

ICOFOM

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The Politics and Poetics of Museology

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**The Politics
and Poetics
of Museology**

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Foreword

This volume 46 of the *ICOFOM Study Series* is special. For four years now, we have continued on the path to which ICOFOM is committed: a deeper and more rigorous peer review procedure, but also a more advanced editing and printing process for our journal. This year 2018, after a two-year process, our journal has also been accepted to appear in the digital portal of [revues.org/OpenEdition Journals](http://revues.org/OpenEdition) hosted by the OpenEdition, a scientific publishing platform supported by the CNRS and several French universities. This portal, which hosts several hundred academic journals, will help us to increase the visibility of our activities within the professional community.

We also took this opportunity to radically transform the graphic design and format of our journal, in its paper version, in collaboration with the graphic designer and typeface designer Bruno Bernard who also drew for us the covers of the collection of ICOFOM monographs that we launched in 2017 and which is available on our website.

Volume 46 of the *ICOFOM Study Series* contains a selection of the papers presented at the ICOM's 40th Symposium of the International Museum of Museology held in Cuba in October 2017. This is the first time that ICOFOM and, apparently, an international committee of ICOM met in Cuba; a rich and intense experience, remarkably well orchestrated by our hosts, just a few weeks after the cyclones hit the city of Havana. Cuba proved to be a really good place in which to discuss politics in the museum and museology, and the discussions around these different concepts were particularly rich and fruitful with participation from all five continents.

This review cannot function without its many contributors, including the anonymous peer reviewers as well as all the members of ICOFOM who participated in the work of secretarial, proofreading, correction and editing. We thank them here very sincerely.

Ann Davis and François Mairesse

Avant-propos

Ce volume 46 des *ICOFOM Study Series* est particulier. Depuis maintenant quatre ans, nous poursuivons la voie dans laquelle l'ICOFOM s'est engagé, à savoir une procédure plus longue et plus rigoureuse de peer review des articles, mais également un processus d'édition et d'impression plus abouti pour notre revue. Cette année 2018, après deux années d'évaluation et de mise au point, notre revue a par ailleurs été acceptée pour figurer dans le portail numérique de *revues.org/OpenEdition Journals* abrité par la plateforme d'édition scientifique OpenEdition soutenue par le CNRS et plusieurs universités en France. Ce portail, qui accueille plusieurs centaines de revues académiques, contribuera à renforcer la visibilité de nos activités auprès de la communauté scientifique.

Nous avons par ailleurs profité de cette occasion pour transformer radicalement le graphisme et le format de la revue, sous sa version papier, en collaboration avec le graphiste et créateur de caractères typographiques Bruno Bernard qui a également dessiné pour nous la collection de monographies d'ICOFOM que nous avons lancée en 2017 et qui est accessible sur notre site Internet.

Le volume 46 des *ICOFOM Study Series* reprend une sélection des interventions présentées lors du 40ème symposium du Comité international pour la Muséologie de l'ICOM, qui s'est tenu à Cuba, durant le mois d'octobre 2017. C'est la première fois que l'ICOFOM et, semble-t-il, qu'un comité international de l'ICOM se rendait à Cuba ; une expérience riche et intense, remarquablement bien orchestrée par nos hôtes, quelques semaines à peine après le passage de cyclones ayant frappé durement la ville de La Havane. Cuba s'est avéré un lieu réellement profitable pour évoquer la question du politique au sein du musée et de la muséologie, et les discussions autour de ces différentes notions furent particulièrement riches et fructueuses entre la centaine de participants, venus des cinq continents.

Cette revue ne peut fonctionner sans ses nombreux contributeurs, mais aussi tous les évaluateurs anonymes ainsi que tous les membres d'ICOFOM ayant participé au travail de secrétariat, de relecture, de correction et d'édition. Nous les remercions ici très sincèrement.

Ann Davis et François Mairesse

Prefacio

Este volumen 46 de las Series de Estudio de ICOFOM (*ICOFOM Study Series*) es especial. Desde hace cuatro años, hemos continuado el camino en el que ICOFOM se ha comprometido, a saber, un procedimiento más largo y riguroso de la revisión por pares de los artículos, pero igualmente un proceso de edición e impresión más avanzado para nuestra revista. Este año de 2018, después de dos años de evaluación y puesta a punto, nuestra revista ha sido aceptada para aparecer en el portal digital de *revues.org/OpenEdition Journals* alojado en la plataforma de publicación científica Open Edition respaldada por la CNRS y la mayor parte de las universidades francesas. Este portal, que alberga varios cientos de revistas académicas, contribuirá a aumentar la visibilidad de nuestras actividades dentro de la comunidad científica.

Aprovechamos también esta oportunidad para transformar radicalmente el diseño gráfico y el formato de la revista en su versión en papel, en colaboración con el diseñador gráfico y diseñador de tipografías Bruno Bernard, quien también diseñó para nosotros la colección de monografías del ICOFOM, que lanzamos en 2017 y que está disponible en nuestro sitio web.

El volumen 46 del *ICOFOM Study Series* contiene una selección de los trabajos presentados en el 40º simposio Internacional del Comité internacional para la Museología del ICOM celebrado en Cuba en octubre de 2017. Esta es la primera vez que el ICOFOM y, aparentemente, un comité internacional del ICOM se reunieron en Cuba; una experiencia rica e intensa, notablemente bien orquestada por nuestros anfitriones, solo unas semanas después de que los ciclones golpearan duramente la ciudad de La Habana. Cuba demostró ser un lugar realmente apropiado para debatir sobre la cuestión política en el museo y la museología, y las discusiones sobre las diferentes nociones fueron particularmente ricas y fructíferas entre la centena de participantes venidos de los cinco continentes.

Esta publicación no podría funcionar sin sus numerosos colaboradores, pero tampoco sin los evaluadores anónimos, así como también aquellos miembros del ICOFOM que han participado en el trabajo de secretariado, revisión, corrección y edición. A todos ellos nuestro más sincero agradecimiento.

Ann Davis y François Mairesse

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The politics and poetics of Museology

François Mairesse

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It has become rather common to speak of the museum as a place of power. Whether one refers to it as media (Davallon, 1992), as medium (McLuhan, Parker & Barzun, 1969), or as device (Bennett, 1995), we must understand that this institution, emblematic of occidental civilization, has always aroused the interests of local political régimes, whatever they may be. The creation of the British Museum and the birth of the Louvre (Déotte, 1994; Pommier, 1995) illustrate the many different ways the public has of seeing the links between knowledge and collections. Furthermore the advent of each new political régime (from democracy in America to the Marxist-Leninist system in the Soviet Union, passing by fascist Italy and national-socialist Germany) marks museums with its imprint, as well as its system of communication, preservation and research.

Politics is always integral to the functioning of museums, affecting both directly and indirectly the neutral and objective image that this institution presents to the public. We muse on the direct influence of a local politician, who tries to force an artist upon a curator, or impose a political régime looking to transform a national narrative (Bergeron, 2014). But we can also question the indirect political influence on the biases of museum professionals and theoreticians, across museology and its different modes of communication: articles, books, conferences, symposia and teaching institutions.

The idea is not new. We find it in the first ICOFOM debates, especially in the division of participants (essentially Anglophone) who considered museology to be essentially practical and pragmatic as opposed to those who saw museology as a scientific (empirical, rational) discipline. In the 1980s the debate was certainly not settled (Burcaw, 1981). The bipolar world of the time differed considerably from that of today. At that time questioning the nature of disciplines

was based on university structures different from what we know now. From a certain point of view, Zbyněk Stránský's reasons for presenting museology as science can only be understood within this somewhat dated context. The more recent interpretations by Bruno Latour (2001), analyzing science as a process in which ideas are added within controversies, has permitted a richer vision, especially for the topic considered here. From this perspective, it is not simply a matter of developing concepts or a new vocabulary, but rather of creating new resources and laboratories of political alliances: in short, developing strategies in which the scientific arguments are just one aspect.

Following this analysis, the question of power referenced above is dominant. Whether seen as scientific or theoretic, museology (or museum studies) as a discipline should be considered to be sufficiently coherent and valuable (in results and the establishment of research capital) to merit development within the academic system. Museology should also be useful beyond the university, as much as museology claims to influence museums and the manner in which they are organized. If research-based museology can influence the world-wide teaching of museology, it seems positive (there have never been so many schools and researchers). But we have to question on one hand the type of museology being taught, and on the other hand the real influence of museology, both on museums and on those who fund museums.

Politics

If we can pretend, along with Bourdieu, that sociology is a combat sport (Carles, 2001), then what is museology? The question posed by Cameron (1971) as to whether a museum is a temple or a forum, can also be asked of museology and the padded environments in which it evolved, most often the university and a few big museums. This question hides museology's lack of influence in these debates in a significant manner. Almost any museum textbook (Gob & Drouguet, 2014; Ambrose & Paine, 2012; Zubiaur, 2004) tends to show the great distance between the stated role of a museum - historic preservation, research, training and education, and a social role - and the reasons why many establishments were actually created: as symbols of power and instruments of propaganda to the glory of a patron or a region, or as urban economic and touristic development. If we can see global politics as the development of city affairs, then who really manages the business of the museum (or the museum field)? What could be the role of museology from this perspective: to keep a prescriptive interpretation of what should be the role of the museum, risking a more and more useless point of view? Should museology seek to define, or should it seek to convince and influence? Should we mainly address our own students and colleagues, colleagues in other disciplines, and museum professionals, or should we endeavour to influence politicians? If, theoretically, all seems possible, most researchers need to make practical choices, but which ones? Should museology, from this perspective, be militant (as is new museology)? And if so, for whom - colleagues, professionals, the public or people

of influence? From this point of view, how to manage the offset between, on the one hand, classical prescriptive museology (conservation, research, communication in a research-based framework) and, on the other hand, the precarious situation faced by many museums including the need to cover the rent, develop tourism and support social inclusion?

Geopolitics

The history of museology, as well as that of museums, shows a considerable evolution of the museum landscape as well as the methods used in museum work. If all members of ICOM see themselves (more or less) in the definition of museum and the code of ethics, most of them could not understand the broad heterogeneity in the ways of thinking about museums today. We can, however, identify a certain number of zones of influence more or less important in the world that are linked to specific trains of thought: a few celebrated universities (Leicester University); a few big museums (the Louvre or the Metropolitan); or certain important authors (Stephen Weil, John Falk, Tony Bennett, Georges Henri Rivière, Hugues de Varine, Roland Arpin, Filipe Lacouture etc.); a consulting organization (Lord Cultural Resources). How to determine and distinguish these zones? Should we speak of museological imperialism (Scheiner, 2016) to recognize certain dominant forms: Anglo-saxon and to a lesser extent Francophone and Hispanic? How, from this perspective, can we find other ways of conceiving of the museum field, from Oceania, Africa, the Middle East, Asia or the far North?

So, from this point of view, the origin of most of the big museum concepts, as well as the museums themselves, is occidental. The evolution of the world suggests considerable political and economic changes in the decades to come, presaging more or less radical transformations in global geopolitical activities. It would be difficult to believe that these changes would not affect museums and museology. How will notions, such as heritage, conservation, the inalienable nature of collections, or the relationship of museums to profit evolve, if a number of countries have conceptions that are, at times, diametrically opposed to those dominant today, especially concerning the materiality of heritage as well as its authenticity and access?

Poetics

If we can risk defining poetics as the theory and analysis of artistic creation (notably literature), we must decide that there exists a poetics of museology (the art of exposition) as shown by numerous authors, such as Altshuler (2013) or Karp and Lavine (1991). But can one really speak of a poetics of museology? Without doubt we could analyze the museological discourse according to its aesthetic or ornamental dimensions, but most contributors privilege a methodical rhetoric in which most of the time sobriety leaves little room for poetics.

Alternatively we can posit a hypothesis that what creates the originality and pertinence of the great museum thinkers is at the heart of a creative process in which the concepts as much as the ways of evoking them contribute greatly to the quality of the message by inscribing in them certain poetics of museology. The lyricism in Duncan Cameron's (1992) foundational articles contribute greatly to their notoriety, and the same goes for the energy evident in the contributions of Hugues de Varine and of the numerous authors of new museology (Desvallées, 1992-1994). Humour as well as John Cotton Dana's style is a non-negotiable aspect of his iconoclastic work. Can we find in museum literature an admirable creative breath among the great museum thinkers today, or are we doomed to gloomy and technocratic gibberish? From this perspective, can we find a poetics of museology and who would be the creators who propose new concepts and notions in synchronicity with our society?

The politics and poetics of museology

Politics, geopolitics and poetics were therefore at the center of discussions at the 40th ICOFOM symposium held in Cuba in October 2017, to clarify how these notions can currently be considered in the field of museology. The contributions in this issue provide an insight, certainly not exhaustive, but nevertheless particularly interesting. Unsurprisingly, it is first the term politics, in its relations to museums, which has most directly inspired the authors. Many of them, using case studies, have often discussed national museum policy issues. The ICOFOM international network promotes the diversity of approaches, contributing to the development of a panorama of original proposals. Ayanda Ngcobo, in *The Politics of Representation in South African Museums*, using two detailed studies of museums (the Old Court Museum and the Bergtheil Museum) – through the representation of the races, but also that of the genres – evokes the transformations of the last decades in South African museums. This country, whose museum discourse has considerably changed in parallel with political upheavals during the 1990s, is the subject of a second analysis, the study of a particularly symbolic diorama. Patricia Davison's *The Politics and Poetics of the Bushman Diorama at the South African Museum* evokes and analyzes the conservation choices of one of the most famous dioramas of the South African museum representing a Bushman family, and the stakes or the political orientations underlying its withdrawal. In a completely different context, Olga Zabalueva, in *Museology and Museum-Making: Cultural Policies and Cultural Demands*, presents the radically different political stakes of two European museums: the Orthodox Church museum located in the Monastery of New Jerusalem, near Moscow, and the National Museum for Democracy and Migration in Malmö, Sweden. The museum, as a public space but above all as a media, thus appears as a particularly favorable ground for the evocation, in a more or less underlying way, of the political visions of those who finance them. It is obviously in the same context that the Museo del Ejército dedicated to National Defense, in Mexico City, analyzed by Maai Enai Ortíz Sánchez in *Museos militares: dispositivos exhibitorios y el borramiento de la memoria de la*

lucha social en México, can be considered. In *The Origins of Puritan Politics in US Museums: Nation Building and "The Arts" from 1776 to 1806*, based on a historical approach, Sheila Hoffman shows a first facet of the policy of the young US government, at that time very cautious about the funding or creating museums on its territory. We know the changes in attitudes towards museums that will accompany the American political evolution, according to the increasingly important place reserved for economic questions and the development of capitalist logic. In a certain way, the article by Karla Estelita Godoy and Sarah Borges Luna, *Museums and city aestheticization policies: controversies between the touristification of public spaces and the social role of museum institutions*, even if it refers to the museums of the city Rio de Janeiro, also illustrates the changes that have taken place in the United States and in so many other countries, with the museum becoming increasingly involved in the economic policies of states or cities in favor of creativity or the reinforcement of consumerism.

If the interference of politics appears as much in museums as in the museum policy of states and cities, it is also found, inevitably, within museum types and ways of thinking about museum professions. It is from that point of view that Yves Bergeron and Lisa Baillargeon's essays, on the one hand, and Sheila Hoffman's, on the other hand, are considered. In *The Curatorial Status of North American Museums: Geopolitical Perspectives*, Bergeron and Baillargeon attempt to describe the functional changes of museum officials, particularly the curatorial profession, to discuss the differences between these functions in Europe and North America. Hoffman, in *Practicality and Value: Historical Influences on Museum Studies in the United States*, discusses pioneering training policies in museum staff during the first half of the 20th century in the United States. Such policies inevitably have a direct influence on the way museums are conceived. But they are in turn conditioned by the thinking of the great figures of the museum field: Bergeron, Baillargeon and Hoffman obviously refer to it them, noting in particular to the figures of Brown, Goode or Sachs. The most detailed and certainly the most geopolitical analysis of this matter, in this issue of *ICOFOM Study Series*, is certainly that developed by Bruno Brulon Soares and Anna Leshchenko. In *Museology in Colonial Contexts: A Hall for Decolonization of Museum Theory*, the authors do not observe the particular context of a particular country – rather, they emphasize the areas where museology is implanted and, in particular, the way Anglophones on the one hand, the Francophones on the other, think of the museum field. They observe a kind of hegemonic use of some of the literature in this area, to the detriment of others, through quotes and references, conditioning the reader. Brulon Soares and Leshchenko, in this perspective, note – from the analysis of some major reference works, such as the *International Handbook of Museum Studies* or the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*, how the museological output of many countries – especially that of Latin America – is underrepresented.

Although the notion of politics is clearly apparent in most articles, that of a poetics of museology seems to have attracted less interest from the authors.

Certainly, as many contributors have pointed out, the exhibitionary complex – especially the dioramas – participate in a particular poetics of museum work. Nevertheless, the idea of a poetics of museology seems less obvious. The article of Tereza Scheiner, *Museología - Poética, Política y Ética: Dimensiones transformadoras de las relaciones entre Humano y Real*, aims at articulating these two notions, from an ethical viewpoint. By emphasizing the dual nature of museology – creative and reflexive on the one hand, active on the other – Scheiner highlights, in a sense, the dualism of philosophical thought, which can be found at the heart of the Renaissance debates, Neo-Platonic thought and the emergence of the modern museum.

In a more practical way, Elizabeth Weiser emphasizes the articulation between poetics and rhetoric, evoking the importance of style and creativity in museological literary production. In *Crafting a Poetic Museology*, Weiser analyzes, from the rhetorical framework, numerous quotations or extracts from museological texts, notably from some authors published in of the *ICOFOM Study Series*, suggesting many ways for developing a persuasion impact (one of the objectives of the rhetoric) of an article.

If this selection of articles can lay the groundwork for a reflection on the links between (geo)-politics, poetics and museology, it does not exhaust the subject. This axis of reflection of ICOFOM, as evidenced by most contributions, however, proves to be of great fertility, all over the world. It is hoped that it will be enriched in the years to come by other points of view in order to clarify the specific relations binding these different concepts to museology.

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Introduction

Politique et poétique de la muséologie

François Mairesse

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Il est devenu plutôt banal de parler du musée en tant qu'espace de pouvoir. Qu'on le qualifie de média (Davallon, 1992), de médium (McLuhan, Parker & Barzun, 1969) ou de dispositif (Bennett, 1995), force est de reconnaître que cette institution emblématique de la civilisation occidentale a toujours suscité l'intérêt des régimes politiques en place, quels qu'ils soient. La création du British Museum et la naissance du Louvre (Déotte, 1994 ; Pommier, 1995) illustrent d'emblée les manières différentes d'envisager le rapport des connaissances et des collections au public, tandis que l'avènement de chaque nouveau régime politique (de la démocratie en Amérique au système marxiste-léniniste de l'Union soviétique, en passant par l'Italie fasciste et l'Allemagne national-socialiste) marque de son empreinte le développement des musées, autant que son système de communication, de préservation et de recherche.

Le politique s'est immiscé depuis toujours et à toutes les échelles dans le fonctionnement du musée, affectant de manière directe et indirecte l'image du lieu neutre et objectif que cette institution donne auprès du grand public. On songe bien sûr à l'influence directe du politicien local, essayant d'imposer un artiste à un conservateur, ou celle d'un régime politique cherchant à transformer le récit national (Bergeron, 2014). Mais on peut aussi s'interroger sur l'influence indirecte du politique, par le biais des professionnels de musées et des théoriciens eux-mêmes, à travers la muséologie et ses différents supports : articles, livres, conférences, colloques, lieux d'enseignement.

L'idée n'est pas neuve, on la retrouve d'emblée dans les premiers débats d'ICO-FOM, notamment dans celui opposant les partisans (essentiellement anglo-saxons) d'une muséologie plutôt pratique et pragmatique à ceux en faveur du développement de la muséologie comme discipline scientifique (Burcaw, 1981).

Si le débat remonte aux années 1980, il serait erroné de considérer la question comme réglée. Le monde bipolaire présenté à l'époque diffère sensiblement de celui que nous connaissons actuellement. A l'époque, le questionnement disciplinaire est envisagé à partir de structures universitaires assez différentes de celles que nous connaissons de nos jours et d'une certaine manière, le raisonnement développé par Zbyněk Stránský afin de présenter la muséologie comme science en développement ne peut se comprendre qu'à partir de ce contexte partiellement daté. L'apport plus récent de Bruno Latour (2001), analysant la science en train de se faire et la manière dont les idées s'imposent à travers les controverses, a permis de développer une vision plus riche en la matière, notamment pour ce qui concerne le sujet évoqué ici. Selon cette perspective, il ne s'agit pas simplement de développer des concepts ou un nouveau vocabulaire, mais de créer des réseaux, des laboratoires des alliances politiques, bref, d'élaborer des stratégies dont les arguments scientifiques ne constituent qu'une dimension particulière.

A partir d'une telle analyse, la question du pouvoir évoquée plus haut apparaît comme prépondérante. Quelle se revendique comme science ou comme champ théorique, la muséologie (ou les *museum studies*) doit d'abord s'affirmer parmi les autres disciplines comme un ensemble suffisamment cohérent et prometteur (en matière de résultats et de constitution de capital scientifique) pour espérer se développer au sein du système académique. Elle doit aussi parvenir à convaincre ailleurs qu'à l'université, pour autant qu'elle prétende influencer les musées et la manière dont ils sont organisés. Si le premier constat que l'on peut poser sur le développement de l'enseignement de la muséologie dans le monde semble positif (il n'y a jamais eu autant de formations et de chercheurs), il convient d'une part de s'interroger sur le type de muséologie enseignée, d'autre part sur son influence véritable, tant au niveau des musées que de ceux qui les financent.

Politique

Si on a pu prétendre, avec Bourdieu, que la sociologie est un sport de combat (Carles, 2001), qu'en est-il de la muséologie ? La question du musée temple ou forum, évoquée par Cameron (1971), se pose aussi pour la muséologie, et les milieux souvent feutrés dans lesquels celle-ci évolue – le plus souvent l'université et quelques grands musées – cachent mal son manque d'influence dans les débats. La lecture de n'importe quel manuel de muséologie (Gob & Drouguet, 2014 ; Ambrose & Paine, 2012 ; Zubiaur, 2004) montre souvent la distance considérable entre le rôle affiché d'un musée – préservation du patrimoine, recherche, apprentissage et éducation, rôle social – et les raisons pour lesquelles de nombreux établissements sont actuellement construits : symbole de pouvoir et instrument de propagande à la gloire d'un mécène ou d'une région, développement urbain, économique et touristique. Si l'on peut évoquer globalement la politique comme la gestion des affaires de la cité, qui gère véritablement les affaires du musée (ou du champ muséal) ? Quel peut-être le rôle du muséologue

dans cette perspective : rester dans une interprétation prescriptive de ce que devrait être le rôle du musée, au risque de prononcer un discours de plus en plus détaché de la réalité ? Chercher à décrire ou chercher à convaincre et à influencer ? S'adresser essentiellement à ses étudiants et à ses collègues, à des collègues d'autres disciplines, à des professionnels de musée ou à des décideurs politiques ? Si, sur le plan théorique, tout semble possible, il convient bien de reconnaître que sur le plan pratique, la plupart des chercheurs en sont réduits à faire des choix, mais lesquels ? La muséologie, dans cette perspective, doit-elle se faire militante (comme le fut la nouvelle muséologie) ? A destination de qui ? De collègues, de professionnels, du public ou des décideurs ? Dans cette perspective, comment gérer le décalage entre le prescrit muséologique classique (préservation, recherche, communication, dans un cadre scientifique) et la situation de nombre de musées de plus en plus précarisés et confrontés à des impératifs de rentabilité, de développement touristique ou d'inclusion sociale ?

