaën, F., 2003, L'exposition, une technologie de l'immersion, *Médiamorphoses*, n°9, p. 98-101 et Montpetit, R., 2005, Expositions, parcs, sites : des lieux d'expériences patrimoniales, *Culture et Musées*, n°5, p. 111-133.

1. Comment aborder l'expérience des visiteurs ?

Un chercheur observant un visiteur de musée dans le cours de sa visite peut décrire le comportement de ce visiteur, mais si ce visiteur ne commente pas son activité pendant son parcours, cette description ne peut porter que sur le déplacement relatif du corps du visiteur dans un espace, qui fait sens du point de vue du chercheur. Dès que le chercheur décrit le domaine cognitif du visiteur à partir de sa description de l'environnement et du comportement du visiteur, il commet une double erreur : 1) il fait une description de l'environnement signifiante pour lui-même qu'il suppose signifiante pour le visiteur ; 2) il établit une relation entre la description qu'il peut faire du comportement du visiteur avec le domaine cognitif du visiteur¹. La verbalisation de l'expérience par celui ou celle qui vit cette expérience est essentielle pour que nous puissions comprendre et partager cette expérience ; or la nécessité de recueillir les verbalisations des visiteurs constitue un point délicat car :

- si l'on interroge le visiteur à intervalles réguliers pendant sa visite, on interrompt le cours de cette expérience et l'on engage le visiteur dans une analyse réflexive de son activité. Cette pratique modifie le cours de l'activité du visiteur et nous éloigne d'une visite en situation naturelle ;
- si au contraire on conserve la situation naturelle de visite et l'on interroge le visiteur à l'issue de son parcours, nous recueillons un discours résumé a posteriori qui perd la finesse et la précision de l'expérience réellement vécue, car il est exceptionnel de se souvenir à tout instant de ce que l'on a vu, ressenti, pensé, dit, touché...

Ainsi, l'enjeu théorique réside dans la possibilité de dissocier le temps de l'expérience et le temps de la verbalisation de l'expérience, tout en conservant la précision et la finesse de la description de l'expérience réellement vécue.

2. Théorie sémiologique du cours d'expérience

En collaboration avec Humberto Maturana², Francisco Varela a développé une théorie dite de l'énaction³ qui permet de surmonter ces obstacles. L'idée fondamentale de l'énaction est que « les facultés cognitives sont inextricablement liées à l'historique de ce qui est vécu, de la même manière qu'un sentier au préalable inexistant apparaît en marchant⁴ ». L'énaction soutient que la perception et l'action sont couplées au sein de tout organisme et que « la cognition, loin d'être une représentation d'un monde prédonné, est l'avènement conjoint d'un monde et d'un esprit à partir de l'histoire des diverses actions qu'accomplit un être dans le monde⁵ ». La perception, l'action et le sens de l'action du point de vue de l'acteur, sont indissociablement liés à l'environnement dans lequel l'action prend forme⁶.

Par exemple, du point de vue énatif, la perception auditive humaine et les sons n'ont de sens que dans l'émergence d'un domaine phénoménal entre un environnement et la structure humaine. Notre environnement autorise des variations de pression de l'air mais les variations de pressions de l'air ne peuvent pas à elles seules spécifier le phénomène que nous appelons un bruit, un son ou de la musique.

¹ Pour une argumentation détaillée, voir Maturana, H., & Varela, F., 1994, L'arbre de la connaissance ; Racines biologiques de la compréhension humaine, Addison-Wesley, p.127-128.

² Maturana, H., Varela, F., & Uribe, R., 1974, Autopoiesis: The organization of living systems, its characterization and a model, *BioSystems*, vol. 5, n°4, p. 187-196.

³ Varela, F., 1989, Autonomie et connaissance, Paris, Le Seuil.

⁴ Varela, F., 1996, Invitation aux sciences cognitives, Paris, Le Seuil, p. 111.

⁵ Varela, F., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E., 1993, L'inscription corporelle de l'esprit, Le Seuil, p. 35.

⁶ Suchman, L., 1987, Plans and situated action, Cambridge University Press.

Seul le couplage structurel entre notre environnement et la physiologie humaine rend possible l'émergence de ce que nous appelons des sons ou de la musique et de façon plus générale de ce que nous appelons la perception auditive et il en est de même pour toutes nos capacités sensorielles. Nous entrevoyons également combien cette approche rend délicate la description objective de l'environnement qui relève en grande partie du domaine phénoménologique du visiteur. L'environnement que nous décrivons est nécessairement une description de notre relation à cet environnement, qui est elle-même historiquement construite avec cet environnement.

Dans la perspective énaïve, un visiteur n'est pas considéré comme immergé dans un espace dont il devrait saisir les traits saillants et signifiants, mais plutôt comme agissant et réagissant à ce qui le perturbe, à ce qui fait sens pour lui, dans un environnement tel qu'il le perçoit en fonction de son histoire, de ses attentes et des connaissances qu'il est capable de mobiliser à cet instant.

En prenant appui sur le socle théorique de l'énaïve, Theureau a élaboré une théorie sémiologique du cours d'expérience⁷ qu'il définit comme « la construction du sens pour l'acteur, de son activité au fur et à mesure de celle-ci⁸ ». La théorie du cours d'expérience permet d'analyser très finement l'activité humaine dans sa dimension dynamique et située, ainsi que les apprentissages qui accompagnent cette activité, à condition que celle-ci soit explicitée a posteriori par celui ou celle l'ayant vécue⁹. Or précisément, lorsque l'on propose à un visiteur de commenter son activité à partir de la trace des diverses actions qu'il a accomplies dans un environnement, ce visiteur découpe spontanément le flux de son activité en unités discrètes qui sont significatives de son point de vue. Chaque découpage significatif est la manifestation d'un signe, dont les six composantes sont à la fois distinctes et indissociables des autres :

Le signe hexadique et ses composantes	
Composante	Identification de la composante
Représentamen	Qu'est-ce qui est pris en compte par le visiteur à cet instant t ?
Engagement	Comment le visiteur relie-t-il les Représentamens, comment le visiteur se lie-t-il aux éléments pris en compte à cet instant t ?
Anticipation	Quelles sont les attentes du visiteur à cet instant t en rapport avec les Représentamens et son Engagement ?
Référentiel	Quelles sont les connaissances mobilisées par le visiteur à l'instant t ?
Interprétant	Quelle est la connaissance que le visiteur construit, valide ou invalide ?
Unité de cours d'expérience	Quelle est la séquence minimale qui fait sens pour le visiteur ?

A travers l'identification des composantes des signes, nous pouvons reconstruire la dynamique significative de l'activité des visiteurs et identifier les connaissances construites par les visiteurs, ainsi que l'état émotionnel lié à cette activité : nous pouvons décrire et comprendre leurs micro-expériences, dont les enchaînements et les concaténations donnent lieu au cours d'expérience, c'est-à-dire ce qui fait sens pour le visiteur au fur et à mesure de sa visite.

3. Méthodologie : documenter et analyser le cours d'expériences des visiteurs à partir d'une perspective subjective et d'un entretien en re-situ subjectif

⁷ Voir Theureau, J., 1992/2004, *Le cours d'action : méthode élémentaire*, Toulouse, Octarès ; Theureau, J., 2006, *Le cours d'action : méthode développée*, Toulouse, Octarès ; Theureau, J., 2009, *Le cours d'action : méthode réfléchie*, Toulouse, Octarès.

⁸ Theureau, J., 2006, *Le cours d'action : méthode développée*, Toulouse, Octarès, p. 48.

⁹ Sève, C., Saury, J., Theureau, J., & Durand, M., 2002, La construction de connaissances chez les sportifs de haut niveau lors d'une interaction compétitive, *Le travail humain*, vol. 65, n°2, p. 159-190.

Chaque visiteur vit un environnement avec ce qui fait sens pour lui, et si l'on réussit à reproduire cet environnement tel qu'il est perçu par le visiteur, il est possible de lui faire revivre cette expérience tout en lui offrant le temps de la décrire. Cette capacité à décrire ce que l'on a vu, ce que l'on a ressenti, les pensées qui nous ont traversé l'esprit, s'appuie sur la réminiscence qui est la capacité de revivre en qualité ce que l'on a déjà vécu : c'est en quelque sorte l'effet « madeleine de Proust ».

Ainsi, pour conserver une trace du monde perçu par le visiteur d'un musée ou d'une exposition, nous l'équiperons dans un premier temps d'une mini-caméra qui enregistre sa perspective subjective visuelle et auditive et nous le laissons librement évoluer sans la présence du chercheur¹⁰. À l'issue d'un temps de parcours d'environ 30 minutes, le visiteur est déséquipé, puis placé devant un écran vidéo, dans un lieu à l'écart de l'activité de visite. Sur cet écran, nous diffusons l'enregistrement vidéo subjectif du visiteur à partir duquel nous l'invitons à raconter et à commenter son expérience de visite. Une caméra, placée derrière le visiteur et le chercheur, enregistre cette fois l'entretien et leurs gestes devant l'écran. Lors de cet entretien appelé entretien en re-situ subjectif ou entretien RSS, le visiteur découpe spontanément son activité en unités significatives de son point de vue. Ses descriptions et ses commentaires sont d'autant plus précis que l'enregistrement vidéo est réalisé à partir de son point de vue et s'appuie sur sa réminiscence¹¹. L'entretien RSS est ensuite transcrit et analysé à travers le cadre sémiologique de Theureau¹². Nous identifions ce qui à chaque instant est pris en compte par le visiteur : ce qu'il regarde, ce qu'il fait, ses attentes, ses préoccupations, les savoirs mobilisés, afin de documenter chaque fragment de séquence significative, puis de reconstruire son cours d'expérience.



Figure 1. ❶ Les visiteurs sont équipés d'une mini-caméra et d'un micro. Nous obtenons un film vidéo proche de leur perception visuelle naturelle. ❷ Les visiteurs sont ensuite invités à décrire leur expérience à partir de ce film. Une caméra placée derrière le visiteur et le chercheur enregistre l'écran vidéo, l'entretien et les gestes du visiteur. L'enregistrement obtenu est transcrit, les signes hexadiques sont renseignés, ce qui nous permet de reconstruire le cours d'expérience des visiteurs.

¹⁰ Le visiteur n'est pas invité à commenter à voix haute son parcours, à la différence d'une approche du type *Thinking Aloud*. Pour des précisions sur cette méthode, voir Dufresne-Tassé et al., 1998, Pour des expositions muséales plus éducatives, accéder à l'expérience du visiteur adulte. Développement d'une approche. *Canadian journal of Education*, vol. 23, n°3, p. 302-315.

¹¹ Rix, G., & Biache, M.-J., 2004, Enregistrement en perspective subjective située et entretien en re-situ subjectif : une méthodologie de la constitution de l'expérience, *Intellectica*, n°38, p. 363-396.

¹² Theureau, J., 2006, *Le cours d'action : méthode développée*, Toulouse, Octarès

L'enregistrement de la perspective subjective du visiteur, associée à un entretien RSS (re-situ subjectif) permet d'accéder à l'expérience verbalisée du visiteur sur la base de sa réminiscence, sans introduire d'effets secondaires significatifs ou de biais manifestes¹³. Nous avons utilisé cette méthode avec plus de 40 visiteurs¹⁴ et nous avons pu décrire leur cours d'expérience avec précision, finesse et profondeur, à la fois sur des durées courtes, de l'ordre de quelques secondes, et sur des durées plus longues (30 minutes) où l'on peut suivre, montrer et partager l'enchaînement des séquences signifiantes et la construction globale du sens au fur et à mesure de l'activité des visiteurs. Nous avons également mis en évidence la concaténation des connaissances, un enchaînement de séquences où une connaissance construite s'évanouit et resurgit quelques instants plus tard comme savoir mobilisé.

Le point clé de cet apport réside dans la compréhension fine de l'activité des visiteurs tant du point de vue observable (le comportement), que du point de vue de leur domaine cognitif (les pensées, les émotions). Ainsi, nous avons pu montrer que la connaissance ne se transmet pas au sens de la captation d'informations mais qu'elle est construite par chaque visiteur comme une réponse adéquate à ses attentes, en mobilisant des ressources disponibles dans son environnement ou liées à son histoire. Et ce qui frappe, c'est l'extraordinaire richesse des cours d'expérience, l'inventivité des visiteurs qui dépasse très souvent ce que nous imaginons en tant que concepteurs de musées ou en tant que chercheurs.

3. Un exemple de cours d'expérience : Annie au musée de l'Œuvre Notre-Dame¹⁵

Au musée de l'Œuvre Notre-Dame à Strasbourg, la salle dite du jubé présente l'art statuaire du XIII^e siècle. Les œuvres de grande taille proviennent de la cathédrale de Strasbourg et sont disposées en surplomb des visiteurs. Le volume architectural est imposant, les matériaux sont minéraux et produisent une réverbération acoustique importante.

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Annie, la cinquantaine, travaille dans une administration publique. Elle entre dans la salle du jubé en expirant, regarde le jubé et certaines statues, expire à nouveau, regarde la figure de la Synagogue, lit un texte sur un pupitre, regarde les statues alentour, lit un cartel, revient sur ses pas, s'éclaircit la gorge, s'approche d'une statue et lit le cartel associé ; son parcours dure 3 min 27 s. Du point de vue d'un observateur, nous ne pouvons pas renseigner l'expérience d'Annie parce que rien de nous ne permet d'interpréter les signes ténus de son activité. En revanche avec l'entretien RSS, d'une part nous pouvons découper l'activité d'Annie en plusieurs séquences qui présentent une cohérence de son point de vue et d'autre part nous pouvons proposer une interprétation de l'articulation de ces séquences qui renseigne son cours d'expérience dans la salle du jubé.

¹³ Schmitt, D., 2012, Expérience de visite et construction des connaissances : le cas des musées de sciences et des centres de culture scientifique. Thèse de doctorat, Université de Strasbourg (disponible en version hypertexte open data sur www.museographie.fr).

¹⁴ Schmitt, D. *ibid.*

¹⁵ Tous les entretiens sont accessibles à partir du site www.museographie.fr



Figure 2. Perspective de la salle dite du jubé au musée de l'Œuvre Notre-Dame à Strasbourg telle qu'on la découvre dans le sens de la visite. « Je me suis sentie tout de suite un peu dans une... une cathédrale-église, pourtant je ne déteste de loin pas ça [...] c'est pas mortifère comme la plupart du temps, mais ce truc là [...] ce gros truc au fond là, il est imposant... voilà je sais pas trop quoi en faire du... j'ai pas lu encore, j'ai rien lu » [Annie SH2].

Annie en entretien RSS (signes hexadiques SH2 et SH4)

Visiteur-e : — je rentre là dans cette pièce, et là... c'est tout de suite plus difficile, [...] ce qui m'interpelle et m'opresse tout de suite c'est ce que j'ai au fond, là... ces figures comme ça... posées ces statues... voilà, ça là, cette vision-là m'opresse un peu, j'ai ressenti ça dans la première salle, dans le fronton aussi toutes ces pierres en haut, pourquoi je sais pas, ça, ça m'opresse un peu [...] je me suis sentie tout de suite un peu dans une... une cathédrale-église, pourtant je ne déteste de loin pas ça... j'ai un gros problème en ce moment avec tout ce que l'on trouve notamment dans les églises, les imageries etc. mais je ne suis pas là-dedans quand même, parce que là, c'est des statues, c'est des pierres et c'est pas... c'est pas mortifère comme la plupart du temps, mais ce truc là... voilà je trouve ça quand même, ce que j'ai trouvé dans cette pièce là c'est que... les choses étaient posées... elles étaient posées quoi, elles étaient... c'est une pièce qui n'est pas destinée à ça, enfin c'est le ressenti que j'ai hein... et les choses sont posées voilà et ce gros truc au fond là il est imposant... voilà je sais pas trop quoi en faire du... j'ai pas lu encore, j'ai rien lu

Chercheur : — c'est quoi le gros truc imposant ?

Visiteur-e : — le gros truc imposant du fond là c'est tout ça (Annie indique avec son doigt une sculpture sur l'écran) <Chercheur : le fronton> le fronton merci, voilà, donc après, ce que je vais faire tout de suite, c'est que je vais... je vais m'adresser, en tout cas m'intéresser à ce que j'ai tout de suite là, c'est-à-dire les statues, qu'est-ce que c'est, qu'est-ce que ça dit, où ça m'emmène quoi, voilà alors après, je vais un petit peu voir tout ça je regarde... est-ce que les visages me plaisent... où est-ce que je suis... comment c'est fait...

Chercheur : — qu'est-ce qui te guide ?

Visiteur-e : — ce qui me guide c'est les formes, c'est le fait de m'intéresser comme ça à quelque chose... qui m'interpelle et ça va être les statues et alors ce qui me guide dans ces statues-là c'est... alors je vais regarder < les cartels> voilà alors celle-là la statue bandée que je connais et je ne saurais pas dire ce que c'est mais ce qui m'a intéressée avant c'était... l'image ne s'est pas arrêtée dessus mais c'est justement ce qui a l'air d'être moins religieux [...] après ce qui me guide ça va être des formes, des statues... qui me parlent plus que d'autres, je suis interpellée par celle qui est devant là quand même et puis après... je vais aller m'intéresser aux Vierges sages là, qui sont assez imposantes assez... voilà, tu vois c'est les Vierges sages

Quelques instants plus tard, nous revenons sur l'entrée dans la salle du jubé (signe hexadique SH4)

Chercheur : — je voudrais revenir un petit peu sur ça cette première vue, est-ce que tu te souviens de... émotionnellement cette salle dans l'entrée ?

Visiteur-e : — ah euh celle là... oui j'ai soufflé... tout ce que je peux dire c'est ouf voilà, comme ça j'ai fait

Chercheur : — et qui signifie quoi ?

Visiteur-e : — eh bien ça veut dire que c'est... pour moi ça voulait dire... enfin je ne sais pas, comment dire ça... c'était imposant pour moi, c'était... voilà quelque chose qui s'apparentait à quelque chose de l'ordre de... de l'église, de la religion, de tout ce qui me... de tout ce qui est lourd

Chercheur : — c'est quoi l'élément significatif, enfin l'élément que tu perçois dans cet espace ?

Visiteur-e : — c'est la prégnance du fond... oui c'est la prégnance du fond c'est... tout cet ensemble là qui s'imposait un petit peu d'une manière violente à moi, tu vois

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- Chercheur : — et est-ce que tu te souviens de... quand tu rentres tu souffles <oui> est-ce que tu te souviens de tes attentes c'est-à-dire au moment avant de rentrer dans cet espace, est-ce que tu espères qu'il s'y passe quelque chose et si oui de quelle nature ?
- Visiteur-e : — oui je... disons en creux ça voudrait dire... pas ça comme ça...tu vois, pas ça comme ça, c'est-à-dire que je sois accompagnée... déjà pour moi, c'est un trajet parce que ça a quand même trait beaucoup à la religion hein, je veux dire il n'y a quasiment que ça, je souhaiterais y être accompagnée autrement, que ce soit plus léger.

Composantes des signes hexadiques Annie SH2 et SH4

Représentamens

- Une forme qui oppresse
- Le gros truc imposant au fond
- Les statues, les visages des statues
- Les formes des statues

Engagements

- Se sentir oppressée
- Se sentir dans un édifice religieux plutôt que dans un musée
- S'intéresser aux statues pour voir si une histoire est possible
- S'éloigner d'une histoire religieuse
- Regarder les formes

Anticipations

- Attentes liées à entrer dans une histoire, à être accompagnée
- Attentes liées à rechercher des formes moins religieuses
- Attentes liées à trouver des formes qui interpellent et qui guident

Référentiel

- La plupart du temps, les églises sont des espaces mortifères

Unités de cours d'expérience

- Faire-face immédiat négatif
- Échapper au religieux par transformation des statues en formes, en sculptures (non-religieuses)

Interprétant

- Renforce la connaissance : « Ce musée ressemble à une église »

Cours d'expérience Annie SH2 et SH4

Annie passe d'une sorte de SAS d'introduction à une grande salle lumineuse. Elle aperçoit le jubé au fond de la salle (Représentamen) et se sent immédiatement « oppressée », le lieu est « lourd », les choses sont « posées » (Engagement). En descendant les marches vers le jubé, elle pousse un profond soupir, nettement audible sur la bande son de la perspective subjective. Cette fois, elle voit « un gros truc au fond » (Représentamen) le gâble du jubé, « l'objet du fond » qu'elle ne nomme pas. Cette salle l'opprime (Engagement), elle ne sait plus si elle est dans un musée ou une cathédrale, elle est à la recherche de l'entrée d'une histoire (Anticipations) mais

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l'histoire qui lui est proposée est, selon elle, une histoire religieuse et elle associe religion à « lourd et oppressant ». La confrontation avec le gâble du jubé est négative. Annie souhaite échapper à ce sentiment « écrasant du religieux et aller vers du plus humain ». Pour elle, les églises sont des « espaces mortifères » (Référentiel). Elle attend une histoire de musée et non une histoire religieuse (Anticipations), elle se sent enfermée dans cet espace et cherche à s'en dégager (Anticipations). Elle cherche des objets auxquels se raccrocher, des objets avec lesquels elle puisse construire ou entrer dans une histoire qui lui convienne. Elle construit la connaissance : « ce musée ressemble à une église » (Interprétant).