Géopolitique

L'histoire de la muséologie, autant que celle des musées, montre une évolution considérable du paysage muséal aussi bien que des méthodes qui y sont utilisées dans le travail quotidien. Si tous les membres de l'ICOM se reconnaissent (plus ou moins) derrière la définition du musée et le code de déontologie, la plupart ne peuvent que constater la grande hétérogénéité des manières de penser le champ muséal actuel. On pourrait cependant distinguer un certain nombre de zones d'influences plus ou moins importantes dans le monde et qui sont liées à des courants de pensée spécifiques : quelques universités célèbres (l'Université de Leicester), quelques grands musées (Le Louvre ou le Metropolitan museum) ou quelques auteurs marquants (Stephen Weil, John Falk, Tony Bennett, Georges Henri Rivière, Hugues de Varine, Roland Arpin, Felipe Lacouture, etc.) voire certains cabinets de consultance (Lord Cultural Resources). Comment déterminer et distinguer ces zones ? Peut-on parler d'impérialisme muséologique (Scheiner, 2016), pour qualifier certains courants « dominants » : l'anglo-saxon et dans une moindre mesure le francophone ou l'hispanophone ? Comment, dans une telle perspective, faire entendre d'autres manières de concevoir le champ muséal, depuis l'Océanie, l'Afrique, le Moyen Orient, l'Asie ou le Grand Nord ?

Il convient bien de remarquer, à partir de ce constat, que l'origine de la plupart des grands concepts liés aux musées actuels, au même titre que les musées eux-mêmes, est occidentale. L'évolution du monde laisse apercevoir des changements politiques et économiques considérables dans les décennies à venir, présageant de transformations plus ou moins radicales des rapports géopolitiques entre les nations. Il serait difficilement concevable que ces changements n'aient pas d'influence sur les musées et la muséologie. Comment des notions telles que le patrimoine, la conservation, l'inaliénabilité des collections ou la relation au profit pourraient-elles dès lors évoluer, si l'on songe que nombre de pays ont des conceptions parfois très opposées à celles actuellement dominantes,

notamment pour ce qui concerne la matérialité du patrimoine, son authenticité ou son accès ?

Poétique

Si l'on se risque à définir la poétique comme la théorisation et l'analyse de la création artistique (notamment littéraire), force est de constater qu'il existe bien une poétique de la muséographie (l'art de l'exposition, mis en exergue par plusieurs auteurs, comme Altshuler (2013) ou Karp & Lavine (1991). Mais peut-on vraiment parler d'une poétique de la muséologie ? On pourrait sans doute analyser le discours muséologique à partir de sa dimension ornementale ou esthétique, mais la plupart des contributions privilégient une rhétorique scientifique dont la sobriété laisse la plupart du temps bien peu la place au poétique.

On pourrait en revanche émettre l'hypothèse que ce qui fonde l'originalité et la pertinence des grands muséologues s'inscrit au cœur d'un processus de création dont les concepts autant que la manière de les évoquer contribuent largement à la qualité du message en s'inscrivant dès lors dans une certaine poétique de la muséologie. Le lyrisme qui se dégage des articles fondateurs de Duncan Cameron (1992) a largement contribué à leur notoriété, au même titre que l'énergie se dégageant des contributions de Hugues de Varine et de nombreux auteurs de la nouvelle muséologie (Desvallées, 1992-1994). L'humour aussi bien que le style de John Cotton Dana constituent une dimension non négligeable du propos souvent iconoclaste tenu par l'auteur. Peut-on retrouver de nos jours, dans la littérature muséale, le souffle créateur que l'on a pu admirer chez certains grands muséologues, ou sommes-nous irrémédiablement condamnés à un sabir morne et technocratique ? Dans cette perspective, que peut-on attendre d'une poétique de la muséologie, et qui seraient les créateurs des nouveaux concepts et notions en phase avec notre société ?

Politique et poétique de la muséologie

Politique, géopolitique et poétique se sont donc retrouvés au centre des discussions du 40^{ème} symposium de l'ICOFOM qui s'est tenu à Cuba, en octobre 2017, permettant de préciser la manière dont ces notions peuvent actuellement être pensées à partir du domaine de la muséologie. Les contributions du présent numéro en donnent un aperçu, certes non exhaustif, mais néanmoins particulièrement intéressant. Sans surprise, c'est d'abord le terme de politique, dans ses relations avec les musées, qui a le plus directement inspiré les auteurs. Plusieurs d'entre eux ont ainsi, souvent, à partir d'études de cas, évoqué des questions de politique muséale nationale. Le réseau international que constitue l'ICOFOM favorise la diversité des approches, contribuant à l'élaboration d'un panorama de propositions originales. Ayanda Ngcobo, dans *The Politics of Representation in South African Museums*, évoque à partir de deux études détaillées de musées (le Old Court Museum et le Bergtheil Museum) – par le biais de la représentation

des races, mais aussi celle des genres – les transformations radicales qui se sont opérées durant les dernières décennies dans les musées d’Afrique du Sud. Ce pays, dont le discours muséal s’est considérablement transformé en parallèle avec les bouleversement politiques au cours des années 1990, fait l’objet d’une deuxième analyse à partir de l’étude d’un diorama particulièrement symbolique. *The Politics and Poetics of the Bushman Diorama at the South African Museum*, de Patricia Davison, évoque et analyse en effet les choix de conservation d’un des dioramas les plus célèbres du musée d’Afrique du Sud représentant une famille Bochimán, et les enjeux ou les orientations politiques sous-jacents à son retrait. Dans un tout autre contexte, Olga Zabalueva, dans *Museology and Museum-making: Cultural Policies and Cultural Demands*, présente les enjeux politiques radicalement différents de deux musées européens : le musée de l’Eglise orthodoxe situé dans le Monastère de la Nouvelle Jérusalem, près de Moscou et le musée national pour la Démocratie et les Migrations, à Malmö en Suède. Le musée, en tant qu’espace public mais surtout comme média, apparaît ainsi comme un terrain particulièrement propice à l’évocation, de manière plus ou moins sous-jacente, des visions politiques des responsables les finançant. C’est évidemment dans ce même contexte que le Museo del Ejército consacré à la Défense nationale, à Mexico, analysé par Maai Enai Ortíz Sánchez dans *Museos militares: dispositivos exhibitorios y el borramiento de la memoria de la lucha social en México*, peut être envisagé. Sheila Hoffman montre dans *The Origins of Puritan Politics in US Museums: Nation Building and “The Arts” from 1776 to 1806*, à partir d’une approche historique, une première facette de la politique du jeune gouvernement états-unien, très frileux envers le financement voire l’existence de musées sur son territoire. On sait les changements d’attitudes envers les musées qui accompagneront l’évolution politique américaine, au gré de la place de plus en plus importante réservée aux questions économiques et au développement de la logique capitaliste. D’une certaine manière, l’article de Karla Estelita Godoy et Sarah Borges Luna, *Museums and city aestheticization policies: controversies between the touristification of public spaces and the social role of museological institutions*, même s’il se rapporte aux musées de la ville de Rio de Janeiro, illustre aussi les changements survenus aux Etats-Unis et dans tant d’autres pays, le musée participant de plus en plus aux politiques économiques des Etats ou des villes en faveur de la créativité ou du renforcement du consumérisme.

Si l’interférence du politique apparaît aussi bien au sein des musées que dans la politique muséale des Etats et des villes, on la retrouve également, forcément, au sein des formations muséales et des manières de penser les métiers du musée. C’est à partir de ce point de vue que sont envisagés les essais d’Yves Bergeron et Lisa Baillargeon d’une part, de Sheila Hoffman d’autre part. Dans *Le statut de conservateur dans les musées nord-américains : perspectives géopolitiques*, Bergeron et Baillargeon s’attachent à décrire les mutations des fonctions des responsables de musées, notamment le métier de conservateur, pour évoquer les différences entre ces fonctions de part et d’autre de l’Atlantique. Hoffman, dans *Practicality and Value: Historical Influences on Museum Studies in the United*

States, évoque les politiques de formation pionnières en matière de personnel des musées, durant la première partie du XX^e siècle aux États-Unis. De telles politiques ont forcément une influence directe sur la manière de concevoir les musées, mais sont à leur tour conditionnées par la pensée des grandes figures du champ muséal. Bergeron, Baillargeon et Hoffman s'y réfèrent bien évidemment, évoquant notamment les figures de Brown Goode ou de Sachs. L'analyse la plus détaillée et certainement la plus géopolitique en la matière, dans ce numéro d'*ICOFOM Study Series*, est certainement celle développée par Bruno Brulon Soares et Anna Leshchenko. Dans *Museology in Colonial Contexts: A Call for Decolonisation of Museum Theory*, les auteurs évoquent moins le contexte particulier lié à tels ou tels pays – ils insistent plutôt sur des zones d'implantation de la muséologie et, notamment, la manière dont les anglo-saxons d'une part, les francophones de l'autre, pensent le champ muséal – que l'utilisation hégémonique d'une partie de la littérature dans ce domaine, au détriment des autres. La manière de penser le musée, mais aussi d'influencer la pensée des autres, passe par les citations et les références, conditionnant le lecteur. Brulon Soares et Leshchenko, dans cette perspective, remarquent – à partir de l'analyse de quelques grands ouvrages de référence, comme l'*International Handbook of Museum Studies* ou le *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*, combien la production scientifique de nombreux pays – notamment d'Amérique latine – est sous-représentée.

Si la notion de politique apparaît clairement dans la plupart des articles, celle d'une poétique de la muséologie semble avoir moins suscité l'intérêt des auteurs. Certes, comme nombre de contributeurs l'ont souligné, les dispositifs expographiques – notamment les dioramas – participent de la poétique particulière du travail muséal. Il n'en reste pas moins que l'idée d'une poétique de la muséologie apparaît comme moins évidente. L'article de Tereza Scheiner, *Museología - Poética, Política y Ética: Dimensiones transformadoras de las relaciones entre Humano y Real*, vise à articuler ces deux notions, à partir de l'éthique. En insistant sur la double nature de la muséologie – créative et réflexive d'une part, active de l'autre – Scheiner souligne, en quelque sorte, le dualisme de la pensée philosophique, que l'on retrouve au cœur des débats de la Renaissance, de la pensée néo-platonicienne et de l'émergence du musée moderne.

De manière plus pratique, Elizabeth Weiser souligne l'articulation entre poétique et rhétorique, évoquant l'importance du style et de la créativité dans la production littéraire muséologique. Dans *Crafting a Poetic Museology*, Weiser analyse ainsi, à partir du canevas rhétorique, nombre de citations ou d'extraits de textes muséologiques, notamment d'auteur des *ICOFOM Study Series*, suggérant de nombreuses pistes afin de développer le pouvoir de persuasion (l'un des objectifs de la rhétorique) d'un article.

Si cette sélection d'articles permet de jeter les bases en vue d'une réflexion sur les liens entre (géo)politique, poétique et muséologie, elle n'en épuise pas pour autant le sujet. Cet axe de réflexion de l'ICOFOM, comme en témoignent la plupart des contributions, s'avère cependant d'une grande fécondité, un peu

partout dans le monde. Il est à espérer qu'il puisse être enrichi, dans les années à venir, d'autres points de vue afin de préciser la relation spécifique unissant ces différentes notions à la muséologie.

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Introduction

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Política y poética de la museología

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Ha devenido en lugar común hablar del museo como espacio de poder. Considerado medio de comunicación (Davallon, 1992), media (McLuhan, Parker & Barzun, 1969) o dispositivo (Bennett, 1995), hay que reconocer que esta institución emblemática de la civilización occidental siempre ha suscitado el interés de los diferentes regímenes políticos, cualesquiera que éstos sean. La creación del Museo Británico y el nacimiento del Louvre (Déotte, 1994; Pommier, 1995) nos ilustran como desde sus mismos comienzos la relación entre el conocimiento y las colecciones con el público, se ha dado de manera diversa y el advenimiento de cada nuevo régimen político (desde la democracia en América al sistema marxista-leninista de la Unión Soviética, pasando por la Italia fascista y la Alemania nacional-socialista) ha dejado su impronta en el desarrollo de los museos, ya se los considere sistema de comunicación, de preservación o de investigación.

La política se ha inmiscuido desde siempre y en todas las escalas en el funcionamiento de los museos, afectando de manera directa e indirecta la imagen de lugar neutro y objetivo que esta institución ofrece al gran público. Nos referimos por supuesto a la influencia directa de los políticos locales tratando de imponer a un curador determinado artista o a aquella de los regímenes políticos que buscan transformar las narrativas nacionales. Pero también nos podemos interrogar sobre la influencia indirecta de la política por medio de los profesionales de museo o de los mismos teóricos a través de la museología y sus diferentes medios de comunicación: artículos, libros, conferencias, coloquios, ámbitos de enseñanza.

La idea no es nueva y la encontramos desde los comienzos de los primeros debates del ICOFOM, particularmente entre los partidarios de una museología práctica y pragmática (esencialmente anglosajones) y aquellos en favor de la

museología como disciplina científica (Burcaw, 1981). Si el debate se remonta a los años 80, sería erróneo considerar el asunto como resuelto. El mundo bipolar de aquellos tiempos difiere sensiblemente del que conocemos actualmente. En aquella época, la investigación disciplinaria se enfocaba a partir de estructuras académicas muy diferentes a las que conocemos hoy en día, y de alguna manera, el razonamiento desarrollado por Zbynek Stránský destinado a presentar a la museología como ciencia debe ser comprendido en ese contexto parcialmente datado. El aporte más reciente de Bruno Latour (2001), que analiza la ciencia como un hecho en construcción y la manera en que las ideas se imponen a través de las controversias, ha permitido el desarrollo de una visión más rica de este campo, particularmente en lo que concierne al tema que acá discutimos. Desde esta perspectiva, no se trata simplemente de desarrollar conceptos o un vocabulario nuevo, sino de crear redes, laboratorios de alianzas políticas, en definitiva elaborar estrategias donde los argumentos científicos constituyan solamente una dimensión particular.

A partir de este análisis la cuestión del poder mencionado anteriormente se nos presenta como preponderante. Ya se reivindique como ciencia o como campo teórico, la museología (o los estudios de museo) debe en primer lugar afirmarse entre las otras disciplinas como un conjunto suficientemente coherente y prometedor (en materia de resultados y de constitución de capital científico) para aspirar a desarrollarse dentro del sistema académico. Debe también ser capaz de convencer por fuera del campo académico, porque pretende influir en los museos y en la forma en que están organizados. Si constatamos como positivo el auge del desarrollo de la enseñanza de la museología en el mundo (pues nunca ha habido una mayor oferta de formación y de investigaciones) convengamos que por una parte nos debemos interrogar acerca del tipo de museología a enseñar y por otra sobre la influencia real tanto en los museos como en aquellos que los financian.

Política

Si podemos argumentar, siguiendo a Bourdieu, que la sociología es un deporte de combate (Carles, 2001), ¿qué pasa con el museo? La cuestión del museo foro o templo evocada por Cameron (1971), se plantea también para la museología, y los ambientes, frecuentemente filtrados, en los que opera - en su mayoría las universidades y algunos grandes museos - apenas oculta su falta de influencia en los debates. La lectura de cualquier manual de museología (Gob & Drouguet, 2014; Ambrose & Paine, 2012; Zubiaur, 2004) muestra a menudo la distancia considerable entre el rol atribuido al museo - preservación del patrimonio, investigación, aprendizaje y educación, rol social - y las razones por la que se están construyendo actualmente numerosos establecimientos: símbolo de poder e instrumento de propaganda para glorificar a un mecenas o una región, desarrollo urbano, económico y turístico. Si consideramos, desde una perspectiva global, a la política como la gestión de los asuntos de la ciudad, ¿quién genera verdaderamente las cuestiones del museo (o del campo museal)?

¿Cuál puede ser el papel del museólogo desde esta perspectiva: permanecer a riesgo de producir una retórica más en una interpretación prescriptiva de lo que debería ser el rol del museo? ¿Tratar de describir, o tratar de persuadir e influenciar? ¿Dirigirse esencialmente a sus alumnos y colegas, a los colegas de otras disciplinas, a los profesionales de museos o a los políticos? Si en teoría, todo parece posible, conviene reconocer que en la práctica, la mayor parte de los investigadores se reducen a hacer sus elecciones, pero ¿cuáles? La museología, desde esta perspectiva, ¿debe hacerse militante (como lo fue la nueva museología)? ¿Destinado a quién? ¿A los colegas, a los profesionales, al público o a los políticos? Desde este punto de vista, ¿cómo gestionar la brecha entre la prescripción museológica clásica (conservación, investigación, comunicación en un contexto científico) y la situación cada vez más precaria de una gran cantidad de museos confrontados a los imperativos de rentabilidad, el desarrollo turístico o de inclusión social?

Geopolítica

La historia de la museología, y también la de los museos, muestra una evolución considerable del paisaje museal, como así también de los métodos utilizados en el trabajo museal. Si todos los miembros del ICOM se reconocen (más o menos) tras la definición de museo y del código de deontología, la mayoría no puede más que constatar la gran heterogeneidad de maneras de pensar el campo museal en la actualidad. Sin embargo, podemos distinguir una serie de áreas de influencia más o menos importantes en el mundo, vinculadas a determinadas escuelas de pensamiento: algunas famosas universidades (Universidad de Leicester), algunos grandes museos (el Louvre o el Metropolitan museo) o algunos autores notables (Stephen Weil, John Falk, Tony Bennett, Georges Henri Rivière, Hugues de Varine, Roland Arpin, Felipe Lacouture, etc.) o algunas empresas de consultoría (Lord Cultural Resources). ¿Cómo identificar y distinguir estas áreas? ¿Se puede hablar de imperialismo museológico (Scheiner, 2016), para describir ciertas corrientes «dominantes»: la anglosajona y en menor medida la francófona o la hispanófila? ¿Cómo, desde esta perspectiva, hacer comprensibles otras maneras de concebir el campo museal, desde Oceanía, o África, o el Oriente Medio, Asia o el gran Norte? Cabe señalar también, a partir de lo que constatado, que el origen de la mayor parte de los principales conceptos relacionados con el museo actual, y del mismo museo, es occidental. La evolución del mundo permite vislumbrar cambios políticos y económicos considerables en las próximas décadas, presagiando transformaciones más o menos radicales en las relaciones geopolíticas en todo el mundo. Sería inconcebible que estos cambios no afecten a los museos y la museología. ¿Cómo nociones tales como patrimonio, conservación, inalienabilidad de las colecciones o las relaciones de lucro podrían evolucionar, considerando que muchos países tienen muchas veces concepciones muy opuestas a las actualmente dominantes, en especial en lo concerniente a la materialidad del patrimonio, su autenticidad o su acceso?

Poética

Arriesgándonos a definir a la poética como la teorización y el análisis de la creación artística (especialmente la literaria), por fuerza constatamos la existencia de una poética de la museografía (el arte de la exposición, puesta de manifiesto por numerosos autores, como Altshuler (2013) o Karp & Lavine (1991)). Pero ¿podemos hablar realmente de una poética de la museología? Podríamos sin duda analizar el discurso museológico en su dimensión ornamental o estética, pero la mayoría de las contribuciones privilegian la retórica científica cuya sobriedad deja la mayor parte de las veces muy poco margen a lo poético.

No obstante, podríamos emitir la hipótesis que lo que pone en relevancia la originalidad de los grandes museólogos se inscribe en el corazón de un proceso creativo en el que los conceptos así como la forma de evocarlos, contribuyen principalmente a la calidad del mensaje y se inscriben por lo tanto en una cierta poética de la museología. El lirismo que se desprende de los artículos seminales de Duncan Cameron (1992) ha contribuido en gran medida a su fama, así como la energía que deviene de las contribuciones de Hugues de Varine y otros numerosos autores de la nueva museología (Desvallées, 1992-1994). El humor así como el estilo de John Cotton Dana constituyen una dimensión no despreciable de la propuesta a menudo iconoclasta sostenida por el autor. ¿Podemos encontrar en la literatura museal de hoy en día, el aliento creativo que supimos admirar en algunos de los grandes museólogos, o estamos irremediamente condenados a una jerga tecnocrática y sombría? Desde esta perspectiva, ¿qué podemos esperar de una poética de la museología, y quiénes serán los creadores de los nuevos conceptos y nociones en nuestra sociedad actual?

Política y poética de la museología

Política, Geopolítica y Poética constituyeron el centro de las discusiones del 40º Simposio del ICOFOM celebrado en Cuba en Octubre de 2017, permitiendo precisar la manera en que estas nociones pueden pensarse actualmente desde el campo de la museología.

Las contribuciones del presente número nos proporcionan una aproximación, ciertamente no exhaustiva, pero sin embargo particularmente interesante a los temas propuestos. Como era de esperar, fue en primer término la política, en sus relaciones con los museos, lo que inspiró más directamente a los autores. Muchos de ellos, a menudo a partir de estudios de caso, encararon cuestiones relativas a la política museal nacional. La red internacional que constituye el ICOFOM promueve la diversidad de enfoques, contribuyendo a la elaboración de un panorama de propuestas originales. Ayanda Ngcobo, en *The Politics of Representation in South African Museums (Las políticas de representación en los museos sudafricanos)*, analiza a partir de dos estudios detallados de museos (el Old Court Museum y el Bergtheil Museum) - a través de las formas de representación de la raza, pero también de las de género, las transformaciones radicales que han tenido lugar en las últimas décadas en los museos de Sudáfrica.

Este país, cuyo discurso museal se ha transformado de manera considerable de forma paralela a las convulsiones políticas que tuvieron lugar en la década del 90, es el tema de un segundo análisis. A partir del estudio de un diorama particularmente simbólico, Patricia Davison en *The Politics and Poetics of the Bushman Diorama en el South African Museum (Política y poética del Diorama Bushman en el South African Museum)*, analiza las elecciones de conservación de uno de los dioramas más famosos de los museos sudafricanos, diorama que representa a una familia bosquimana, y pone de manifiesto lo que se pone en juego o las orientaciones políticas que subyacen a su retiro. En un contexto completamente diferente, Olga Zabalueva, en *Museology and Museum-making: Cultural Policies and Cultural Demands (Museología y creación de museos: políticas culturales y demandas culturales)*, presenta las apuestas políticas radicalmente diferentes de dos museos europeos: el museo de la Iglesia Ortodoxa ubicado en el Monasterio de la Nueva Jerusalén, cerca de Moscú y el Museo Nacional para la Democracia y la Migración en Malmö, Suecia. El museo, en tanto que espacio público pero especialmente como medio de comunicación, aparece como un terreno particularmente favorable para la afirmación, de manera más o menos explícita, de las visiones políticas de los responsables de su financiamiento. Es evidente que ese mismo contexto está presente en el análisis que realiza Maai Enai Ortíz Sánchez del Museo del Ejército dedicado a la Defensa Nacional, en la Ciudad de México, en su ponencia, *Museos militares: dispositivos exhibitorios y el borramiento de la memoria de la lucha social en México*. Sheila Hoffman, a partir de un enfoque histórico, muestra en *The Origins of Puritan Politics in US Museums: Nation Building and "The Arts" from 1776 to 1806 (Los orígenes de la política puritana en los museos de Estados Unidos: la construcción de la nación y «Las artes» de 1776 a 1806)*, una primera faceta de la política del joven gobierno de Estados Unidos, muy prudente sobre la financiación o la existencia de museos en su territorio. Refiriéndose a los cambios de actitud hacia los museos que acompañaron la evolución política estadounidense, acordes con el lugar cada vez más importante otorgado a las cuestiones económicas y al desarrollo de la lógica capitalista. En cierto modo, el artículo de Karla Estelita Godoy y Sarah Borges Luna, *Museums and city aestheticization policies: controversies between the touristification of public spaces and the social role of museological institutions (Museos y políticas de estetización de la ciudad: controversias entre la valoración turística de los espacios públicos y el papel social de las instituciones museísticas)*, aunque se refiere a los museos de la ciudad Río de Janeiro, también ilustra los cambios que han tenido lugar en los Estados Unidos y en otros países, constatando que el museo se involucra cada vez más en las políticas económicas de las ciudades y estados, favoreciendo la creatividad o reforzando el consumismo. Si la interferencia de la política aparece tanto en los museos como en la política museal de los estados y ciudades, la encontramos, igualmente, en de la formación museal y las formas de pensar las profesiones de los museos. Es desde este punto de vista que los ensayos de Yves Bergeron y Lisa Baillargeon por un lado, y de Sheila Hoffman por otro, enfocan el tema. En *The Curatorial Status of North American Museums: Geopolitical Perspectives (El estado curatorial de los*

museos de América del Norte: perspectivas geopolíticas), Bergeron y Baillargeon intentan describir las mutaciones de las funciones de los responsables de los museos, particularmente la profesión curatorial, tratando las diferencias entre estas funciones del otro lado del Atlántico. Hoffman, en *Practicality and Value: Historical Influences on Museum Studies* *Practicidad y valor: Influencias históricas en los estudios de museo en los Estados Unidos*, analiza las políticas pioneras de formación profesional del personal de los museos durante la primera mitad del siglo veinte en los Estados Unidos. Tales políticas inevitablemente tienen una influencia directa sobre la forma de concebir los museos, pero a su vez están condicionadas por el pensamiento de las grandes figuras del campo museal. Bergeron, Baillargeon y Hoffman evidentemente hacen referencia a esas figuras, destacando en particular a Brown Goode o Sachs. El análisis más detallado y ciertamente el más geopolítico de este tema, en este número del ICOFOM Study Series, es sin duda el desarrollado por Bruno Brulon Soares y Anna Leshchenko. En *Museology in Colonial Contexts: A Call for Decolonisation of Museum Theory* (*Museología en contextos coloniales: Un llamado a la decolonización de la teoría museológica*), los autores no ponen tanto el acento en el contexto específico de tal o cual país - enfocándose en cambio, en las zonas donde se ha implantado la museología, destacando como las teorías anglosajonas y las francófonas piensan el campo museal - particularmente el uso hegemónico de parte de la literatura de este campo del conocimiento, en detrimento de otro. La forma de pensar el museo, pero también de influir en los pensamientos de los demás, pasa por las citas y referencias, condicionando al lector. Brulon Soares y Leshchenko, desde esta perspectiva destacan y advierten - a partir del análisis de las principales obras de referencia, el *International Handbook of Museum Studies* o el *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*-, como la producción científica de numerosos países, en especial los latinoamericanos, está subrepresentada.

Aunque la noción política aparece claramente en la mayoría de los artículos, la de una poética de la museología parece haber suscitado menos interés por parte de los autores. Ciertamente, como muchos colaboradores han señalado, los dispositivos expositivos, especialmente los dioramas, participan de la poética particular del trabajo museal. Sin embargo, la idea de una poética de la museología aparece menos evidente. El artículo de Tereza Scheiner, *Museología - Poética, Política y Ética: Dimensiones Transformadoras de las Relaciones entre Humano y Real*, tiende a articular estas dos nociones, partiendo de la ética. Al enfatizar la naturaleza dual de la museología, creativa y reflexiva por un lado y activa por otro, Scheiner subraya, de alguna manera, el dualismo del pensamiento filosófico que encontramos en el corazón de los debates desde el Renacimiento, el pensamiento neoplatónico, hasta la aparición del museo moderno.

En una forma más práctica, Elizabeth Weiser enfatiza la articulación entre la poética y la retórica, destacando la importancia del estilo y la creatividad en la producción literaria museológica. En *Crafting a Poetic Museology* (*Estrategias*

de elaboración de una museología poética), Weiser analiza, basándose en el marco retórico, una serie de citas o extractos de textos museológicos, especialmente de autores del Icofom Study Series, que sugieren muchas pistas para desarrollar el poder de la persuasión (uno de los objetivos de la retórica) de un artículo.

Si esta selección de artículos puede sentar las bases para una reflexión sobre los vínculos entre (geo) política, poesía y museología, no agota nuestro sujeto de análisis. Este eje de reflexión del ICOFOM, como lo demuestran la mayoría de las contribuciones, son sin embargo, de gran fecundidad en casi todo el mundo. Es de esperar que pueda enriquecerse en los años por venir, desde otros puntos de vista, a fin de precisar la relación específica que une estas diferentes nociones a la museología.

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PAPERS

ARTICLES

ARTÍCULOS

Le statut de conservateur dans les musées nord-américains

Perspectives géopolitiques

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RÉSUMÉ

Le conservateur de musée est longtemps demeuré la figure emblématique du musée. Le modèle européen du conservateur s'est transformé dans le contexte nord-américain en raison du contexte géopolitique. Le mouvement international de la nouvelle muséologie combiné au développement du réseau muséal et à la professionnalisation des musées dans la seconde moitié du XX^e siècle a contribué à remettre en ques-

tion le statut du conservateur en favorisant l'apparition de nouveaux professionnels (conservateurs invités, chargés de projet d'exposition, commissaires, archivistes et directeurs). Si la fonction de conservateur éclate et prend de nouvelles formes adaptées aux changements qui transforment les musées, le contexte géopolitique et économique de l'Amérique du Nord favorise la reconnaissance d'un modèle de « muséologue » qui renoue en quelque sorte avec la figure traditionnelle du conservateur généraliste et polyvalent.

Mots clés : conservateur, chargé de projet, commissaire, nouvelle muséologie, gestion

ABSTRACT

Curator status in North American museums: Geopolitical perspectives

The museum curator has long remained the emblematic figure of the museum. With the emergence of museums at the beginning of the XIXth century in North America, the European model of the curator changed. The international movement of New Museology, combined with the development of a museum network and the professionalization of museums in the second half of the XXth century, has called into question the status of the curator by promoting the emergence of new professionals (guest curators, artist-curators, community curators, exhibition designers, archivists and directors). If the function of curator fragments itself into new forms adapted to the changes that transform museums, the geopolitical and economic context of North America promotes the recognition of the museologist model, which somehow reconnects with the traditional figure of the generalist and versatile curator.

Key Words: curator, museologist, New Museology, museum administration



La recherche qui a conduit à la rédaction de cet article repose avant tout sur une question simple : en quoi le statut de conservateur de musée en Amérique du Nord, est-il différent de celui que l'on observe dans les musées européens ? Nous proposons une approche qui convoque le concept de géopolitique afin de démontrer que les contextes géographique, politique, historique et culturel ont contribué à façonner un type de conservateur particulier au monde des musées nord-américains.

Remise en question du statut de « conservateur »

Dans un article récent consacré aux conservateurs, François Mairesse (2015, p. 23) cite Douglas Allen qui écrivait en 1950 qu'au « fond le rayonnement spirituel et le dynamisme d'un musée dépendent toujours d'un conservateur ». Si cette remarque était parfaitement juste au milieu du XX^e siècle, elle ne l'est certainement plus aujourd'hui. Les musées se sont littéralement transformés dans la seconde moitié du XX^e siècle, tant en Europe qu'en Amérique, et le statut de conservateur n'a rien à voir avec ce qu'il était en 1950. Si le statut des conservateurs est resté relativement stable au cours de cette période dans les pays européens, les changements se sont bousculés rapidement du côté de l'Amérique du Nord dès la décennie 1970 avec l'arrivée d'une nouvelle génération de conservateurs. La revue internationale *Thema*, publiée par le Musée de la civilisation, consacrait d'ailleurs en 2016 un numéro aux musées sans conservateur dans lequel le rédacteur en chef écrit :

Dans bon nombre d'institutions muséales, surtout au Québec, en France, en Suisse et en Europe du Nord, l'approche ethnographique ou disciplinaire assurée par les conservateurs-chercheurs (scholar-curators) a été peu à peu délaissée au profit de séries de tâches de commissariat et de mise en exposition confiées à des gestionnaires et à des chargés de projet (Shelton, 2011, p. 76 ; Turgeon et Dubuc, 2002, p. 22). (Courville, 2016, p. 4)

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Si on évoque principalement le cas des musées de société, le constat du rédacteur en chef s'applique également aux musées d'art qui se sont également transformés avec l'apparition, au cours des dernières années, de deux profils de conservateurs, c'est-à-dire « conservateur aux expositions » et « conservateur aux collections ». Mais, quelle est la nature exacte de ces changements évoqués par Courville ? Pour bien comprendre, il est nécessaire de revenir quelques décennies en arrière afin de saisir les fondements même du travail des conservateurs avant que les musées ne se métamorphosent en profondeur, c'est-à-dire à l'aube des années 1980.

Les ancêtres comme des ombres

Si on a peu écrit sur l'histoire des musées et de la muséologie comme discipline en Amérique du Nord, il existe cependant des traditions vivantes qui permettent de transmettre des valeurs communes d'une génération à l'autre. Dans un monde formé de bénévoles, d'amateurs éclairés, de collectionneurs et de mécènes, il existe des règles non écrites qui forment pourtant la culture première (Dumont, 1981) qui donne un sens au réseau muséal nord-américain. L'historien américain des musées, Edward F. Alexander, a d'ailleurs publié en 1983 un ouvrage intitulé *Museum Masters. Their Museums and Their Influence* qui

présente douze figures marquantes de l'histoire des musées. En parcourant ces portraits, on découvre le profil type et les valeurs de ces conservateurs américains, britanniques, allemands, islandais et français. Dans le cas des conservateurs et directeurs américains, figure Charles Willson Peale et son concept de musée populaire, Ann Pamela Cunningham qui se consacra à la sauvegarde du domaine de Washington à Mount Vernon, George Brown Goode de la Smithsonian Institute qui a précisé le concept de musée d'histoire culturelle et John Cotton Dana, bibliothécaire et fondateur du *Newark Museum* qui a développé l'idée que le musée doit être au service de la communauté. Alexander reconnaît certaines qualités communes à ces personnalités marquantes. Le *leadership* les caractérise dans la mesure où ils ont innové en renouvelant le rôle du musée et en créant de nouveaux modèles. Alexander présente ces leaders comme des patriotes, car ils se voient au service de leur pays et ils consacrent leur carrière à définir la culture et l'identité américaine. Du côté canadien, certains conservateurs se sont également imposés comme des modèles : William Logan, William Dawson, Charles Marius Barbeau ou Gérard Morisset. Ces figures marquantes de l'histoire des musées correspondent également à un patriotisme propre au Canada anglais et au Canada français (Piché, 2012).

Nouvelle muséologie et nouveaux conservateurs

La plupart des auteurs qui se sont penchés sur l'histoire des musées évoquent inévitablement le mouvement de la nouvelle muséologie pour expliquer la réorientation des musées dans la seconde moitié du XX^e siècle (Gob et Drouguet, 2014 ; Desvallées, 1992 et 1995 ; Mairesse, 2000). Il y a dans cette interprétation une lecture européenne de l'histoire des musées centrée notamment sur le concept d'écomuséologie défendu par Rivière et de Varine. Comme le soulignent les principaux auteurs, le mouvement de la nouvelle muséologie a effectivement eu un impact indéniable sur le renouvellement de la mission des musées en Europe, mais cette impulsion s'est d'abord fait sentir dans les musées de société et les musées de sciences (Drouguet, 2011 ; Côté, 2008).

Il est par ailleurs utile de porter notre attention sur la philosophie de la nouvelle muséologie, c'est-à-dire sur les valeurs du monde des musées. En examinant cette période de transition du point de vue des valeurs, on constate que les musées nord-américains ne vivent pas une rupture aussi radicale comme celle observée en Europe. Certains muséologues canadiens, proches de Rivière et de Varine comme René Rivard¹ et Pierre Mayrand², Maude Céré et Andrea Hauenschild (1998) se sont fait les porte-parole du mouvement au sein du réseau des musées canadiens.

1. On doit à René Rivard de la traduction des principes de l'interprétation de Freeman Tilden et sa diffusion au sein du réseau de Parcs Canada et de l'Association des musées canadiens.

2. Pierre Mayrand a tout au long de sa carrière comme professeur de muséologie et d'histoire de l'art à l'Université du Québec à Montréal valorisé les principes de la nouvelle muséologie. Il est un des fondateurs du MINOM. Voir : Champoux-Paillé, 2007.

Le tournant en Amérique latine

La déclaration de Santiago du Chili, issue de la table ronde sur le développement et le rôle des musées organisée par l'UNESCO en 1972, constitue certainement un événement marquant pour la muséologie. Elle souligne par ailleurs la fin d'une certaine conception du rôle du conservateur. Les participants y débattent du 20 au 31 mai des tendances et des enjeux de l'époque autour de quatre thèmes : (1) le musée et le développement culturel en milieu rural et l'expansion de l'agriculture ; (2) le musée et les problèmes sociaux et culturels de l'environnement ; (3) le musée et le développement scientifique et technique ; (4) les musées et l'éducation permanente. On y retrouve quatre grandes problématiques qui mobilisent à l'époque le monde de la culture : l'écart de plus en plus marqué entre le monde urbain et le monde rural, l'environnement menacé par l'industrialisation et la pollution, les impacts des sciences et de la technologie sur la culture, et finalement l'éducation permanente comme solution afin de s'adapter aux changements accélérés par la mondialisation.

Ces réflexions ont conduit à six grandes orientations stratégiques qui font alors consensus. On recommande de revoir la conception des expositions en tenant compte d'une approche culturelle et anthropologique des collectivités en réaction à la position traditionnelle de l'histoire de l'art. On reconnaît la nécessité d'assurer une représentation pluridisciplinaire dans les conseils d'administration des musées. On croit nécessaire d'introduire des mécanismes d'évaluation des expositions afin de s'assurer que celles-ci correspondent aux besoins des collectivités. On suggère de créer « une association pour l'échange d'information et d'expérience concernant le rôle des musées dans le milieu où s'exerce son action. » De plus, on souhaite créer des programmes de formation afin que « les expositions des musées aient un impact plus fort aux différents niveaux d'enseignement. » Enfin, une requête est adressée à l'UNESCO « demandant de créer et de renforcer les centres destinés à la formation de spécialistes des musées. » (Fernandes Guido, 1972, pp. 6-7)

En somme, les participants expriment les valeurs de la génération des baby-boomers qui prend alors le contrôle des institutions culturelles au début de la décennie 1970. Si cette perspective fait consensus afin d'actualiser les musées en phase avec les valeurs de la société occidentale force est de constater que la plupart de ces principes sont présents dans la culture des musées au Canada et aux États-Unis depuis la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle. Comme les musées, à l'exception des musées nationaux, ont été créés par des sociétés savantes et des associations de citoyens (Gagnon 1999, Piché 2012), ceux-ci se sont rapidement adaptés aux attentes des communautés dont ils dépendent pour leur financement (Bergeron, 2014 ; Bergeron et de Muys, 2016). Les musées sont structurés autour de conseils d'administration constitués de citoyens représentant les citoyens ainsi que les partenaires sociaux et économiques. C'est ainsi que la tradition d'une culture entrepreneuriale et du mécénat s'implante rapidement au début du XIX^e siècle dans la grande majorité des musées nord-américains. Les expositions expriment les préoccupations des citoyens et s'inscrivent dans

une perspective de formation continue. Aux États-Unis, les musées développent des liens étroits avec le monde scolaire, car ils deviennent des partenaires dans la formation à la citoyenneté et au patriotisme. Il est d'ailleurs utile de relire l'ouvrage de John Cotton Dana *The New Museum* publié en 1917 (Alexander, 1983, pp. 377-411). Les musées locaux sont nombreux sur l'ensemble du territoire nord-américain. Ils abritent des archives et des sociétés d'histoire qui conservent le patrimoine local et qui valorise les identités régionales. Ce qu'il est essentiel de retenir, c'est que ces musées acquièrent et conservent prioritairement des traces matérielles et archivistiques de la culture populaire qui a permis de consolider l'identité culturelle des États-Unis, du Canada anglais et du Canada français.

Des associations nationales de musées existent aux États-Unis dès l'aube du XX^e siècle. L'*American Association of Museums* apparaît dès 1906 et l'*American Association for State and Local History* (AASLH) créée en 1940 pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale contribuent à structurer les musées sur l'ensemble du territoire. Ces deux associations offrent des formations pour le personnel des institutions muséales et patrimoniales. En réalité, le patrimoine devient plus important que les œuvres d'art dans la construction des identités collectives. La *Canadian Museums Association* (CMA-AMC) fondée en 1947 et la Société des musées du Québec (SMQ) en 1958 reprennent le modèle des associations américaines et offrent des services aux musées privés qui ne sont pas ou peu soutenus par les gouvernements fédéraux et provinciaux. S'il existe bien quelques musées nationaux, le réseau muséal est fondamentalement formé de musées privés créés par les communautés, les mécènes et les bénévoles. Ce contexte géopolitique propre au Canada fait en sorte que les associations professionnelles (AMC et SMQ) jouent un rôle de premier plan dans cet écosystème où les amateurs, bénévoles, mécènes et citoyens prédominent. Ce modèle de musées privés est soutenu et encouragé par les divers paliers de gouvernements qui encouragent les musées à atteindre une autonomie financière. Ainsi, les ministères de la Culture choisissent de ne pas encadrer le statut professionnel des conservateurs et autres professionnels du monde des musées. Au contraire, les politiques culturelles poussent les musées à se tourner vers des partenaires économiques dans différentes sphères de la société.

En Europe, le mouvement de la nouvelle muséologie, amorcé dans la décennie 1970, fait face à une résistance, car la formation privilégiée pour travailler dans les musées relève de l'histoire de l'art qui s'inscrit dans une logique du chef-d'œuvre valorisant la culture savante (Bergeron, 2015). Fondée en 1882 par Jules Ferry, l'École du Louvre qui est désignée au départ comme l'École d'administration des musées, fait figure de référence pour les conservateurs. Il existe bien sûr en France comme en Europe des musées de sciences avec des préoccupations sociales ainsi que des musées d'histoire, d'arts et traditions populaires, mais leur influence reste marginale en comparaison avec les musées d'art. Cependant, les musées européens influencés par les valeurs de la nouvelle muséologie s'ouvrent peu à peu aux publics à partir des années 1980 et 1990 et

les thèmes des expositions tiennent davantage compte des attentes des visiteurs. Il semble que les valeurs défendues par les muséologues européens après la déclaration de Santiago du Chili reprennent en quelque sorte les principales valeurs qui s'étaient mises en place dans les musées nord-américains au XIX^e siècle et de manière plus marquée au début du XX^e siècle.

La version nord-américaine de la nouvelle muséologie

Alors que le mouvement de la nouvelle muséologie bouleverse les valeurs des musées en Europe, les musées nord-américains vivent de profondes transformations d'un autre ordre au cours de cette période. Ces changements, contrairement à l'Europe, ne transforment pas les valeurs du monde muséal. Les mutations qu'on observe sont d'une autre nature. Elles s'expliquent par l'émergence de deux facteurs principaux. D'abord, une nouvelle génération de jeunes muséologues envahit le monde muséal. L'arrivée massive des baby-boomers, plus instruits que leurs parents, leur permet d'adapter les musées à leur vision de la culture qui privilégie la culture populaire. Ils n'ont pas connu la guerre, mais la prospérité et le développement des médias de communication. Ils modernisent les musées en revisitant les moyens de communication et en intégrant les nouvelles technologies de sorte que la muséographie qui avait peu changé depuis un siècle s'actualise comme dans le monde du théâtre, du cinéma et de la télévision. Le musée devient à partir des années 1970 un véritable média de masse. Il ne se concentre plus comme autrefois sur ses collections, mais sur les expositions et le concept nord-américain d'interprétation théorisé par Freeman Tilden et qui sera remplacé en France par le terme de médiation (Montpetit, 2011). En réalité, les valeurs ne changent pas, ce sont les moyens qui se diversifient et s'actualisent. Le second facteur qui favorise les changements est d'ordre économique. Le développement sans précédent de l'économie qui suit la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale crée de la richesse et permet l'émergence d'une classe moyenne qui accède à l'éducation supérieure et à la culture. Conséquemment, les gouvernements canadiens et américains investissent dans l'éducation à tous les niveaux et développent plus particulièrement le réseau universitaire dans les régions. Cette soudaine richesse permet de créer des musées sur l'ensemble du territoire. Le développement du réseau des musées au Canada s'accélère avec la commémoration du centenaire de la confédération en 1967. Afin de répondre à ce développement rapide du réseau muséal, on met en place des programmes universitaires de formation à la muséologie. Ces programmes permettent l'émergence d'une nouvelle génération de jeunes professionnels compétents qui dispose par ailleurs de moyens économiques permettant au projet culturel et social des musées de se déployer à un niveau exceptionnel. En ce sens, on ne se trouve pas devant une nouvelle muséologie, mais devant de nouveaux moyens qui reposent sur une même vision du rôle culturel, social et identitaire pour les musées nord-américains.

Tradition des conservateurs en Amérique du Nord

Au-delà des principes qui structurent le monde des musées en Amérique du Nord, il est essentiel de démontrer en quoi se distingue le statut de conservateur. Contrairement à la tradition européenne où les conservateurs des musées sont avant tout des chercheurs et des scientifiques, il n'existe pas de profil spécifique pour les conservateurs nord-américains. Depuis l'apparition des musées au début du XIX^e siècle, ceux-ci, à l'exception des musées nationaux, sont dirigés par des amateurs qui coordonnent le travail de groupes de bénévoles. Ce phénomène est bien démontré par George-Hébert Germain (2007) dans son histoire du musée des Beaux-arts de Montréal. Fondé en 1860, le musée engage son premier directeur et muséologue professionnel en 1947. Ce constat s'explique simplement en raison du statut privé des musées qui sont soutenus financièrement par des mécènes et des communautés. Comme les gouvernements ne réglementent pas les musées, les conseils d'administration, formés de mécènes et de représentants du monde économique, choisissent des directeurs ayant un profil d'amateur éclairé et d'entrepreneur. Rappelons que les musées ne se professionnalisent véritablement que dans la seconde moitié du XX^e siècle avec la création de formations spécialisées offertes par des universités (Allard et Lefebvre, 2001) et les associations nationales de musées (AAM, AASLH, AMC, SMQ).

Au milieu des années 1950, la tradition du bénévolat est toujours au cœur de la vie des musées nord-américains. Ainsi, l'Association des musées canadiens décerne chaque année des prix dont la Médaille du souverain pour les bénévoles³ et le Prix du bénévolat muséal qui « rend hommage à des personnes ou à des groupes qui ont généreusement consacré leur temps et leur énergie à un musée ou à un établissement du patrimoine et qui ont contribué de manière significative au sein de leur communauté à titre de bénévole. » (http://www.museums.ca/site/award_mva) Une enquête réalisée en 2015 montre que plus de 103 000 bénévoles sont actifs dans le réseau des musées canadiens (AMC, 2017). L'Observatoire de la Culture et des Communications du Québec a notamment évalué en 2010 l'impact économique des bénévoles dans le réseau muséal (OCCQ, 2010).

Contrairement à certains pays européens dont la France, il n'existe pas au Canada et aux États-Unis de concours des conservateurs et d'institutions comme l'École nationale du patrimoine en France afin de préparer les jeunes professionnels à prendre en charge des collections et à diriger des musées. Chaque musée étant indépendant, c'est le conseil d'administration qui détermine le profil des directeurs et des conservateurs. Par conséquent, il n'existe pas de profil type pour les conservateurs et les directeurs d'établissements. La Société des musées du Québec a d'ailleurs réalisé une première enquête en 1987 et une

3. Médaille du souverain pour les bénévoles qui « reconnaît les réalisations bénévoles exceptionnelles de Canadiens partout au pays et célèbre tout un éventail de réussites et de contributions bénévoles.

seconde en 2000 sur la profession de conservateur ou conservatrice de musée. Le dernier rapport souligne :

[...] alors qu'auparavant les conservatrices et les conservateurs de musée exerçaient leur rôle en occupant la position unique au sommet de la hiérarchie dans la structure organisationnelle des musées, aujourd'hui ils doivent exercer ce rôle en travaillant avec des personnes qui proviennent d'autres catégories professionnelles, comme les archivistes, les bibliothécaires, les chargés de projet aux expositions, les designers et les muséographes, les chargées et les chargés de projet à l'action culturelle, les techniciennes et les techniciens, etc. De plus, dans leur travail, et ce, compte tenu de l'importance accordée à la fonction de diffusion dans les institutions muséales, le temps consacré à la conservation des collections, à la recherche sur ces dernières, et à leur enrichissement, diminue au profit de celui consenti à la gestion et à la mise en œuvre de projets d'exposition. (SMQ, 2000)

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Quand on plonge dans l'histoire des musées nord-américains, on constate que les directeurs et les directrices des grands comme des petits musées n'ont pas de profils académiques communs. Ce qui les caractérise, c'est l'intérêt et plus particulièrement la passion pour les musées, l'histoire et le patrimoine. Ils sont historiens de l'art, historiens, anthropologues, archéologues, artistes ou gestionnaires. Jusqu'à l'apparition des premiers programmes de formation en muséologie, les conservateurs se forment à la muséologie par compagnonnage. On entrait dans les musées comme on entrait autrefois en religion c'est-à-dire par vocation. D'ailleurs, les premiers conservateurs américains et canadiens se définissent comme des patriotes au service du nationalisme (Alexander, 1997; Piché, 2012).