Annie en entretien RSS (signe hexadique SH3)

Visiteur-e : — je cherche oui je sais pas trop ce que je cherche il y a une idée, alors c'est soit, je suis interpellée par une forme comme celle-là qui m'étonne parce qu'elle est différente, parce que c'est quelqu'un sans jambes, parce que... enfin voilà parce la forme de la sculpture m'intéresse, soit c'est parce que c'est quelque chose... qui me rappelle, voilà comme les Vierges folles ça justement, que je connais parce que je sais qu'elles sont sur la porte devant, il y a les Sages et les Folles et donc là, j'ai les Sages et je cherche les Folles donc, c'est soit une idée, soit une forme qui m'intéresse plus qu'une autre et toujours j'essaye de sentir où je suis, qu'est-ce ça me dit etc. ça me dit pas toujours quelque chose d'ailleurs, il me faut plus de temps... voilà... ah oui celle là aussi m'interpelle, qu'est-ce que c'est celle qui est là, après ça, ça me rappelle

Chercheur : — ça t'interpelle pas longtemps parce que tu passes, tu glisses dessus

Visiteur-e : — oui pour l'instant je glisse dessus, en fait... c'est un petit peu ma façon de faire c'est-à-dire, je vais... il me faudrait plus de temps, c'est-à-dire que pour l'instant je vais glisser, voir où je suis et après je vais revenir, si j'avais pu, tu vois, revenir et m'y intéresser plus longtemps, je reviens toujours à cette idée de sas c'est-à-dire le besoin d'être guidée, besoin de me sentir dans quelque chose, ce qui n'est pas le cas pour l'instant donc si tu veux c'est comme si... c'est comme si j'écoutais un petit peu ce que les pierres me disent, là où ça m'amène parce que c'est des pierres, surtout j'ai à faire à des pierres, là où elles m'amènent, dans un deuxième temps j'y reviendrai en approfondissant, tu vois pour l'instant j'ai pas... comment dire, je suis en train de sentir là où je suis et ce que disent les pierres voilà en gros tu vois... c'est pour ça je glisse dessus, oui tout à fait...

Chercheur : — mais comment tu sais qu'elles te disent quelque chose, à travers quoi elles te disent, à quel moment elles te disent quelque chose ?

Visiteur-e : — les pierres... elle me disent quelque chose en leur forme, elles me disent quelque chose là dans leur présence, bon pour l'instant j'en suis au stade où je sens je navigue à vue [...] je reviens un petit peu en arrière, les chiens, j'aimais les chiens donc, c'est quelque chose de l'ordre de la sculpture, c'est quelque chose qui est... qui transcende un peu mon idée première de la religion qui est pas facile pour moi surtout en ce moment enfin tout ce que ça dit tout ça, ça me branche pas tu vois donc c'est un peu, donc je vais être plutôt dans l'aspect... dans l'aspect sculpture, tu vois sculpture de la pierre voilà [...] voilà le fronton ne me plaît pas d'ailleurs je ne m'y arrête pas, comme ça d'un premier jet je m'y arrête pas trop, et...

Chercheur : — pourquoi il ne te plaît pas ?

Visiteur-e : — parce qu'il me rappelle l'église, il me rappelle quelque chose d'extrêmement formel de la religion qui en ce moment a vraiment tendance à me... à me repousser plutôt que m'attirer donc là je vais faire ce qui va me guider... c'est tout ce qui sort un petit peu du traditionnellement religieux, par exemple cette statue là m'a interpellée, parce qu'elle était différente des autres tu vois, c'est comme ça que je vais fonctionner... alors tu vois, je vais aller voir ce que c'est.

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Décrire et comprendre l'expérience des visiteurs

Composantes du signe hexadique Annie SH3

Représentamens

Les formes hors référence au champ religieux

Les statues réifiées en pierres

Engagements

Chercher une entrée dans une histoire qui ne soit pas religieuse

Glisser pour se repérer, trouver le lieu et revenir / Tester si une histoire autour des pierres est possible / Éviter, s'extraire du champ religieux

Anticipations

Attentes liées à une histoire hors du champ religieux

Attentes liées à se sentir guidée

Référentiels

Je connais la cathédrale ou certains éléments de la cathédrale

La sculpture (art) peut transcender la religion

Unité de cours d'expérience

Glisser-repérer des pierres et des formes

Interprétant

Le glisser-repérer permet de construire un sens aux pierres / construction du sens en cours à travers la dimension « sculpture »

Cours d'expérience Annie SH3

Pour échapper à ce qu'elle ressent comme une oppression, Annie évite visuellement le jubé et se concentre (Engagement) sur les statues. Elle est toujours à la recherche d'une prise pour entrer dans une histoire « qu'est-ce que ça dit, où ça m'emmène » (Anticipations). Mais ce qui la guide maintenant, « c'est les formes » (Représentamens) « ce qui a l'air moins religieux » (Anticipations), elle s'arrête pour lire le panneau graphique explicatif présenté sous forme d'un lutrin. Une stratégie originale se dessine : Annie « restreint » d'une certaine façon son champ visuel (nouvel Engagement) au point de ne plus voir des églises, des gâbles, des statues, mais simplement des formes et des pierres « quelque chose qui transcende l'idée de religion » et finalement « la sculpture de la pierre » (Représentamens). Rien de ce qu'elle perçoit n'offre de prise, elle glisse sur les pierres et les formes (Engagement) dans l'attente de trouver des œuvres qui lui permettent de rentrer dans une histoire (Anticipations). Cette réification des statues religieuses en pierres, en fragments ou en formes, cette transformation de la nature des Représentamens associée à des Anticipations d'évitement (éviter le champ religieux) est l'opération créative par laquelle Annie espère « entrer dans une histoire » et construire un sens à ces pierres. Annie trouve ainsi une solution originale à travers le resserrement de son champ visuel. Nous la voyons modifier son cadre perceptuel pour construire des Représentamens qui ne soient pas des statues religieuses et c'est de cette façon créative qu'elle peut composer avec cet environnement, le rendre supportable à défaut de le rendre « aimable ».

4. Les apports et les perspectives

Les analyses du cours d'expérience des visiteurs faites à partir d'un entretien en re-situ subjectif, nous ont permis de mettre en évidence que chaque élément, chaque expôt, chaque œuvre que nous percevons comme une chose-en-soi, évidente et offerte au regard de tous, émerge à travers un processus cognitif et corporel subtil et complexe. Ce processus engage chaque visiteur dans ce qui le constitue et traduit son rapport au monde, ses capacités physiologiques individuelles, cognitives singulières, perceptives, son histoire, ses connaissances, ses attentes, son désir de se lier aux « choses » en interaction avec les autres membres du groupe, eux aussi avec leurs propres capacités individuelles et singulières.

Ainsi, ce cadre épistémique et cette méthode permettent une compréhension fine de l'expérience de visite en situation naturelle. Surtout, le recensement de ces expériences étonnamment diverses fait émerger une préoccupation constante qui nous invite à repenser la nature même de la relation à l'environnement que constituent un espace muséal, des œuvres, des savoirs, des dispositifs.

Ce qui importe aux visiteurs, c'est de pouvoir se lier à cet environnement d'une façon qui leur convienne, en construisant des réponses adéquates aux questions qu'ils ou elles se posent à chaque instant et ce, indépendamment des intentions de l'institution muséale. Dès lors qu'ils obtiennent une réponse qui convient à leur préoccupation, ils savent ou connaissent quelque chose qui fait sens pour eux et ils éprouvent une sensation de plaisir. Cette approche, centrée sur une catégorisation des expériences plutôt que sur une catégorisation des publics pourrait transformer, élargir et enrichir durablement la gamme des propositions expérientielles offertes par les musées et ainsi augmenter en qualité et en proportion la satisfaction des visiteurs.

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THE INDIVIDUAL IN INDIAN MUSEUM REALITY

Anita B. Shah

Hyderabad, India

ABSTRACT

The child in his conscious practice of life imbibes physical and social skills to survive in his environment. The collective consciousness of the society decisively influences the individuals in its sphere and forms the basis of his multiple identities. The individual enters the museal reality with a unique set of genetically and socially acquired attributes. Personalizing every individual's experience seems to be beyond the scope of Indian museality at first glance because of its large population, tremendous diversity, few museums, limited funds and huge differences in the educational and social status of its people. Moreover, Indian cultural ethos nurtures social standards that sublimate the individual into a larger familial and social reality. Certain museums that were established more recently show improvements in addressing the individual visitor through their special exhibition techniques and programs. One important positive feature of Indian culture is its living intangible heritage that holds the power to stimulate an individual visitor to experience reality even in the museal environment. The Indian museum holds the transformative power to inspire individuals to introspect their own morality with regard to seeing the other as equal, so that each individual sees other cultures in light of similarity with his or her own culture and community, thus opening avenues to restructure and reconnect his or her self.

RÉSUMÉ

L'individu dans la réalité du musée indien

Dans la pratique de sa vie consciente, afin de survivre dans son environnement, l'enfant assimile des compétences physiques et sociales. Dans sa sphère, la conscience collective de la société influence de manière décisive les individus et forme la base de ses multiples identités. L'individu entre dans la réalité muséale avec un ensemble unique d'attributs génétiquement et socialement acquis. Une expérience personnelle par chaque individu semble être hors de portée de l'approche muséale des Indiens au premier coup d'œil, à cause de sa grande population, de son énorme diversité, de son peu de musées, de ses fonds limités et des énormes différences du statut éducatif et social de son peuple. De plus, l'éthos culturel indien nourrit des normes sociales qui subliment l'individu dans une plus grande réalité familiale et sociale. Certains musées qui se sont établis plus récemment montrent des améliorations en s'adressant au visiteur individuel par leurs techniques d'exposition et leurs programmes spéciaux. Un trait positif important de la culture indienne est son patrimoine immatériel vivant, lequel détient le pouvoir de stimuler les visiteurs individuels d'éprouver la réalité, même dans l'environnement muséal. Le musée indien détient le pouvoir de d'inciter l'individu à voir l'autre comme l'égal de lui-même, de façon à ce que chaque individu voie d'autres cultures à la lumière de leur ressemblance avec sa propre culture et avec sa propre communauté, et ouvre ainsi des avenues pour se restructurer et se reconnecter lui-même.

Anita Shah

The individual in Indian museum reality

RESUMEN

El Individuo en la realidad de los museos indios

Cada niño humano nace con un conjunto totalmente único de características genéticas y sin conciencia alguna de la vida dentro de una realidad social. A través de la práctica social, el niño adquiere habilidades físicas y sociales que le permiten adaptarse y sobrevivir a su entorno. La conciencia colectiva de la sociedad influye decisivamente en los individuos que hacen parte de ella, estableciendo las bases de sus múltiples identidades. El individuo entra en la realidad del museo con este único conjunto de atributos genéticos y socialmente adquiridos. Personalizar la experiencia para cada individuo parece estar más allá del alcance de la musealidad india, debido a su numerosa población, su inmensa diversidad, sus pocos museos, los fondos limitados con los que estos cuentan y las grandes diferencias en la situación educativa y social de las personas. La cultura india provee proscriciones y transcripciones sociales que subliman al individuo a una realidad familiar y social de mayores dimensiones. Algunos de los museos establecidos más recientemente, presentan mejores técnicas de exhibición y programas especiales para abordar a cada uno de sus visitantes. La cultura india presenta una importante y positiva característica, su herencia viviente e intangible, que es capaz de estimular a cada visitante a experimentar la realidad, incluso a través del ambiente museístico. El museo tiene el poder transformador de inspirar al individuo a una introspección de su propia moralidad de respeto equitativo, de tal manera que cada uno de los visitantes pueda apreciar otras culturas de manera similar a como lo hace con propia cultura y desde su propia comunidad. Esto abre vías para reestructurar y reconectarse consigo mismo en el proceso de la auto-reinvención.

* * *

Evolution of human thought has brought us to the platform where we understand and respect importance of perceptions of people, as it is the perceptions of people that give meaning to objects. This realization has made it increasingly clear that people and society matter more than an institution. It has brought a paradigm shift in our focus, moving people and society rather than the institution to the center stage. The older contours of deliberations have changed and forced us to ask questions and rewrite our cannons of inquiry. To start on this journey of inquiry I want to elaborate on the following four questions:

- 1) What is the definition of 'I' in the individual?
- 2) How is 'I' in the individual integrated with reality? How is 'I' related to the surrounding reality?
- 3) How are 'I' and the encompassing social reality integrated with the museal¹ reality?
- 4) Individual in museal¹ reality in the Indian context.

¹ According to Mairesse and Desvallées (2010), Museal is defined as: 1) A specific relationship with reality; 2. On a level with political, social, religious, economic...; 3. Can be found at the crossroads of several fronts; 4. Museums did not bring about museology but rather museality brought about museums; 5. No filters/skills needed to experience the museality. Mairesse, François and André Desvallées, *Key concepts of Museology*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2010, p. 48-50

The conscious practice of life

Contemplating on the 'I' of the individual brings us to the very basic aspect, which starts with the consciousness of life. Each human child is born with a totally unique set of genetic characteristics and a bare consciousness of life. S/he is born in a family, in a particular social and cultural set up that is part of a community, which is part of a social and geographical landscape of a country. The child in his conscious practice of life learns language from his social reality and gradually imbibes a set of physical and social skills necessary to survive in his environment. With time the child develops a value system and various aspects of his character in interaction with society. The child is shaping into a distinct individual and this individuality is dynamic as it is constantly evolving in response to the surrounding reality that comprises of both social and virtual.

“I” and society

Here we have to step away cautiously from the false misconception that the individual and society are two completely isolated entities. We have familiar concepts of individual and society, the first of which refers to a single human being, and should be noted that this individual does not exist in complete isolation. Similarly, society is not mere accumulation of individuals living together geographically. Society is the ever-expanding reality that encircles an individual constantly interacting with him/ her in the process changing, molding the individual and which is also in the process of dynamic evolution. The collective consciousness of the society decisively influences the thoughts and actions of individuals growing up and living in its sphere and this single human being labeled the individual, and the plurality of individuals conceived as society are ontologically one whole entity. The individual is an integral part of society, at the same time the society becomes an internalized part of the individual. The 'I' of the individual is born out of the collective consciousness of the warp and weft of biological and social reality of life. If one were to attempt a definition of 'I' in consonance with the current state of neuroscience, 'I' would be the expression of the uniqueness of a phenotype, measured and assessed in terms of its interactions with its environment. In relation to this, one could answer the question: "Who is the I in me?" with the explanation that "me" is the material infrastructure and "I" is the personal perceptual image of "me" of herself/himself.

“I” and “Me” are part of the self. But what is self? Does the self consist of social roles a human being plays out in the domain of social reality? The self can be conceived as a multi-dimensional field of reality, where both “I” and “Me” are not just a simple extension of the social structure ingenuously and uncritically conceptualized and constructed, it also comprises of what the ‘others’ conceive and expect of him/her. The relationship among these is one of autonomy and interpenetration. “I,” “Me,” “self” and “society” can help each other to realize aspirations, dreams and unrealized potential as part of fields of actions, reflections and transformations.

The self in the individual is constantly reconnecting through interaction with its environment, restructuring the multiple dimensional roles it has to perform and in the process reinventing itself to face the challenges life brings forth. To reconnect, restructure and reinvent the self is constantly in dialogue with herself/himself. As Vitaly Ananiev says “ that in some ways a man “is sentenced to dialogue”, and every museum, regardless of the techniques used there, is a dialogic museum.” In this context creation of vibrant social spaces of creativity nurtured by arts as in the museum space can help vibrant minds to flourish.

Museal reality in the Indian context

Every individual comes to the museum armed with a unique set of genetic inheritance and also an equally unique set of socially acquired attributes. The individual enters the museum with a special set of perceptual abilities and a natural propensity towards certain objects that have been musealised², uniquely perceiving and experiencing the museal field of reality. It would be interesting to contemplate at this juncture on whether it is possible to cater to this difference and personalize each individual's experience? The primary objective of the museum is to cater to the entire population. Museums uphold the ethics of equal rights and non-discrimination. With these values clear in our minds it would be better to concentrate and discern the common threads that can stitch the diverse human differences.

Personalizing every individual's experience seems to be beyond the scope of Indian museality at first glance. As India has a very large population exhibiting tremendous diversity in terms of language, religious beliefs, dress, cuisine, traditions, holidays, in short there are wide cultural and social differences among the people of India. The contradictions that exist have to be experienced to be believed. Further more, the divide between educational qualifications and social status is also huge. India has not achieved 100% literacy among its population. However, with the expanding economy the middle class is growing, with more leisure and money at its disposal, resulting in the increase in the number of people visiting museums. But Indian museums have limited funds to cater to the increasing number of people.

However, a very positive feature that comes to the forefront is the preservation of intangible heritage to a great extent through oral traditions that makes up the collective memory of the community. Indian culture has retained a great part of its ancient traditions, mores, religious practices customs of rites of passage and many more customs. There are many places of worship that are centuries old, especially temples all over India that follow rituals and customs coming down as family traditions. For example, the son of a priest of the temple is expected to carry forward the traditions of worship his father and ancestors did. Likewise, many traditional arts and crafts also run in the families of a community, therefore the son/daughter of a sculptor, painter, potter, weaver etc., most likely continues in the same profession. So we have whole communities, villages and even towns of a region devoted to particular arts and crafts for generations. These arts and crafts are absorbed by the society at large as they were mostly associated with specific rituals of a particular community. This practice is still continuing, though modernization has affected it. The Indian Government and some Indian museums are playing an active role in preserving traditional arts and crafts by facilitating the traditional lifestyle of craftspeople.

India has a living culture that is not very far from the past and its collective memory has not been obliterated completely. Although some of it has been lost, changed, evolved in different ways but a great deal is still part of the living culture unlike as in the western society as Kerstin Smeds points out "Firstly, that the museum, as well as museology, is engaged with the sense of Loss and with the problem of collective Experience (Erfahrung) of Time and Reality in western culture, ever since "modernity" entered the scene at the end of the 18th century. The museum is engaged with Absence. It is the House of Lack, seeking to regain and recreate our losses with the aid of objects." This

² Musealisation is the action of selecting the object and then the integration of the object into the museum. It refers to the operation for extracting a thing, physically or conceptually, from its original, natural or cultural environment and providing it with the museal status (turning it into a museum object, or musealium). Involves change of context. Mairesse, François and André Desvallées, *Key concepts of Museology*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2010, p. 51-52.

may not wholly apply to the Indian reality. The intangible culture and the collective memory of the Indian people have been retained to a great extent through oral transmission, adherence to traditional practices and following scriptures. However, globalization, western influence and migrations are bringing faster change. But with modernization radicalization of religious beliefs is also increasing as expressed by the increase in terrorist activities.

An interesting feature that I observed in many museums all over India was people standing in devout postures before the sculptures of gods and goddesses inside a museum, they even place flowers on sculptures kept in the museum garden. A popular belief, which is part of the collective memory of Hindu tenets, is that you can consider a sculpture to be God and worship it devoutly or consider it just stone or metal. The perception lies in the judgment of the beholder. The point is that the museum personnel while curating and displaying the object did not solicit for such a 'religious' response. Here the visitor is reacting to an object in the museum on his individual terms, identifying with his religious identity. Therefore, the display may be as John Falk in his keynote address says "...the content the visitor chooses to focus on may or may not bear much resemblance to the content the museum professionals who designed the experience hoped they'd attend to ... learning seemed to be totally independent of whether high or low quality exhibits were seen and engaged with. In short, the museum experience is influenced by the nature of the museum and its exhibitions, but not exclusively."

We can presume that the individual visitor reacts to the objects in the museum based on her/his personality traits. These personality traits develop as a result of interactions between the individual's unique genetic make up and enveloping social and virtual reality. Secondly, it also depends on the visitor's multiple identities that come into play in the museal reality. Thirdly, it is influenced by his/her memory of the living intangible heritage that is part of the collective memory of the culture to which the visitor belongs that was associated with the musealised objects. This illustrates that though all museums in India have not evolved or updated to suit the needs and aspirations of the changing audience, yet they are able to attract a huge number of visitors as the objects still hold the power to elicit a response similar to the one it was originally intended for, because of the continued flow of intangible heritage as part of the collective memory of the society. Musealised objects that the visitor is able to relate to any one of his multiple identities capture his/her attention starts a dialogue within her/himself. Legene quotes Kwame Anthony Appiah "the connection people feel to cultural objects that are symbolically theirs, because they were produced from within a world of meaning created by their ancestors – the connection of art through identity - are powerful. It should be acknowledged."

Museum as part of the social reality in India

A few museums in India, especially those established after 1990s attempt to address the individual visitor. The Arts and Crafts Museum, New Delhi, The Tribal Museum, Bhubhaneshwar and the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangralaya, Bhopal are a few examples of museums in India that are visitor-centered. Last year I was invited to attend a conference at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sanghralaya in Bhopal. My personal experience at this museum was gratifying. Informal observations of the visitors revealed interesting facets. This museum has been successful in bringing people from all walks of life including the tribal people into the museal reality. The objects here connect with the visitors communicating without too many labels to distract attention. Most of the galleries have living artisans belonging to the communities who had created the objects. These artisans also have contributed to

curating the galleries. Here the people native to a particular culture play an important role in creating spaces showcasing their culture. They provide guidance to the visitors who seek their help. Here I witnessed an interesting interaction between an individual visitor and the 'artisan' caretaker in the museum. The visitor was looking at an object and I presume wondering what the decorative motifs on the object represented. The artisan came forward and a verbal interaction between them ensued. With the expression on the face of the visitor I could gauge that the artisan was able to explain the object with ease and conviction. Later, on enquiry he revealed that he was a Gond artist and the object belonged to his culture. This museum is popular with the local people as well as the tourists who visit Bhopal, and has gained popularity in the neighboring towns.