Nouvelle muséologie / nouveaux conservateurs

Les changements commencent à se manifester dans le statut des conservateurs au milieu des années 1980. Jusque-là, ils avaient la responsabilité de développer les collections, d'assurer la recherche, de réaliser les expositions (conception, mise en espace) et de rédiger les catalogues. Le rapport de 1987 souligne que la profession est « très jeune au Québec » et que les premiers conservateurs professionnels reconnus apparaissent vers 1960 dans les grandes institutions muséales. On dénombre alors une centaine de conservateurs dans le réseau muséal. Les auteurs rappellent que c'est au cours de la décennie 1970 que le réseau se développe sur l'ensemble du territoire et se professionnalise. La formation relève alors de l'histoire de l'art ou de l'ethnologie. Les musées, rappelle-t-on, sont alors engagés dans un vaste mouvement de démocratisation et de visibilité publique. Les conservateurs dénoncent cette dérive de la conservation vers la

diffusion en ces termes : « pendant combien de temps, en effet, pourra-t-on exposer les branches d'un arbre dont on blesse le tronc et écrase les racines ? » (Devis, 1987).

Pour devenir conservateur, on estime que les candidats doivent acquérir une culture générale diversifiée et des études de 2^e ou de 3^e cycle dans une des disciplines suivantes : histoire, histoire de l'art, ethnologie, anthropologie, archéologie ou science et technologie. Ils doivent avoir des connaissances en muséologie acquise par des formations spécialisées ou par expérience professionnelle dans des musées. Ils doivent être bilingues et s'exprimer clairement à l'oral et à l'écrit tout en étant formés aux méthodes de la recherche fondamentale et appliquée. On considère fondamental que les conservateurs aient des aptitudes à la recherche, à l'analyse et à la synthèse, au travail consciencieux et à la vulgarisation. En ce qui concerne les collections, on souligne qu'ils doivent avoir maîtrisé le langage visuel et faire preuve d'une sensibilité aux objets. Ils doivent par ailleurs démontrer leurs intérêts pour la conservation et la mise en valeur du patrimoine historique, l'art, l'histoire, la culture matérielle, l'évolution des sciences et la recherche en art contemporain et actuel. On tente par ailleurs de cerner le tempérament idéal et la personnalité des conservateurs en insistant sur l'ouverture d'esprit, la curiosité intellectuelle, la disposition à enrichir continuellement ses connaissances, la souplesse, la polyvalence, la patience, la facilité à travailler en équipe, la résistance à la critique, la résistance au stress, l'intégrité et le sens de l'éthique ainsi que le sens de la collection et de la continuité. Bref, le conservateur idéal est un érudit, un humaniste et un créateur. Ce portrait idéal correspond à cet homme-orchestre qu'était Charles Willson Peale à la fin du XVIII^e siècle.

« Conservateur invité » et « conservateurs indépendants »

À partir des années 1980, le gouvernement canadien encourage les musées à multiplier les expositions thématiques qui génèrent des revenus autonomes et favorisent l'autofinancement. Comme les musées se modernisent et que l'accent est mis sur les expositions temporaires, on voit apparaître une nouvelle figure : le « conservateur invité » aussi désigné comme « conservateur indépendant », en opposition au conservateur permanent à qui le musée confie essentiellement la réalisation des expositions. C'est à partir de ce moment que s'amorce la grande crise qui sera dénoncée par les conservateurs. Dès lors, les musées préfèrent confier les expositions temporaires à des professionnels extérieurs aux musées qui deviennent eux-mêmes des spécialistes de la communication. Leur profil est différent des conservateurs qui les ont précédés. Les conservateurs invités n'ont aucune responsabilité à assumer à l'égard de la collection du musée et ne se consacrent qu'à des projets de diffusion. Comme ils produisent de grandes expositions dont ils assurent le succès, ils deviennent de véritables vedettes. Ce sont eux que les journalistes interviewent dans les journaux, à la radio et à la télévision. Les musées s'arrachent les services de ceux qui réalisent des expo-

sitions originales qui attirent un large public. La compétition s'installe entre ces deux statuts qui s'antagonisent rapidement. Les conservateurs permanents s'opposent à cette nouvelle approche de gestion, car ils voient leur échapper les projets les plus intéressants pour lesquels les musées investissent des budgets importants. Ils perdent du même coup la possibilité de signer des catalogues et d'être reconnus par leurs pairs. En somme, ils ont le sentiment qu'on leur coupe les ailes et que l'évolution des musées se fait sans eux.

Si les conservateurs ont toujours assuré la recherche et la gestion des archives des collections, l'informatisation des collections des musées nord-américains au début des années 1990 bouleverse encore une fois l'une de leurs fonctions traditionnelles. Comme la plupart des conservateurs refusent de collaborer à l'informatisation des collections, les directeurs de musées confient cette responsabilité aux archivistes des collections qui prennent du même coup le contrôle des bases de données informatiques, de la documentation et des réserves.

Les conservateurs nord-américains voient aussi leur échapper la direction des musées qui n'est plus automatiquement confiée à des conservateurs, mais à des gestionnaires. Les compétences scientifiques ne suffisent plus pour prendre la direction d'un établissement.

Considérant ces pertes de responsabilités sur une courte période, on peut donc comprendre que les conservateurs vivent mal d'être mis à l'écart dans ce nouveau modèle de gestion du musée et contestent les nouvelles orientations en dénonçant notamment la marginalisation des collections. Il est vrai que les nouveaux responsables des expositions ne se soucient pas d'exposer les œuvres des collections du musée, mais recherchent dans l'ensemble des musées et chez les collectionneurs les œuvres les plus pertinentes pour leur exposition. Conséquemment, les conservateurs dénoncent le fait que les musées préfèrent restaurer et documenter des œuvres provenant de collections privées plutôt que de documenter, restaurer et révéler des œuvres de leurs propres collections. La question est si préoccupante que la Société des musées du Québec organise en 1990 un forum qui a pour objectif de faire le point sur la recherche et les collections. De nombreux conservateurs participent à cette rencontre et dénoncent la fébrilité des musées qu'ils qualifient de désordonnée et qui remet en question les assises de l'activité muséale (SMQ, 1990). Paul Carpentier, directeur au musée canadien des Civilisations, rédige la conclusion de ce forum et évoque d'une part l'effervescence stimulante des musées et constate d'autre part la crise qui secoue les musées depuis près de quarante ans. Carpentier rappelle que les changements observés dans les musées remontent pourtant aux constats de Paul Sachs au début des années 1920 qui énonçait l'idée que

Le musée devrait être plus que le lieu privilégié de quelques « professeurs Tournesol » se livrant à des élucubrations masturbatoires et mettant leurs condoms usagés en vitrines plutôt qu'en latrines. Le musée devrait tirer parti de son caractère particulier et exceptionnel,

similaire en un certain point à celui du cirque, qui l'amenait à attirer des curieux (visiteurs) fascinés par le caractère multiple des trésors exposés, soit la rareté, l'exotisme, l'authenticité et la valeur. Le musée étant plus cela, il était le tremplin idéal pour créer l'université populaire, être le lieu d'apprentissage des connaissances dépourvu de la rigidité des cadres académiques. (Carpentier, 1990, p. 79)



Carpentier prend donc ses distances avec le discours des conservateurs et assume la position de son institution, le musée canadien des Civilisations, qui adhère au concept de musée de société mettant l'accent sur la communication et la médiation (MacDonald, 1989, pp. 147-165). Cependant, les conservateurs dénoncent la bureaucratisation des musées qui marginalise la fonction de conservation. Cette critique de la marginalisation des collections se conclut par une dénonciation d'une nouvelle tendance à la commercialisation qui transforme les musées.

Du point de vue de la gestion, ces changements s'accompagnent d'une augmentation importante de la fréquentation et d'une hausse des tensions avec les équipes de professionnels. Il ne reste bientôt plus aux conservateurs que le prestige des acquisitions et le privilège d'entretenir des liens avec les collectionneurs. Comme ils conservent le contrôle sur l'accès aux collections et la circulation des œuvres, ils ont le privilège de convoier les œuvres lors de l'organisation des grandes expositions. Quoi qu'il en soit, leur rôle se marginalise peu à peu.

De conservateur à réalisateur et chargé de projet d'exposition

Avec des investissements de plus en plus importants dans la production d'expositions temporaires et thématiques, des musées de société vont créer un nouveau type de professionnel ayant pour mandat de réaliser des expositions, mais au sein de l'équipe permanente. C'est ainsi qu'apparaissent au Canada à partir des années 1980 ceux que l'on désigne comme des chargés de projet d'exposition. Ces nouveaux professionnels à qui on confie la scénarisation et la réalisation des expositions proviennent de divers horizons : communication, cinéma, théâtre, design, littérature. Dans la tradition du réseau de Parcs Canada où se développent de nouvelles approches innovantes de la muséographie et de la communication dans les années 1970, ces professionnels sont désignés comme des réalisateurs d'expositions. Le terme provient du monde du cinéma et traduit bien la nouvelle réalité des musées. Les expositions ne sont plus l'œuvre d'un seul individu. Comme au cinéma, le réalisateur coordonne une équipe formée de chercheurs, de conservateurs, de designers, de scénographes, de rédacteurs, d'éclairagistes, de graphistes et de techniciens (technologies, audiovisuel). Souvent, le réalisateur est également l'auteur du scénario d'ex-

position, mais c'est lui qui assure la cohérence du projet et qui, comme au cinéma, signe l'exposition.

Le profil des réalisateurs et des chargés de projets d'exposition s'approche davantage de la création et de la gestion que de la recherche. Le musée national de la Civilisation à Québec a largement contribué à diffuser le modèle de chargé de projet (Arpin, 1992). L'analyse de la profession réalisée par la Société des musées québécois en 2000 note que la profession de chargé de projet d'exposition est née.

En quelque sorte, de nouvelles considérations relatives à la mission muséale au regard de la diffusion du patrimoine et de son accessibilité à un public élargi, cette profession cherche à combler un besoin grandissant des institutions à l'égard de personnes pouvant assumer à la fois la direction de la « communication muséographique » et la gestion, proprement dite, d'un projet d'exposition, ces personnes devant avoir la capacité de conduire le processus créatif de la mise en exposition, tout en coordonnant les diverses ressources du projet, et ce, afin de le mener à terme. En somme, ce processus est fondé sur le travail d'une équipe multidisciplinaire dont chaque membre apporte son expertise particulière au regard des exigences du projet. La chargée de projet ou le chargé de projet joue le rôle de chef d'orchestre ou de chef d'équipe. (SMQ, 2000, p. VI)

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En ce sens, la rupture est significative avec le profil traditionnel du conservateur. C'est d'ailleurs sur cette base que les critiques sont formulées par les conservateurs qui deviennent soudainement les adjoints obligés des chargés de projets. La littérature produite dans les revues des différentes associations nationales de musées au cours des décennies 1970 et 1980 témoigne des critiques formulées par les conservateurs qui perdent peu à peu leurs responsabilités traditionnelles.

De conservateur invité à commissaire

Les tensions entre conservateurs et conservateurs invités ou chargés de projet se font de plus en plus vives au début des années 1990 de sorte que les conservateurs invités vont peu à peu opter pour une nouvelle désignation de leur statut. Ils se définissent alors comme commissaire. Ils conservent leur indépendance et manifestent leur distance à l'égard de la position traditionnelle des conservateurs. Si le terme est d'abord réservé aux musées d'art (Esse, 2011), on voit apparaître des commissaires dans toutes les catégories de musées.

Il est intéressant de constater que dans plusieurs grands musées, des professionnels qui avaient débuté leur carrière comme conservateur choisissent de rompre

avec leur ancien statut pour s'affirmer comme commissaire d'exposition. Ces changements se sont faits de manière naturelle en sélectionnant naturellement les meilleurs. On constate que ceux qui ont réussi ce passage combinaient des qualités de recherche et de création.

Professionalisation et éclatement

Avec le recul, il semble bien que la spécialisation du travail de conservateur dans les musées était inévitable. Tant que les musées étaient animés par des équipes d'amateurs éclairés et de bénévoles, la polyvalence demeurait nécessaire. La professionnalisation a contribué à l'éclatement de la fonction traditionnelle de conservateur. Le développement économique des musées s'est traduit par des exigences professionnelles plus élevées. Seuls, les petits musées et les musées régionaux doivent encore miser sur la polyvalence des professionnels comme on pouvait le faire au XX^e siècle. Dans les musées intermédiaires et les grands musées, on fait aujourd'hui appel à des professionnels spécialisés.

Ces changements profonds dans l'organisation du travail et la gestion des musées sont le résultat des politiques culturelles du gouvernement canadien et des ministères de la Culture de chaque province. L'homogénéité des politiques muséales sur le territoire nord-américain illustre bien une réalité géopolitique encouragée et soutenue par les gouvernements. En d'autres termes, les musées nord-américains ne relèvent pas uniquement de la culture, comme on a tendance à le croire, ils sont le produit d'influences politiques nationales sans que les professionnels qui y travaillent en prennent véritablement conscience. Dans le monde des musées, on n'aime pas parler de politique et on préfère croire en le répétant comme un mantra que « les musées demeurent des institutions culturelles au service de la société ».

Muséologue : nouvelle figure du conservateur ou retour aux sources

Il est intéressant de constater que les formations en muséologie se sont mises en place au Canada au moment où on assistait à un développement majeur du réseau des musées. C'est au cours des années 1980 qu'apparaissent et se multiplient les formations collégiales et universitaires en muséologie. Le cas spécifique du Québec est intéressant. Comme il s'agit de la seule province francophone en Amérique du Nord, le ministère de l'Éducation opta pour la création d'un programme de deuxième cycle en muséologie conjoint entre deux universités. La masse critique des emplois en muséologie ne permettait pas la création de plusieurs profils. On opta donc pour la formation de généralistes des musées. À partir de 1987, l'Université du Québec à Montréal et l'Université de Montréal accueillirent les premiers étudiants à la maîtrise en muséologie. On ne forme plus des conservateurs comme autrefois, mais des muséologues, c'est-à-dire des professionnels qui ont une connaissance transversale du musée à partir des grandes fonctions muséales : les collections, la conservation, l'exposition,

l'éducation et la médiation avec les publics. Ce changement de profil ne s'est pas fait sans heurts et sans résistance. Les premiers candidats au programme travaillaient souvent dans les musées et poursuivaient à la maîtrise une formation qui transformait leur conception de la muséologie. Ils ne s'inscrivaient plus dans une logique disciplinaire comme autrefois, mais dans une approche systémique du musée. Il s'agit d'une rupture radicale dans la culture des professionnels des musées. Comme l'époque de la conquête de l'Ouest se termine avec les guerres indiennes, l'époque des pionniers des musées se terminait. Les nouveaux professionnels rompent avec le passé et s'inscrivent dans une nouvelle ère. Contrairement à ceux qui les ont précédés, ils partagent une culture commune des musées, c'est-à-dire une connaissance commune de l'histoire des musées et des auteurs qui ont marqué la discipline.

Si ce changement était inévitable et permettait soudainement d'inscrire les musées dans un monde globalisé où les formations professionnelles en muséologie se professionnalisent, la résistance s'est rapidement manifestée. Ceux qui avaient été formés sur le modèle du compagnonnage auprès de conservateurs séniors tentèrent de bloquer l'accès des jeunes qui se définissaient comme « muséologues » dans les musées. Ils prétendaient par exemple que ces jeunes formés dans les universités n'avaient aucune connaissance pratique des musées et que la formation théorique qu'ils avaient acquise ne les préparait pas à travailler concrètement. Bref, on a tenté de dévaloriser ces nouvelles connaissances et de freiner l'accès des jeunes professionnels. La réalité, c'est que la vieille garde se trouvait menacée et que dans bien des cas, les conservateurs n'avaient pas les compétences nécessaires. Ils résistaient à tous les changements, notamment l'informatisation des collections.

Il y a maintenant trente ans que des programmes d'études supérieures forment de jeunes professionnels et la figure du conservateur s'est estompée, remplacée par le modèle du muséologue. À cela s'ajoutent tous les enjeux liés à la gouvernance, qui affectent également le milieu muséal. On voit depuis peu se mettre en place des cadres de références telle que la *Recommandation concernant la protection et la promotion des musées et des collections, leur diversité et leur rôle dans la société* de l'UNESCO (2015), le guide de la SMQ (*La gouvernance muséale : guide à l'usage des directions et des conseils d'administration*, 2014), et la loi 114 (*Loi modernisant la gouvernance des musées nationaux*) en vigueur depuis l'automne 2016. La loi 114 impose aux musées des contraintes similaires à celles imposées au secteur privé. L'ensemble des intervenants en milieu muséal est donc touché par ces changements dont le conservateur. Ainsi, les aspects de bonne gestion, la relation avec le conseil d'administration, le rôle du conseil d'administration et la transparence deviennent des enjeux majeurs avec lesquels les musées doivent maintenant compter, sans s'y soustraire.

Pourtant, même si le profil semble avoir changé, le muséologue, nouveau généraliste du musée, renoue en quelque sorte avec le modèle traditionnel du conservateur.

Si Douglas Allen observait le contexte géopolitique du monde des musées, il écrirait probablement qu'au « fond le rayonnement spirituel et le dynamisme d'un musée dépendent toujours d'un muséologue », mais ce muséologue est le produit d'un contexte géopolitique qui le définit.

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Museology in Colonial Contexts

A Call for Decolonisation of Museum Theory

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ABSTRACT

The theory of museology produced over the past half century to define its own moral interpretation of reality has shown to be marked by paradigms created within colonial structures of power. This paper aims to question whether museology has a political centre. Two methods of analysis – *author geopolitical backgrounds* and *bibliography and citations* – were chosen to identify the main patterns of geopolitical impact on international museological production through examining key international publications: *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*, *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies* and *ICOFOM Study Series*. Our research shows that the theory of museology is still produced according to colonial structures of power.

Key words: Museology, postcolonial studies, knowledge production, ICOFOM.

RESUMEN

Museología en contextos coloniales: Una llamada a la descolonización de la teoría museal

La teoría museológica producida durante el último medio siglo con el objetivo de definir su propia interpretación ética de la realidad ha demostrado estar signada por los paradigmas creados dentro de las estructuras coloniales del poder. Esta ponencia pretende poner en cuestión a la museología como opción política. Elegimos dos métodos – el de análisis de antecedentes geopolíticos de los autores y el análisis de bibliografía y citas – para identificar los patrones principales de impacto geopolítico en la producción museística internacional. Examinamos publicaciones clave y de alcance internacional: *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*, *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies* and *ICOFOM Study Series*. Nuestra investigación demuestra que la teoría museológica aún se reproduce según las estructuras coloniales del poder.

Palabras clave: Museología, estudios poscoloniales, producción de conocimiento, ICOFOM.



The theory of museology and museum theory produced around the world over the past five decades has had, as a central purpose, the education and training of professionals to work in museums. The focus on this mainly Eurocentric institution has guided several academics and “theorists” of museology to envisage a discipline that is both culturally founded and politically charged. Furthermore, the instruments to disseminate this theory were singularly based in the West¹ and in countries that control the production of knowledge because they control the means for its “circulation” around the globe (either as capitalist potencies, or as former metropolises in the colonial system that still impact knowledge production and circulation today). For this reason, it is possible to map the centres of power in knowledge production that have defined museology and museum theory in both the past and the present, unveiling the “coloniality of knowledge” and some of its consequences in this academic discipline today.

1. The term “West” in this article refers to the “First World” countries that control the capitalist production and knowledge production in a global perspective, being European countries or other capitalist powers such as the United States and Canada.

Our purpose in the present analysis is, thus, in direct reference to the concept of the “coloniality of power and knowledge” used to discuss the legacies of European colonialism in different social orders and systems of academic production. We take as a starting point the introduction of this notion into post-colonial studies and Latin-American subaltern studies in the late 20th century (e.g. Quijano, 2000), considering the persistence of colonial domination sustained by the global capitalist system and in the policies of states in former colonies.

Over four decades, the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) has been the most active and regular forum for the publication and circulation of theoretical knowledge in museology and museum theory. Its international production and the central authors who have presented and published their papers are a testimony to the great geographic and cultural diversity among its members. The topics approached are a consequence of a wide range of issues and concerns that constitute this discipline’s theoretical base. However, its centres of power and the political agents who configured it and are still involved in its maintenance are yet to be questioned using a reflexive approach.

Since the 1970s, in the social sciences, the ideas that knowledge is colonised and that every theory stems from a political centre (Connell, 2012) were expressed in different disciplinary domains (Mignolo, 2007). As many authors have argued, knowledge is an important part of colonisation. Hence, knowledge in itself was colonised in the processes of “colonizing imaginaries”² (Gruzinski, 2007) or in the history of domination of what was once denoted the “Third World”. In the early 1970s, Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro stated that the imperial march toward the colonies goes with arms, books, concepts and preconceptions, while denouncing the geopolitics of knowledge that historically separated the cultures that investigate from those that were investigated (Ribeiro, 2011).

In this violent dispute over imaginaries and mindsets through knowledge production, museums played an essential role. As a consequence of direct involvement in the colonial system of power, and after several studies that express *mea culpa* towards the past (see Gonseth, Hainard & Kaehr, 2002), museums have faced a drastic revision of their predatory practices. On a different level, museology is on the verge of dealing with a revision of its own paradigms, as a field of studies whose base is strongly tied to European tradition.

Slowly, museum practice has been adjusted to start considering non-European authority in the process of shaping the representation of reality, for example, by including indigenous peoples in the institutional processes or recognizing their own perspectives in exhibitions. Even the museum, as an institution with a certain end, has been adapted to serve as a tool for different societies that

2. Historian Serge Gruzinski, in the work, *The Colonization of the Imaginary*, refers to the process of *Westernization of imaginaries* as a continuation of the colonial process in its strict sense and the conversion of the natives by the missionaries. In this article, we use the concept of “colonizing imaginaries” in a broader sense referring to knowledge as an instrument to shape and colonise mindsets.

wish to present their own interpretations of reality through musealisation³. The movement of New Museology, associated with the invention of ecomuseums, has allowed a certain perspective on the democratization of the institution to be spread in the most diverse places in the world, disseminating the idea that the museum had been “decolonised” (e.g., Varine, 2005).

But how far has museology accompanied the decolonisation of the museum? And is the museum of the 21st century shared by every culture working as a real decolonised forum for inclusion? If we have indeed achieved the decolonisation of these historically colonial institutions, have we recognised the true political centres of museological knowledge?

Reflecting on the body of knowledge that museology encompasses today requires, in our view, a critical revision of its place in a postcolonial epistemology. According to postcolonial authors, knowledge produced these days cannot be separated from its grounding in powerful metropolitan universities and central institutions that sustain and control its circulation. In this global “knowledge economy” (Connell, 2015), the recognition that the so-called “Third World” countries could also produce knowledge and, even more, develop critical approaches to the “classics” as defined by the metropolis, came late to European theorists. Engaged in denunciation of the power relation between the (metropolitan) centres of knowledge production and the so-called “peripheries”, as they were defined in colonial times, a whole field of postcolonial studies and de-colonial theories has been created, constituted by intellectuals both from the “centres” as well as the “peripheries” (not necessarily in this order).

As Fernando Coronil puts it, these studies have raised a central intellectual challenge related to the problem of producing knowledge of history and society in the context of imperial relations:

“to develop a bifocal perspective that allows one, on the one hand, to view colonialism as a fundamental process in the formation of the modern world without reducing history to colonialism as an all-encompassing process and, on the other hand, to contest modernity and its Eurocentric forms of knowledge without presuming to view history from a privileged epistemological standpoint.” (Coronil, 2008, p. 401).

Considering museology as “postcolonial” or as a decolonised social science involves unveiling its power centres, identifying its own forms of coloniality. Used both as a set of prescriptions for museum practice and as a reflexive discipline, museology in the present day is in conflict with its own founding purpose and needs to be critically reconsidered to be up-to-date.

3. Although “musealisation” is a term widely used by many ICOFOM members and is part of the professional language of museologists in Eastern, Central and Northern Europe, as well as Latin America, it should be noted that it means the transformation process of some entity into a museum entity. For a more detailed definition, see *Key Concepts of Museology* (Musealisation, 2010).

Methodology

With a reflexive perspective on museology, this paper considers the multiple approaches to postcolonial studies in the social sciences and the coloniality of power and knowledge (see Quijano, 2000; Lander, 2005) to develop a conscious review of museology and museum theory in the present.

The methods chosen to identify the main patterns of geopolitical impact on international museological production were an *analysis of authors' geopolitical backgrounds* and *bibliography and citation analysis*. The choice of publications for analysis was driven by their self-declared international scope and intended readership. Analysis of authors' geopolitical backgrounds was applied to the following key museological publications:

- *Vagues, une anthologie de la nouvelle muséologie*, 2 volumes, 1992
- *Cent quarante termes muséologiques ou petit glossaire de l'exposition*, 1998
- *Reinventing the Museum*, 2004.
- *Musée et muséologie*, 2005
- *Vers une redéfinition du musée?*, 2007
- *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*, 2011
- *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*, 4 volumes, 2015
- *ICOFOM Study Series* (2006-2016)

The three latter publications underwent a thorough bibliography and citation analysis. Since our hypothesis is that the power centres in museology are related to specific regions – notably Francophone and Anglophone⁴ countries of the “First World” regions – the citation and bibliographic data were divided into data sets in the following way:

- References to Francophone authors
- References to Anglophone authors
- References to other European authors (outside Anglophone and Francophone regions)
- References to other regions

Francophone and Anglophone were not judged by the publication's language or city of publication, but by the residence and presumed nationality of the author⁵. International publications without names of authors (e.g. UNESCO

4. Francophone regions include France, Belgium, Switzerland and Canada, whereas Anglophone include the UK, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The latter region is often referred to as “Anglo-Saxon” in other languages.

5. For “European authors”, division into Europe and Asia was geographical, so all publications of the European part of Russia were counted as “References to other European authors”, whereas the Siberian part of the country was seen as “References to other regions”. For Canadian authors, the division was between Francophone and Anglophone, based on the language of the article. If the author was born in one region and moved to another country where they received a degree and later delivered lectures in a non-native language, we counted them as belonging to that country where they were civilized by study. For example, English publications of Manuel DeLanda and Hans Ulrich

and ICOM documents) were discounted, as were references made to the whole volume of *ICOFOM Study Series*, unless it was a publication of the regional meetings of ICOFOM LAM or ICOFOM ASPAC that were attributed to “other regions”.

We only counted secondary sources, skipping press or museum catalogue images that were used as primary sources by authors. Self-citations as a reference to an author’s previous publications were not included in the analysis, because the aim was to determine influence.

The selection of the articles of *ICOFOM Study Series* was limited to peer-reviewed articles of the past decade (2006-2016, issues 35-44), thus skipping the non-reviewed special edition of 2014, a tribute to André Desvallées, and all case studies that were published between 2014 and 2016.

Political roots of museology

If we consider that all knowledge is structured within a certain system of power and that its historical foundations sometimes lie in “colonial situations” (Balandier, 1951), it is mandatory to assume that there is no such thing as neutral or *apolitical* knowledge. In this sense, the deconstruction of the power centres in museology should begin with a reflexive exercise of disassembling the invisible traces of political intentions in the foundations of museum theory.

Firstly, we have to question the very background of knowledge production. As pointed out by different authors, the individualist model of the “genius” who bears knowledge, a notion invented in the Renaissance, can no longer be sustained in the 21st century. In the present, knowledge economy researchers work in networks and depend on an international industry of publishers, journals and conferences, software and websites, grants and fellowships to produce academic materials and to circulate this knowledge (Connell, 2015, p.92). However, this production is not without a centre. The idea that individual creativity operates through a social network of cooperation does not exempt knowledge from having a centre of power from which it is controlled and commercialised.

According to Connell (2012, pp.10-11), we can identify a global post-colonial periphery – such that most large data sets are collected around a metropolis, where those data will be processed, formalised, debated, organised and edited. In the peripheries (the plural is important), studies will be conducted by theorists from the metropolis, applying their methods to the most complex postcolonial subjects. In fact, there is only one viable subject of study suited to the concepts and methods forged in the centres. In Brazil, India or Australia, academics quote Foucault, Bourdieu, Giddens, Beck, Habermas, and so on, in order to understand their subjects and, ultimately, to shape their own

Gumbrecht were counted as US authors and Zygmunt Bauman as a British author.

social realities. In most of our references, the founding fathers of our so-called mother-sciences came from very far away and were imported in the process of colonisation, and it is they who constitute knowledge and science the way we understand them today.

In this sense, in order to argue that museology has an imperial centre, we must carry out a real genealogy of this discipline. The term “museology”, investigated in its historicity by François Mairesse and André Desvallées (2011), has been perceived as indicating the existence of a specific field of study, formed by its organised actors and with particular geopolitical goals. Originating in Europe, notably Germany, the term – “*Museologie*” in German and “*muséologie*” in French⁶ – evolved according to the transformations in the very notion of the “museum”, which were emphasised mainly from the second half of the 19th century and more intensely in the interwar period.

During this period, a colonialist Europe was still trying to impose ideas and a cultural viewpoint over the rest of the world. In 1926, the *Office International des Musées* - OIM⁷, bound to the League of Nations⁸, was created as the first attempt to implement an international entity centred in Europe, gathering museums of the world and their professionals⁹. In 1946, after the end of World War II, the creation of the *International Council of Museums* – ICOM, marked the constitution of a central platform for the museum field based in France, and which enhanced the broad circulation of general materials, textbooks and manuals produced in the imperial centre that would be, consequently, reproduced in the peripheries.

Even in the 21st century, the notion of “museology” presents no common understanding. The absence of a consensus over the term, as argued by Aquilina (2011), is related to the fact that various languages use the word differently. Moreover, some languages have introduced into their vocabulary terms that, although not exact synonyms of museology – such as “museum studies”, “museum theory” and “*museumwissenschaft*” (museum science) – are nonetheless interpreted that way by some authors and translators (p. 2). In fact, based on critical analysis of some of the works that use such terms in recent textbooks, we may conclude that the variations in language are directly connected to different centres of power and knowledge in the roots of contemporary museology.

In textbooks, such as *Musée et muséologie* (2005) by Dominique Poulot, the whole history of museums and of museology is centred in Europe and in the

6. From the early 20th century, the word “*Museologie*” first appeared related to the administration of museums, notably in the contexts of Germany and France. For the history of the term see, for example, Aquilina (2011) and Brulon Soares, Carvalho, Cruz (2015).

7. International Office of Museums.

8. Created in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles.

9. In this period, with its most disseminated publication, the review *Museumion*, the OIM tried to approach themes of central importance for museums at the time. The review *Museumion* was published from 1927 to 1946 (fifteen years, with a gap during the war period) by the OIM.

richest countries in the north. In Poulot's work, even though the author gives a general and international approach to "museology", his vast bibliography is acutely Eurocentric, showing 74 titles from Francophone authors and 64 from Anglophone authors, being 32 North Americans and 32 from the United Kingdom; the bibliography presents only three titles by Asian authors, and there are no authors listed from Africa, Oceania, or Latin America.

In another part of the world, in a textbook published at almost the same time, *Reinventing the Museum* (2004), American scholar and museum professional Gail Anderson reunited articles from 35 North American authors, almost all from the United States, and its bibliography consists of 85 titles, all by Anglophone authors, mostly from North America.

Museums and museology have at least two clear political roots. The different approaches that assume museums as universal institutions, and museology as a philosophy or a set of abstract theories related to the museum, corroborate with the invisibility of the power structures in which museology is imbedded. After decades of studies and academic discussions, museum theory and the theory of museology are produced by agents under the influence of at least one of the centres of knowledge production that we can identify in the foundation of this complex disciplinary field. These are *muséologie*, imagined by the French and Francophone theorists in general, and *museum studies* or *museum theory*, conceived and legitimized by Anglophone authors, in different instances primarily in Britain and North America. The political differences between these centres of power and epistemic frameworks, with clear geographical occurrences, can no longer be ignored in the perspective of a reflexive museology.

Decolonising Museology: Dichotomy of a discipline between two political centres

If the museum and museology are culturally and politically determined, the aim of decolonisation of the theory sustaining these two concepts should be to map the centrally focused networks of knowledge production within which they are being reproduced and consumed. Far from being neutral concepts detached from political intentions, both the museum and museology have their genealogy marked by colonisation – of "nations", imaginaries and epistemologies. Our goal in the present section will be to identify the hegemonic traditions according to which museum theory and museology are produced, configuring an international field of knowledge that has inherited, even in the margins, the paradigms of its centres.

For this purpose, we may understand "museology", in its most general sense, as "the philosophy of museal field" (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010, pp. 53-56), aligned with Western thinking about the Museum. Or, in a slightly different approach by Karsten Schubert, as "the systematic enquiry into the nature and methods" of a museum (2002, p. 28). In both definitions, as with several others we could recall, museology is understood within the frames of a political

domain of knowledge that have shaped philosophical thinking in the West. Our purpose here is not to drastically abandon such frames, but to unveil them, putting them under the lens of critical epistemology to uncover the coloniality that lies at its core.

Through critical analysis of some of the discipline's most referenced textbooks, we will show the existence of two political and cultural centres of knowledge production in museology. These two centres are sometimes dichotomised in the discipline's foundations¹⁰, but lately, not without difficulty, have been establishing their first conceptual bridges.

French museology and the *Nouvelle Muséologie*

Different generations of French museologists throughout the 20th century have demonstrated a particular interest and rigor with the roots and multiple influences in the very discipline they intend to define and determine. A simple differentiation between theoretical and applied museology could begin to explain this specific trajectory in French publication. As Burcaw put it, the Anglophones would prove to be more inclined to study the practical aspects of this discipline, relegating theoretical concerns to the background (Mairesse, 2012, p.20). On the other hand, French museology, since the 1950s, has been clearly influenced by Eastern European thinkers, such as the Czech Jan Jelínek (the first president of ICOFOM), the Russian Awraam Razgon, the German Klaus Schreiner and, of course, the Czech Zbyněk Stránský who presented the first attempts to draw a system of concepts and theories for this specific discipline. His concepts, in particular, would not gain adherence over the years, but the purpose of formulating theoretical bases and defining a set of specific terms for museology, would be pursued by French authors such as Georges Henri Rivière, André Desvallées and, more recently, François Mairesse.

In 1958, during a training course in Rio de Janeiro organised by UNESCO, ICOM and several Brazilian authorities and specialists, Rivière, the then-ICOM director, introduced his definition for museology as “the science that studies the mission and organization of the museum” (1960). This UNESCO Regional Seminar, under Rivière's coordination, involved the participation of several Brazilians and, among them, a majority of museum professionals. In his report on the event; published in 1960, Rivière presented his fundamental definitions for the terms “museum”, “museology” and “museography” as discussed at the seminar. The first definition was taken from the ICOM statutes adopted at that time, while the other two were based on debates from the seminar sessions which involved local participants and also influenced their views.

10. A similar dichotomy was identified on an institutional level by Javier Gómez Martínez (2006), which he called two *museological traditions*; Mediterranean, dominated by France, and “Anglo-Saxon”, dominated by Britain and North America.

The early 1970s brought some initial reflections on the social and political role of museums in a postcolonial Europe to the French context. A critical consciousness of the museum, its practice and theory, was raised by some voices from independent colonies. These views found resonance in events, such as the ICOM 9th General Conference in Dijon, in 1971. This was most notable in the speech of Stanislas Adotevi, a philosopher from Benin, Africa, who solemnly questioned the role of traditional museums in colonised countries (Adotevi, 1971), bringing attention to a critical imbalance in museum action in different world contexts. The following year, the UNESCO Round Table in Santiago, Chile, organised with the aim of debating the role of museums in Latin-American societies, heard further calls for the decolonisation of this Eurocentric institution. Several French museologists would integrate the criticism and produce a more sensible discourse about the “Third World” regions.

This so-called “decolonisation” of museology (Varine, 2005) was a direct response to a broader claim for the revision of paradigms, related to the social movements that marked the end of the 1960s, as well as the attainment of independence by some colonised nations. In this political and theoretical movement, some European museologists saw a chance to redeem the theory and concepts disseminated in the colonial discourse that had framed traditional museology, creating a so-called *new* museology or *nouvelle muséologie*. The first reflections on this theory appeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s, at a time when the supposed crisis of museums was being intensely discussed worldwide.

The *Nouvelle Muséologie* in France, and a few years later in the rest of the world, was a movement with a political centre, even though it advocated the deconstruction of power structures in museum practice and a renewed approach to audiences. The ideas of some non-European thinkers are in its foundations, such as the above-mentioned Adotevi, but also the Brazilian Paulo Freire, the Mexican Mario Vásquez, as well as the North Americans Duncan Cameron and John F. Kinard. Their ideas were translated and appropriated by French museology in the publication *Vagues: une anthologie de la nouvelle muséologie* (1992), two volumes of which were edited by Rivière’s disciple André Desvallées, quickly becoming a central reference for this international movement. Although introducing some non-French authors to Francophone readers, this work also presented texts from well-known French museologists and theorists such as Georges Henri Rivière, Hugues de Varine, Jean Clair, Élie Faure and others.

Since Rivière’s compendium *La muséologie*, was published in 1989, an emphasis on society and on contextualizing museum practice has marked French studies. The emphasis encompassed applied museology, as well as reflection on this discipline’s socially founded key concepts. In the 1990s, André Desvallées was internationally appointed to lead an extensive project to determine museology’s terminology, not only for the French but for the whole museological field. Since then, several texts on the definition of the terms “museology”, “museum”, “museography” and others were published as part of this ambitious project. In his chapter *Cent quarante termes muséologiques ou petit glossaire de*

l'exposition, in the *Manuel de muséographie* (1998) compiled by Marie-Odile de Bary and Jean-Michel Tobelem, Desvallées presented his definition of selected museological terms according to the French museum field and to the theory of museology as perceived in France. His references consisted of 16 French titles, no more than five North American titles, and two works from Britain. Among the selected French authors, the ones occurring most were Desvallées himself, Rivière, Jean Davallon; other authors included the British museum studies professor Susan Pearce and the Czech museologist Zbyněk Stránský, with two works each in the bibliography.

In 2007, a collective publication entitled *Vers une redéfinition du musée?* was produced with the support of ICOFOM, with François Mairesse as co-editor, presenting papers debating the definition of the museum by authors with various cultural and geographical backgrounds. Among the invited authors, other than Mairesse and Desvallées themselves, most were ICOFOM members; overall, there were five Francophone authors (10 Europeans in total), and five non-European authors. In this work, we further observe increased participation by female authors, notably from colonised countries, in contrast to a clear male predominance among Europeans¹¹. The partial diversification of authors exposes the diversity of approaches to one single concept at the core of this disputed discipline.

Following this publication, Desvallées and Mairesse pulled together a team of Francophone editors to work on a full dictionary of specific terms. The selection of terms and authors was centred clearly on French museology, and the result was the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de Muséologie* (2011); its vast bibliography reveals an undeniable Western view. In its general bibliography, the *Dictionnaire* lists 29 French titles, 19 North American titles including authors from the United States and Canada, 12 from Britain, 22 from other European countries, one from Africa (in a French publication) and none from Latin America, Asia, or Oceania. This extensive work, fully written by Francophone authors, is a testimony of coloniality in museology, as we have counted in the referenced authors across all its articles:

- References to Francophone authors - 510
- References to Anglophone authors - 352
- References to European authors (outside Anglophone and Francophone regions) - 174
- References to other regions - 17

As we have demonstrated, French museology over the 20th and 21st centuries opened itself up for different international influences without, nevertheless, losing its central position. After the 1970s and 1980s, under the influence of

11. While the book's five authors from Australia, Canada, India, Argentina and Brazil were women, all 10 authors from Europe were men, showing that coloniality can be also connected to gender relations.

ICOFOM, and directly concerned with international standards in the production of specific terms and concepts for museology, French authors implemented an “imperial” museology that cannot be disconnected from the coloniality of power and knowledge.

Anglophone Museum theory

The trajectory of the development of museology in Anglophone countries has been described in the “Museum Theory” volume of the *International Handbooks of Museum Studies*. According to the editors, museology, seemingly around the world, has passed through three phases:

1. “Museum studies, affiliated with history, art history, sociology, cultural studies, and Foucauldian cultural theory, addressed the process of nation building that had motivated the development of mid-nineteenth-century public museums” (Witcomb & Message, 2015, p. xxxvii)
2. The new, or critical, museology “informed by postcolonial studies and development anthropology, and motivated by themes of equity and human rights” (p. xxxvii)
3. Current museum studies approaches are “influenced by concerns about social justice and community building, as well as by public policy-oriented approaches” (p. xxxviii).

The International Handbooks of Museum Studies is becoming a main reference for museum training in some parts of the world beyond Western Europe and North America. However, in other regions, such as Latin America where French museology has a great influence, it is rarely quoted and not used as a central reference.

Of the authors invited to contribute to the handbooks, 85% are from Anglophone countries (half are UK authors, Fig. 1). Only two authors wrote articles in their native language to be translated (Bettina Habsburg-Lothringen from Austria and Beat Hachler from Switzerland). Out of 102 articles throughout four volumes, only 13 are from a non-English-speaking country, but are still from Europe. In a publication positioned as “international”, there are authors from only 16 countries, without a single one from Latin America, two articles by authors from Africa (Kenya and South Africa), and one from Asia (India). However, it should be noted that those nations are part of the so-called Anglophone and the texts were written in the official language of their country. A voice from the former colonies is given, but the predominant Anglophone nature of the handbooks is evident.

All publications referenced in the “Museum Theory” volume of *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies* were published in English, 98% of which were from Anglophone countries. Out of them we have counted the authors by geopolitical regions:

- References to Francophone authors – 78
- References to Anglophone authors – 967
- References to European authors (outside Anglophone and Francophone regions) – 92
- References to other regions – 6

The totals from all four volumes show that, geopolitically, the authors tend to refer to Anglophone authors, making up 83% of all references:

- References to Francophone authors – 175
- References to Anglophone authors – 3387
- References to European authors (outside Anglophone and Francophone regions) – 436
- References to other regions – 62

Most references to other regions come from authors also outside the Anglophone regions.

In the Anglophone tradition, the international movement of New Museology is dated to the 1990s and Peter Vergo (1989; see also Gómez Martínez, 2006, p. 274), ignoring its existence and history in France, which denotes how the different centres of knowledge production were historically in competition over the colonisation of international museology. So far, they have not succeeded in creating one hegemonic theory for museology or museum theory, producing several epistemic gaps and breaches between the most influential schools of academic thinking across the world.

The ICOFOM Study Series: an international journal in museology

The authors of the *ICOFOM Study Series (ISS)*, the most regularly published journal in world museology, come from various regions; this is, in part, a consequence of the International Committee's concept of holding each annual conference on a different continent. This approach has led to 26 Argentinian articles out of 63 during the 2006 ICOFOM symposium in Alta Gracia, Argentina, and 12 Chinese papers out of 28 during the 2010 ICOFOM symposium in Shanghai.

Despite the continuous participation of authors from outside the European and North American centres of power, the analysis of bibliography and references in the *ISS* published in the past 10 years shows a predominance of Anglophone references, followed by Francophone ones:

- References to Francophone authors - 768
- References to Anglophone authors - 1050
- References to European authors (outside Anglophone and Francophone regions) - 573
- References to other regions – 559

Similar analysis of bibliography and references in the *ISS* published between 2006 and 2014 shows a balance among Francophone, other European regions, and outside these regions, with around 450 references attributed to them, while there is a considerable majority of Anglophone authors - 703.

While there was considerable growth in publications referring to Francophone authors appearing between 2015 and 2016, it still leaves Anglophone references to dominate and shows fewer authors from other regions:

- References to Francophone authors - 317
- References to Anglophone authors - 347
- References to European authors (outside Anglophone and Francophone regions) - 127
- References to other regions - 96

One possible reason for this effect may be the introduction of a double system of peer-review in 2014 - at first on the level of acceptance of abstracts and then for articles. However, the imbalance is not as noticeable amongst the authors accepted for the publication in 2015 and 2016 (Fig. 2).

Some aspects of publications from this period can be noted. There were no Asian or African authors in the volume following the Japanese symposium. The only two countries represented from Latin America are Brazil, with 7 publications, and Mexico, with 3 publications. While authors' nationalities have been linked generally to the region in which the symposium took place, after 2014 the Tsukuba and Milan symposia did not result in more local representation. On the one hand, the quality of the journal has been increasing by rejecting texts that did not address the selected topic; but on the other, some texts might have been rejected because they do not meet the high academic standards formed in English- and French-speaking countries.

The participation of Latin-American authors in recent issues is a relevant trace of this committee's international adherence. Latin American participation in ICOFOM has occurred since its initial years, mostly through individual members who could travel and speak the languages from the epistemic centres. However, with the creation of ICOFOM LAM - the subcommittee of ICOFOM for Latin America and the Caribbean - in 1990, regional events and publications have expressed a great integration of theory and local practice, as well as an appropriation of the ideas proposed by European authors into the discourse of Latin-American museologists who were not necessarily in direct contact with them.

In the analysis of some of the Latin-American articles in *ISS*, where we mostly see not only traces of Eastern Europe and French museology, but also theoretical approaches based on local experiences, we could envisage how knowledge can sometimes go through a process of *transculturation*. In this sense, the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz' concept of "transculturation" (1983) could be applied to knowledge or theory when produced in an encounter between

more than one culture, because it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena.

Some conclusions: museologies in plural?

The genealogy of museology cannot be detached from a reflection on the political centres of knowledge, across the distinct parts of the world where it has been adopted as a “science” or university discipline and in different languages into which the term has been translated. The theory of museology produced over the past half century to define its own moral interpretation of reality has been shown to be marked by paradigms created within colonial structures of power, excluding approaches and experiences that cannot be translated – culturally or linguistically – into the discourse of the epistemic centres. For this reason, a postcolonial theory should be one of the central goals of this discipline, not only in the “peripheries” but also in the “metropolis” of knowledge where coloniality still influences museological thinking.

As we have demonstrated in this article, there is an almost invisible political force that guides museology as a discipline, centered in the regions of the world that control the means for knowledge production. This can be verified in the bibliographical material produced over the years and still referenced today. Since these works have marginalised other views on museology – such as those from Eastern Europe where theoretical museology was born, or the more recent production from Latin America, where museology was considered a “science” by some authors – a critical consciousness for this discipline will take time to develop.

In Latin America, for instance, a great corpus of museum theory or written reflections on museology existed even before the 1980s. This was, however, a decade when the first Latin-American authors published internationally, with encouragement from Czech museologists Vinos Sofka and Jan Jelínek, in the first publications of ICOFOM. This was the route for theoretical concepts from authors such as Waldisa Rússio, Tereza Scheiner, Nelly Decarolis and Norma Rusconi to be noticed by authors from Europe and North America. In Brazil, the 1980s marked the time when the first theoretical texts on museology were translated and published, some of them under the direct influence of ICOFOM publications that circulated in this country¹².

In 1990, in South America, ICOFOM LAM was created, motivated by a will to regionalize the debates on museology. Indeed, the subcommittee amplified the circulation of theoretical texts written in Portuguese and Spanish across

12. In Rio de Janeiro, the publication *Cadernos Museológicos* was coordinated by museologist Maria de Lourdes Parreiras Horta (*Cadernos Museológicos*, Rio de Janeiro, n. 1, 2 e 3, 1989-1990) presenting, for the first time in the Brazilian context, translations of papers from ICOFOM authors like Desvallées, Sofka, van Mensch, Sola and the only Brazilian who published in the first ICOFOM publications, Waldisa Rússio.

the region. This new regional forum allowed the experiences and their professionals – mostly not scholars, but museum professionals at different levels – to give their own interpretation to theoretical proposals from European authors. Unfortunately, to date, no text or collection of works from the ICOFOM LAM production of the past 25 years has been translated into either French or English.