This museum regularly organizes exhibitions of regional arts and crafts serving as a platform for popularizing tribal arts, giving an opportunity to living artists, traditional crafts people to bring their arts and crafts into mainstream society, at the same time providing livelihood and bringing a revival to these living traditional arts and crafts. This activity of the museum opens up the direct channel of communication between the artist, craftsperson and visitors. Here the artisan demonstrates his ingenuity in producing her/his art. While s/he is demonstrating in the museum the individual visitor can directly communicate with the artist. When an exhibition of a single region is taken up by the museum there is ample opportunity for the individual visitor to interact with the artisan on a one to one basis. I have experienced this direct interaction personally. I was attending an exhibition and demonstration of hand embroidery by tribal women from Kutch, a province in the state of Gujarat in a museum as one of the visitors. These people were tribal living in the Rann of Kutch, which is very dry and desolate. They decorate their clothes with stunning intricate, artistic hand embroidery in a riot of colors and motifs in a style typical to their community. On my visit to this exhibition I saw many individual visitors talking to the artists curious to know about the motifs and the techniques of making certain embroidery stitches, as each stitch was minute and delicate. It had especially caught the imagination of the fairer sex. I was inspired to ask one of the artisans what these special motifs signified. She informed that they consider certain symbols as auspicious and make them on bridal dresses. The mother teaches her daughter these techniques. An interesting feature she mentioned was a particular stitch is associated with a particular community of the region. So every community has its own stitch and typical design that they primarily use. It is a unique way of identifying a community through changes in the same art form. This social practice of different styles and techniques of embroidery show how art is being used as a means of expressing identity. Art is a powerful medium of expressing identity worldwide.

Individualism as perceived in the Indian social context

My experience at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangralaya makes me feel that in the Indian context, the museum is a small, but now an important part of the social web that human beings have created around them. It is that space of social reality that can help individuals to find their own space, their roots giving them a sense of their identity. The museal reality restores the centrality to the human individual, which then, may be viewed as the nucleus of the social reality and the fountain of creativity. From this perspective, then, society would be conceived as a facilitating mechanism so that the individual may pursue his dreams. The museum being seen as the lubricating oil for the functioning of the social machine that facilitates the emergence and the pursuit of various values. Indian culture nurtures social transcriptions and proscriptions that sublimate the individual into a larger familial and social reality. Modernistic humanism privileges individualism. But this is individualism of an egoistic and possessive kind, in the light of Indian ethos. In the Indian cultural context individualism needs to be transformed into a relational individuality possessed by a multi-valued logic of

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autonomy. This realization of a dignity of relationship between individual and community can be grasped by dialogue between different cultures and traditions. The museum is the space where the individual can be challenged to rethink this relationship of emphasis that is laid either on the individual or the community, and reconstitute a harmonic balance between the two.

Museal reality and its transformative strength in the Indian context

At the same time, museum is also the place for self-development. Self refers to an egoistic dimension of the individual as well as its transcendental and transversal connectivity to the social reality. Self-development means development of all these multi-dimensions of the self in an essence of autonomy and interpenetration. The project of self-development is deeply entrenched with the inclusion of the other. In these times of globalization, we also need a vision and practice of transformative inclusion. Cultivation of a new global humanity involves multi-dimensional processes of inclusion of the other in the various pursuits of humanity. This inclusion of other should be characterized by sensitivity to difference, which can be experienced in the field of museal reality. The museum holds transformative power and this can be used to stimulate in the individual issues about the morality of equal respect, so that each individual no longer confronts other cultures and life forms as alien but experiences an interlinked system of consciousness that connects humanity together with all the life forms and the planet Earth. The emphasis on the acceptance of difference is highly relevant in the Indian context to combat the challenges of radicalization.

To make the field of museal reality strong in relation to its transformative power, we have to discern the underlying common threads that bind humanity and all forms of life together. We have control over the creation of the field of museal reality. The museum in this sense is an artificial space created in answer to specific needs and aspirations of human beings. It is the space where the individual discovers, introspects about the "I", "Me" self and society. However, the museum space at times runs the risk of appearing bland and glossy conveying a sense of nonchalance to the visitors, resulting in freezing their emotions. To keep alive the imaginative play in the intellectual and emotional planes of visitors the Indian museum can add necessary material needed and ask the visitors to draw, paint, write or just speak into a recording device what they have seen and felt in the museum. The cost of such an exercise would be minimal, as in the Indian context museums would require just basic stationary and an audio recording machine. This small initiative will open a Pandora's box of dialogues between the visitors and the museum. By introducing a transformative field of interaction, the museum can cajole visitors to interact with objects at the rational and emotional level. Today technology can help us to explore and understand the perceptions of the visitors with greater ease. Instead of having just one -way communication, like a 'loud speaker,' we could open the two -way communication channel as in a 'telephone'. In short, the transformative force that is open at both ends, influencing the visitors and the museal field of reality will be highly beneficial to all concerned. It will make visitors to feel 'special' by boosting their sense of empowerment.

Conclusion

The museum can help the individual to form the basis for understanding on how to accept difference. It is the most important issue that modern Indian society is confronting. Indian museums have in traditional ways addressed the individual visitor with activities, but the Indian ethos of the individual's own particular extended family and community being more important than the person who is part of it remains an obstacle to focusing on the individual. However, the potential exists that the Indian

museums can inspire an individual on considering other cultures and life forms as similar to their own and interconnected on a much larger scale than their own community. This focus on the individual by the museum can play an important role for the benefit of the Indian society. In the Indian context it can stimulate her/him to think for her/himself as an individual entity, introspect on beliefs, attitudes towards life in general. Her/his exposure to various cultures and beliefs will open avenues to restructure and reconnect her/his self in the process reinventing her/himself.

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HERE COMES EVERYBODY! THE VISITOR BUSINESS IN MUSEUMS IN THE LIGHT OF EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

Kerstin Smeds

Professor of Museology, Department of Culture and Media Sciences
Umeå University, Sweden

ABSTRACT

This paper will discuss some ideas on learning and “understanding” in a communicative process, particularly attached to objects in a museum setting. I will analyse our object relations and the idea of engagement, participation and collaboration in museums. A starting point is, on the one hand, today’s individualization of society, with self-performative action as a result. On the other hand there is a “radical group-forming” tendency that goes along with new communication technologies that has created an “architecture” of participation. Museums have responded to these new tendencies in society in a variety of ways. I will bring up some hermeneutical aspects to the “visitor business” and “learning” and point out the social and phenomenological origin of identity, thought and cognition. I will take a look at the identity of the “radical” individual on the one hand and of the institution on the other, and point out some unsolved museological and paradigmatic problems in the interaction between these two. Finally I will discuss the very much overlooked question how do institutions think, and work?

RÉSUMÉ

Et les voilà tous! La question du visiteur du musée à la lumière de la philosophie de l’existence

Cet article développe quelques idées sur l’étude et la compréhension dans un contexte de communication, particulièrement attaché aux objets dans un cadre muséal. Je voudrais analyser nos rapports à l’objet ainsi que ce qui concerne l’engagement, la participation et la collaboration entre musées. D’un côté, un point de départ se situe dans le rôle primordial de l’individu dans la société actuelle, avec l’action auto-performative qui en résulte. D’un autre côté, on tend vers « la création du groupe radical » qui accompagne les nouvelles technologies de communication, lesquels ont créé "une architecture" de participation. Les musées ont répondu à ces nouvelles tendances de la société par une variété de moyens. Je soulignerai quelques aspects herméneutiques à "l’activité de visiteur" et à "l’étude" et j’indiquerai l’origine sociale et phénoménologique de l’identité, de la pensée et de la connaissance. Je jeterai un coup d’œil, d’une part sur l’identité de l’individu "radical" et, de l’autre sur l’institution, et je pointerai quelques problèmes muséologiques et paradigmatiques non résolus dans l’interaction entre les deux. Finalement, j’examinerai cette question très négligée : comment les institutions pensent-elles et travaillent-elles ?

RESUMEN

Acá viene todo el mundo! La cuestión del visitante del museo a la luz de la filosofía

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Este artículo desarrolla algunas ideas sobre aprendizaje y "comprensión" en los procesos comunicativos, sobre todo en relación a los objetos en el contexto del museo. Voy a analizar las relaciones que establecemos con los objetos, las ideas de compromiso, participación y colaboración en los museos. Un punto de partida es, por una parte, el individualismo en la sociedad actual, con la consiguiente acción auto-performativa. Por otro lado, existe una tendencia "a la formación de grupos radicalizados" que junto con las nuevas tecnologías de la comunicación han creado una "arquitectura" de la participación. Los museos han respondido a estas nuevas tendencias de la sociedad de manera muy variada. Pondré énfasis en algunos aspectos hermenéuticos de la "actividad del visitante" y del "aprendizaje" para señalar el origen social y fenomenológico de la identidad, el pensamiento y la cognición. Voy a realizar un somero análisis de la identidad del individuo "radical", por una parte y de la institución por otra, señalando algunos problemas museológicos y paradigmáticos no resueltos en la interacción entre los dos. Por último, me referiré a una cuestión frecuentemente pasada por alto: ¿cómo piensan las instituciones, y cómo trabajan?

* * *

Introduction

Today, museum discourses are subject to deep change in response to shifts in Western society during the last 25 years. As a starting point this paper looks at one of the outcomes of these shifts: the "radical individualization" of society and the impact this has had on ways of communication as well as ways museums receive their visitors. Radical individualization is closely linked to the rejection of classical universal humanistic values of Enlightenment.¹ If there are no objective ethical, educational or identity linked 'truths,' it's up to the individual to establish her own standards. Instead of searching a universal prototype, the individual looks inwards and tries to build up his or her unique self, says Ulrich Beck:

In the individualized society the individual must ... learn to understand himself as the centre of events, as an 'administration office' for his own existence, talents, orientations etc. If one will survive, one must ignore intellectual games and develop a self-centred world view, which turns the relationship between the individual and society on its head, in a way which is usable for the individual's purpose.²

According to this, the Danish social analysts Lars Geer Hammershøj and Lars-Henrik Schmidt have formulated a theory of 'self-formation' and 'self-performance'.³ Self-formation is here seen as opposed to the traditional concept of universal '*Bildung*' (cultivation/erudition), which was understood as a common good. Self-formation is an aesthetic practice of the self, concerned with the unfolding of the personality.⁴ Whereas in the classical concept of *Bildung*, the individual (ideally) assimilates the universal values and becomes part of the larger, in the case of self-formation the individual experiences the larger, and then returns to his or her own particularity. Self-

¹ See further: Kerstin Smeds, 'The Escape of the Object? – crossing territorial borders between collective and individual, national and universal', in: *Museology and Techniques*, Edited by Hildegard K. Viereggs, Munich/Germany. ICOFOM Study Series – ISS 36. Vienna/Austria, August 20-22, 2007, web edition: <http://network.icom.museum/icofom/publications/our-publications/>]

² Ulrich Beck, *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*. Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt am Main 1986 ; See also Ulrich Beck, 'Living our Own Life in a Runaway World. Individualisation, Globalisation and Politics' in: *Global Capitalism*, Edited by Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens. New Press: New York 2000.

³ L.G. Hammershøj, *Selvdannelse og socialitet – forsøg på en socialanalytisk samtidssdiagnose*. Danmarks Pædagogiska Universitet, København 2003.

⁴ Hammershøj, pp 443-444;

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performance is, consequently, the way an individual seeks on a “social stage” to perform the personal qualities she has gained.

However, today new information technology also allows easier group formation, and has enabled us to *share* things without any institutional intervention. As Clay Shirky puts it in his book *Here Comes Everybody*:

Electronic networks are enabling novel form of collective action, enabling creation of collaborative groups that are larger and more distributed than at any other time in history. The scope of work that can be done by non-institutional groups is a profound challenge to the status quo. ... it [is] easier for people to get together – so much easier, in fact, that it is changing the world.⁵

People have always wanted to share things, experiences and thoughts, and the obstacles that prevented sharing on a global scale are now nearly gone. *Sharing, cooperation, collective action* and *collaborative production* are, according to Shirky, the modes of social behavior that networks allow. When sharing, it is usually the individual person who shares his personality, or himself as a “product”, or things that are important to him, with others. “Everyone is a media outlet”, says Shirky.⁶ Unlike sharing, cooperation creates group identity – you know who you are cooperating with, and you add a group identity to your personal one. In collective action (e.g. in politics) and collaborative production (e.g. Wikipedia) anyone can contribute, and no single person can take credit for what is produced. The result is not only the increase of user aggregated information on the web, according to an “architecture of participation”, but also a mass amateurization of production, previously reserved only for professionals. This is particularly typical for mass media but also for museums and other cultural institutions whose authority is thus challenged. This problem I will discuss briefly in the last section of this paper.

The architecture of participation raises new challenges. According to studies on participatory online audiences, only a fraction of the users would be defined as “creators” – those who produce, upload, write content.⁷ Danish researcher Jakob Nielsen has studied participation inequality on the web, introducing the 90-9-1 principle, which states: “in most online communities, 90% of users are lurkers who never contribute, 9 % of users contribute a little, and 1% of users account for almost all the action.”⁸ Translated into museum language Nina Simon concludes that if visitors were to be left alone in the museum, free to “contribute” and use the resources offered by the museum, only a tiny per cent would really do this. Therefore, visitors should be *invited* to participate, according to their personal needs and priorities.⁹ The “inviting” principle is also John Falk’s point, introducing his visitor-identities-model with the aim of “attracting” visitors.¹⁰ On the other hand, many visitors really prefer to be left alone to wander. But what options do they have, then, for interaction and engagement?

I. Visitors’ value – what’s up?

Many museums have adapted to the principles of market economy by modifying the concept of “shareholder’s value” into “visitor’s value” as a guiding principle for museum

⁵ Shirky, Clay, *Here Comes Everybody. The Power of Organizing without Organizations*. Penguin Press: New York 2008. p 48.

⁶ Ibid. p 55.

⁷ Ibid. p 9.

⁸ Jakob Nielsen, ‘Participation inequality: Encouraging More Users to Contribute’, at <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/ref1-7/>, cited p 9, in: Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*. Published by MUSEUM, Santa Cruz, California 2010.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ John H. Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*. Left Coast Press, California 2009

activities and communication.¹¹ Another corporate analogy would be the shift from product-centred to consumer-centred marketing. Today, museums are (allowed to be) collection based only as far as their collections serve people. Accordingly, Zahava Doering, in the *Curator* in 1999, addresses the visitor as “client”. She foresaw many of the current ideas on the visitor-orientation in museums. She divided in three categories the ways museums view their visitors: *stranger*, *guest*, and *client*.¹² For our purposes, the third category, *client*, is crucial. The self-formative visitor has taken command and is no longer subordinate to the museum and its will. Doering acknowledges that visitors use museums for their own vast variety of purposes, no matter what “message” the museum tries to transmit. In Beck’s words, rather than hoping to be “educated” they seek opportunities for self-performance. Together with Kelly and Godbey, Doering points out the museum’s role in leisure activities that serves people’s need for

personal self-definitions and agendas for development. ... [Here] individuals take action that has consequences for who they are and who they are becoming. There is a developmental dimension to leisure that runs through the entire life course.¹³

Doering and her colleagues found that individuals come to museums with different “*entrance narratives*” which steers their needs, desires and behavior. An “entrance narrative” has three main components: 1. A basic framework, that is, the fundamental way that individuals construct and contemplate the world; 2. Information about a subject matter or topic, organized according to that basic framework; 3. Personal experiences, emotions, and memories that verify and support this understanding. “Entrance narrative” would easily be equaled with the concept of identity, used by many others.

Doering draws the conclusion that the museums visitors find most satisfying are those that resonate with their “entrance narrative” and confirm and enrich their existing view of the world. From this point of view, the museum visitor wants to engage in active, creative, intellectual, and emotional processes that include remembering, imagining or revering objects, and using objects to tell stories to others. D. Carr has called meaning making an act of “personal transformation”:

To see the museum as an open work is to recognize that it is always discovered by its users in an unfinished state, not unlike seeing it as a laboratory, or a workshop for cognitive change. It is a setting where the museum offers tools, materials and processes for systematic exploratory approaches to experience and purposive thought that leads one further towards insight – and toward the occasional, exquisite transforming surprise. The great museum allows its users to ask – and to answer – the question, *What transformation is possible for me here?*¹⁴

These were radical thoughts 20 years ago – even more accurately described than the definitions that John Falk or Nina Simon present in their recent works, and very far from the traditional idea of “museum education”.¹⁵ Visitor studies indicate that people go to museums not to “learn”, but rather to engage in “identity-work”.¹⁶ Other studies indicate

¹¹ For more material on this discussion, see the two previous ICOFOM SERIES of conference presentations, ISS 40: *The Dialogic Museum and the Visitor Experience*; and ISS 41 part 1-2: *Empowering the visitor: Process, Progress, Protest*. Both to be found at <http://network.icom.museum/icofom/publications/our-publications/>

¹² Zahava D. Doering, ‘Strangers, Guests or Clients? Visitor Experiences in Museums’ in: *Curator* 42/2 April 1999. pp 74 – 87.

¹³ Kelly, J.R. & Godbey, G., *The Sociology of Leisure*. State College, PA, 1992, cited in Doering, pp 78-79

¹⁴ Cit. in Doering, p 81.

¹⁵ John H. Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*. Left Coast Press, California 2009 ; Simon, 2010.

¹⁶ Falk, p 59.

that meaning-making (“learning”) during a museum visit depended on individuals in discussions and social interaction in a group.¹⁷

Social interaction, contexts and individual experience have been at the core of the discussion on museum education ever since Georges Hein in 1995 postulated that the viewer constructs very personal knowledge from the exhibits, and that the process of gaining knowledge is itself a constructive act [based on context].¹⁸ Constructivist educational theory argues that in any discussion of teaching and learning the focus needs to be on the learner, not on the subject to be learned. The learner has to be treated as an individual. And an individual is not very apt to be “educated”, if he doesn’t experience any understanding, and thus meaning.

John Falk, in his visitor learning theory, leans heavily on what he calls “identity-related motivations” and “free-choice learning”.¹⁹ Interestingly, Falk’s definition of identity is very similar to the phenomenological concepts of identity and person, although he never refers to these:

... our identity can be defined as something that has always “situated” in the immediate realities of the physical and socio-cultural world. Our identity is a reflection and reaction to both the social and physical world we consciously perceive in the moment, but identity is also influenced by the vast unconscious set of family, cultural, and personal history influences each of us carries within us. Each is continually constructing and maintaining, not one, but numerous identities which are expressed collectively or individually²⁰

The five categories of modern museum visitors that Falk identifies – explorer, facilitator, experience seeker, professional/hobbyist, and recharger – all come to the museum with their own motivations and expectations. The museum is supposed to acknowledge these and offer appropriate participatory affordances and resources. But Falk does not really make any new suggestions as to *what* kind of resources, and *how*, the museums should offer.

Nina Simon takes this a bit further. She stresses that instead of being “about” something or “for” someone, participatory institutions would be created and managed “with” the visitor. A participatory institution collects and shares diverse, personalized and changing content *co-produced* with visitors. She speaks of museum visitors as *contributors*; of *collaborating* and of *co-creating* together with visitors.²¹ This comes, in my view, very close to general ideas of how people behave when networking in cyberspace, and corresponds accordingly with Shirky’s concepts of sharing, cooperation, and collective action. Simon recognizes three necessary components for participatory activity to be successful: “a plausible promise, an effective tool, and an acceptable bargain with the [participants].²² She states that:

The institution must promise an appealing participant experience. The institution must provide access to tools for participation that are easy to understand and use. And the bargain between institution and participants – regarding

¹⁷ Joyce Fienberg & Gaea Leinhardt, ‘Looking through the glass: Reflections of identity in conversations at a history museum, in : Leinhardt, G., Crowley, K., Knutson, K. (ed.), *Learning Conversations in Museums*. London 2002.

¹⁸ Georges Hein, “The Constructivist Museum”, in: *Journal for Education in Museums* No. 16, 1995. p 21-23.

¹⁹ Falk, p 59.

²⁰ Ibid. p 78.

²¹ Simon, Preface p iii.

²² Simon, p 17.

management of intellectual property, outcomes of the project, and feedback to participants – should accommodate participants' needs.²³

There we are. All of this is fine. But here the trouble begins.

II. Existential philosophy and meaning-making

Speaking about the “visitor business” in theoretical terms is all about identity, experience, learning and meaning-making, about models and modes of communication, about text, representation, rhetoric and semiotics. In a way, all (museum) educational theories of the day do that.

Most current (museum) learning theories – diverse as they are – have a few perspectives in common; firstly the individualistic approach to learning, and secondly a statement that human action, experience, and learning are “situated”; that is, they are occurring in specific social, cultural, historical and institutional contexts.²⁴ All of them have, as a matter of fact, developed along with increased interest in a hermeneutic and phenomenological view within the human and social sciences. The positivist theory of “the One Way the World Is” has by now been overturned by the more communicatively oriented philosophers who observed that subjectivity as well as objectivity both have been constituted communicatively under fallible circumstances. Jürgen Habermas has argued that the idea of “communicative reason” had to replace the empiricist idea of subject-object relationships. Advocates of “communicative action” theories argue that understanding requires more than only “observing” – it requires dialogue and action.²⁵

Knowledge is not an object, the philosopher Hans Georg Gadamer argued; it is not something you *have*, or *get* or gain from some source “outside” yourself, but something you *participate in*.²⁶ For instance, to look at some piece of art would not be a commonplace (active observing) subject – (passive receiving) object relationship. What counts, is the “experience” which emerges at the very point where artwork and observer *meets*. There learning/meaning-making occurs.