Our research was based on analysis of bibliographical material constituting this academic discipline; in different parts of the world, but mostly from international publications. The research considered several museology textbooks in English, French and Spanish published from the 1990s to 2010s, and the *ICOFOM Study Series* publications from 2006 to 2016. The results show that museology, as it has been produced and taught worldwide in the past decades, was created and reproduced according to colonial structures of power. A long road is still ahead of us in the investigation of museological influences and currents both inside and outside these colonial centres.

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Figure Captions

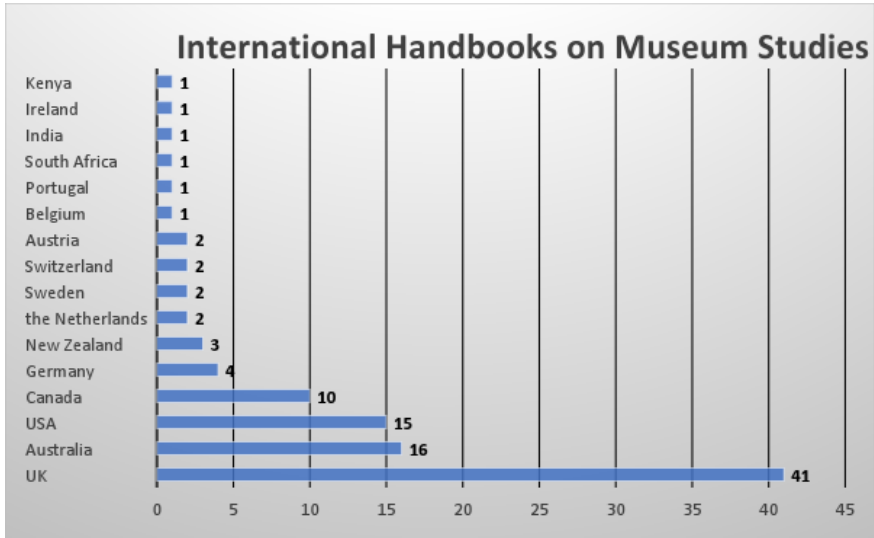


Figure 1. Geopolitical background of the authors invited to contribute to 4-volume “International Handbooks on Museum Studies”

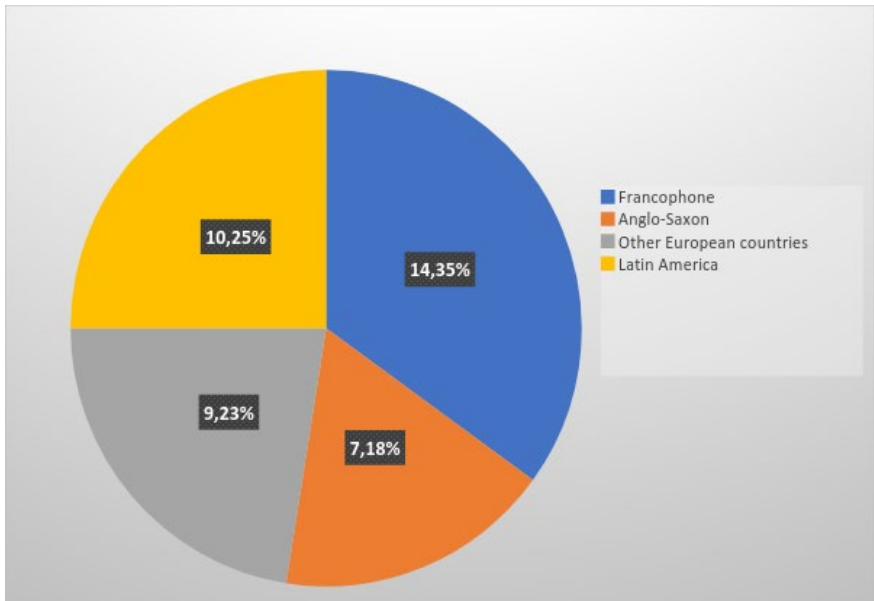


Figure 2. Geopolitical background of the authors accepted for the publication in *ICOFOM Study Series 2015 and 2016*

The Politics and Poetics of the Bushman Diorama at the South African Museum

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*... the diorama aims to establish itself as a substitute for reality,
as something even more real
Umberto Eco*

ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the interplay of politics and poetics in relation to the history of the iconic 'Bushman' diorama at the South African Museum, now part of Iziko Museums of South Africa. From 1960 to 2001 the diorama, representing a hunter-gatherer encampment in the Karoo, was on public view and during this time responses to the display changed, as did the wider political context of South Africa and the conceptual context of museology. After prolonged controversy, in

2001 the diorama was closed to the public, pending possible rethinking and reopening. The diorama, however, remained closed. The conceptual and political shifts that underpinned the ascendance and decline of the diorama are traced, focusing attention on power-relations and ethics, while also discussing aesthetic resonance. Ironically, the closed diorama remains open to intellectual and creative engagement. As an archive, it has current relevance for museum studies.

Key words: Diorama, Bushman, South African Museum, museology

RÉSUMÉ

Politique et Poétique du Diorama Bochimán du South African Museum

Cet article définit l'interaction existant entre politique et poétique dans le cadre de l'histoire du diorama iconique Bochimán du South African Museum, lequel fait désormais partie maintenant des Musées Iziko d'Afrique du Sud. De 1960 à 2001, le diorama, qui représente un campement de chasseurs-cueilleurs dans le Karoo, était visible par le grand public; pendant cette période, les réactions à cette présentation ont beaucoup évolué de même que le plus vaste contexte politique d'Afrique du Sud ainsi que le contexte conceptuel de la muséologie. En 2001, après de longues controverses, le diorama a été fermé au public dans l'attente d'une nouvelle approche qui permettrait une éventuelle réouverture. Le diorama est cependant resté fermé. Les virages conceptuel et politique qui sous-tendent l'ascendance et le déclin du diorama sont évidents et attirent l'attention sur le rapport entre pouvoir et éthique, sans oublier bien sûr les discussions sur la résonance esthétique. Ironiquement, bien que fermé le diorama n'en reste pas moins ouvert à une approche intellectuelle et créative. Il présente, en tant qu'archive, un intérêt certain pour les études muséographiques contemporaines.

Mots clé: diorama, Bochimán, South African Museum, muséologie



Since the late 1980s it has become axiomatic to invoke the concepts of 'poetics' and 'politics' in the theoretical analysis of museum exhibitions (Karp & Lavine, 1991; Greenblatt, 1991; Lidchi, 1997). The poetics of museum representations encompasses their expressive, aesthetic aspects, while the politics of museum practice focuses on the power relations which shape and influence particular projects and their reception. It must be acknowledged, however, that in prac-

tice these are not independent conceptual fields but often intersect, overlap and inform each other. This paper focuses on the interplay of these concepts in relation to the Bushman¹ diorama at the South African Museum (SAM) over an extended time period during which there were notable changes in the theoretical discourse of museology, as well as in the politics of museum practice in South Africa. This case study affirms that power-relations are implicit in museum practice but suggests that performance and engagement with diverse audiences have the potential to subvert the dominant narrative and open museum spaces to alternative interpretive voices. This accords with the concept of the ‘post-museum’ as an institution in which knowledge is no longer unified but fragmented and multi-vocal (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.152). The article concludes with insights that can be drawn from the case study.

The diorama was opened to the public in 1960 and closed in 2001. For decades this installation of a simulated hunter-gatherer encampment in the Karoo captured the public imagination and attracted acclaim for the SAM, the oldest museum in southern Africa. From the late 1980s, however, there was increased criticism of the colonial bias of museums and demands for change in terms of both structure and programming. After 1994, when South Africa became a democracy, museums and heritage institutions became the focus of more intense debate. In 1998 legislation was passed to establish an amalgamated cluster of national museums in Cape Town intended to spearhead transformation in the museum sector.² The SAM became part of this group of museums, now known collectively as Iziko Museums of South Africa (Iziko). The changing political context had bearing on the structure and staffing of Iziko, the composition of the governing board and the constituencies that it aimed to serve. In this context, the Bushman diorama came under closer scrutiny and, in 2001, the recently appointed CEO of Iziko, Jack Lohman, made the decision to close the installation pending consultation with stakeholder communities and possible reopening at a later date. Media responses highlighted the popular appeal of the diorama and questioned the reason for its closure, suggesting that political correctness had been the primary motive. I discuss this later in the paper.

The installation was not dismantled but ‘archived’ as part of the history of the institution (Davison, 2001). In the years that followed, out of sight did not mean out of mind. Internal meetings and public debates were held to discuss the future of the diorama and the life-casts which had been displayed in that setting and in the adjacent ethnography gallery. Years passed without any positive intervention and, eventually, institutional inertia gave way to the assertion that the casts should be regarded as human remains. Once this had been ratified, the casts were precluded from exhibition on ethical grounds. By 2011 it had been decided in principle that the diorama installation should be

1. The term ‘Bushman’ is used here instead of the alternative ‘San’ to describe southern African hunter-gatherers as this was how the installation in the SAM was described and known.

2. Cultural Institutions Act, No. 119 of 1998.

dismantled (Rassool, 2015, p.663). The pragmatic conclusion is that the politics of the diorama had finally eclipsed the poetics of its presentation. None the less, the poetics of the display lingered in the memory of the many visitors who were moved by its evocative visual appeal and also in the minds of indigenous communities who viewed the diorama with nostalgia for a former way of life and considered the closure to be an exclusion of their heritage from public recognition. Of museological interest is the fact that, despite being closed to the public for over a decade, the archived diorama continues to have a presence in curatorial, academic and popular discourse.³ Artist and academic, Pippa Skotnes, who has sustained a long-term visual and intellectual engagement with the diorama, comments:

Like many people, I have been compelled by the theatricality of it; by its ability to draw in the viewer and encourage a suspension of disbelief; by a deep desire to be absorbed into the landscape . . . Such feelings are reinforced by the beauty of its construction – the perfection of the casting technique, the attention to the detail of colour and expression and the verisimilitude of the painted backdrop (Skotnes, 2014, pp. 47- 48).

”

But there is ambivalence in this response (Skotnes 2014, p. 47), as the serene visual appeal of the diorama obscured a much longer and more poignant narrative of colonial dispossession of the indigenous people who were collectively stereotyped as ‘Bushmen’. The poetics of the diorama depended on historical amnesia, a forgetting of the violent past that had decimated the Bushman population. In post-apartheid South Africa, minorities who descend from these indigenous people have still not been adequately acknowledged in terms of their history, identity or claims to land. Thus debates and controversy about the diorama could not be separated from the conspicuous absence of historical context or contemporary political concerns. In addition, there were unresolved issues relating to the role of museums in society and engagement with stakeholder communities, as well as uncertainty regarding the way the SAM should deal with its own history of representing other cultures. As a museological case study, the diorama highlights these dilemmas.

The early decades of the diorama

The diorama was conceptualized in the late 1950s, over a decade before Cameron (1971) drew attention to the museum as a forum of ideas, and long before the ‘new’ museology of the late 1980s highlighted a critical self-awareness of

3. A recent press headline deplored the closure of the diorama (Smith, Cape Times, 16 August 2017, p. 9); see also Witz, Minkley & Rassool (2017) for recently-published references to the diorama.

curatorial subjectivity (Vergo, 1989). The paradigm of scientific objectivity and authenticity prevailed at the SAM and the trend in museum display at the time was the habitat group. The SAM was already well-known for its collection of life-casts of Bushman which had been produced in the early twentieth century when research into racial typology had been actively pursued by the museum director, Louis Péringuey (Davison, 1993). Although the casts proved to have no scientific value, they became a key visitor attraction and remained on public display without any contextual information except that relating to their skin-colour, height and other physical features. Thus the focus on racial difference was perpetuated in the SAM long after racial typology had been discredited on scientific grounds. Although the making of the diorama was intended to provide an environmental context for the casts and thereby deflect attention away from the singular focus on race, the public remained captivated by the life-like casts which had long been a major attraction to the SAM.

Thirteen cast figures were placed against a finely painted landscape of the Karoo. Rocks, accurately modelled on those of the area, as well as local plants, stones and soil evoked a convincing sense of place, and the careful placing of utensils - ostrich egg-shell flasks, sieves, skin bags, tortoise-shell vessels and quivers - gave convincing visual detail and texture to the scene. The central figures were two hunters holding bows and arrows, and a woman reclining in the shade of a mat-shelter under an acacia tree. In the background three young women and a young man appeared to be walking into the veld; on the left two older women regarded the scene passively, while another pounded edible bulbs; on the right a man reached for a club and another was engaged in cleaning a stretched skin; and in the foreground an old man was kindling a flame with a pair of fire-sticks. All of the figures were minimally dressed in aprons or loincloths made of animal skins. This resulted in the almost-naked bodies of the casts remaining a primary focus of attention despite being placed in a camp scene. Years later, in keeping with ethnographic knowledge, cloaks were added to the casts of women to cover their prominent buttocks which had so fascinated viewers.⁴

Initially, the diorama was viewed through three windows that framed the scene and divided it into three tableaux. In the early 1980s, these were replaced by large glass panes that allowed the full panorama of the display to be viewed - this further enhanced the visual impact of the diorama. The objects used in the display created an illusion of homogeneous contemporaneity - there were no individual labels and no dissonant items to disrupt the sense of timelessness. In fact, the items of material culture in the diorama were not contemporaneous

4. In the early 1980s, the clothing of the casts was changed to be more ethnographically accurate. Although Bushman women always covered their buttocks, the early displays of the casts had drawn attention to steatopygia - an accumulation of fat on women's buttocks and thighs - as a physical feature of particular interest to viewers; the central reclining woman was covered with a cloak. The complaints from tour-guides confirmed that voyeurism was a significant part of the visitor experience.

with the casts or with each other, nor did they come from the same geographical region - they were selected to create an imagined reality. Paradoxically, as noted by Umberto Eco (1986, p.8), the convincing naturalism of a diorama display is achieved by being constructed entirely artificially.

The success of the Bushman diorama derived from a combination of aesthetic realism and human scale - the poetics of the scene appealed to the viewer's imagination while reinforcing the tropes of 'nature' and the 'primitive'. The body-casts remained a source of fascination - simultaneously familiar and 'other'. Dioramas in museums frequently depict natural history habitat scenes, in which mounted animals are placed in recreated 'natural' environments. By presenting the casts of Bushmen in this way, in a museum largely associated with natural history, viewers were prompted to place them, consciously or unconsciously, in the realm of nature rather than culture. In the early 1960s a policy decision was taken to relocate the colonial history collections of the SAM to a separate building which led to the formation, a few years later, of the South African Cultural History Museum. Significantly, the anthropology collections, including the Bushman casts and their material culture, remained in the SAM with the natural history collections. The result was that ethnography was physically and conceptually separated from cultural history and portrayed as part of unchanging tradition (Cluver & Davison, 1999). From the mid-1970s onwards, the association of the casts with natural history became a key issue for critics of the diorama. The political context of apartheid South Africa added cogency to the criticism that the location of the diorama within the context of natural history rather than cultural history was racially motivated. The claim that the diorama was racist in conception has been sustained and continues to evoke critical and provocative responses ("Curating the colonial crime scene", 2018).

The perception of Bushmen as 'children of nature' was also perpetuated in popular literature, such as the novels of Laurens van der Post, as well as in film and television. Tour-guides affirmed the stereotype of hunter-gatherers as living in isolated, archaic harmony with their environment. Evidence to the contrary was overlooked and growing public awareness of environmental problems in the face of technological development promoted a nostalgic view of hunting and gathering as a way of life, once shared by all humankind. The diorama reinforced the illusion of an unchanging past and made no attempt to counter the many popular misperceptions and stereotypes about the Bushmen. The most significant absence was the lack of any reference to the colonial history of maltreatment, dispossession and resistance of indigenous hunter-gatherers throughout southern Africa. From the late 1970s, drawing on field research among the Kalahari Bushmen (Lee & De Vore, 1968; Sahlins, 1974), successful adaptation to environment became a popular theme for interpreting the diorama. None the less, the life-like casts remained the primary visitor attraction.

So iconic were the casts that in 1975 the SAM produced a major travelling exhibition presenting glass-fibre replicas of the original plaster-casts in a series

of tableaux on 'The Bushmen' and their way of life.⁵ The exhibition travelled to Europe where it was shown in museums in seven countries. The stereotype of preserving a disappearing way of life was perpetuated, which was an expedient deflection from the harsh realities of life for indigenous people in apartheid South Africa and neighbouring South West Africa (now Namibia). The travelling exhibition repeated the selective visual narrative of the diorama and also echoed earlier politically-motivated exhibitions of living Bushmen at the Empire Exhibition in 1936 and the Van Riebeeck Festival in 1952 where they were presented as primitive people, close to extinction, and in need of state protection, while the colonial history of their decimation was omitted (Witz, 2003).

In the context of apartheid South Africa, museums were perceived as being primarily for white audiences. Even though access to the SAM was not segregated on the basis of race, the wider context of segregation and inequality in South Africa was so pervasive that museums were widely regarded by 'non-whites' as being elitist and colonial. When Nelson Mandela addressed the nation on Heritage Day in 1997, he commented that most museums in South Africa 'represent the kind of heritage that glorified mainly white and colonial history' and deplored the depiction of African people as lesser beings in some natural history museums (Cluver & Davison, 1999, p. 275). This was regarded as a direct reference to the Bushman diorama in the SAM.

Rethinking the diorama - 1980 to 2001

During the 1980s, my colleague, Gerald Klinghardt, and I developed a small exhibition of 'story-boards' that drew attention to the history of the diorama and the concepts that had shaped it. More generally the intention of the display, 'About the diorama', was to raise public awareness about museum authority and power-relations (Coombes, 2003, pp. 225-227). In accord with museological theory of the time (Clifford, 1988; Durrans, 1988), we felt that there was the potential for creative engagement by making explicit the implicit assumptions and value judgements that underpinned museum practice. In addition, we added text panels that outlined the history of the people who were cast. However, many critical issues regarding the ethnographic appropriation and representation of cultural 'others' remained unresolved, including the unequal power relations that had informed the casting project and, indeed, our own project. From a viewer's perspective, the display about the diorama was far less compelling than the diorama itself and few visitors spent time reading the texts. This highlighted the fact that the responses of museum audiences cannot

5. In 1975/76 the SAM, supported by the National Department of Education, sent a travelling exhibition on 'The Bushmen' to Europe where it was shown in museums in Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Holland, Spain and Scotland. In the political climate of apartheid a number of countries rejected the exhibition. Some of the unfinished glass-fibre casts were used later in 1996 in the 'Miscast' exhibition.

be assumed to follow the curatorial narrative. Some years later, in 1996, the dissonance between curatorial intention and viewer responses was shown very clearly in relation to the exhibition, 'Miscast', that was shown at the South African National Gallery. The exhibition represented a counterpoint to the diorama and drew heavily on the physical anthropology research collections housed in the SAM.

By the mid-1990s the political structure of South Africa had undergone the momentous transition to democratic rule. The release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, the unbanning of the ANC and the advent of a democratically-elected government in 1994 affected every part of civil society, including museums and heritage institutions. There was widespread discussion of the role that museums could play in social and cultural transformation, in redressing past discrimination and in creating the space for multicultural engagement. Much has been written about the 'Miscast' exhibition, curated by artist Pippa Skotnes (Coombes, 2003; Kasfir, 1997; Lane, 1996, Skotnes, 2002), and this will not be repeated here, except to comment on the relationship of 'Miscast' to the diorama. Skotnes has written that her curatorial strategy was to create an environment that was almost diametrically opposed to that of the diorama but which provided a sensory experience for viewers. 'Whereas the diorama occluded all traces of history and intellectual traditions, "Miscast" cast these in leading roles . . .' (Skotnes, 2014, p. 55). In one room, visitors had no option but to walk over vinyl floor tiles printed with historical accounts of violence and images of Bushmen; in another fragmented limbs and torsos, re-cast from the original casts in the SAM, were illuminated from within and presented on plinths in the manner of sculpture. If the diorama presented a romanticized view of hunter-gatherer life which evoked a sense of longing for an imagined past, 'Miscast' countered that illusion by drawing on the material archive to reveal the colonial violence and dehumanization inflicted on the Bushmen. Responses from descendant communities were unexpected and unprecedented in outrage - they challenged the right of the curator to represent their history and accused the National Gallery of perpetuating the colonial humiliation of the past. Here the politics and authority of curatorship was foregrounded and the Gallery was quick to acknowledge the need for dialogue and negotiation. Public forums followed and hundreds of visitor comments were documented; controversy continued throughout the five-month duration of the exhibition. Twenty years later, 'Miscast' remains a landmark exhibition in museum discourse and in the history of the South African National Gallery (Tietze, 2017).

It was hoped that there would be greater public engagement with the diorama during the 'Miscast' exhibition but this did not take place. After the close of 'Miscast', however, the SAM invited Pippa Skotnes to curate an exhibition in the room adjacent to the diorama that included a number of panels of Bushman rock paintings. She installed some of the images that had been used in 'Miscast' to draw attention to the work of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd who, in the 1860s, had transcribed the /Xam language and the beliefs that were

essential to the understanding of rock art. At the time, Skotnes also proposed modifying the diorama to make viewers aware of the problematic absence of history but this was not implemented.

In the same year as the 'Miscast' exhibition, the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996) was published by the national Department of Arts and Culture.⁶ It had followed a lengthy process of consultation and was intended to be the blueprint for transformation in the heritage sector. It advocated the rationalization and restructuring of national museums in South Africa. This was ratified in legislation by the Cultural Institutions Act of 1998 which provided for the formation of two 'Flagship' amalgamated institutions, one based in Pretoria and one in Cape Town. Thus the SAM became part of the Southern Flagship Institution, later renamed Iziko Museums of South Africa (Iziko). Within this new cluster of museums, the formerly separate South African Cultural History Museum became linked once more with the SAM and this structural change allowed for the eventual integration of the colonial history collections with the ethnographic collections. This integration gave rise to the Social History Collections Division of Iziko and to new curatorial portfolios that aimed to cut across former disciplinary boundaries.

From 1999 onwards, the political imperative to transform the long-established national museums became more pressing⁷. A new governing Council and management structure were put in place with a mandate to redress discriminatory practices. It was in this context that the diorama became the focus of increased media attention and political inquiry in parliament. The Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, which was responsible for funding national museums, was asked to respond to assertions that the diorama demeaned and dehumanized the victims of racial oppression. In this climate of opinion, the closing of the diorama became inevitable. In April 2001 it was screened from public view and 'archived' with the possibility of it being re-interpreted and re-opened at a later date.

If relations of power in museum practice derive from the curatorial authority to select, classify and represent knowledge (Karp & Lavine, 1991), this is particularly relevant in exhibitions of other cultures. The high profile of the diorama gave it symbolic value as a signifier of museum practice more generally, and closing the diorama was seen as an indicator of transformation of museums into more democratic institutions. Politicians who had not seen the diorama did not hesitate to condemn it as racist. Detractors suggested that the SAM had kept the diorama open for so many years, despite being surrounded by controversy, simply because it was the biggest visitor attraction. For others,

6. <http://www.dac.gov/content/white-paper-arts-culture-and-heritage-0>

7. Museums, like the SAM, which had their roots in the nineteenth century carried a burden of the colonial past which was not the case in museums which were established after 1990. The latter included the Robben Island Museum, the District 6 Museum and Freedom Park, all of which embraced narratives of resistance to apartheid.

the closure was long overdue - it symbolized a restoration of dignity and full humanity to the /Xam Bushmen. From the SAM perspective, closing the diorama opened a space for debate about the diorama in the public and academic domains. The diorama dilemma became inscribed in museological discourse:

Every attempt to deal with this problematic display. . . produces friction and foregrounds the museum itself, its operations, its history and mistakes, in a series of reflexive moves that make the museum, its practices and its mediations visible. We can see here a critical shift from an informing museology (the exhibit as a neutral vehicle for the transmission of information) to a performing museology (the museum itself is on display) (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006, p. 41).

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Diorama dialogues

When the diorama was closed, it was not anticipated that uncertainty about its future would continue for over a decade. During the period from 2002 to 2010 the CEO of Iziko was Prof. H. C. (Jatti) Bredekamp who facilitated consultation with representatives of indigenous stakeholders regarding Iziko's holdings of human skeletal remains, as well as the casts (Bredekamp, 2006). The life-like presence of the casts and their historical connection with scientific racism formed one of the key concerns in relation to the future of the diorama. The issue of consultation was complex as there was not a single descendant community but a number of diverse stakeholder groups with different perspectives. A successful example of consultation with community stakeholders took place in relation to the development of a new exhibition of Bushman rock paintings and engravings that had been in the SAM for almost a century but had not been adequately displayed or interpreted. The new exhibition, 'ǀQe – the power of rock art', opened in December 2003 and drew on a body of scholarly knowledge relating to San spiritual beliefs. Archaeologist, Dr Janette Deacon, who was responsible for scripting the exhibition texts, worked closely with indigenous groups and allowed the ancestral voices of Bushmen to be reflected in the exhibition. The title of the exhibition was suggested by /Una Rooi, one of the elders who spoke the endangered Nuu language and was a guardian of intangible heritage and local knowledge. The exhibition is significant in that it both acknowledges and honours the San people, past and present. Unlike the diorama which was an idealised construct based entirely on the views of outsiders, this exhibition sought to respect indigenous knowledge and beliefs.

The exhibition script drew on oral narratives transcribed in the nineteenth-century from the /Xam⁸ (southern Bushman) language by Dr Wilhelm Bleek and his

8. In transcriptions of the /Xam language, the following diacritical signs are used: / indicates a

sister-in-law, Lucy Lloyd. They had worked with a group of convicts in Cape Town who had come from the Kenhardt district of the northern Cape and were among the few remaining speakers of the /Xam language. Eventually, over 12 000 notebook pages of /Xam cultural beliefs and mythology were transcribed from the verbal accounts of //Kabbo, Dia!kwain, /Han#kass'o and others.⁹ Over a century after Bleek died, cognitive anthropologist and rock art researcher, David Lewis-Williams, found in the Bleek and Lloyd archive a source of illumination for the interpretation of rock art. His analysis showed that, far from being primitive, the iconography of the art was complex, multi-layered and deeply spiritual (Lewis-Williams, 1981). This insight was entirely absent in the narrative of the diorama, as well as in the explanatory labels of the rock art panels that had been exhibited at the SAM since 1918 (Davison, 2012).

The poetics of the rock art exhibition constitutes a spatial interpretation of the landscape in which the art was inscribed and which had profound meaning for the artists. There is an inverse relationship between space and object, whereby awareness of emptiness heightens the presence of the rock art on display and projects the body of the viewer into a visual experience of an imagined landscape. Contrary to the diorama which was characterised by the presence of the body-casts, the design of the rock art gallery invites a sensory and poetic engagement with absence and poignant loss of a cultural heritage. By exhibiting the rock art of the Bushmen in a way that inspires respect for the artists, it was hoped that the negative racial stereotypes associated with the diorama would be countered and replaced with empathy for their culture.

Another initiative that involved consultation with indigenous communities was in the development of a policy on the management of human remains in Iziko collections. The publication of 'Skeletons in the Cupboard' (Legassick & Rassool, 2000) had drawn attention to the unethical acquisition by the SAM of human remains for scientific analysis in the years between 1907 and 1917. The project to make the life-casts in the diorama had also taken place at this time and was linked conceptually to the precepts of racial science that were later discredited. In 2003 an audit of Iziko's physical anthropology collections was undertaken and recommendations made regarding human remains that were found to have been collected unethically. In a series of workshops, descendant communities were made aware of the holdings of the SAM and of the possible processes of return and reburial. A draft policy on the management of human remains was circulated for comment to stakeholders and the final policy was ratified by the Iziko Council in 2005 (Bredenkamp, 2006). Thus far, no requests for reburial of human remains have been received by Iziko but

dental click, // - a lateral click, ! - a palatal click and # - an alveolar click. The /Xam language is no longer spoken but the clicks occur in related San languages.

9. The Bleek-Lloyd archive is held by the University of Cape Town. Pippa Skotnes has written extensively about this archive (Skotnes, 2007).

the Advisory Committee set up in terms of the policy guides access to these sensitive collections and how they are curated. All human skeletal material is restricted from being on public exhibition. Consultation regarding Iziko's collections of human remains is an on-going process.

At a forum on the future of the diorama held in June 2007, Prof Bredekamp noted that the Iziko Advisory Committee on Human Remains had recently agreed that there was no inherent problem in displaying the figures which had resulted from the casting project, but that they should be placed in historical context. One of the main reasons for closing the diorama had been the absence of historical interpretation regarding the early history of colonial violence and dispossession, as well as the twentieth-century history of racial science in which the casts had been made for the SAM. Both contexts had been humiliating for the Bushmen. One of the speakers at the forum proposed that the intellectual history of the SAM as a colonial institution, including the diorama, should be presented in an exhibition. Another speaker drew attention to the poetics of the diorama and that it could be re-interpreted to create a multi-faceted display focusing on individuals whose life histories and knowledge had been recorded and preserved in the Bleek/Lloyd archive. In this way, the memory of /Xam people would be honoured. A spokesperson for indigenous communities argued for greater dialogue with the people whose culture and history were being represented, so that their voices could be heard directly, rather than being interpreted by those who controlled the exhibition process. Here the issue of power relations and sharing curatorial authority was raised and accepted in principle but remained to be taken forward in practice.

At the same time, it was suggested that the future of the diorama should be considered in relation to rethinking and planning the other ethnographic displays, as well as to larger issues of transformation at Iziko. Although this made sense at the institutional level, it deflected the specific focus away from the diorama to larger, more diffuse issues that would take time to resolve. The following year, in November 2008, a temporary exhibition curated by Pippa Skotnes on George Stow and the rock art of the San was opened by historian, Nigel Penn, who made reference to the impasse regarding the diorama. Between 2008 and November 2010, when Prof Bredekamp retired as CEO of Iziko, a number of panel discussions about the diorama were held but no decision was taken. The significant point was made that a reconfigured diorama did not have to be a long-term installation but a creative intervention that would draw on the historical archive on the /Xam to reclaim their history and also tell the back-story of the diorama itself, including the casting project. However, the proposal to re-imagine the diorama using creative techniques to convey multiple voices did not prevail as it was deemed necessary to address the bigger issue of colonial bias in all the ethnography displays.

In November 2010, Ms Rooksana Omar was appointed as CEO and a new Council (the governing body of Iziko) also took office. Two years later the diorama was still closed and it was reported that, 'much of the work of re-concep-

tualising our permanent exhibitions must still be undertaken' (Iziko Annual Report, 2012/13, p. 8). Led by historian, Prof. Ciraj Rassool, a member of the new Council, the institutional priority shifted towards addressing the issue of human remains in Iziko collections. This resulted in the plaster-casts being conflated with human remains and thus precluded from exhibition on ethical grounds. In June 2011, the Iziko Council accepted the recommendation from of the sub-committee on Human Remains that all body casts made in the interests of racial science by James Drury should be deemed unethically collected human remains (Rassool, 2015, pp. 662-663). It followed that the diorama would be closed permanently. But this was not the end of the public discourse on the diorama or the Ethnography Gallery of which it had been a significant part.

In 2013, all life-casts, whether made in the interests of racial science, or not,¹⁰ were removed from the ethnography exhibitions and replaced by wire figures. At the same time a series of additional labels and objects were added to the gallery to mark the centenary of the 1913 Land Act which had greatly reduced the land available to the African people of South Africa. Other labels were introduced to explain the changes in the gallery but these were intended as temporary measures. Four years later, they were still in place, highlighting the distance between intention and reality. As George Stocking (1985) wisely noted, large museums tend to be institutionally prone to paradigm lag and thus exhibitions often outlive their conceptual currency. At one level, the diorama also proves this point but, none the less, it has retained iconic status and occupies a unique place in museum history in South Africa. It resonated with viewers and remained vivid in the collective memory despite, or perhaps because of, being contested.

Conclusion

By 2017 the management structure of the SAM had changed and a decision was made to close the Ethnography Gallery, dismantle the exhibitions and take the collections back into storage. On 7 August 2017, as a prelude to the closing of the gallery, a 'cleansing and re-dedication' ceremony was performed by a coalition of community representatives whose traditional material culture had been on display for many years. A commitment was made by the museum curators that new exhibitions would be planned in discussion with source communities and that responsibility to redress omissions and errors of interpretation would be shared. In principle, this would be a form of curatorial power-sharing and would accord with 'post-museum' theory (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.152; Marstine,

10. Apart from the full-body casts that had been made between 1907 and 1924 for the purpose of making a physical record of 'pure' Bushmen (Davison, 1993), the displays included models made in the 1970s of a Xhosa woman dressed in traditional clothing, a Sotho man making a hat of grass and a Lobedu woman cooking. Their faces, hands and feet were cast, with full consent of the individuals concerned, and the bodies were made of straw. These models were used to display clothing and related items of material culture.

2006, p.19) that advocates transparency in curatorial decision-making and working together with museum constituencies. This commitment, however, has yet to be tested in practice and balancing community interests with those of museum professionals may prove challenging. An issue that makes working with communities complex is that community groups seldom speak with a unified voice and contesting views can be difficult to reconcile. This was the case when negotiating with stakeholders about the future of the Bushman diorama. The outcome was inertia on the part of the museum, and a lack of decision-making and action. Although the diorama installation remained closed to the public for 16 years, the discourse surrounding it did not dissipate but remained relevant to current debates, especially those focused on the transformation and de-colonization of museums. Contemporary students of museology and heritage have only seen images of the diorama but they engage actively with the discourse and continue to interact critically with it.

Shortly before the closing of the Ethnography Gallery, an interactive intervention titled 'Curating the Colonial Crime Scene' (2018)¹¹ was staged there and members of the public were invited to participate in transforming and decolonizing the static displays into a lived memory. The event took the form of a performance, in the Xhosa language, in which a restless spirit from the past who had taken the form of an old man bore witness to various crimes perceived to be inherent in the ethnographic displays. Despite being closed for over a decade, the diorama was invoked as a crime of ethnographic violence. The intervention appealed to the emotions more than the intellect and the visual presence of the performers in the gallery was compelling and intriguing; they enlivened the space and triggered the imagination. Ironically, the power of the museum as a cultural domain was not undermined but affirmed by the intervention.

The insight from this event is, I suggest, that inclusion and building relationships with diverse constituencies, even those critical of the institution, is an important aspect of contemporary museum practice and redressing past inequalities. Grewcock (2013, p. 174) argues that embracing process and performance, combined with a recognition of visitors and audiences as participants, serves to open museums to embodied and lived experience. This was affirmed in the intervention described above. Understanding and revealing how relations of power work in museum practice remains important but as Witcomb (2003, p.15) has noted there is a tendency in academic museum studies to assume that the operation of power in museums always has a negative impact on society. In fact, as this case study shows, the reality is more complex.

11. On 12 September 2017 Iziko hosted the one-day event as part of 'Heritage Month' in South Africa. The intervention was organized by the Iziko Education and Public Programmes Department in collaboration with Kara Blackmore, curator, and the Institute for the Creative Arts, Cape Town.

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Museums and city aestheticization policies

Controversies between the touristification of public spaces and the social role of museological institutions

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ABSTRACT

The creation of new museums, together with policies for the aestheticization of cities and for the touristification of public spaces - aimed at attracting consumers and developing touristic destinations - generates controversies on the social role of the museological institutions

themselves and their relationship with their environment. They are connected at the same time to gentrification processes and market demands, as they produce aesthetic fruition and can guarantee structural improvements to certain parts of the population. Such museums become products of a “touristic urbanization” process and integrate the so-called *touristic landscapes* or *cultural landscaping* - «a concept that involves the idea of artificialism and superficiality, connected to a strictly market view.» Thus, the museum becomes the catalyst for oppositions that inhabit the cultural landscape, placing itself in service of «cultural landscaping» and contradicting the social role that it should exert. This article presents examples that seem to break with this logic.

Keywords: museums, touristification, landscaping and cultural landscape, museum of Art of Rio.

RÉSUMÉ

Les musées et les politiques d'esthétisation des musées et des villes: controverses entre la touristification des espaces publics et le rôle social des institutions muséales

La création de nouveaux musées, ainsi que les politiques d'esthétisation des villes et de touristification des espaces publics – visant à attirer les consommateurs et à développer des destinations touristiques – suscitent des controverses quant au rôle social des institutions muséales et leur relation avec leur environnement. Ce phénomène est à la fois lié au processus de gentrification et aux exigences du marché, qui influencent l'esthétique et permettent des améliorations structurelles à certaines parties de la population. De tels musées deviennent les produits d'un processus d'urbanisation touristique et intègrent les paysages dits touristiques ou les aménagements culturels – « un concept qui implique l'idée d'artificialisme et de superficialité, liés à une vision strictement marchande ». Ainsi, le musée devient le catalyseur des oppositions au sein du paysage culturel, se mettant au service de la « mise en paysage culturel » et contredisant le rôle social qu'il devrait jouer. Cet article présente des exemples qui semblent rompre avec cette logique.

Mots-clés : musée, touristification, paysage culturel, musée d'Art de Rio.



Introduction

The creation of new museums, together with policies for the aestheticization of cities and for the touristification of public spaces - aimed at attracting consumers and developing touristic destinations - generates controversies on the social role of the museological institutions themselves and on their relationship with their environment, since they are both directly or indirectly linked to processes of gentrification¹ and market demands while producing aesthetic fruition, and can guarantee structural improvements to certain parts of the population. Such museums become products of a “touristic urbanization” process and integrate the so-called *touristic landscapes* or *cultural landscaping* - “a concept that involves the idea of artificialism and superficiality, connected to a strictly market view” (Godoy, 2016).

It is important, then, to question the extent to which museological institutions, when integrated into the touristification of public spaces, can (or will) subvert the mere logic of aestheticization of cities and cultural landscapes. By working with the concepts present in this question, we will try to address the issue based on a theoretical approach that supports the discussion, later pointing out initiatives that are consistent with the theme proposed here. The Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR²) was chosen as object of analysis both because it was created having in mind the remodeling process of Cais do Porto in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - preceding the hosting of huge sport events such as the World Cup (2014) and the Olympic Games (2016) - and because of the actions developed by the institution aiming at integrating with its surroundings, seeking to exert part of its social function. Nevertheless, the project is surrounded by controversies, especially regarding local heritage and native communities, what instigated us to research it further.

Opened in 2013, MAR is located in the Port Zone of the city. The museum is composed of two buildings - the Dom João VI Mansion (older) and the deactivated building of the Mariano Procópio bus terminal (more modern) - interconnected by a suspended footbridge. While the mansion houses the exhibition halls, its neighbor houses the administrative sector and the Escola do Olhar. The institution was one of the first projects implemented during

1. For our studies, we have used the term gentrification as one that “designates urban interventions as enterprises that elect certain spaces of the city considered centralities and transform them into areas of public and private investment, with changes in the meanings of a historical locality that turn the property into a market segment. Gentrification processes culminate in real estate valorization, consequently fostering the establishment of the commerce of goods accessible to the upper social classes, and the impossibility of permanence of residents with lower financial resources, being thus replaced by dwellers with greater purchasing power, elitizing the place” (RANGEL, 2015, p.42). It is also important to point out that the term “revitalization” is often used to soften the impacts caused by the gentrification processes, and is far from meaning urban betterment, concerned with infrastructural improvements for the population living in the locality.

2. The acronym refers to the word “SEA”, alluding to the shore of Rio de Janeiro and its internationally known beaches.

the execution of Porto Maravilha³, which remodeled and established a series of transformations in the landscape of the downtown neighborhoods of Caju, Gamboa, Saúde, and Santo Cristo. Since its inception, there have been several controversies, specifically related to the process of gentrification resulting from its renovation.

There are significant disputes between cultural and ethnic groups in the region where MAR is located. It should be noted that the Port Zone is home to what was dubbed “Little Africa”, an effervescent environment of Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestations. In Colonial Brazil, this was the landing place for slaves from the African continent. In its surroundings, there was a large slave complex consisting of the Slave Market, the Pier of Valongo, the Lazaretto (hospital for the slaves who arrived sick) and the Cemetery of the New Black⁴, where those who did not survive the crossing or died in the hospital were buried. The Cemetery remained hidden with the transfer of the Market to another location but was discovered in the 1990s by Ana Maria Merced e Petrúcio Guimarães while working on their property. They opened the site for visitation and, later, founded the Institute of the New Black (IPN).

The Cemetery’s casual discovery further evidenced attempts to silence and erase black culture, like the persecution of African gathering yards and samba music. Although several groups have been seeking strategies to protect these manifestations, they face actions of the Porto Maravilha Project. Cavalcanti (2016) informs that the “Porto Maravilha Cultural” allows the Urban Development Company of the Region of Porto de Rio de Janeiro (CDURP) to manage 3% of the resources available through incentive announcements and sponsorships for cultural projects. According to the author, older groups ask for greater attention to actions prior to the Project. As a result, the collective “ComDomínio Cultural”⁵ was founded, aiming at bringing together entities, groups and artists from the region. Cavalcanti (2016) notes that the collective is

3. Scheduled to last 30 years, the project was implemented at the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics in Brazil. Its program consisted of the redevelopment of roads, rehabilitation and expansion of infrastructure, implementation of light rail vehicles (VLT), construction of tunnels, and the modernization of the city’s port. Porto Maravilha also encompassed the construction of the Museum of Tomorrow besides MAR. Both institutions have as partner the Roberto Marinho Foundation.

4. “New Black’ or ‘boçais’ was the denomination given to slaves newly arrived from Africa in Brazil as soon as they landed at the port. Once they were sold or learned Portuguese, they were called ‘ladinos’. (PEREIRA, 2014, p.342)

5. Groups that are part of the collective: AACATED - Associação do Armazém Cultural das Artes e Técnicas em espetáculo de diversão; ACIMBA - Associação Cultural Mestre Benedito de Angola; Afoxé Filhos de Gandhi; Associação de Capoeira Estilizada; Portal da Gamboa; Bloco Escravos da Mauá; Casa Amarela; Casa da Cultura do Porto Centro Cultural da Ação e da Cidadania; Centro Cultural Velhos Malandros; Companhia Mariocas; Conexão Cariocas de Rodas na Rua/Roda do Cais do Valongo; Feira de Artes Rio Porto em Harmonia 68; Grande Companhia Brasileira de Mistérios e Novidades; IPM - Instituto de Pesquisa e Memória Pretos Novos; Instituto Fim; Instituto Galpão Gamboa; Mostra + CineRG Registro geral e Vozes do Cais; MAR - Museu de Arte do Rio; Projeto SANIN; Sônia Baiana and Tia Lúcia.

composed both by groups that exist prior to Porto Maravilha as well as newer ones - as is the case of MAR itself. This way, there is mutual empowering for attracting incentives.

The most significant initiatives of Porto Maravilha are MAR and the Museum of Tomorrow. MAR is a result of the Law of Incentive to Culture, with support from the Rio de Janeiro City Hall and the Roberto Marinho Foundation, and is managed by the Odeon Institute - a non-profit private organization. The museum offers diverse programs and holds temporary exhibitions despite having its own collection. The Museum of Tomorrow, inaugurated in 2015, poses as a highly technological museum of science. Its construction, of great proportions, uses technologies called sustainable. Both seek to communicate with neighboring communities; however, this relationship is considered controversial, especially regarding the affiliation of these groups to institutions associated with such projects.

Considering the controversies as a starting point for starting a discussion on the subject, we refer to anthropologist and philosopher Bruno Latour (2000), one of the authors who is the foundation of the studies carried out by our research group, regarding the analyzes of several phenomena, such as those that cross the museological field. In this regard, it should be stressed that the theme chosen by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) for International Museums Day (18 May), in 2017, was precisely "Museums and controversial stories: to say the unspeakable in museums". ICOM sought to highlight the role of museums as instruments capable of fostering peaceful relations among peoples and, thus, favoring their reconciliation. However, according to Godoy (2017), "museums are far from being places of consonance - they are rather spaces of controversy" (Godoy, 2017).

Thus, once the concept is recovered, when controversial situations are not yet stabilized in a field of study, what Latour (2000) calls "controversies" come into play. This epistemological view, which implies the way in which one can deal with knowledge, is the basis of a methodology that consists in mapping controversial issues that emerge from the object of study, in a two-way process, moving the researcher between the theoretical and empirical fields. In this process, it is fundamental to consider the various elements involved - human and nonhuman - forming a network that intertwines science, technology and society. This view implies in listening to what the object says and what its observers - specialists and non-specialists - have to say about it.

It is in this way that we seek to develop our research on tourism and museums, going to the field to map controversies and to create a circularity between the empirical, the theories and the social actors involved in this relation. Thus, mapping and analyzing controversies compose one of the research methods adopted by the Center for Studies and Research on Tourism and Museums, a research line linked to the Group of Tourism, Culture and Society Research, hosted by the Postgraduate Program in Tourism (PPGTUR) at Universidade

Federal Fluminense (UFF), and registered with the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). The studies and projects that we develop, targeted more specifically towards the relationship between tourism and museums and vice versa, presuppose the science under construction – or Science in Action (Latour, 2000) –, in which the controversies are adopted as starting point. They speak directly to our studies on tourist supply and demand in museums, the theme of hospitality in museums, the experience of tourist visitation in these institutions, the management of museums for tourism, and studies of tourist audiences in museums. In addition, we incorporate other methodologies that converse with each other and agree with the objectives to be achieved, without losing sight of the controversies that emerge from the field or even from theories. In the light of the cartography of the controversies, proposed by Latour (2000), the Center proposes to analyze questions that seem paradoxical in relation to tourism and museums, such as those presented in this article.

Museums, landscaping, touristification and aestheticizing

Museums play a key role in spatial planning, representing an urban centrality (POULOT, 2013). Therefore, they represent a cultural landscape – a symbiosis between nature and culture – acting in the reconfiguration processes of space, form, function and structure (Santos, 1992; Godoy, 2016). Considering that landscape is a cultural spatial order, insofar as it is the result of a social construction imposed on the natural or constructed environment, directly linked to socially determining institutions and instances of power, we add to this aspect what we call cultural landscaping.

The process of touristification undergone by a cultural landscape, involving the transformation of a locality into a tourist destination, often comprises only the beautification or adornment of the space, so that it becomes beautiful and attractive, as in a “landscaping” so often alienated from socio-cultural and socio-environmental processes. Cultural landscaping⁶ (GODOY, 2016), in this sense, is a kind of landscape touristification – which is exclusively aimed at attracting tourists.

This phenomenon resonates with what Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015) call the aestheticization of the world. According to the authors,

We are no longer at a time when industrial production and culture referred to separate, radically irreconcilable universes; we are at a time when production, distribution and consumption systems are impregnated, penetrated and remodeled by operations which are

6. The term is not adopted here as the art and technique of planning and organizing the landscape, nor is it used as a mark of an area of knowledge.

fundamentally of an aesthetic nature (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2015, p.13). [our translation]

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Art and beauty end up incorporated by capitalism, producing the aestheticizing of everyday life. For Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015, p.14), this would be the basis of an artistic capitalism or transesthetic creativity, an adaptation made up by the economic system to incorporate this aesthetics. What they call “transesthetic” is the hybridization of art and culture with consumption. The artistic capitalism is the result of this mixture, that is, one of the modalities of the system that encompasses artistic expressions. If, previously, it was considered responsible for chaos and for making the world “uglier”, capitalism now appropriates the beautiful as a consumer good. Yet, “capitalism is much less an ogre who devours his own children than a two-faced Jano.” Jano, the Roman god of change, transitions and beginnings, is by the authors’ view the representation of capitalism’s ability to adapt and incorporate phenomena that, at first, would not be compatible with its ideology.

The critical view of Lipovetsky and Serroy is focused on what they claim to be “an epidermal way” of dealing with art. For them,

[...] of this ancient universe we see nothing but the form for the form, the artistic dimension by itself, destined to satisfy the new aesthetic consumers passionate for exoticism and tourist relaxation (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2015, p.383). [our translation]

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Aesthetic pleasure also becomes a product, and tourism is characterized as the consumption – which may be predatory – of landscapes, culture and art.