In hermeneutics, *understanding* and *involvement* are the two core concepts embedded in the act of meaning-making. In his work *Sein und Zeit* [Being and Time] Martin Heidegger defines hermeneutics as our *existential* ability to understand and interpret, and thus discern the *possibilities* in life.²⁷ According to Heidegger, and Gadamer, understanding is not something we “have”, simply to use when we need it. Understanding is, instead, “constitutive” [essential] of our *being-in-the-world*.²⁸ Understanding and involvement are firmly grounded in the idea of individuality and identity. Understanding that does not come down to the core of the individual is no real understanding.²⁹

Gadamer’s philosophy is called *existential hermeneutics*.³⁰ Language, text, objects as well as the encounter with them, must be viewed from an existential point of view.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ The “Context oriented model” (Falk & Dierking); the “Experiential learning model” (Jacobsen); the “User generated education”- model (Geerstein); the “Viewer-oriented model”(Taylor); the “Learning by doing”- model (Streeck et.al ; Steinkühler et.al.); the “Knowledge through action”-model (Molander; Schön)).

²⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Cambridge, Polity Press, pp 301, 311.

²⁶ Per-Johan Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande. Hermeneutik i teori och praktik*. Norstedts, Stockholm. p 27.

²⁷ Palmer p 130. Ödman p 25.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ H.C. Wind, *Historie og forståelse. Filosofisk hermeneutik*. Aarhus Universitetsforlag 1987. p 19-20.

³⁰ *ibid.* pp 28, 29.

Language is the tool which anchors the individual in time and place with the aid of *memory*, *expectation* and *attention*. Gadamer emphasizes the role of *tradition* in all actions and events. A person who interprets is always constrained by the cultural context, traditions, customs and institutions. All this together makes up what Heidegger names the *life-world* of a person. Life-world is the "horizon of interpretation" of a person. Life-world is where an individual's *being-in-the-world* is constituted, where identity is formed, where she belongs. In the mind of a person, this "life-world horizon" constitutes the *prejudice* [Vorstruktur: precondition, literary translated prestructure], something close to the idea of a "world view," which is already there when an interpretation takes place. The *prejudice* is thus firmly anchored in time, in history and tradition. Without *prejudice* no meaning can be created³¹ or, to use a didactic term, no *learning* can take place. The act of meaning-making, then, takes place at the very point where the "horizon" of the interpreter and the "product" (a text, image, object or whatever) *meet*. A *fusion* [mergence] of *horizons* takes place, real communication happens and something new (knowledge) will be created.³²

Gadamer's "mergence, also called "fusion" would, in my view, come close to Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic idea of a "plot".³³ To keep some order in the communicative chaos, Ricoeur uses the word "plot". As a kind of silent tribute to Gadamer, he states that the "reader" or interpreter always *becomes a part of the story* – there will occur a joining of the "worlds" of the reader and the "text". This mixture is what he calls a "plot". The plot, then, consists of all that shaped the "text" during its coming into being, and all that shaped the "reader" during his life. The reader always brings with him his personal preconditions as well as his awareness of the "here and now". According to Ricoeur, the open possibilities of interpretation (e.g. of a text or exhibit) are as many as the readers are. So here they come now – everybody! Accessibility (to museums), says Hilde Hein, is a matter of personal interpretation, and diversity of the past compounds diversity of the present.³⁴ For our purposes, these ideas correspond neatly, I think, with John Falk's definitions of "experiential learning" based on "identity-motivations" and Doering's "entrance narratives".

Speaking of socialization and dialog in the museum space, one last concept of Gadamer's should be mentioned here: that of a "play" or "game" (*Spiele*). In a game, an individual is not solely "himself", but also a *player partaking in the game*. To be able to play the game successfully he obeys certain rules. *Spiele* is a metaphor for social interaction on many levels. The social interaction that takes place in a museum or an exhibit, or in the cyber world, would in these terms be a "social game". In cooperation and collaborative action, not to speak about collaborative production, playing the game, sticking to rules, is crucial. We play the game and the "game plays with us", is a well-known saying of Gadamer's, which I would likely to apply to museums.³⁵ However, we are not only players obeying rules; we also like to play just for amusement and joy – together. As Nina Simon puts it: "You can find a place to play, a place to be inspired, a place to shop". Museums should be thought of as multi-use-venues.³⁶

III. On things

³¹ Jan Lindhardt, 'Historieforskningens hermeneutik', in: *Historisk kundskab og fremstilling*. Ed. by Christian Kvium. Studier i historisk metoder XX. Aarhus 1989. pp 66-68.

³² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Warheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. 3. Auflage, J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen 1972.

³³ Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences. Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1990.

³⁴ Hein, p 32.

³⁵ Wind, p 43.

³⁶ Simon, p 36.

I need to explore a few more concepts that I suggest be included in the analysis of our object relations and the idea of engagement, participation and collaboration in museums. The phenomenological concept of *being-in-the-world* includes important ideas about human interaction and encounter with the material world. Objects function as one of the primary media in a society with which to create, express, confirm, fix and finish ideas, human actions and social relations. We make selections, create representations and fix the meaning of artefacts according to our social and intellectual needs. Objects thus represent what we know and want to know about reality. To quote Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi:

The things with which people interact are not simply tools for survival, or for making survival easier and more comfortable. Things embody goals, make skills manifest, and shape the identities of their users. Man is not only homo sapiens or homo ludens, he is also *homo faber*, the maker and user of objects, his self to a large extent a reflection of things with which he interacts. Thus objects also make and use their makers and users.³⁷

In everyday life, we act *through* things, and together *with* them we situate ourselves in time and space. For Heidegger, the purpose of an object was its life as *equipment* (*Zeug*), for intentional action. As a prefix to all artefacts one would add a “*with-which*” to do something (or, “*in-order-to*”). These *equipments* make our daily life easier, as we use them in intentional, communicative and social action. The purpose of an artifact is its “*ready-at-hand*”.³⁸ It kind of sits there with a friendly attitude and waits to be used.

Material culture is a framing and communicative medium involved in social practice, says archaeologist Christopher Tilley, echoing Heidegger. It forms a symbolic medium for social practice, acting dialectically in relation to that practice. It can be regarded as a kind of text, a silent form of writing and discourse; quite literally, a channel of reified and objectified expression.

Although material culture may be produced by individuals, it is always a social production. In regarding material culture as socially produced, an emphasis is being placed on the constructedness of human meaning as a product of shared systems of signification. The individual does not so much construct material culture or language, but is rather constructed through them.³⁹

With the aid of objects we “inscribe” our lives in time and space, says Jean Baudrillard.⁴⁰

With Heidegger, one would say that the whole idea of establishing archives and museums, of collecting things with the intention to preserve them for eternity, is the idea that all this would be *useful* for us. In the case of museums then, the collections should have some kind of *utility value* – or at least indicate what quality of utility each object has (had). Every thing should incorporate a Heideggerian “life-possibility”. According to Heidegger, we are only interested in those things that are in one way or other linked to our personal options to go on with our lives. *Intentionality*⁴¹ is guiding

³⁷ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *The meaning of things*, Cambridge, 1981, p 1.

³⁸ Christopher Macann, *Four Phenomenological Philosophers. Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty*. Routledge 1993. p 72-73.

³⁹ Christopher Tilley, “Interpreting Material Culture:”, in: *The Meanings of Things. Material Culture and Symbolic Expression*. Ed. by Ian Hodder, Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge. London 1989. p189.

⁴⁰ Jean Baudrillard, “The System of Collecting”: John Elsner & Roger Cardinal, *The Cultures of Collecting*. London 1994. p 8.

⁴¹ all our actions have a goal, aims at something, be it consciously or not

all our actions, all our social relations, all our interaction with objects.⁴² We are guided by purpose, meaning and hope.

What, then, does a museum do to objects? An object, picked “out” of its “natural habitat” – the intimate relationship with human action, no longer seen as an *utility* or *equipment*, gains its value instead in an “artificial” world of taxonomic abstraction: the museum. The process of musealization changes the purpose of an object into “material” for representations, signs and symbols of *something else*. To brutally cut off the life cycle of an object by musealizing it, is to kill it, says the German sociologist Theodor Adorno:

... the word museal describes objects to which the observer no longer has a vital relationship and which are in the process of dying. They owe their preservation more to historical respect than to the needs of the present. Museum and mausoleum are connected by more than phonetic association.⁴³

In the museum, he continues, the artefact loses its vivid “soul”, something which is not possible to reveal by scientific, taxonomic methods, or by just telling what it is or where it comes from. Because the “soul” of an artefact resides in our heads (and hands) as “silent knowledge” of what the object is all about and how it would be used in our daily lives. The object, moved from its earlier rich life of usability, is thrown into a dull life of “unemployment”, according to museologist Hilde Hein. In the transition from object to museum object, things lose the dimensions of use and exchange value as well as other dimensions of meaning. What was one of many becomes unique; what was functional becomes idle; what was private becomes public.⁴⁴ The complexity of the museological problem, says Donald Preziosi, lies in that we are dealing with both a kind of thing (museum/exhibition) and a way of using things: an artefact operating on other artefacts so as to fabricate stories which are then made legible as causal agents of artefacts themselves. Artefacts / objects are given significance in the structure of narrative systems and political, scientific and intellectual discourses. They are redefined, moving from “real” to “media,” their value undergo a kind of “degradation” from innate to instrumental.⁴⁵ No wonder then [I’d say] that many people feel dislocated and detached in a museum and find it impossible to relate to what they see.

On the other hand, the object is certainly not entirely “unemployed” in its new context. On the contrary, one could argue that it has gained entirely new “tasks” in its new, museal life. Both curators and visitors will add meanings and interpretations to the objects according to their own purpose and experience. One of the principal products of museum stagecraft, notes Preziosi again, is a belief in the independent existence and agency of what its objects are taken as signifying. There is also a belief in the independent existence or agency of what is signified. The latter can be as various as the soul, spirit, character, or mentality of a single individual, or that of an entire tribe, gender, class, race, nation, climate, or species.⁴⁶

IV. How institutions think and work

First, take a look at this text:

⁴² Ibid. p 81.

⁴³ Adorno cit. in Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum’s Ruins*. 1993.

⁴⁴ Hilde S. Hein, *Museums in Transition – A Philosophical Perspective*. Smithsonian Press, Washington 2005. p 54.

⁴⁵ Donald Preziosi, *Myths of Nationality* : NaMu workshop paper, Leicester June 2007 (manuscript).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The second step if museums are going to become a dynamic force must be the realization that the functions are not static either in their relationship to one another or in their importance. Both aspects change even as do the times. Thus, if the term “museum” is going to mean something in the future, museums of today must be willing to alter and to modify their internal structure and their ideas to fit the changing world conditions and the advances in social thought. Museums have failed to do this and have shown a most extraordinary reluctance to accept new social theories and new social ideas.⁴⁷

I have picked this quotation not because of its originality, but because of its representativity of the criticism directed towards museums – at least in Europe – at any time during the last hundred years. The quotation is from 1942. Museums have, but only to a limited extent, adapted to the shift in the scholarly field from positivism to hermeneutics, from ontological values to phenomenological values. If museums are to change further, they should perhaps in the future become more of a *game* and less of a paradigmatic, ontologically described and communicated “text”.⁴⁸ The social theory of radical individualization and network-grouping lurks somewhere in the backwaters of this development.

Today, in a situation when “everybody” is not only invited but also rushing by the millions to museums, we have reason to dig even deeper into the problem of change, than what the museological discussion hitherto has done. Something is clearly very wrong, considering that we, for one hundred years, have been telling museums to change, and they won’t do that! *Why* don’t they? – is the question I want to pose. I’m not saying that the kind of museums in question haven’t changed at all – there are all the time processes of change going on. Still, this nagging and lamentation goes on and on.

We have been busy studying visitors’ behavior and how museums “treat” and receive visitors. We have been busy mapping out and pointing at good examples of dialogic museums all around the world, where some real change has occurred. But a brief check reveals that the positive examples are often picked, not from museums of cultural history, archaeology or ethnography with their large collections of artefacts, but from museums of technology and natural science. I refer to Science Centers, Technoramas, Museums of Natural History⁴⁹, or to entirely *new* museums built for this or that purpose, often with no collections at all, but in their exhibitions leaning heavily on ICT and other new media of communication. This state of affairs evokes my suspicion that the “old” classical object-centered museums have difficulties to live up to current social and political demands. They are not made for that.

More often than not, the kind of institutions mentioned above have put into practice the “hands-on” theories of participation and learning. This doesn’t mean that visitors may interact with artifacts *per se* (e.g. touch), but only try to communicate *via* some other media. Nina Simon, discussing the sociability of objects, engagement, sharing and participating, repeatedly turns to new technological media to prove her point. To create “authenticity” and participatory affordances, museums use more and more methods that are entirely detached from the authentic (object) itself. Museums have an overblown belief in the effect of technology in exhibitions – considering the 90-9-1–principle referred to in the introduction. This, I think, mirrors the trouble the “old” museums with a representative mission get into when trying to become interactive, poly-vocal, and multi-cultural. In a very interesting article, Kirsten Wehner and Martha Sear discuss encounters with objects in a very hermeneutic and phenomenological

⁴⁷ said Theodore Low in 1942, in: *Reinventing the Museum. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*. ed. Gail Anderson. Altamira Press, 2004. p 36.

⁴⁸ Smeds, 2007.

⁴⁹ Museums of Natural History do, of course, have very large collections of objects, but these usually represent nothing else but themselves, e.g. an insect.

way. In the planning process for an exhibition in the National Museum of Australia, they were “searching for insight into how objects connect people, across time and space, to their own historical selves”. They speak about objects as constituting “knowledge of being”, about the “material conditions of existence”, about visitors wanting to know “how other people’s bodies had interacted with these objects”, and about “understanding others’ experience” through interaction with objects.⁵⁰ But—and this is my point—in spite of all this “phenomenological” insight, the outcome was not conducive to interaction and involvement. The objects were, as usual, firmly concealed in glass cases, with information resources loaded on the outside. In my opinion, in a case like this all thoughts about “learning-by-doing” and interaction, are thrown out the window.

I am not saying that all efforts to improve the modes of communication hitherto have failed; I’m just saying that the measures taken are obviously not enough. To dispel some of the confusion around the core of museum change, I suggest we ask a couple of questions: 1) are there perhaps serious paradigmatic reasons restraining deeper change? And 2) how does an institution think? We tend to forget, that not only the visitor, but also the institution, has an identity.

I suggest that at least two serious obstacles for change lie within the institution itself: systems of collecting and professionalism. [This] seems to be particularly true for museums that hold large collections of objects. The systems of collecting and organizing objects in taxonomic, hierarchical and typographical categories are firmly enshrined in the original episteme of the museum, based on logical empiricism, positivism, and evolutionism. While during the 20th century this paradigm was seriously challenged by hermeneutics and phenomenological theories in human and social sciences research, and was finally surpassed by them, the empiricist paradigm still prevails in many museums. And this, I would argue, is mainly *due* to of the traditional way their collections are organized. Although the rest of the academic world has undergone a shift from ontological values (how things are) to phenomenological values (how we *think* they are), museums have only partially done so. That is: the departments of exhibitions and pedagogy have (tried) to make that shift, but the departments of collections have often not. This leads to the second “obstacle” (if one may say so), which is the professionalism of the staff attached to the collections and research.

What are the features of professionalism? In the case of museums, the professionals are gatekeepers of scientific thought and practice, simultaneously providing and controlling access to information, entertainment, and communication. In any profession, Shirky notes, members have a tendency to equate their own solutions to particular problems, with deep truths about the world.⁵¹ Professional behavior is guided by a set of norms about what an institution is. An institution confers identity.⁵² Mary Douglas defines an institution as a “legitimized social grouping”, where legitimized authority resides.⁵³

Within an institution there might be several different “social groupings”. Translated into a museum world, the scientist and the collections managers would be a “group” of gatekeepers of the “knowledge” of the institution, and another “social group” would be the departments of pedagogy and exhibitions. Which gives two, in this case,

⁵⁰ Kirsten Wehner and Martha Sear, “Engaging the Material World. Object knowledge and Australian Journeys”, in: *Museum Materialities. Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*. Ed. by Sandra H Dudley. Routledge 2010. pp 143-161.

⁵¹ Shirky, p 57.

⁵² Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think*. Routledge 1986. p 55.

⁵³ Douglas, p 56.

professional groups within the same institution. As I discussed above, they represent two different paradigms and do not necessarily have any mutual interests.

Quoting James Q. Wilson, Shirky says that a professional is “someone who receives important occupational rewards from a reference group whose membership is to people who have undergone specialized formal education and have accepted a group-defined code of proper conduct”.⁵⁴ This very much differentiates the professional from the populace and their needs. In a profession, Shirky notes, members are only partly guided by service to the public (here I refer to the professional collection management). They have more important things to do. Shirky concludes that a professional outlook can sometimes become a disadvantage preventing the very people who have the most at stake – the professionals themselves – from understanding major changes to the structure of their profession.⁵⁵

As argued above, the positivistic/empiricist paradigm rules the “scientific identity” (of the collection management) of the museum. This continues to be the basis not only of *how* objects are displayed (e.g. bullet-proof glass cases), but also of what “knowledge” the museum as a “sender” communicates to visitors. The professionals within exhibition and pedagogical work are usually supposed only to see to the practical implementation of this “knowledge”. One of the obstacles in the traditional museum paradigm is the axiomatic idea of “eternal preservation” of the objects, for future generations. Nobody asks why on earth we think that future generations would be interested in the “scrap” of our time. Nobody asks, why we want to reserve those objects for *them*, when it is *us* who actually need them in our (therapeutic) interaction with the past. A colleague of mine once said: “until now, our pivotal motive has been the feeling that our heritage is threatened and has to be protected, but from what!? Well, from humans. But to declare the heir incapable to protect the heritage is not a sustainable base for antiquarian thinking”.⁵⁶

Considering the discussion above of our daily relations to objects and the ways common people interact with them and charge them with meaning, the paradigmatic gap between the world of the visitor and the world of the museum becomes perhaps too big. In hermeneutical terms: a “fusion” of the horizons, identities and Life-worlds of the museum and the visitor can hardly take place. Real understanding and engagement does not happen, and the visitor will remember very little of what she has seen.

To make people actively participate in the heritage business requires a widening of the scope of values, norms and museal traditions between preservation and use. This is the core question here. Museums would be (*world*)*makers* in the same way as historians already are. But *how* would the museums do this? – given that this would ask them to entirely change not only their views, but also their practice and paradigms of collection management and research. They would, in Hilde Hein’s words, be forced to accept an ethos of dislocated meaning.⁵⁷ In short, they would be forced to start *using and utilizing* (some of) their objects in a new, creative way – to release (some of) them from the museum depositories and from the idea of eternal preservation. Museums possess millions and billions of objects. What if, for instance, they picked out some and start doing things with them, or pulling them apart, to show visitors how they are used and fabricated? Would this, then, ruin the whole foundation of their existence?

One well known circumstance in the “museum world” is that many museum (scientifically trained) professionals are unwilling to accept a scenario like the one

⁵⁴ Shirky, p 58.

⁵⁵ Shirky, p 58/59.

⁵⁶ *Agenda Kulturarv*, Riksantikvarieämbetet, Stockholm 2002

⁵⁷ Hein, p 15.

suggested above. Loss of authority and *disineyfication* are perhaps what they dread the most. “We don’t want to be like YouTube” they cried, when Nina Simon asked professionals what they think about user-aggregated information.⁵⁸

To change an entire – in some cases, 200 years old – structure and paradigm of taxonomy, documentation and “truth”, is not easy. To let the visitors in, to let them “use” the collections and contribute to the contents of them, to take the individualistic, self-formative and self-performative visitor seriously, well this requires perhaps more of the museums than they can bear. But to enable the classical museums, stuck in their “old” scientific paradigms, to undergo any deeper change, they have seriously to start scrutinizing and analyzing their own profession, their motives, missions and policies in relation to their collections and their use, and in relation to modern society. In short, they have to question the very origins of their identity. Otherwise I am afraid we soon will have an assortment of heavy institutions that have outlived their own time and purpose; we will have real “Museum Ruins” to take care of, and to musealize.

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⁵⁸ Simon, p 9.

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DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE INDIVIDUAL VISITOR IN METROPOLITAN AND PROVINCIAL MUSEUMS IN RUSSIA

Olga Truevtseva

Altai State Pedagogical Academy, Barnaul, Russia

ABSTRACT

The development of tourism in Russia has forced museums to react appropriately to changes in our contemporary society. Museums should concern themselves with not only quantity, but also with the quality of the services they provide. A serious problem for modern museology and museum practice is the study of visitors' needs. The article describes the experience of using modern techniques aimed at visitors in Russian museums, and in regional, municipal, and school museums of Siberia. The author pays attention to the fact that, in order to attract individual visitors and create necessary conditions of acquaintance with the exhibition, the individual visitor is included in many forms of museum communication. Interactive forms of work with the visitor are of major importance in regional museums. The efficiency of provincial museum action with the individual visitor is, in many respects, determined by the initiative, creativity and professionalism of its employees. The ability to cooperate with other establishments, organizations, enterprises, private persons and tour agencies in searching for mutual interests is of vital importance. The use of multimedia engineering and modern information technologies in a provincial museum is more the exception than the rule. Metropolitan museums have recently made a great effort to address the problem of the individual visitor by providing technical equipment, often very expensive which replace the information and guiding that group visitors receive from the educational staff. Provincial museums have been obliged to find other more collaborative and imaginative solutions.

RÉSUMÉ

Les approches différentes envers le visiteur individuel dans les grands musées métropolitains et dans les musées provinciaux en Russie

Le développement du tourisme en Russie a forcé les musées à répondre aux changements dans la société contemporaine. Les musées devraient s'occuper non seulement de leur qualité intrinsèque, mais aussi de la qualité de leurs services. Une difficulté importante pour la muséologie contemporaine et pour le travail muséal est l'étude des besoins des visiteurs. Cet article décrit l'expérience de l'emploi des techniques modernes dans les musées russes, ainsi que dans les musées régionaux, municipaux et scolaires de Sibérie. L'auteur porte une attention particulière à la nécessité d'attirer les visiteurs individuels et de créer les conditions nécessaires à l'assimilation de l'exposition, ce qui oblige le musée à inclure le visiteur dans les divers modèles de communication muséale. Les activités interactives avec le visiteur particulier sont d'une importance majeure dans les musées régionaux. L'efficacité d'une action muséale qui vise le visiteur particulier dans un musée de province dépend, dans l'ensemble, de l'initiative, de la créativité et du professionnalisme du personnel du musée. Ce qui joue un rôle majeur est la capacité de coopérer avec d'autres établissements, avec des organisations, des entreprises et des personnes privées dans la recherche des intérêts en commun. L'emploi

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des multimédia et des technologies d'information modernes dans les musées de province est plus une exception qu'une règle générale. Les musées métropolitains ont récemment fait des grands efforts pour aborder le problème du visiteur individuel en s'équipant de matériel technologique, souvent très coûteux pour les petits musées, qui remplace l'information et le guidage que les visiteurs en groupe peuvent recevoir du personnel éducatif. En revanche, les musées provinciaux, ayant moins de moyens, ont cherché des solutions qui dépendent d'avantage de l'imagination et de la coopération.

RESUMEN

Actitudes hacia el visitante en los museos grandes metropolitanos y provinciales en Rusia

El desarrollo del turismo en Rusia ha obligado a los museos a reaccionar apropiadamente frente a los cambios en nuestra sociedad contemporánea. Los museos deben preocuparse no sólo de la cantidad, sino también de la calidad de los servicios que prestan. Un problema serio para la museología moderna y la práctica museal es el estudio de las necesidades de los visitantes. El artículo describe la experiencia del uso de las técnicas modernas utilizadas con los visitantes en los museos rusos, y en los museos escolares, regionales y municipales de Siberia.

La autora presta atención al hecho de que, con el fin de atraer a los visitantes individuales y crear las condiciones necesarias de acercamiento a la exposición, se incluye al visitante individual en muchas formas de comunicación del museo. Las formas interactivas de trabajo con el visitante son de gran importancia en los museos regionales. La eficacia de la acción del museo provincial con el visitante individual es, en muchos aspectos, determinada por la iniciativa, la creatividad y la profesionalidad de sus empleados. La capacidad de cooperar con otras instituciones, organizaciones, empresas, particulares y agencias de viajes en la búsqueda de intereses comunes es de vital importancia. El uso de la ingeniería multimedia y de las tecnologías modernas de la información en un museo provincial es más la excepción que la regla. Los museos metropolitanos recientemente han hecho un gran esfuerzo para abordar el problema del visitante individual proporcionando equipo técnico, a menudo muy costoso que sustituye la información y guía que los grupo de visitantes del reciben desde el personal educativo. Los museos provinciales se han visto obligados a encontrar otras soluciones más colaborativas e imaginativas.

* * *

Russian museums twenty years ago, under Soviet times, were only focused on their collections and visitors were most often brought to the museum in groups. Education was an essential part of museums, with museum visits organized for school groups and other educative associations. Qualified educational personnel guided the groups, essentially booked in advance, through the collections. Individual visitors were the exception and those who attended were left to interpret and understand the exhibitions as best they could.

However, with the changes of the past 20 years and the recent economic development, museums must compete with other forms of leisure time. People become more independent and visiting in groups is no longer the principal form of museum visits. People can also travel more and tourism has increased enormously. These are all great challenges for Russian museums, especially provincial museums. The great Russian collections, like the Hermitage in St Petersburg and the Kremlin and the

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Pushkin in Moscow, will always attract both local and international visitors and can afford now forms of communication, but provincial museums must meet the challenges of today's situation.

This development of tourism led Russian museums to pay attention to individual visitors, no matter who they are or whatever the form of their visit. Museums now must concern themselves with not only the quantity, but also with the quality of the services they offer. One of serious problems of modern museology and museum practice in Russia is studying the requirements of visitors. Essentially, the solution to the growth of the individual visit as compared to the group has been to introduce modern technology for use by individuals, providing equipment which not only informs, but also leaves a wide margin for personal discovery by the visitor.

Altai territory aims to hold a major place among those regions of the country which are most frequently visited by tourists. Altai takes second place after Saint Petersburg according to the increase of tourism. According to the information of the news agency "Tourinfo", the flow of independent tourist groups, tours organized by agencies, and those wishing to travel individually or in small groups, grows annually. In 2009 independent tourists or small parties made 13 % in the total flow of tourists, and in 2012 this share had increased up to 30 %¹.

Both the tourist industry and museums (metropolitan, as well as provincial) must be ready to serve the increased flow of individual visitors. A single visitor in a regional museum was the exception. He did not make solid profits and was doomed to acquaint himself with exhibition independently. Museums were obliged to refuse to provide special services to this low-profit categories of visitors. The necessity to "survive" in the conditions of economic crisis, the ambition to make some profit from to the number of visitors forced museums to be concerned with attracting groups of visitors first of all. It was for them that programs and lectures were developed; mass actions and holidays were carried out. A single visitor, in turn, appeared to be deprived of attention. At the best, museum staff tried to gather single visitors in a group and to offer them traditional forms of service.

Metropolitan Museums

In the new social and economic conditions, metropolitan museums started to develop special programs aimed at attracting individual visitors. The Moscow Kremlin museum, for example, bought personal pocket computers-guidebooks to allow visitors to navigate in museum halls, which displayed images of all the showcases and the most significant exhibits, allowing visitors to hear full information about each case, and giving them the opportunity to use glossaries. Or, for example, the State Darwinian Museum opened an Interactive centre providing free service for individual visitors.

The state Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg has developed the system of "your electronic guidebook". It included specialized software and a complex of equipment set up in the form of directory booths. The purpose of the project was to solve the problem of the deficiency of information in a museum, and to install virtual guidebooks, which should help to individual visitors to orient in a museum. The Hermitage organized subscriptions to an excursion service for individual visitors. The first Thursday of each month there is a free-of-charge entrance for individual visitors to the Hermitage.

The oldest museum of the country - the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography named after Peter the Great (his Cabinet of curiosities), at the Russian Academy of Sciences, carried out sociological research on studying visitors' interests. The results of

¹ http://www.nice-world.ru/look_new-id-193.html (accessed March 20, 2013)

long-term monitoring have allowed the staff to draw conclusions on prominent features of perception and to develop a series of innovational projects².

The project "Virtual Cabinet of Curiosities" enables the visitor to become the equal participant of a dialogue, to personally search for information and to independently choose the level of its presentation (Fig. 1). The dialogue "question – answer - question" allows an individual visitor to work in an on-line mode and to receive the necessary information actively³.

In the same museum there was created a multimedia information-exhibition complex or "the multimedia guide" (Fig. 4), allowing virtual travel over the countries of the world in search for civilizations with bright and original cultures. Touch booths with the guide and big screens for viewing video programs were set up in all the galleries (Fig. 2). Each of them has an access to the guidebook of the museum with plans of halls and showcases and the description of objects, encyclopedias "Countries, peoples and cultures". Each touch booth also provides access to the game section "the Museum for children" with quizzes and games. A Children's centre equipped with modern interactive aids was created within the framework of the project. The above methods promoted the increase of individual visitors visiting exhibitions and expositions of metropolitan museums.

Provincial Museums and new approaches to the individual visitor

The situation in metropolitan museums differs from provincial museums. Not having sufficient means for the purchase of expensive multimedia electronic individual aids, provincial museums are compelled to use other ways of satisfying interests of individual visitors. Visitors in a provincial museum are attracted by the professionalism, initiative and creativity of the museum staff. To be successful, a museum must constantly work and improve. The ability to collaborate with other institutions and private persons is also very important. The primary goal is to find a proper basis for interaction, which will meet mutual interests and create conditions for visitor satisfaction. Each museum has a lot of programs and projects, since the museum is unique, and museum employees really like and appreciate their work.

One of the forms of attracting of various categories of individual visitors is the program of museum activities. These are numerous and varied enough to include a broad spectrum of interests. One of them is "Museum night". The initiator of the project "Museum night in Altai" is the State Art Museum of Altai Krai. In 2012, 71 museums of the Siberian federal district took part in this action. Forty-three regional museums in the Altai territory opened their doors for visitors until late at night. Twenty thousand visitors have taken part in the action. Museum night in Altai has attracted the attention of representatives of all social groups of the local population. It was visitors who are not organized into groups who came to museums that night, first of all because major attention is paid to them, and new expositions and exhibitions, master-classes, dramatized programs and performances are devoted to them.

Museum people of the Altay Regional museum of Local Folklore have realized many interesting projects. Altai territory is a multinational region; representatives of more than

² "Sociology of museology: the visitor of MAE of the Russian Academy of Science" research initiated in 1997 in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Cabinet of Curiosities) named after Peter the Great at the Russian Academy of Sciences, was the first stage to find a methodology to judge problems of contact with its visitors.

³ Uzunova V.G., Bogomazova T.G. Project «Virtual Cabinet of curiosities ": goals of designing of a multimedia product in the context of the analysis of requirements and perception of museum visitors.

140 nationalities live here. The annual regional museum festival “We live in Altai” helps to involve people of various nationalities and confessions in the museum: more than 30 regional museums of history and local lore were attracted to participating in this festival. Special attention in the project is given to family visiting.

The regional Museum of Local Folklore developed special programs for individual visitors, deprived of the opportunities to hear, see, or to move freely: “the Museum for all”, “Russian samovar and tea drinking”, “Russian national toy”. In order to work with handicapped visitors there are invited experts, teachers, psychologists, it is for them that the main rule – to touch nothing – is broken in the museum.

There is an atypical museum in Altai territory the “Park of entertaining engineering”. Its main aim is to popularize science and education. It has not been given the status of a museum officially yet, but any state or municipal museum can envy its authority and popularity among youth. The author of the exhibition “Travel to the world of automatic devices. Miracles of the mechanics”. Having retired, Paul Nejshtadt, the author of the exhibition, devotes all his time, knowledge and experience to work with children. Local “kulibins” have created dozens of exhibits, and each of them is based on profound knowledge of history of development of science and engineering. All models are functioning, but the most important thing is, that it is possible not only to touch them, but also pick them up, operate them, organize and carry out experiments. For the time robots carry out only the simplest actions, but how exciting the process of their creation is! Huge educational potential is incorporated into the process of modeling designs. It is in children’s delight in the “magic” of mechanical devices and making robots work that love for science and engineering takes root in (Fig. 6). However, the most important factor influencing interest of the visitor is that all the created models are functioning; they are actuated and reproduce certain technologies used in mining and metallurgy in the 18th and 19th centuries (Fig. 7).

Craftsmen’s work is supported by an international grant from UNESCO and the grant of the Governor of Altai territory; members of a board of trustees and the heads of industrial enterprises add their support.

The appearance of such a museum in Altai territory is not a random event. Since the 18-th century mining and metallurgy have been actively developed in Altai. Here silver and gold was smelted. The first copper smelting enterprise was built in 1727. Later Kolyvano-Voskresenskiy, Barnaulskiy, Pavlovskiy and other factories started to function here. Altai ranked first place in Russia on manufacturing silver, and it was the second on manufacturing copper, and the third on manufacturing gold. Altay silver was used for minting coins in the St.-Petersburg Mint. In Altai I.I. Polzunov (1729-1766) invented the first in Russia steam engine for Barnaul silver-smelting factory. The great hydraulic engineer K.D. Frolov (1726-1800) created one of the largest in the world cascade complexes on Zmeinogorsk mine.

Teachers and tutors of the Children's school of arts "Tradition" in the village Vlasikha were assigned the task to create a museum which would be attractive to a child. The exhibition space of the museum is arranged in such a manner that children with the help of original museum objects, installations, interiors and reconstructions are immersed in the reality that experts have recreated. Sensations are amplified by role games with use of household utensils. Children here are engaged in molding and making dolls-talismans. The exhibition has a working potter's wheel, electric and muffle furnace for baking items from clay and salty dough; there is a breadboard model of the Russian furnace for baking pies according to ancient recipes. A visitor will also find tubs for salting and storing products for winter and other objects in the displays. (Figs. 3, 5).

The museum administration creates the maximum favorable conditions for reaching its pedagogical objectives and tasks in its work with individual visitors. At the № 4 school in Biysk, named after V.V. Bianki, each pupil is not only the visitor of the museum, but also its creator. The unique museum-school in which each class is a museum space functions here. Original exhibits are created, studied and carefully kept by pupils. The collections have more than 40 thousand pieces. Thematic collections are being formed: ethnographic, numismatic and the collection of badges and cards (more than 3000 units are stored), stamps, gramophone disks (228 units are stored), and periodicals. All the collections are used in the creation of thematic exhibitions, teaching and the educational processes of the school (Fig. 8).

New Technologies in Provincial Museums

Expensive newest technologies are not widely accessible as yet to museums in our region, even though some are already used in Siberian museums.

One of the oldest museums of Siberia – the Tomsk regional Museum of local lore had prepared by its 90-anniversary the evening performance “Museum. Night Shift” and exhibition projects “Alexander Benua di Stetto. Returning to Russia”, “Nicas Safronov. Painting”. The main event of the anniversary program became the presentation of inter-regional project “Siberian Atlantis. Exhibition of museum rarities” where visitors had the opportunity to see rarities from the collections of the regional museum of local lore and collections of museums of the Siberian federal district - Tomsk, Omsk, Novosibirsk, Kemerovo areas, Altai territory, the Republic of Khakasija.

For the first time in Siberia, the exhibition of the Tomsk Regional Museum of Local Folklore included modern museum equipment: 3D pyramids, virtual dressing rooms⁴, interactive tables, video-mapping⁵ creating the effect of presence and partnership, allowing to recreate absent objects in photorealistic quality.

New technologies are used in the museum "Archeology, Ethnography and Ecology of Siberia" in Kemerovo State University. In this museum new technologies are used not only by scientific employees, but also by its visitors. The application of QR-codes in the museum became a real innovation.⁶ The new information technology of QR-coding of separate objects from exhibitions was introduced in museum in 2010 and is being carried out with the support of the Centre of new information technologies, Kemerovo State University. The name of the project is “Historic and cultural, natural and industrial heritage of the region in virtual environment”. The model of use of the system is the following: a visitor enters the galleries of an exhibition; establishes on his personal computer an application for reading a QR-code; finds a QR-code of an object; reads it out as the address of a site and receives a site page on his personal computer.

Thus the user’s PC should have: - access to the Internet via Wi-Fi (or via 3G-modem); - established Web-browser; - Web-camera; - LCD-display with the application that allows looking through the pages of a museum site. A free-of-charge program of QR-code identification can be loaded from the Internet and set up on the personal computer of the user before visiting the exhibition. By means of combining a real museum exhibition and virtual detailed descriptions of exhibits an individual visitor has the opportunity of independently becoming acquainted with exhibits without inviting a guide. (Fig. 9)

⁴ Virtual dressing room of ethnographic clothes, footwear, accessories, online. Choose clothes and the complete set of offered accessories in a virtual dressing room and imagine yourself a Neanderthal man, the Eskimo and so forth.

⁵ Video mapping represents 3D-displaying image on one of environmental objects, taking into account its arrangement and geometrical parameters

⁶ The QR-code is a small square (*from Engl. quick response*): a two-dimensional bar code.

Multimedia technologies are widely used by the museums, which are included in the structure of the Siberian branch of Russian academy of sciences. The exhibition galleries of the Museum of history and culture of the peoples of Siberia and the Far East are supplemented with digital photo frames which contain information on researching artifacts and 3D images. At the museum entrance disabled visitors receive the system block, which operates as the navigator and helps to move along the unfamiliar museum space. The museum is outstanding in its active introduction of new forms and principles of work with information technologies, non-standard museum projects focused both on individual and group visitors.

For the 75th anniversary of the Tyumen region (Ujgra) the exhibition of the Museum of Nature and People - the oldest museum in Khanty-Mansiysk district was updated. Multimedia technologies supplemented the collection of ancient exhibits and made the museum space more modern and rich in information. Now unique exhibits and rich photographic collections are shown in a modern high level. And the matter is not only in new showcases and well decorated galleries, but also in the multimedia equipment of the exhibition with the information on archeology and history of the territory from antiquity up to the present.

An integrated complex of multimedia equipment established in the museum consists of the following subsystems: plasma displays, system of integrated management, directory system on the basis of information booths, system of individual soundtrack (Audio-guide) (Fig. 10). Video reels and lectures of scientists about history of Western Siberia, prepared by scientific employees, are shown on displays. In order to provide visitors with more full information about the museum collections information booths have been set up in the museum halls. Each exhibition is accompanied with special information supplementing the speech of the guide and video reels on plasma panels (Fig. 11, control room). The appendices for touch booths, executed in uniform style, represent thematic slide-shows with illustrations and text, as well as interactive games. These materials tell about the history of the territory in a fascinating form, which is long remembered.

Among other things, those visitors who prefer personal experience are provided with a system that gives an individual soundtrack (Audio-guide) in several languages. The control system is executed in such a manner that when a visitor with the Audio-guide approaches a certain zone, the appropriate sound track is started automatically.

Individual visitors demand special attention. The examples given above are just a first step toward providing them with special services. The overwhelming majority of museums in the provinces do not have as yet any possibility to introduce such multimedia methods because they lack material resources. Therefore, in these conditions, work with individual visitors must take into consideration creative potential of the museum staff.

However perfect the engineering, when assisting a visitor to get acquainted with an exhibition in a dialogue between the visitor and the museum, the main thing is the museum object, around which the action is formed. All technical means should allow the visitor to approach the object and give as much information as possible about its manufacture and existence.

After the end of Soviet Union the behavior of the visitors changed totally. Many of them didn't like always to be dictated to as they visited museums in groups – whether as working groups or as social groups. Now they prefer to visit museums according their own wishes: for example, they may prefer a certain type of a museum – archeology, folklore, natural history or the arts. This means that museum professionals had also to

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Different approaches to the individual visitor in metropolitan and provincial museums in Russia

change their view to the visitors. An individual visitor needs a dialogic presentation, different media, educational support and means for learning by doing as well as help to develop their own creativity.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1. "Multimedia guide" in the Cabinet of Curiosities, allowing to travel on the countries of the world in search for civilizations with bright and original cultures



Fig 2. Touch booths with the guide and big screens for viewing video programs. Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography named after Peter the Great (Cabinet of curiosities)



Fig. 3. Potter's workshop. Children's school of arts "Tradition" village Vlasikha



Fig. 4. "Multimedia guide". Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography named after Peter the Great (Cabinet of curiosities).



Fig 5. Workshop on training weaving on bobbins. Children's school of arts "Tradition" village Vlasikha



Fig. 6. Museum “Park of entertaining engineering”. Barnaul



Fig. 7. Working table of the individual visitor in the Museum “Park of entertaining engineering”, Barnaul



Fig. 8. School № 4 named after V.V. Bianki, Biysk



Fig. 9. Information panel with the detailed scientific description of an exhibit



Fig. 10. Audio-guide



Fig. 11. Integrated complex of multimedia equipment with opportunities for operative management

INDIVIDUAL VISITORS FROM THE VIEW OF MUSEOLOGY – MUSEUMS OF THE FINE ARTS

Hildegard K. Vieregg

Munich School of Philosophy – Germany

ABSTRACT

Museums can be accessed not only by guided tours for groups of visitors of different ages and levels of education, but should also suggest ideas and provide educational benefit for individual visitors. Museum theories and museum studies require auxiliary sciences, such as history and sociology, and especially the impulses of philosophy and of pedagogy. In our context we should focus on individual visitors and how they should gain education in art museums through the use of museum concepts, dedicated productions and personal dialogue with works of art. Museums should stimulate the visitor to dialogue with objects. One of the most recent examples in the sector of art museums, which are responding to individual visitors, is the Barnes Collection in Philadelphia, USA. In addition, a presentation comparing artworks of Cy Twombly at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and in the Museum Brandhorst in Munich centers on the problem of individual visitors. Further reflections on the subject of museums and individual visitors will be described at the Paul Klee Center in Bern, Switzerland. Each of these museums relates to museum scientific issues that must be resolved by experts to ensure that individual visitors return home with new insights about art.

RÉSUMÉ

Les visiteurs particuliers sous l'angle de la muséologie : les Musées des beaux-arts

Les musées peuvent être appréhendés non seulement par le biais de circuits guidés à l'usage de groupes composés de visiteurs de différents âges et niveaux d'éducation, mais aussi les musées devraient proposer au public des idées et procurer une expérience éducative pour les visiteurs individuels. Les théories et les études muséologiques nécessitent l'appoint des sciences auxiliaires telles que l'histoire, la sociologie, et surtout l'apport de la philosophie et de la pédagogie. Dans le texte actuel nous nous intéressons sur les visiteurs individuels et de savoir comment ils pourraient accroître la valeur éducative de leur visite par l'utilisation des concepts muséologiques, des productions spécifiques et un dialogue avec les œuvres d'art. Les musées devraient motiver le visiteur à entrer en conversation avec les objets. Un exemple récent dans le secteur des musées d'art est la Barnes Collections à Philadelphie aux États Unis. Une comparaison des expositions des œuvres de Cy Twombly au Musée d'art moderne de Philadelphie et au Musée Brandhorst, à Munich, met en avant le problème des visiteurs individuels. L'auteur propose des réflexions qui tournent autour de l'exemple du Centre Paul Klee à Berne, Suisse. Chacun de ces musées a sa propre philosophie et son propre contexte historique qui parlent aux visiteurs individuels et contribuent à leur expérience muséale, afin que les visiteurs puissent rentrer chez eux avec des nouveaux aperçus sur l'art.

Hildegard Vieregg

Individual visitors from the view of museology – Museums of the fine arts

RESUMEN

Los visitantes individuales desde el punto de vista de la Museología – Museos de Bellas Artes

A los museos se puede acceder no solo a través de visitas guiadas para grupos de diferentes edades y niveles de educación, los visitantes individuales también pueden beneficiarse a partir de experiencias sugerentes con las consiguientes ventajas educativas. Tanto el estudio como la teoría de museos requieren del aporte de ciencias auxiliares como Historia y Sociología, y especialmente del impulso de la Filosofía y la Pedagogía. En nuestro contexto nos enfocaremos en los visitantes individuales y como podrían aprender en museos de arte a través del conocimiento de los conceptos de museo, propuestas de producciones y diálogos con las obras de arte. Los museos deberían estimular el diálogo del visitante con los objetos. Uno de los ejemplos más recientes en el sector de los museos de arte, nos lo brinda la Colección Barnes en Filadelfia, Estados Unidos, que está dando respuesta a las inquietudes de los visitantes individuales. Otras reflexiones y ejemplos sobre el tema de museos y visitantes individuales pueden apreciarse en el Centro Paul Klee en Berna, Suiza. Además, una presentación comparando obras de arte de Cy Twombly en el Museo de Arte de Filadelfia y el Museo Brandhorst en Munich, nos introduce en el problema de los visitantes individuales. Cada uno de esos museos tiene sus propios principios filosóficos y su particular contexto histórico. Cada uno de ellos está relacionado a temas científicos de museo, que deben ser resueltos por expertos asegurando que los visitantes vuelvan a sus casas con una nueva comprensión más precisa y profunda sobre el arte.

* * *

Museum Studies, the journal of the German Museum Association, in 2006 headlined a special issue "Museums in the Future - Prospects for the 21st Century".¹ The articles by various authors were dedicated to both new ideas and innovations as well as to educational missions and described exhibitions that they had staged themselves. All of the contributions started from the assumption that museum exhibitions can be explained not only by guided tours for groups of visitors of different ages and levels of education, but beyond that they should guarantee educational benefit for individual visitors. This relates to museums of all different typologies in both theory and practice.

Museum theory and museum studies require a relationship to various auxiliary sciences, such as history and sociology, and particularly philosophy² and pedagogy. In our context the needs of individual visitors should be specified along with the possibilities to increase education in art museums through the knowledge of museum concepts, dedicated productions and the personal exploration of works from the approach of auxiliary sciences. All of the exhibitions were staged, perhaps by means of scenography, maybe with classic cabinets or in art museums by color or open productions, to stimulate the visitor to the dialogue with objects.³ Staged by museum experts in terms of visitor participation, production is necessary for understanding the museum content, presentation is "a kind of user interface, a kind of "crossing point", without which the object is difficult to decode."⁴

¹ Deutscher Museumsbund (Hg.), *Museen gestalten Zukunft – Perspektiven im 21. Jahrhundert*, Museumskunde vol. 71, 2/06 Kassel. December 2006.

² Hildegard Vieregg, on behalf of ICOFOM, the International Committee for Museology (Ed.), *Museology and Philosophy, ICOFOM Study Series 31 (preprints) ISS*, Coro, Venezuela and Munich, Germany 1999.

³ Klaus Vogel, „Die inszenierte Ausstellung – einziger Weg in die Zukunft?“, in: *Museen gestalten Zukunft – Perspektiven im 21. Jahrhundert*, Museumskunde, vol. 71, 2/06 Berlin 2006 S. 69-75.

⁴ Klaus Vogel, "Die inszenierte Ausstellung – einziger Weg in die Zukunft?", S. 71.

The most recent example in the sector of art museums that can be shown as an example of museological objectives responding to the requirements of individual visitors is the Barnes Collection in Philadelphia, USA. This famous collection was reopened in May 2012 in a new museum building on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in the center of the city, created by the architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien.

Further reflections on the subject of a museum for individual visitors are found in the Centre Paul Klee in Bern, Switzerland. A third example relates to a comparison of the artworks of Cy Twombly displayed in the Philadelphia Museum of Arts and in the Museum Brandhorst in Munich, Germany. Each of these museums has its own philosophy and its specific historical context. All of them have a great deal in common concerning the problems of museum sciences. It is the responsibility of experts to solve these problems to ensure that individual visitors return home from the museum with new insights and visions about art. The individual dialogue of the visitor with the objects exhibited is on the one hand essentially based on their own previous knowledge and experience of the everyday life. On the other hand this point of view, which has to do with museum-philosophical and pedagogical issues, plays also an important role in the concepts of museums for contemporary art.

1. Individual Visitors and Museum Concepts

The legendary art collection of Albert Coombs Barnes (1872-1951, the American pharmacist, physician, philanthropist and art collector) is an excellent example of the outstanding importance of museological objectives with regard to individual visitors.

The concept for the presentation had evolved from lectures and discussion meetings in the Barnes' pharmaceutical factory. The two first museum buildings of the Barnes Foundation were built between 1922 and 1925 on Latch's Line in Merion, Pennsylvania, on the outskirts of Philadelphia. In the discussions with Barnes participated personalities such as William James (1842-1910, American psychologist and philosopher), John Dewey (1859-1952, American philosopher and educator) and Bertrand Russell (1872-1970, British philosopher, mathematician, and social critic). The invitation and the involvement of those experts improved the considerations in terms of philosophical, psychological, pedagogical and sociological issues. They were indispensable in order to both to develop a visitor-friendly museum concept and to respond to the interests of the individual visitor.

These events primarily targeted promoting the understanding of art and the education of the African-American population in particular. This intercultural motivation to involve points of view in the conception came from Barnes' youth when he had discovered African-American art at African American Camp meetings in which he participated together with his Methodist mother. These meetings aroused a lifelong interest in the art of these cultures and their social concerns. Finally, he intended to transmit his own experiences and his enthusiasm to visitors and to foster cultural, social and religious tolerance.

In 1893 Barnes traveled to Germany for the first time. In 1894-1895 he worked as a medical doctor at the Charité hospital in Berlin. Afterwards he undertook and completed studies of pharmacy in Heidelberg, where he also attended lectures in philosophy. Finally, he was in Paris several times, collected not only the works of European Masters (Renoir, Cézanne, Picasso, Monet, Rousseau, etc.), but also African and African-American sculptures and reliefs. This intercultural approach was not only an important aim intended by Barnes, but much more also the basis for the creation of identification possibilities for individual visitors with different educational and cultural backgrounds.

He merged his own experience in art with an educational concept and dedicated his collections with strict conditions to the Barnes Foundation. Works of art were not

allowed to be borrowed so that the total number of objects was always accessible to the visitors. Reproductions and copies of any kind of works of art were strictly forbidden, even learning by painting copies in the galleries. Specifically it was not permitted to change the concept developed by Barnes according to sociological and educational aspects. Nevertheless, in the 1990s an exception was decided by the Barnes Foundation because of the urgent need of repair of the Merion-building: At this time, long after the death of Barnes in 1951, an exhibition tour with only the paintings was shown in Paris, Munich (Haus der Kunst, 1995) and other cities.⁵

Back to the roots: in 1923, John Dewey became Director of the Education Department of the Barnes Foundation. This meant great support for the educational issues and for the specific intention of Albert Barnes to develop an institution for education.

In the same year, 1923, Barnes displayed a part of his collection in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia where it was not accepted by academic visitors and by critics. From his disappointment the ingenious Barnes built an own new building for his collection in Merion, on the suburbs of Philadelphia. He also decided that his collection of works of art shouldn't be shown to everybody; only he could give permission to visit. Art critics, museum experts and groups which often couldn't understand the intentions of Barnes and received no access – rather only individual visitors who could convincingly explain their personal interest. These single authorizations were maintained.

Even in 2000, long after the death of Barnes (1951), only a low number of 250 (!) visitors per week was allowed. This decision was part of Barnes' requirements which clearly show that never larger groups, but only selected individual visitors were, welcome in his collection. The reopening of the Barnes collection on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the "Museum Mile" in downtown Philadelphia in May 2012, makes a higher number of visitors possible - although until today almost only after a pre-registration.

The spatial conditions and the presentation of objects are still similar to the Merion exhibition and displayed in relatively small areas of the recently opened new building of the Barnes Collection, an identical image of the "old" Barnes. The new building replicates the layout of the galleries and the elaborate scheme of picture hanging from Merion. Beyond that, Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, the architects of the new Barnes, created a sequence of outdoor and indoor spaces that, like Paul Cret's original design at Merion, carries visitors away from the quotidian and guides them to meet great art in a contemplative but concentrated manner."⁶ From this mandate they created spaces specifically for individual visitors. Dark lines intended to ensure the distance of visitors to the works of art are embedded in the floors of exhibition spaces.

People want to find new, even unexpected ways to understand. This was not easy to replicate in the 2012 presentation of the Barnes collection. The museum building (the outdoor and the indoor areas) is in its substance identical with the museum building in Merion, "describing it as an institution of education rather than simply a place to display art, whose galleries would be ' primary teaching spaces'." The presentation of the collection was and is determined by the interest of art connected with social engagement. Today more than before the question for the individual arises how to understand the presentation and how to grasp the ensembles of works of art, watercolors and paintings, wood reliefs of Christian and African cultures, carvings,

⁵ http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_C._Barnes and http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barnes_Foundation (February 26, 2013).

⁶ Brownlee, David B, *The Barnes Foundation. Two Buildings, one Mission*, Skira Rizzoli publications, New York/Philadelphia 2012, p. 13.

relics, jewelry ornaments of metal, furniture of all kinds, and folklore items. The arrangement and mixture of objects of classical art and folk art is really unusual. Nevertheless it enables new experiences through one's own exploration and discovery of similar expressions in different forms in a museum of cultural history.

The individual visitor benefits from the absence of authoritative description, interpretation, or evaluation of works of art, so that everyone can make his own image. This approach was already noted by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1802) in his lectures on *Philosophy of Art*: "the art in itself is so diverse, just as the various aspects of the assessment are varied and nuanced."⁷ Albert Barnes had done appropriate groupings of works of art, which should facilitate exploration with regard to social issues.

We must not forget that Barnes lived in Germany at a time when social reform began to take place in museums. Popular art was based on the ideas of William Morris (1834-1896, social reformer, connecting art and everyday life) and John Ruskin (1819-1900, philosopher, art critic and writer) and understood art as an aspect of the "Social Question".⁸ Both of these pioneers started from the assumption that the Arts and Crafts Movement was a part of everyday life. The education of workers had already played an important role since 1870 primarily in museums of history, cultural history and popular art, an approach that was transferred from fine arts museums.⁹

Barnes also had social reform and the training of workers in mind. There were innovative art historians and art teachers from German and Anglo-Saxon countries at the time. Personalities like Alfred Lichtwark (1852-1914) were certainly not unknown to Barnes during his years in Germany. The "Days for Art Education" in Germany with descriptions of collecting activities under the local and social conditions included discourse on the connection between art and local art, as well as the aesthetic, historic and educational value of a collection of art. To reach the educational "value for a living museum, it was important, to make the items of a collection become the intellectual property of museum visitors."¹⁰ This kind of incorporation into a context known to the visitors through daily life and as an act of democratization should facilitate special contact with the museum and help the individual visitor to understand the museum exhibition in its context.

Another point of reference is that Albert Barnes certainly knew the Kaiser Friedrich Museum (opened 1904), now the famous Bode-Museum in Berlin. The museum was equipped "in 1904 with a patchwork of paintings, altars, bronze, terracotta, marble busts and furniture with reliefs".¹¹ Wilhelm von Bode (1845-1909), one of the creators of the modern museum was trying to strengthen the historical atmosphere of the paintings of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum by combining classical art with appropriate objects of the decorative arts. "Bode himself argued for some mixture of masterpieces and lesser works, and held that 'if the visitor has to look around, as he does now, and decide for himself what appears good to him, he will be much more likely to find his way to pleasure and understanding than if people dictate to him what he is to see in

⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, „Philosophie der Kunst“ (1802), in: Werner Beierwaltes, *F.W.J. Schelling: Texte zur Philosophie der Kunst Auswahl und Einführung*, Stuttgart 1982, bibliographische ergänzte Ausgabe S. 143.

⁸ Hildegard Viereg, *Museologie. Eine Einführung*, Paderborn 2006, S. 165-168.

⁹ Hildegard Viereg, *Geschichte der Museumspädagogik. Dargestellt an der Museumsentwicklung in Berlin, Dresden, München und Hamburg bis zum Beginn der Weimarer Republik*, Univ. Diss. Munich 1990, Münster / Hamburg 1991 p. 310.

¹⁰ Hildegard Viereg, *Museologie. Eine Einführung*, S. 157.

¹¹ Andreas Kilb, „Ein Vorschlag, wie man die Kunst zum Schweigen bringt“, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, 1. März 2013, S. 35.

advance'.¹² This is also an example of democratization by shaping an environment with well-known objects in addition to the pure presentation of works of high art. Probably after his return to the United States Barnes adapted the principles of Wilhelm von Bode, the Director-General of the museums in Berlin (from 1906), who saw museums in the service of social reforms and encouraged private people to collect works of art¹³ and beyond that.¹⁴ He himself aimed to be equal to rival contemporary presentations abroad and to incorporate international ideas to his own concepts for the benefit of visitors.

For John Dewey, the pragmatic educator and philosophical advisor of Barnes, "Democracy and Education"¹⁵ were closely related. Dewey stated that positive experience served as the basis and context for new knowledge, and should be learnt independently. Gunar Musik speaks about the "conception of a value-oriented experience", which he exemplifies as Dewey's "Art as Experience" (1934).¹⁶ "A work of art is going to develop to an aesthetic experience if it arouses a specific experience in the recipient. There should be an interrelated clarification of the functions of art and experience. The artwork determines and develops the values of the interaction of man with his environment."¹⁷ In addition, we should consider that various exhibits when they are put together as ensembles become important subjects for museum studies. Each item can explain the other. How Barnes himself understood works of art as objects for study is now the basis for individual visitors to find interrelationships and interactions in the exhibits.

What does a social reformist presentation in an art collection mean today? Which objects will be combined and what deeper purpose does this achieve for individual visitors?

Currently the concept of the Barnes collection is the latest and most interesting example that addresses individual visitors. Here is an exhibition that is displayed in a way which up to now is not usual in museums for cultural history. For example, in one picture gallery the presentation is arranged with paintings from different periods (impressionists, post-Impressionists) together with masks, a serving as altar relief and reliquary figures which should explain this visitor-related concept.

There is a showcase in the Barnes centre – itself like a shrine - with eighteen African sculptures and masks with in between small figures; a bas-relief from Madagascar is positioned over this showcase. (Figure 1). A three-paneled altar from Europe is displayed above this cabinet, whose sides are accompanied each by a free hanging body of Jesus Christ. Already this composition requires visitors to rethink the staging and the relationship between the single objects. It emphasizes the intercultural references and proves the equivalence of the artistic expressions. The masks in the showcase, the Kota reliquary figures and two brass plates on the outside of the wall correspond with portrayals of a female (left) and a male head created by Pablo Picasso. Both of them have mask-like facial features. For the minority of Kota, who lived in the 20th century on the border of Gabon, Congo, ancestor worship is the foundation of their religious life, these relics are the most significant artistic expression

¹² Holst, "Creators, Collectors and Connoisseurs" p. 288. "The Purpose and Policy of the National Museum". Burlington Magazine 9 (April, 1906), cited in: Edward P. Alexander, *Museum Masters. Their Museums and their Influence*, Nashville, Tennessee 1983, p. 219.

¹³ Theodor Heuss, *Deutsche Gestalten*, München 1975, S. 112-121.

¹⁴ Hildegard Vieregg, *Geschichte der Museumspädagogik*, S. 303 ff.

¹⁵ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*. Munich 2009.

¹⁶ Gunar Musik, „Pragmatische Ästhetik – John Dewey. Kunst als Erfahrung“, in: *Semiosis* 30 (1983). Nachgedruckt in: *Das Programm des Schönen, ausgewählte Beiträge der Stuttgarter Schule zur Semiotik der Künste und der Medien*, blogs.epb.uni-hamburg.de/kunstundfrieden/files/2011/09/Gunar-Musik-ueber-Dewey-Kunsterfahrung.pdf (February 26, 2013).

¹⁷ Gunar Musik, „Pragmatische Ästhetik“, S. 2.

of this ethnic group. In the contemplation of the vertically set objects - masks, relics, bas-relief (African cults) and a polyptych with laterally placed figures of Jesus Christ (as Christian-centric theme) the individual visitor comes into contact with manifestations, artistic skills and religious themes of different cultures.

In the symmetrically arranged display there are two large sized portraits of women by Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920). The one on the right represents Modigliani's wife Jeanne Hébuterne in profile; she wears a conical hairstyle that reminds one of the crowns of deities of the old Kingdom of Egypt, giving her "an aura of priestly serenity".¹⁸

The two watercolors of the American painter Charles Demuth (1883-1935): "Two acrobats" (1917) and "Acrobatic dancers with cylinder" (1918), connected to Modigliani, and a pen-and-ink drawing by Pablo Picasso, hang to the right of the showcase. A painting by Matisse entitled "Seated Odalisque" (1922) crowns the highest point of the almost pyramid-like and altar-like composition. Folklore objects made of iron, displayed in between and above the painting by Matisse, are grouped in the same way in all the other galleries.¹⁹ They give the impression of iron votives or defense symbols. The combination of objects of high art created in different cultures with what we perceive as ethnographic items stimulate the education, knowledge and interests of the individual visitor.

2. Individual Visitors and Pictures Cycles

Picture cycles make special demands on individual visitors as a theme and as a synthesis of the arts. One such cycle titled "The Battle of Lepanto" is located in the Museum Brandhorst in Munich, Germany, opened 2009.²⁰ It was created by the native American artist Cy Twombly (1928-2011). The twelve-part cycle "The Battle of Lepanto" which occupies a special status in this museum, was made for the Venice Biennale in 2001, and then acquired by the Anette and Udo Brandhorst Foundation for the Munich Museum of Contemporary Art. The artist, born in 1957, moved to Rome as an adult. He dealt intensively with the cultural and mythological traditions of the Mediterranean. In his cycle, as "a philosopher's artist"²¹, he translated the topic in an artistic-philosophical language to the present time. The topic of the "Battle of Lepanto" is a familiar subject in fine arts, which puts Twombly in the tradition of historical painting. The attentive visitor can feel the atmosphere of the day-long battle and make comparisons to the political presence and wars fought today. Although originally this event was combined with the glorification of a ruler²², this approach is not evident in Twombly's cycle. Rather, the visitor realizes that despite the winners and the conquered, in war there were and are never true winners.

Mythological subjects have a strong attraction for museum visitors since ancient times. Because they are discussed in literary, scientific, religious, and trans-cultural areas, individual visitors having different interests are stimulated to deal with artistic questions. Werner Beierwaltes, referring to the philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling

¹⁸ Jeffrey S. Weiss, "Jeanne Hébuterne assise de profile", in: *La Joie de vivre. The Museum masterpieces from the Barnes collection*, copyright 1993 for the German-language edition of Kindler Verlag GmbH, Munich in accordance with Alfred A. Knopf Inc., Copyright 1993 by Alfred A. Button, New York. S. 220.

¹⁹ Richard J. Wattenmaker, "Albert C. Barnes, and the Barnes Foundation", in: *La Joie de vivre. The Museum Masterpieces from the Barnes collection*, p.21. In Bavarian folklore such motives belong to the religious traditions.

²⁰ This museum today occupies a significant place in the Munich "Museum-area".

²¹ Niklas Maak, „Die Archäologie des Moments. Spuren an der Wand: Zum Tode des amerikanischen Künstlers Cy Twombly“, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, November 7, 2011. Maak determines that not art historians, but much more European philosophers discovered Twombly's artistic importance, such as Roland Barthes.

²² http://www.beyars.com/kunstlexikon/lexikon_4082.html (March 5, 2013).

(1775-1854), characterized mythology "as the infinite reservoir of poetic imagination", the "necessary condition" and the "actual first matter and form of every kind of art."²³ Cy Twombly understood the pictorial reference to mythology as a subject of psychology and pedagogy, he even ascribed to them eschatological significance. This picture cycle and its appeal to visitors demonstrate what great effect not only artistic and historical facts, but also psychological and pedagogical intentions of the artist may have on nearly every viewer. It is a communication by means of mythology. Beyond that it is a medium that challenges a form of dialogic communication.²⁴

The cycle of 12 paintings goes back to the Battle of Lepanto (in the North of the Peloponnese, located on the Ionian sea at the entrance to the Gulf of Patras in Greece) on 7 October 1571. After the conquest of the previously Venetian island of Cyprus by the Ottomans on 1 August 1571, the allied Christian powers of the Mediterranean (Republic of Venice and Spain) sent a joint fleet to the Mediterranean Sea where they were victorious despite the strategic superiority of the Ottomans. The commander-in-chief of the so-called "Holy League" was Don Juan d'Austria.²⁵ Don Juan, who led the battle on the galley ship "La Real", opted for a several kilometers wide slaughter line with four squadrons, using six large and well-stocked Venetian Galleasses. Ali Pasha,²⁶ who was hit by a bullet in the head from a Spanish soldier, led the Ottoman fleet on the flagship "Sultana". The result of the battle, which lasted about five and a half hours, was of great importance, as now the myth of the invincible Ottoman Empire was broken. Due to its historical significance the subject was often depicted, for example by Fernando Bertelli (1572), Paolo Veronese (1572), in a painting in the Doge's Palace in Venice, 1708 as Lepanto monstration (Ingolstadt), 2001 by Cy Twombly (for the Biennale in Venice).

Regarding our topic, how the visitor can approach this important cycle depends in an adequate presentation. How has the cycle been staged for individual visitors? How can they find this picture cycle accessible? How can an individual understand and interpret a significant event in the history of the world?

The language of communication used by the artist places the visitor at a theatre. Everything that is represented appears to individuals like a scenic staging. The artist did a great deal to involve the mind of the observers, "to purify their soul, to upset their cores, to transform without changing the reconstruction of the artwork through the mind...!"²⁷ An audio guide or a general text in the exhibition room may be helpful for leading into the topic, going directly to the historic event. Although the importance of history as a supporting science for art history is often neglected, here it is particularly significant. But how is the contemporary representation of Twombly to be understood? Which content elements allow a deeper understanding and lead to contemporary references? From the theory of the Museum there are various contexts to take into account:

- The historical context: The authentic event of the battle and the views of today's Sea events (e.g. the capers of ships).

²³ Werner Beierwaltes, *F.W.J. Schelling: Texte zur Philosophie der Kunst*, S. 26.

²⁴ Kirstin Casemir/ Christian Fischer, *Deutsch. Die Geschichte unserer Sprache*. Darmstadt 2013, p. 211.

²⁵ Don Juan d'Austria (John of Austria) (1547-1578) was the extramarital son of the Emperor Charles V. He emerged as the Supreme Commander of the fleet of the Holy League (Spain, Venice, Savoy, Genoa, Malta, Tuscany and Vatican), based on the victorious Vatican battle against the Ottomans on October 7, 1571.

²⁶ Ali Pasha was the son of a muezzin in Istanbul. After a successful military career on land, he was commander-in-Chief of the Ottoman fleet in 1569. On his flagship "Sultana", he fought against the flagship of Don Juan d'Austria called "Real". He was severely injured and through the influence of Spanish soldiers was cruelly killed.

²⁷ Werner Beierwaltes, *F.W.J. Schelling: Texte zur Philosophie der Kunst*, S.140.

- The political context: Political conflicts between the "West" and the "Islamists" took often place in the course of the history – long before the attack against the World Trade Center in New York City.
- The religious context: The conflict between different religions, even religious wars, continued to the present.
- The intellectual context of the artist who was particularly interested in the European past and has settled in the Italian Gaeta, a large military port of the 6th fleet of the U.S. Navy.
- The artistic context: Probably the artist at the Biennale of Venice in 2001 to draw attention that Venice was an important starting point for the "Holy League" and the battle.
- There are also different didactic points. Martin R. Schärer says: The exhibition is a place for visualization of absent matters with objects serving as symbols.²⁸ It is the message that matters to us.

In order to understand contemporary records of the battle, a visitor-oriented presentation of the Lepanto cycle is necessary. For individuals the viewpoint begins with the fact that Cy Twombly himself gave the idea for the design of the exhibition room. In order to connect the interior design of the exhibition space with the works of art. He intended to connect an imagined "authentic" place with the theme of the cycle of pictures. The museum visitor associates his entering to the room with the visit to the deck of a vessel: the wooden floor, the elliptical landscaped exhibition area and the natural daylight that spreads from above the ship. Twombly focuses on essentials which Rudolf Seitz, the former director of the Academy of the Fine Arts in Munich, already emphasized in relation to successful appreciation of art: a sensitive, a creative and a rational motivation and an atmosphere that helps understanding.²⁹

As regards the individual visitor, s/he will be faced with a very specific exhibition language. This kind of language attempts to communicate messages to visitors in a theatrical, associative and aesthetic manner. In our case, all three language characteristics play an important role, but the aesthetic is apparently the most important. "It is assumed that the objects are positioned as works of art. Through their beauty they can speak directly to the visitor and lead him to a profound experience."³⁰

When we are talking about aesthetics, it comes to the language of the colors, the shapes, the artistic techniques. It is also of importance how the artist conveys his messages as an expression of our time and how the visitor can recognize this aim. How are the historical theme and the artistic language connected? Is there also a "positive" aesthetic for finally "negative" events such as a battle or a war?

To understand the facts of the historic situation and the current relevance of the topic is essential for the individual visitor. Nevertheless exists the problem that the message on these "Historical Pictures" even by a great artist as Cy Twombly can be conveyed in a subjective and partial way.

The inhuman action of the battle of the 7 October 1571 is portrayed in the contrast between the first pictures appearing in cheerful bright colors and the other colors of a terrible bloodbath (Figure 2). Because Twombly was referring not only to history but also to antiquity, the boats anchored and sunk have a powerful meaning: they are

²⁸ Martin R. Schärer, „Theorie der Ausstellung“, in: Viereg, Hildegard (Hg.), *Studienbuch Museumswissenschaften. Impulse zu einer internationalen Betrachtung*, Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, Baltmannsweiler 2007, p. 49.

²⁹ Rudolf Seitz, „Bildbetrachtung“, in: *Begegnung und Gespräch, Ökumenische Beiträge zu Erziehung und Unterricht*, Verlagsbeilage „Bayerische Schule“, März 1972, S. 102.

³⁰ Martin R. Schärer, „Theorie der Ausstellung“, in: Viereg, Hildegard (Hg.): *Studienbuch Museumswissenschaften*, Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, Baltmannsweiler 2007, S. 52.

metaphors for the fate of people involved in war. In Greek mythology, the Styx ("water of the horror"), was a river that formed the boundary between the worlds of the living and of the dead. The souls of the dead were brought across the river in a boat by Charon, the ferryman, against payment with a fee set under the tongue, thus taking them to the kingdom of the dead. Since the *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) the Styx has appeared frequently as a literary theme.³¹ In Cy Twombly's cycle this motif is recognized in the visual arts: the battle and the sinking boats on two opposing sides. The overview of the day shows the visitor that each specific event of this battle was a disaster and at the same time a warning. For people who were involved in wars in previous times or today, this cycle of 12 paintings may be a memorial and in the same way advise for a moral and peaceful behavior.

Fifty Days of Iliad: The Fire that Consumes All before it³²

When we compare the display of Twombly's "Fifty Days of Iliad" at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, it is evident that Cy Twombly was closely attached to antiquity. He intended to convey³³ events and literary texts from ancient times to contemporary visitors. The 1978 ten-part cycle of paintings created in 1978 came to the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1989. Homer's *Iliad* is dated to the second half of the 8th century before Christ, clearly the oldest work of European literary history. The cycle is not about warriors and heroes, rather the "Terrible, dehumanizing brutality and cruelty of war as well as about the other side of heroism"³⁴, meaning death, which is titled "Fifty Days at Iliad: The Fire that Consumes All before it".³⁵

For visitors, who are familiar with Homer's Iliad (Ilium is another name for Troy and an episode of the Trojan War) it is clear that Cy Twombly is not the inventor of the image title, but that the paintings refer immediately to the Epos of the Iliad. The series is composed of: *Shield of Achilles* (1) *Achaean Heroes* (2) *Vengeance of Achilles* (3), *Achaean in Battle* (4), *The Fire that Consumes all before it* (5), *Patroclus and Hector* (6), *Shadows of Achilles* (7) *House of Priam* (7) *Ilians in Battle* (8), *Shadows of Eternal Life* (9), *Heroes of the Iliad* (10).³⁶ The verses of the Iliad (hexameters), composed of comparisons and parables – such as pastoral motifs or forces of nature, are complemented by the description of objects. A central theme is the description of Achilles' new shield, which Hephaestus forged for him.³⁷ It is also the subject of the first frame in the cycle by Twombly. The visual history of the Iliad was often represented quite literally on Greek vases or in book illustrations. Cy Twombly in his picture-cycle portrayed the 50 days of the Iliad figuratively in excerpts shaped in his own an artistic vision. Visitors can compare the cycle of the contemporary artistic conception of Twombly with the literary criticism of Homer. This reduction is also a simplification of the myth of Troy with his many complicated stories, which Twombly succeeds in incorporating into clear artistic themes.

3. Individuals and Self-activeness – Museum Practice

³¹ Examples of literary motifs include Dante Alighieri's "Divine Comedy" and Thomas Manns (1875-1955) "Death in Venice". Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805) recorded also the Styx in his drama "The Bride of Messina" with the "Stygian Boat" in his poems. "Styx" is also the title of a new collection of poems by Else Lasker-Schüler (1869-1945), a German-Jewish princess among poets. In addition, there was also a group of rock musicians called "Styx" in the 70/80's in Chicago. This exhibition is presented in Gallery 185, Modern and Contemporary Art, in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

³² Thierry Greub, "Cy Twombly und die Antike", (Speech in Stuttgart, Germany from February 16, 2012). http://www.Staatsgalerie.de/download/Vortrag_Greub.PDF (March 5, 2013).

³³ Thierry Greub, "Cy Twombly und die Antike", (Speech in Stuttgart, Germany from February 16, 2012). http://www.Staatsgalerie.de/download/Vortrag_Greub.PDF (March 5, 2013).

³⁴ Thierry Greub, "Cy Twombly und die Antike", S. 12.

³⁵ <http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/85714.html> (March 11, 2013).

³⁶ All of these issues were recorded by me even to the cycle in February 2013 in Philadelphia.

³⁷ <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilios> ,p. 13 (March 6, 2013)

An example of the individual visitor in museums practice can be seen at the Paul Klee Center in Bern, Switzerland. Here the drawings and paintings of the artist Paul Klee are presented in chronological order. Additionally there is a specific support in order to promote the understanding of the individual visitor.

1) Surrounding the entire exhibition area is a “band” that combines the biography of Klee along the outer walls synoptically with the presentation of the artworks. This means that both the life and the personal fate of Klee can be viewed in conjunction with the pictures. Every visitor can discover in the style and the colors of paintings in which psychological and physical condition Klee was at a certain time. In this respect is also recognizable how the artistic skills of Klee changed from about 1935 when he was very ill.

2) On the basis of this chronological and biographical work- consideration the self-motivation and the independence of visitor is roused by the personal interest. Computer stations are integrated into the benches in the exhibition area. They have the purpose to see individually the works of Klee that are distributed worldwide and to compare them with works belonging to the collections of the Centre Paul Klee. Conveniently sitting on the benches, every visitor can experience more about Paul Klee. There are "touch screens" which help either to find information about works already known to him or he can find out museums which house other works of Paul Klee. Just the comparison samples, which can either be obtained according to chronological or thematic aspects, are extending the basic knowledge of visitors. Even this individual approach is helpful for better understanding.

3) Very often people mention Paul Klee's *Angels*. However, when were the first representations made of angels; where can they be seen? What is the role of angels in terms of content in the history of art and in the lives of people? Just as the cult and worship of angels in literature plays a remarkable role, representations in the artistic sphere are valued as important examples.

4) Independence in terms is required in the "Museum Creaviva" included as an educational institution in the Center Paul Klee (Figure 3). This was originally planned as a "Children's Museum". Nevertheless, some years after the opening of the museum was emphasized on that individual visitors like to go there as a place for creativity and that also adults like to make creative works. Therefore, the "Childrens' Museum" was opened for other groups of society.

5) The Centre Paul Klee was one of the first museums to develop "Dialogic Exhibitions". I could see for myself a comparison between the works of Klee (1897-1940) and Max Beckmann (1884-1950) – works of art of very different kinds – from the period of National Socialism in the years 1933-1945. The international awareness of Beckmann was apparently higher than of Klee. The individuals who visit the Centre Paul Klee have the possibility, from comparison with other major art museums of the world, to make their own appreciation of the artworks of Klee.

6) There is, finally, a walking trail in Bern that runs from the main station to the Museum Centre along with other places in the city (Figure 4). The display in the outdoor area is a good addition to the objects in the museum because the visitor receives information with other senses than the visual. The road signs are named according to art works of Klee, for example *Carpet of Memory*. An example of the images reproduced in the natural surroundings of the museum is the *Pyramid of Air*. Authentic places are surrounded by Klee's work, the quarry nearby inspired many motives. One can also visit Klee's burial place. None of this requires a group, but rather appeals to the individual interested and contemplative viewers who like to immerse themselves in an entirely artistic sphere.

Each of these examples of fine arts museums is related to museological scientific issues that must be resolved by experts to ensure that individual visitors return home with new insights about art. Both the curators as well as the individual visitors have to be very active: the curators in considering the needs of the visitor and the visitors in entering into a dialogue with the works of art. Museological aims are in this case to focus on social aspects, to foster aesthetic tolerance, to provide motivation for identification and contemplation, and finally to enable specific experiences in art. Historical knowledge can be a very good support. None of this requires participation in a group, but rather interested individual and contemplative viewers who like to immerse themselves in an entirely artistic sphere. They are challenged to understand the museum language, the metaphors and the backgrounds such as the literature, the history and the diverse other contexts of the art they have come to see.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. This arrangement was done by A. Barnes himself in the original building in Merion. In the new building in downtown Philadelphia we find the identical display.



Figure 2. Cy Twombly: "Lepanto series" Museum Brandhorst, Munich, Germany



Figure 3. Center Paul Klee – Museum Creaviva, Centre Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland



Figure 4. Pedestrian path to the Centre Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland

INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY / COLLECTIVE HISTORY: PERSONALIZING ESSENCE IN THE MUSEUM

M. Elizabeth Weiser

Ohio State University – United States

ABSTRACT

What does it mean to say that every visitor has a unique, unclassifiable identity? I return to the rhetorical sense of identity as action, the sense that museums and their visitors are a discourse community in which each individual—be they visitor or staff—is actively engaged in building a common story/identity that does not exist in reality but (to borrow Benedict Anderson's phrase) is instead an *imagined* community. To put it another way, this paper deals with how individuals in museums invoke *their own* group identities with which to identify. I argue that one way to look at this invocation/identification process is through the lens of what modern rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke called a *personalizing of essence*: the individual characteristics that make up one's personal identity narrative are translated into an abstract reflection, then translated back into a narrative now larger than oneself—a persuasive narrative of self in society. Burke's description of this temporal/ontological shift is very much the process described by psychologists for narrating one's lifestory and by museologists for the identity work done by individuals in museums when confronted by a series of artifacts and a wall of stories. All visitors are indeed individuals, just as are all the individuals represented by the objects we now gaze at in our museums—and thus, paradoxically, we share commonalities of identity of which personalizing serves to remind us.

RÉSUMÉ

L'identité de l'individu / L'histoire de la collectivité : dans le musée, il faut personnaliser ce qu'est l'essence

Que veut-on dire lorsqu'on maintient que chaque individu a une identité unique que l'on ne peut classer ? J'évoque le sens historique de l'identité en tant qu'action, le sens où les musées et leurs visiteurs forment une communauté de discours dans laquelle chaque individu – qu'il soit visiteur ou fasse partie du personnel – s'engage activement dans la construction d'une histoire / identité commune qui n'existe pas dans la réalité mais (et j'emprunte une expression de Benedict Anderson) qui est plutôt une communauté imaginaire. Autrement dit, l'article traite de la manière dont les individus font appel aux identités de *leur propre* groupe auquel ils s'identifient. Je maintiens qu'une façon d'envisager ce processus d'appel/ identification, que le théoricien rhétorique contemporain Kenneth Burke dénomme *la personnalisation de l'essence* : les caractéristiques qui composent un récit personnel de l'identité se traduisent en un reflet abstrait de l'image, lequel ensuite se traduit en un récit qui est plus grand que le soi-même – c'est à dire en un récit persuasif du soi-même dans la société. La description de Burke de ce déplacement temporel / ontologique ressemble beaucoup au processus décrit par les psychologues lorsqu'une personne raconte l'histoire de sa vie, et le processus des muséologues qui travaillent sur l'identité des individus lorsqu'ils présentent une série d'artefacts ou bien un mur d'histoires. Tous les visiteurs sont bien entendu des individus, tout comme tous les objets que nous contempions dans le musée représentent des individus – et

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ainsi, paradoxalement, nous partageons une communauté d'identité dont la personnalisation sert à nous en souvenir.

RESUMEN

Identidad Individual / Historia Colectiva: Personalizando Esencia en el Museo

¿Qué significa decir que cada visitante tiene una única, inclasificable identidad? Vuelvo al significado retórico de identidad como acción, el significado en que los museos y sus visitantes son una comunidad de discurso en la cual cada individuo - sea visitante o personal del museo - participa activamente en la construcción de una historia / identidad común que no existe en la realidad, sino (para tomar prestada la frase de Benedict Anderson) es en cambio una comunidad imaginada. Para decirlo de otra manera, este artículo trata la forma en que las personas en los museos invocan sus propias identidades de grupo con la que se identifican. Sostengo que una manera de mirar este proceso de invocación / identificación es a través del lente de lo que el teórico de la retórica moderna, Kenneth Burke, llama *personalización de la esencia*, donde las características individuales que componen la narrativa propia de la identidad personal se traducen en una reflexión abstracta y, a continuación, traducido de nuevo en una narrativa ahora más amplia que la propia -una narrativa convincente de sí misma en la sociedad. La descripción de Burke de este salto temporal / ontológico es en gran medida el proceso descrito por los psicólogos para narrar nuestra propia historia de vida y por los museólogos para el trabajo identitario que hacen los individuos en los museos cuando se confrontan con una serie de artefactos y un muro de historias. Todos los visitantes son en realidad individuos, como son individuos todos los representados por los objetos que ahora se contemplan en nuestros museos -y, por tanto, paradójicamente, que comparten elementos comunes de identidad que la personalización nos sirve para recordar.

* * *

Every visitor brings to the museum his or her individual characteristics—the introduction to this year's call for papers is such a truism that we almost read past it, looking for the *new* information. Yet what does it mean to say that every visitor has this unique, unclassifiable identity? Social scientists William Penuel and James Wertsch conclude an influential article on identity noting that rather than an essence it is "a form of action that is first and foremost rhetorical, concerned with persuading others (and oneself) about who one is and what one values to meet different purposes."¹ Rhetorical action--yet since Aristotle's *Rhetoric* first advised budding public orators 2500 years ago to know their audience by knowing the *group* characteristics of their audience, rhetoric as a field has struggled with how to consider an audience of individuals. As rhetorical scholars Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford argued in their ongoing examinations of audience, because the rhetorical tradition aims for *successful* communication, it risks excluding or disenfranchising those whose difference from some imagined audience norm makes success more difficult to achieve.² The communication goal, in other words, encourages the illusion not of self-identity but sameness. Thus we continue to encourage our student writers and speakers to either *learn* the characteristics of their

¹ William Penuel and James V. Wertsch, "Vygotsky & identity Formation: A Sociocultural Approach." *Educational Psychologist* 30.2, 91.

² Andrea A. Lunsford and Lisa Ede, "Representing Audience: 'Successful' Discourse and Disciplinary Critique," *College Composition and Communication* 47.2 (May, 1996), 167-68.

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Individual identity / collective history: personalizing essence in the museum

audience, or *imagine* the characteristics of their audience, or *create* the characteristics of their audience by the information and context that they provide. At the same time, a parallel theoretical tradition has held, as James Porter put it in *Audience and Rhetoric* in 1992, that audience should be considered not as the end recipient of the information-dissemination process but as a “discourse community” actively engaged with the rhetor, working with them to build not only a common story but also a common identity.³ This notion of the *engaged* audience has never been truer than in today’s era of interactive media.

We can see these same issues debated over—struggled with—in museum studies. Should museologists engage in visitor studies to *learn* their audience? How much can they extrapolate from those data to *imagine* the whole self that is their visitor? To what degree should professionals *create* or *invoke* the desired characteristics in their visitors by certain displays, particular texts and artifacts, lighting, flow patterns, etc.? And what about interaction—how to *engage* the visitors with touch screens, provocative questions, reflection zones, and all the rest?

With the range of concerns facing museum professionals and museologists already, adding that museum-goers cannot be defined only as group members but also as individuals seems to add just one more layer of complexity to an already impossible identification project. John Falk’s attempt to categorize these individuals not by their demographic characteristics but instead by their need to perform their identity with one of five roles (Explorer, Facilitator, Experience seeker, Professional/Hobbyist, Recharger)⁴ can be seen, in this light, as merely a different (if a better, more accurate) kind of grouping for the “individual characteristics” each visitor brings. In this short paper, therefore, I plan to return to the rhetorical sense of identity as action, the sense that museums and their visitors are a discourse community in which each individual—be they audience/visitor or rhetor/museum staff—is actively engaged to build a common story and identity that does not exist in reality but (to borrow Benedict Anderson’s famous phrase) is instead an *imagined* community. As Penuel and Wertsch note, identity “is always addressed to someone, who is situated culturally and historically.”⁵ To put it another way, this paper deals with how individuals in museums invoke *their own* group identities with which to identify.

I argue that one way to look at this invocation/identification process is through the lens of what modern rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke called a *personalizing of essence*, in which the individual characteristics that make up one’s personal identity narrative are translated into an abstract reflection, then translated back into a narrative now larger than oneself—a persuasive narrative of self in society. Burke’s description of this temporal/ontological shift is very much the process described by psychologists for narrating one’s lifestory and by museologists for the identity work done by individuals in museums when confronted by a series of artifacts and a wall of stories. I will use the latter to return to Burke’s personalizing in order to describe the idiosyncratic identification of individuals with the communities invoked by museums.

Identity, as popular and important as it is in the scholarship of multiple disciplines, is a tricky concept to define, but all identity theories have in common a dual internal-external focus on the *self* in *society*. Some theories, following the line of psychologists like Erik Erikson, focus more on the individual, personalized nature of identity as the choices made to define ourselves, while others focus more on the social forces that enable and constrain these choices, perhaps most famously articulated by sociologist Anthony Giddens’ duality of structure—that we make the structures that in turn constrain us in our potential choices—now a cornerstone of modern sociology. Giddens

³ Porter, James. *Audience and Rhetoric: An Archaeological Composition of the Discourse Community*, New York: Longman, 1992.

⁴ John Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*, Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2009, 64.

⁵ Penuel & Wertsch, 91.

recognizes that in modern societies, identities are becoming dislodged from the traditional collectivist structures such as location and kinship such that, while still constrained, they are more individualized.⁶ In other words, we must form our sense of self with less of a pre-written script than earlier people.

This script exists as a narrative of our past lives and roles, unified into the story of our self-identity. Social psychologists Robyn Fivush and Catherine Haden explain that individuals construct a self-identity by selecting past episodes which seem particularly meaningful or relevant to their present quest for selfhood, mining their own memories for nuggets of self-understanding. But they do not simply leave the memories alone; any more than modern museums leave objects alone on an examination table: these life episodes are crafted into what the psychologists call a *lifestory*, a *narrative of identity*. "It is through the construction of a lifestory that self and memory are intertwined," Fivush and Haden write, and the lifestory is built upon "social interactions or cultural frameworks that lead to the formation of an autobiographical narrative."⁷ Shaping the selected pieces of one's random memory into something that contains the two essential qualities of narrative—linearity and causality—allows individuals to make meaning of their life. As Fivush and Haden put it, "life stories are based on autobiographical episodes, but to a considerable extent reflect efforts to portray oneself in a way that makes sense within one's social and cultural context."⁸ Narrative psychologist Dan McAdams adds that until one is old enough to endow one's lifestory with linearity and causality (McAdams calls these *unity* and *purpose*), identity itself is not fully realized.⁹ Such a sense of self-identity, McAdams says, is achieved through both a *synchronic* integration, uniting the different roles each of us plays into a "me," and a *diachronic* integration, uniting our divergent life choices into one coherent timeline.¹⁰ In an individual these integrations might mean unifying into one coherent lifestory the roles of scholar/teacher/mother/deacon/aspiring guitarist and the timeline of majoring in music before becoming a mathematician, living in three cities, getting divorced and remarried. In a national museum it might mean unifying a history of wars, invasions and plagues, and a diversity of multiple waves of immigrants into the unity of the nation.

Combining the concept of the lifestory narrative with Falk's performative roles, then, we can easily imagine ourselves walking into, say, the British Museum, confronted with the Rosetta Stone and the colossal bust of Ramesses II and the rest of the monumental artifacts of past civilizations and incorporating Falk's role of Explorer into whatever personal narrative we tell ourselves about ourselves. Like actors playing Hamlet, each individual brings to the role a unique sensibility, but *if* the role can be made to fit our context—and the British Museum carefully encourages the context of Explorer as their display pattern requires visitors to walk around each artifact and to weave their own path from object to object—then we can unify it synchronically (as one of the roles we play) and diachronically (as consistent with other times when we have "explored") into our sense of self.

Not everyone agrees with this interpretation of museum work. The European National Museums consortium (Eunamus), a multiyear international study with which I worked last year, puts it bluntly in their final report:

⁶ In Sharon Macdonald, "Museums, National, Postnational and Transcultural Identities," in *Museum and Society* 1.1 (2003), 6.

⁷ Robyn Fivush and Catherine Haden, "Introduction: Autobiographical Memory, Narrative and Self," in *Autobiographical Memory and the Construction of a Narrative Self*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003, vii.

⁸ Fivush & Haden, viii.

⁹ Dan P. McAdams, "Identity and the Lifestory," in *Autobiographical Memory and the Construction of a Narrative Self*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003, 188.

¹⁰ McAdams, 188-89.

National museums are about history: Most visitors surveyed said they came to national museums for social reasons, for entertainment and education. They did not visit with the intention of developing, understanding or crystallising their national identities. They believed these museums were about history, not identity.¹¹

It is indeed true that museum-goers do not label their own identity-construction as a goal of their visit—but neither, really, does Falk, who discusses museums as “settings that allow visitors to play [a] role”¹²—not *take on* a role but *perform* one. The difference in viewpoint may lie in Falk’s sense of the “inter-animation” of the competing dialogues within the public space of the museum: museums narrate history, visitors narrate an individual identity that interacts with that history—and both of these performances of reality interact to create the continually replicated but always unique memory narrative of an exhibit.

The identity narrative, in other words, may be unified into the lifestory of each individual visitor, but (as theorists such as Falk and Rowe *et al.* have documented), it is far from univocal. In some museums the multivocality, or what literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin called the polyphony of multiple competing voices, is embedded into the narrative crafted by museum staff: “Ask any ten people what it means to be Australian and you are likely to get ten different answers,” reads a prominent sign in the Australian National Museum. Whether or not the polyphony is intended, though, it is always present, carried into the museum by the visitors themselves. Museologist Rhiannon Mason described in a recent presentation the experience of listening to residents of Newcastle visiting an exhibit of maritime artwork. The visitors did not discuss with each other painterly techniques or camera angles—they talked about their own memories of watching ships being launched or time spent on the water.¹³ Such personal memories might serve to tie an individual to the collectivity represented by a museum display, but perhaps in a more idiosyncratic way than desired. As museum educator Lisa Roberts states,

In any given museum, visitors will probably encounter the same raw material: an entryway, exhibits, and perhaps a restaurant or gift shop. However, each will come away with an individually unique experience and interpretation because every visitor is engaged in constructing a narrative about what he or she sees.¹⁴

Of course, as I have here begun to imply, museums themselves contribute to the creation of the conditions for Giddens’ structure as a constraint on the narrative of our potential identity choices. As rhetorician Greg Clark argues regarding a different kind of rhetorical space (significant landscapes), we are encouraged by the material provided us to endow what we are looking at with collective meaning and then to determine our stance toward that meaning, and thus we are “prompted to recreate [our]selves in the image of a collective identity.”¹⁵ As I wrote in an earlier article regarding the plethora of artifacts in vitrines lining the entry corridors greeting visitors to the National Museum of American History—everything from scientific measuring devices to the TV-show typewriters—“the visitor is confronted with three messages about America: its material culture is vast, it is indeed diverse, and it boasts a radical egalitarianism in which everything is, potentially, a ‘treasure of the American past’.”¹⁶ The *collective* American

¹¹ Eunamus. *European National Museums Making Histories in a Diverse Europe*. Linköping, Sweden: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012, 28.

¹² Falk, 64.

¹³ Rhiannon Mason, “Communities and Redisplay at the Laing Art Gallery,” University of Leicester School of Museum Studies Research Seminar Series, 24 Oct. 2012.

¹⁴ Lisa C. Roberts, *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997, 137.

¹⁵ Gregory Clark, *Rhetorical Landscapes in America*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004, 4.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Weiser, “Who are We? Museums Telling the Nation’s Story,” in *International Journal of the Inclusive Museum*, 2.2 (2009), 29.

identity, as displayed, is not that of the nation of the Rosetta Stone and the head of Ramesses, of Winged Victory and the Mona Lisa, or of other symbols of imperial power and cultural triumph—it is instead of the nation of the ruby slippers and a farmer president's battered top hat. Their presence in the national museum provides a more populist collective identity with which visitors are asked to identify. It may not be consistent with visitors' personal lifestory, or even with their understanding of the lifestory of America—but our ability to “change the narrative” and incorporate new identities into an ongoing synchronic/diachronic selfhood should not be overlooked.

As an example, we can look at the resurrection of Amir Temur in museums in Uzbekistan. He is perhaps best remembered in the West as the “scourge of God” title character in Christopher Marlowe's bombastic Renaissance play *Tamburlaine*, but in modern Uzbekistan he is the personification of national identity. The State History Museum of the Temurids in Tashkent, for instance, founded five years after Uzbek independence from the Soviet Union, recounts and celebrates the life of Temur seven centuries after his rise to power in Samarkand. As cultural historian Timur Dadabaev notes, the post-Soviet discourse in Uzbekistan evokes the glorious ethnic past as a counter to a long-term Soviet discourse that emphasized “civilizing” underdeveloped Central Asia.¹⁷ Thus as independent Uzbekistan (re)constructs a national identity it is not surprising to find that Temur—conqueror of much of Central Asia, patron of the arts and sciences, ethnically non-Russian, and founder of the last “golden age” dynasty of the region—has taken on a mythic status. He is perhaps particularly promoted by the country's only president, Islam Karimov, and visitors to the State History Museum can read Karimov's assertion on a marble wall plaque:

If somebody wants to understand who the Uzbeks are, if somebody wants to comprehend all the power, might, justice, and unlimited abilities of the Uzbek people, their contribution to the global development, their belief in the future, he should recall the image of Amir Temur.

The modern Uzbek visitor, then, is encouraged toward a particular constrained kind of identity—not only of pride in Uzbek nationhood but of an Uzbek collective identity that values what the museum's walls proclaim as Temur's values: Justice, Enlightenment, Honour, and Friendliness. Whether and to what extent the visitor engages with that identity as part of his/her personal narrative is idiosyncratic—but what is not so idiosyncratic are the parameters of the collective identity the visitor has available to choose from. And I do not mean to say that the State History Museum has *more* of an agenda of collective identity than any other national museum, for, as Peter Aronsson, director of the Eunamus project, asserts, any national museum

is part of the arena where these forces [of contemporary individuality and commonality] are negotiated, no doubt with a certain tendency to articulate the communality and the virtue of the national community, but at the same time hinting at what the desired virtues of individual citizens ought to be, giving a broad audience an ambitious opportunity to participate in the making of individual identity and community by the practice of making the museum.¹⁸

The interaction between individual visitor narratives and the museum narrative, or what John Bodnar calls vernacular and official narratives, interact in at least four ways, write researchers Rowe, Wertsch, and Kosyaeva, some of which serve to bolster the official narrative and others of which deflect or negate it. Visitors' stories, they say, might simply use the official story as a jumping off point for their own narrative, but they might also work to link the individual—or their audience—more closely to the larger

¹⁷ Timur Dadabaev, “Power, Social Life, And Public Memory In Uzbekistan And Kyrgyzstan,” in *Inner Asia* 12.1 (2010), 32.

¹⁸ Aronsson, Peter. “Comparing National Museums: Methodological Reflections.” *NaMuIV* (2010), 12.

narrative.¹⁹ Say I am standing in the Museum of Westward Expansion in St. Louis, Missouri, looking at an artifact like explorer Meriwether Lewis's compass. If I am reminded by it of my grandfather's pocket watch from his work on the Panama Canal, that might serve to deflect me from the official narrative of Western exploration in 19th century North America. However, as Rowe *et al.* note, I might then continue on to discuss the role of timepieces, the Canal, or my own grandfather in US expansionism—all of which would be ways of bringing my personal narrative more in line with the official one, and thus encouraging me to identify more closely as I interact with it.

In fact, the personal memories of individual visitors are triggered as never before by modern museum displays because collections of personal narratives have become so central. In the Imperial War Museum North (England) with its highlighted soldiers' letters and personal quotes; in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum with its personalized permanent exhibit "Remembering the Children: Daniel's Story"; in the Ethiopian National Museum, where four million years of hominid ancestors are manifested in the personalized fossils of Ardi, Lucy, and the Tang Child; and on and on, large historical events are commonly told through the lens of individual lives. Beyond this kind of personalized experience, however, some museums are also narratologically constructed to demand a response from their newly engaged audience on an individual level.

I see three approaches used repeatedly around the world to encourage this kind of individual visitor engagement with personalized narrative. First, individuals are asked to give the museum their own personal narratives, thus implying that the visitor's lifestory is synecdochally connected to the official story presented back to the visitor. Synecdoche, the rhetorical trope whereby a part stands in for the whole or the whole for the part, places the seemingly idiosyncratic individual narrative within the collective. For instance, in the "Eternity" exhibit at the National Museum of Australia, light boards display the lifestories of 50 Australians—some famous or historically significant, others not. Australian visitors are encouraged by the opening sign to take these personal narratives as exemplars and add their own stories to the collection:

Share all the emotion as the selected stories unfold. And you're invited to add your own: in writing, through video, via sounds. Laugh. Feel fear. Fall in love. Take a chance.

As synecdoche, each person's narrative is not a reduction from the greater whole, not less than the national story, it becomes instead its own an embodiment of the whole. As synecdoche, each person's story is a unique microcosm of the whole nation's story. Burke noted that synecdoche "stresses a *relationship* or *connectedness* between two sides of an equation"²⁰—in this case, between the vernacular narratives of the individual visitors and the official narratives of the museum.

Second, museums invite the visitor to take on the role of a participant in the official story, thus asking them to unify this other unique identity into their own lifestory as they reflect on what it would be like to be that particular individual. For instance, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum is famous for its use of identification cards given to each visitor who enters the permanent exhibit. Each card gives information, with photo, of a real person, along with the narrative of their wartime life. Receiving this card at the beginning of the exhibit encourages visitors to enter the chronological journey through the 1930s and 40s with a dual identity—their own and that of someone who suffered the effects of the history on display. Similarly, the Apartheid Museum (South Africa) informs visitors that their "ticket to the museum has randomly classified you as 'white' or 'non-white.' Please use the entrance . . . indicated." Visitors assume the dual

¹⁹ Sharon Rowe, James Wertsch, and Tatyana Kosyaeva, "Linking Little Narratives to Big Ones: Narrative and Public Memory in History Museums," in *Culture & Psychology* 8.1 (2002), 108.

²⁰ Kenneth Burke, "Four Master Tropes," in *Kenyon Review* 3.4 (1941), 428.

identity and pass through separate turnstiles into two parallel tunnels made of wire-mesh cages that contain enlarged identity cards of similarly white/non-white individual South Africans. The narrative then forces not only cross-racial identification but also makes an argument about the “randomness” of such classification as designated “white” and “non-white” visitors stand together at the end before a large photo of one of the review panels that determined each person’s race.

Finally, museums ask visitors to directly incorporate their own individualized lifestory into that of the official museum display, not as a separate identity but as if they were *in fact* made over into someone else. Historical museums everywhere invite child visitors to dress up in the costumes of another age, and sophisticated walk-through displays invite visitors to feel what it was like to be in a slave holding pen or a World War I trench or a primeval rainforest or (in living history museums) any number of old-time villages. But the Museum of Boca Juniors Passion (Argentina) takes its “this is you” approach to cinemagraphic levels. The museum is tucked into the wall of La Bombonera, the iconic soccer/football stadium of the Boca Juniors team in the old working class neighborhood of the capital city. Visitors to the Museum are ushered into an introductory room encircled by large screens showing in 360 degrees a film shot from the perspective of the visitor. With the camera serving as the visitor’s eyes and the narration employing the second person (“You run, trap and kick”), “you,” a youth in the poor neighborhood of La Boca, can trace “your” first discovery by scouts for the Club, through endless practices with fellow aspirants, to “your” first big chance on goal and heartbreaking miss, and then to “you” working harder than ever, practicing, practicing, finally running onto the field at La Bombonera, where the crowds surround “you” with screaming, foot-stomping cheers, and “you” and your teammates face off against your rivals, waiting your chance, until suddenly a teammate passes you the ball—and there are your legs, running, dodging, shooting in a long arc . . . and scoring! Since it is a safe guess that this is the dream story of nearly everyone who comes to this museum, its enactment on film immediately invites the visitor to take on a new identity (not merely fan but player) and so connect with the “passion” that is the stated purpose of the museum—which is, after all, not devoted to the Boca Juniors but to the “Pasión Boquense.”

All three methods of visitor engagement demonstrate the links that are forged between the narration of a lifestory (one’s own or one adopted) and one’s identity (again, one’s own or one adopted)—which is then presented back to the visitor as a piece of the collective identity of all the other individuals around him/her—or to return to my original argument, what Burke named the “personalizing of essence.”

Toward the end of Burke’s *A Grammar of Motives*, he began to explore the relation between ontology and history, things in their essence and things in time. He noted that narrative must by its nature historicize occurrences that do not actually happen temporally because narrative requires linearity. That is, one’s essence, who one is, being translated into narrative becomes the story of one’s origins, where one came from.²¹ Burke’s example is that calling someone a “bastard” maligns his essence by reference to his origins. I witnessed a larger example of this essence-origin translation in Australia in 2008 during a national campaign entitled “All of Us” that celebrated the new Australian identity by collecting stories and photos of Australians. As its website still explains, the project aimed to

graphically illustrate the amazing cultural diversity in Australia today. The candidates [for photos] must have been born overseas, preferably in their country of origin.²²

²¹ Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, Berkeley: U of California Press, 1945, 1968, 430.

²² “The Project,” *All of Us: Multiculturalism-Australian Style*, www.allofus.com.au, accessed 15 March 2013.

The ontology of their Australianness was determined by their temporal origin. When Burke returned to this temporizing theme five years later, he added that one could classify an essence not only in terms of its origins but also “in terms of its *fulfillment or fruition*, conceiving of its kind according to the perfection . . . of which that kind is capable.”²³

He went on, “In either choice (the ancestral or the final) the narrative terminology provides for a *personalizing* of essence.”²⁴ The abstraction that is the essential is brought into time, personalized, narrated into a causal timeline that then—as one explores with one’s fellows the collective history presented in the museum—interacts with that collective history in a way that promotes identification with the larger story by infusing individual acts with the more unifying ideal. It is in this sense that, as museologist Jay Rounds argues,

Visiting a museum is both about construction of identity and signaling of identity . . . museums offer opportunities of affirming our identity, but they also offer a safe environment where we can explore other identities and gain materials to ‘construct’ ourselves.²⁵

They do this, again, not consciously, not as the reason for visiting the museum, but as a consequence of one’s engagement there. Burke discussed this engagement phenomenon as *identification*, “any of the wide variety of means by which [a rhetor] may establish a shared sense of values, attitudes, and interests with [an audience].”²⁶ If Aristotle founded the Western rhetorical tradition around the notion of *persuasion*, Burke said that its persuasive force is found not in rational argument but in human interactions: “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language . . . *identifying* your ways with his.”²⁷ This identification process is inevitably engaging with an audience of individuals, each with their own shifting mix of “speech, gesture tonality, order, image, attitude, idea,” as Burke says.²⁸ Far from lamenting this shifting ambiguity, however, he celebrated it as the human condition.

Faced with endless examples of the process of individual engaged identification with a shifting collective identity, let me end with two museums of New World indigenous culture. In the “Our Peoples” exhibit at the National Museum of the American Indian, an introductory sign asserts the individuality of precontact indigenous people:

The people who live here are engineers and artists, cooks and dreamers, hunters and students. They are scientists and kings, farmers and revolutionaries. They aren’t ‘Indians.’ They have never heard of ‘America.’

We are strangers to them—but by providing these unknown individuals with familiar titles, the sign provides a way for modern visitors, also engineers and artists, hunters and dreamers, to identify our own ways with those of these peoples—they are *not* strangers to us. All visitors are indeed individuals, just as are all the individuals represented by these objects we now gaze at in our museums—and thus, paradoxically, we share commonalities of which personalizing serves to remind us. As Adolfo Lopez Mateos, the President of the Republic of Mexico, noted on the inauguration of his country’s National Archaeological Museum almost 50 years ago (a quote now carved into the museum’s entrance), “Faced with the testimonies of those

²³ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Berkeley: U of California Press, 1950, 1968, 13-14, emphasis Burke’s.

²⁴ Burke, *Rhetoric*, 15, emphasis Burke’s.

²⁵ Jay Rounds, “Doing identity work in museums,” in *Curator* 49.2 (2006), 138.

²⁶ Burke, *Rhetoric*, 138.

²⁷ Burke, *Rhetoric*, 55.

²⁸ Burke, *Rhetoric*, 55.

cultures, Mexico today pays tribute to indigenous Mexico, in whose example *it recognizes characteristics of its national originality*.²⁹

If identity, “emergent rather than permanent,”³⁰ as Falk puts it, is not a static essence but a rhetorical action, then what modern rhetoricians remind us is that rhetoric itself is “the process of negotiating with others our notions of individual and collective identity”³¹—and what better place to do that than within the dialogic museum?

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²⁹ “Frente a los testimonios de aquellas culturas, el México de hoy rinde homenaje al México indígena en cuyo ejemplo reconoce características de su originalidad nacional.” Translation and emphasis mine.

³⁰ Falk, 73.

³¹ Clark, 3.

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Ann Davis
President / Président / Presidente
ICOFOM

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