In this sense, the museum becomes a catalyst for not-so-subtle oppositions that inhabit the cultural landscape, being able to put itself to the service of “cultural landscape”, contradictory to the social role that it should exert.

For Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015, pp. 28- 29), the mercantile strategies of transaesthetic creative capitalism safeguard no sphere. The heritage is reassembled as cinematographic scenarios. “The center of the cities is staged, dressed up, ‘disneyfied’ in lieu of tourist consumption.” From this perspective, one can perceive that, by common agreement, tourism is considered a process of frivolous use of goods, expressions, and cultural landscapes. Tourist practices approach what Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015, p. 31) define as the transaesthetic individual: “reflective, eclectic and nomadic: [...] A drug-addicted obsessed with disposability, with celerity, with easy amusements”. We must reflect that the authors’ most emphatic analysis focuses on what they call the “transesthetic era,” not

on the aesthetics itself. It is not to think of aesthetics as superficial, since the concept is linked to the affection and feelings brought about by art. It is its appropriation by capitalism, which can reach even the beautiful, when we thought that it would be immune to its effects.

This way of dealing with aesthetics in service of the logic of consumption ends up promoting a shallow outlook. According to Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015), despite the consumption of beauty, life does not become more beautiful. They signal that a similar situation occurs with the tourist gaze “which everywhere sees only landscapes to admire and photograph, as if they were scenery or paintings” (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2015, p. 31). However harmonious it may be, it does not involve the individual who is only interested in momentary and fleeting consumption. Being in front of a monument, a landscape, a museum could be considered an extension of the senses and an exercise of otherness. However, as Benjamin warned (2005), individuals have become more devoid of communicable experiences. “What is the value of all our cultural heritage, if experience no longer bonds it to us?” Without experience, we live in what he calls barbarism.

Benjamin considers the importance of the individual’s interaction with the environment. The figure of Baudelaire’s *flâneur* appears as one who seeks to experience the city. He, besides observing landscapes, inhabits spaces. In *Arcades Project*, he writes:

That anamnestic intoxication in which the flâneur goes about the city not only feeds on the sensory data taking shape before his eyes but often processes itself of abstract knowledge – indeed, of the dead facts – as something experienced and lived through. (Benjamin, 2006, p. 206).

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We do not intend, however, to establish here a difference between the figure of the *flâneur* and that of the contemporary tourist, as some authors do, but rather to consider that tourists are travelers insofar as they visually absorb the landscape and allow themselves to be affected by it, establishing a perceptual contact with space, not just consumption.

At this point, we must consider the difference between landscape and space, commonly seen as synonyms. For geographer Milton Santos, landscape is a set of real-concrete objects, while “space results from the intrusion of society into these object-forms” (2008, 103). Thus, while the landscape is a relatively immutable material system, space is a system of values that is perpetually transforms itself.

Therefore, depending on how tourists are received by the host city or institution, and how they themselves deal with the visited place, “they will take

with them not only the record of the cultural landscape, but also the effects that space produced in them.” (Godoy, 2016).

Thus, the way in which the tourist will deal with the satisfaction attained by the trip and the aesthetic pleasure evoked in the touristic activity can vary between the aesthetic way pointed out by Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015) and the search for the transforming experience pointed out by Michaud (2007), when he states that

[...]What is sought in tourism is distraction, evasion, fun, sensation, pleasure: all things that are commonly classified quietly in the rubric of exoticism. This allows you to escape from daily life and from your obligations if you disorient. It should also allow re meetings, meetings with men, other customs, other ways of thinking and feeling. [...] In the face of exoticism, the tourist seeks the other, which is not, identities different from yours and that give you the feeling of leaving you and make you believe that you know who you are. (Michaud, 2007). [our translation]⁷

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This may be a good point of reflection on the ways in which one can react to artistic capitalism by reducing its pragmatic landscaping effects.

If landscaping is the process of aestheticization of the landscape in order to make it plastic and pleasing to the viewer’s eyes, when interaction with space occurs, that logic may be broken.

It is face this controversial sense that we reflect on the social role of museums when immersed in turistified landscapes. As we have pointed out, museological institutions may be at the center of controversial discussions, especially in relation to their political and social function. Soares and Maranda (2017) remind us that museums possess, in an endogenous way, predatory characteristics. They point out, for example, the constitution of many collections that are formed from the exploitation of so-called “exotic” cultures. For the authors, in the context of museums in the 21st century, the act of exploiting is due to the unbridled consumption of visitors and tourism. According to them,

7. [...] lo que se busca en el turismo es la distracción, la evasión, la diversión, la sensación, el placer: todas las cosas que, comúnmente, se clasifican tranquilamente en la rubrica del exotismo. Éste permite huir de lo cotidiano y sus obligaciones, desorientarse. También debe permitir, y más aún, realizar encuentros, encuentros con otros hombres, de otras costumbres, de otras maneras de pensar y sentir. [...] Mediante el exotismo, el turista busca lo otro, lo que no es, identidades diferentes de la suya y cuyo encuentro le da el sentimiento de salir de sí y lo hace creer que sabe mejor quién es (Michaud, 2007, p. 157).

now, not only the museum visitor but also every single person is encouraged to consume someone else's culture. The constant depredation of one's material and immaterial cultural heritage is embraced as part of the very notion of "global culture" in a so-called globalized world. However, what are the ethical boundaries for such a predatory action? Who establishes such boundaries and for whom? (Brulon Soares & Maranda, 2017, p.17)

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Therefore, the authors argue that the notion of World Heritage can be controversial, since it is generally understood as something to be consumed in a generic way, regardless of its particularities.

In a world where power relations of the past have not been fully confronted and are yet to be deconstructed and reshaped, the declaration of world heritage, or of "cultural landscapes", for instance, will lead to the most recurring sets of misunderstandings. Even the more recent celebrated expressions of the notion of museum, such as the ecomuseum or community museums, have not been able to define an agenda isolated from private interests and political intentions. The predatory museum is alive and hungry (Brulon Soares & Maranda, 2017, p.17).

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Thus, if museums wish to be “institutions beyond their appropriation as product” (Godoy, 2010), they should, as emphasized by ICOM, propose, since its genesis, joint actions aimed at the administration of intra and extramural space, respecting the values of its community and its landscape, inserting themselves as active participants in public and urban policies, defining and implementing policies related to the protection, interaction and ethical responsibility of the museological institution for the public space. So, what should museums serve? In a certain sense, some will be conniving with the logic of aestheticization and will only appear as one more element of the landscape, as purely aesthetic and for tourist contemplation monuments, not dialoguing with its surroundings or the visitors. Others may wish to subvert this landscape aestheticizing order, by musealizing it with its social potential.

Musealizing the landscape: the social role of museological institutions through cultural landscaping

The museum is part of the aesthetics logic. Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015) consider that its invention strongly illustrates the concept, since the museum space is, par excellence, the site of the sacredness of art. By extracting the value of

usage of works, it gives them an aesthetic value and makes them admired and contemplated for it. According to the authors' line of thought, "the museum has the task of making them immortal" (2015, 22). Like the process of aestheticization of the object the museums, as monuments present in the landscape, are immortalized. Soares believes that

beyond musealizing them, putting them into discourse since landscapes started being understood as patrimony, museums are part of the landscape, they build and create them, and in certain contexts and under certain conditions, museums are landscapes. However, it is musealization, that is, the chain process of construction of cultural meanings, which inserts the landscape in discourse – cultural, social and political – by promoting its reproduction and its «tourismification» (Salazar, 2009) so that it is consumed (Brulon Soares, 2017, p.75) [our translation]

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Brulon proposes that the musealization of the landscape should consider the complexity of the cultures. What is interesting is to establish "a continuous flow of information, interaction, exchanges, and sometimes even a flow of people through them" (Brulon Soares, 2017, 77). According to the author, what really drives the landscape is the people, who maintain it and recognize themselves in it. The museum would thus be a significant interlocutor between these individuals and the landscape.

This perception agrees with the concept of space that we adopt and opens a dialogue with the object of study chosen as the case to be presented.

The Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), although inserted in a landscape that stands out as representation of a cultural landscape, presents actions that try to break with this aestheticizing logic.

As most projects predict, there are attempts to minimize these impacts. The museums in this context would be responsible for establishing the dialogue with that part of the city and with the local communities. However, while some take on the model of aestheticization and present themselves as monuments, MAR has been implementing actions, albeit isolated, that promote interaction with its public and its environment. The area of Praça Mauá has always hosted important cultural manifestations of the city, such as Pedra do Sal – considered one of the places where samba originated – and the Cais do Valongo – a relevant archaeological site recently elevated to World Heritage by UNESCO⁸. Both were slave landing sites during the colonial period. The place also houses a series of communities that are symbols of the urban formation of

8. July 2017.

Rio de Janeiro, such as Morro da Conceição and Morro da Providência. Precisely because it is located in this environment of cultural and historical importance, the museum, which follows these transformations, could have a negative impact.

Although MAR was created amid a controversy which involves complex analyzes on the subject, since there is a debate about the creation of new institutions while others receive little public incentive, - such as the IPN, as we have pointed out - the museum has been struggling to activate its social function.

In its official website, it states that its mission is to carry out

a transversal reading of the history of the city, its social fabric, its symbolic life, conflicts, contradictions, challenges, and expectations. Its exhibitions bring together historical and contemporary art dimensions through long- and short-term national and international exhibitions. The museum also comes with the mission of inserting art in public education through the Escola do Olhar. (Museu de Arte do Rio, 2017, online).

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At Escola do Olhar, one of the actions that integrates the museum's educational program, courses, seminars and workshops are promoted, many of them destined for teachers in the public sector. There is also the *MAR in the Academy* program, which proposes a dialogue of its contents with universities.

When it comes to participation and involvement of the museum with the community, we highlight the program *Neighbors of MAR*, which aims at promoting the union of the museum with its territory. In addition to enjoying free access, the residents of the Port Zone are invited over for coffee every first Saturday of the month, when projects are developed together with artists and cultural producers who are also neighbors of the Museum. MAR also maps knowledge and crafts of artists and artisans of the locality, who are part of the workshops of Escola do Olhar.

According to Cavalcanti (2016), there are no studies that point out the results of the interaction of these actions with the communities. In addition, according to officials and visitors interviewed by the author, it is believed that membership is low due to insufficient promotion and lack of interest by the residents.

However, MAR has already sought to carry out actions that bring the local population and projects developed in the region closer together.

Another activity that stands out in the Museum is the *Mar de Música* project, started in 2013 and resumed in 2016. Held one Friday a month, from March to November, from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., the event has already brought to the Museum several artists and festivals in Rio, as well as artists from other states, who stand out in the country. With free entrance and limited seats, the musical

events open the space of MAR to the community, transforming the moment into a great party or space of coexistence among people from diverse social classes and origins, from natives to foreigners, from local residents to residents of many other places in Rio de Janeiro. Once again, MAR's architecture is also favorable to the integration with the space, because its low and glass walls allow the participation of those who are outside since it is possible to hear the sound and visualize the choreography and the festivities that take place inside.

When we look at the activities proposed by the Museum, we try to establish debates with the proposed theme and highlight some – even if subtle – ways of diminishing the impacts caused by policies of aestheticizing cities, which include museums as one of their preponderant elements.

Considering all the controversies surrounding the existence of this Museum, we decided to highlight the actions that precisely oppose the criticisms regarding its insertion as an institution created according to public policies of aestheticization of the city of Rio de Janeiro. Therefore, we do not intend to praise the institution, but, by example, to encourage other museums to minimize the damage inevitably caused when their social role is questioned before the touristification of public spaces.

Capitalism, in fact, seeks to engulf social life in all its aspects. Its ability to objectify, that is, to transform everything into commodity, is enormous and easily reached the museum space. But the museum, as an institution that seeks to safeguard cultural assets, must act beyond this uncontested objective as an important center of political and social transformation. Institutions need to host increasingly responsible thinking about their role in and with society, taking care of the relationship with their visitors (tourists or not) and with the local population, so that they do not become criminals or hostages of strategies of aesthetic manipulation. Musealizing the landscape, then, which consists in the construction of cultural meanings in a certain space, is perhaps one of the ways of museums to exercise their social function.

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Practicality and Value

Historical Influences on Museum Studies in the United States

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ABSTRACT

The emphasis on the practical concerns and quotidian duties of the museum worker characterizes US Museum Studies as vocational training, rather than a more theoretical field of study. Such practicality is often attributed to the American¹ focus on individualism, pragmatism and sometimes empiricism. The reality is that American Museum Studies is a child of Industrial Age thinking and a clear descendent of British origins. It is concerned with the tracking and protection of wealth and punctuated by the lingering Puritanical requirement of usefulness in all things. This article will summarize two art museum models that arose in the United States following its Civil War and the impact of these models on the subsequent emergence of the first Museum Studies course in the US.

1. For ease and clarity, I use the term “American” to denote the United States culture.

Key Words: Museum Studies, United States, Art History, Industrialization

RÉSUMÉ

Valeurs et sens pratique : influences historiques des *Museum Studies* aux États-Unis

La muséologie n'existe pas aux États-Unis; les *Museum Studies* ressemblent peu aux autres cursus développés à travers le monde. Le renforcement des aspects pratiques et de la gestion quotidienne caractérise les *Museum Studies* ou études muséales aux États-Unis, en tant que formation professionnelle, au détriment du développement d'un champ théorique. La mise en exergue de ce volet pratique est souvent attribuée à l'individualisme, au pragmatisme et à l'empirisme américain. En réalité, les études muséales américaines sont le fruit de la révolution industrielle et de la pensée britannique. Aux États-Unis, elles se préoccupent de la gestion et du maintien de la richesse, tout en étant imprégnées d'un puritanisme utilitariste. Cet article présente les deux modèles de musées apparus aux États-Unis à la suite de la guerre civile, ainsi que leur impact particulier sur l'émergence du premier cours de *Museum Studies* aux États-Unis.

Mots clés : Muséologie, États-Unis, Histoire de l'art, Industrialisation



The “Brown Decades” and the “Gilded Age”

Prior to the United States Civil War the earliest US museums, peculiar combinations of cabinets of curiosities, patriotic instruction and religiously acceptable entertainment, had become either circus side shows (Schofield, 1989) or dusty university relics (Bennett, 1995, p. 2; Conn, 1998, p. 8; Murray, 1904, pp. 187-188; Neil, 1975, p. 46; Rasse, 1999, p. 13). Following in the British tradition, “museums” in the US had traditionally been the province of science, whereas “galleries” were reserved for art. American artistic taste was still split between pro-American and pro-European sentiments as vestiges of the American Revolution and the War of 1812. And Puritan religious views further complicated the emergence of artistic institutions (Neil, 1975; Silverman, 1976) as much as they would eventually play a role in the interest in industrial design (Harris, 1962, p. 561). Art was still deemed frivolous—a remnant of European ostentation—unless it could be proved useful, whereas science was glorified as embodying the Spirit of the Enlightenment and providing a path to personal and national progress. Echoing this sentiment of the superiority of science over

art, then President of the Academy of Natural Sciences stated, “[Science] stirs no sensual emotions, provokes no admiration for what is false, but inclines the observer to perceive that the truth, nature itself, is more worthy of respect and admiration than any imitation or likeness of it (Ruschenberger, 1871, p. 18, cited by Conn, 1998, p. 40),”

The Civil War (1861-1864) had transformed an agricultural nation into an industrial one, ushering in the accompanying urban development, immigration and materialism (McLanathan, 1973, p. 139). Rapid expansion of industrialization, led to rapid economic growth in the US. Mechanized production sought cheap ways to produce more product. The US soon leapt ahead of Britain’s industrialization, leaving behind a wake of pollution so extensive this period was called the “Brown Decades”. “Rivers filled with refuse...flowed past cities covered with soot.” (Mumford, 1931, p. 63) Industrialization transformed business. Businessmen emerged who thought only about output, streamlining and profit.

The Brown Decades nourished and fertilized a subsequent period of abundance. “Beneath the crass surface, a new life was stirring in the department of American thought and culture that had hitherto been barren, or entirely colonial and derivative.” (Ibid., p. 20) To some this was the Golden Age of America, its first moment of prosperity and power since its founding. But others deemed it the “Gilded Age” (Twain, Warner, Hoppin, Stephens, & Williams, 1873) taking aim at the thin veneer of wealth masking a corrupt core. The Reconstruction after the Civil War had renewed the efforts to forge a national identity, and the Gilded Age of conspicuous consumption finally produced enough wealth to seriously pursue the creation of the nation’s first fine art museums. It is from these that the museum age blossoms in the US, fostering new ideas about what museums were and who they served.

In this context, the first art museums arise in the US followed by the emergence of the first elements of codified museum administration and the first Museum Studies course. Internationally, the names of George Brown Goode and John Cotton Dana are espoused as significant figures in US Museum Studies. Indeed, they are, but their contributions, and significant ones by others, tend to be presented solely in the context of being how they have paved the way for today’s thinking about museums in service to the public, an idea in stark contrast to the dominant art museum model that will emerge and the first Museum studies course in the US. But *Principles of Museum Administration* and the *New Museum* are considerably richer documents when the museums of the “Brown Decades” and the “Gilded Age” come into focus. Indeed, the fuller character of American Museum Studies is revealed when we understand the national emphasis on practicality and value, even – and perhaps especially, when it comes to early museum culture in the US and how it still resonates today.

The First Museums of Fine Art: The Birth of New Museum Models

“Aided by the general decay of strict Puritanism after the bloodlust of the Civil War....the fine arts underwent swift transformation (Mumford, 1931, p. 189).” Insofar as it relates to the historic foundations of museum studies, the Reconstruction was the impetus to finally shed cultural differences of opinion that had persisted since the Revolution in order build national culture.

Thus, in 1876, one hundred years after the Declaration of Independence was signed, the nation hosted the *International Exhibition of Arts, Manufacturers, and Products of the Soil and Mine* (Gross & Snyder, 2005) in its original capital (Ingram, 1876), Philadelphia. This “Centennial Exposition”, like World Expos before it, was an opportunity for the US to prove its merit as an independent nation. Despite a dozen or so private and public museums collections existing in the US since its founding in 1776, Coleman, in his history of *Museums in America*, states that “the fever of preparation for our first great fair, the Centennial Exposition of 1876, did much to launch the era of museum expansion...by exposing our weakness in design compared to Europe and the Orient...” (1939, p. 18). From this, two strains of art museum arose: one with the goal of making American industry more competitive in terms of pleasing designs, the other to generally improve the taste and culture of Americans. Both types adopted the title “Museum” to attest to their utility and importance to a society still suspicious of fine art.

In Philadelphia, in anticipation of being a repository of objects from the Centennial, the exhibition hall for the arts was constructed as a permanent gallery of fine art and the *Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art* was chartered². Elsewhere in 1876, the *Boston Museum of Fine Arts* opened on July 4th even as the *Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City*, founded in 1870, was still in the midst of constructing its facilities (ibid., p. 17). Among these early institutions, the heritage of the Puritan ethic to prove their practicality and value is clear. We consider them briefly here.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art

Chartered in February of 1876, the then named Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art was to be a legacy of the industrial and manufacture products of the World Expo, but emphasizing the local trades and crafts Its charter establishes: “a Museum of Art...with a special view to the development of the Art Industries of the State, to provide instruction in drawing, painting, modeling, designing, etc., through practical schools, special libraries, lectures

2. See the history of the Philadelphia Museum of Art at <http://www.philamuseum.org/information/45-154-18.html>

3. See the Museum of Fine Art website at <http://www.mfa.org/about>

and otherwise.”⁴ Indicative of the emphasis on industrial design were the first three departments to be named in the new museum: Pottery, Numismatics, and later in 1893 the Department of Textiles, Lace and Embroidery. As European arts holdings increased, the museum retained its desire to appeal to a broad population⁵. Like the Met and MFA, the Pennsylvania Museum and School was governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees composed of wealthy businessmen.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art⁶

That New York had become a major center of finance, industry, commerce and tolerance meant it could supply the necessary wealth and taste of a new aristocracy to its founding. Though there were still strong pro-American sentiments, anti-European sentiments had waned among the rich. When the *Metropolitan Museum of Art* (The Met) was founded in 1870, it was primarily conceived to exhibit the art collected by its wealthy benefactors (Tomkins, 1970) and was unabashedly modeled after the Louvre (Conn, 1998, p. 29).⁷

The founders, “a group of businessmen and financiers as well as leading artists and thinkers of the day”⁸ resolved to base the museum’s collection of objects “illustrative of the History of Art from the earliest beginnings to the present time,” defining Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting as the “three great arts,” (Proceedings, 1869) and inaugurated the institution with an exhibition of Old Masters (Conn, 1998, p. 197). Despite the effort to follow the European museum model emphasizing masterpieces, by 1887, the Director of the Met delivered an “Address on the Practical Value of the American Museum (Di Cesnola, 1887) to attest to the “purposes, scope and utility of such Institutions.”

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The *Museum of Fine Art, Boston* (MFA) was chartered in 1870, the same year as The Met, though instead of three “Great Arts”, the Trustees outlined three guiding Principles: art, education and industry. (Museum of Fine Arts, 1906, p. 202) In the same year, Massachusetts became the first state to legislate compulsory public school art education”. (Bolin, 1990, p. 59) This act was intended

4. The South Kensington Museum in London served as a model for the museum’s format. See also the Museum’s website: <http://www.philamuseum.org/information/45-19.html>

5. Nevertheless, restructuring during the early 20th century led the museum to favor the examples of the Louvre and the Metropolitan, especially under the tenure of Benjamin Ives Gilman. See Conn (1998, p. 29)

6. In this case the use of term Museum also probably stemmed from the French use of *Musée du Louvre*.

7. Howe & Kent (1913, pp. 99-100) state that It was first conceived in Paris in 1866 to a group of wealthy Americans

8. See *A Brief History of the Museum* at <http://metmuseum.org/press/general-information/2005/a-brief-history-of-the-museum>

to spur the development of draftsmen, who would aid the manufacturing economy through an improvement of design quality. At the dedication of the MFA, the mayor hailed it as “crown of our educational system” (Museums of Fine Arts, 1876, p. 6, as cited in Harris, 1962). In their efforts to manifest education through the arts, the MFA made it a priority to put education into practice and not just hope that a cogent arrangement of collections would permit collections to speak for themselves as so many other museums had in the past. Rather, the MFA developed interpretive techniques, publications, classes and a library (Greenleaf, 1888, cited in Harris, 1962), inaugurating a new form of educating *through* art, not just about it.

Rather than imitate the Louvre, Boston initially looked to the South Kensington doctrine⁹ as its muse. (Conn, 1998; Harris, 1962) That doctrine stated that good design was dependent on “honesty in construction, fitness of ornamental material, and decorative subordination,” (Kouwenhoven, 1948, p. 91) an ethic that appealed to a state still influenced by Puritan views that required art to be useful in order to not be immoral. As the MFA’s trio of principles suggests, art, education and industry would work harmoniously to achieve the aims of the founders. Improved industrial output was the goal. Education was its servant.

These three distinct institutions arose simultaneously in different American cities, each with rich traditions of history and culture. Over time they may have grown more similar, but at their creation each manifested the characteristics of its founders and their collections, offering up new definitions for what a museum should be and paving the way for museum studies in the US. While The Met was teaching *about* fine art, the MFA and the Philadelphia Museum of Art were teaching industry *through* art. The different approaches have been compared in a classic rich man/poor man juxtaposition, framing the Met as exclusive, pretentious and dilettante, and “Philly” and the MFA as useful and educational¹⁰—only later did the MFA try to escape that rut. (McClellan, 2008, p. 30) But that simple rich/poor characterization is a product of the cultural nationalism of the time and the long drawn-out American antipathy of useful versus frivolous art in the Puritan tradition. What is more important in the context of museum studies is that these museums offer two essential models for the emergence of museum studies in the coming decades; one emphasizing the actual and cultural value of fine art and the other bent on proving the practicality or usefulness of fine art.

9. This doctrine is according to Walter Smith (1872), influential teacher and leader in art education. He was brought to Massachusetts to supervise the implementation of the new laws mandating drawing in schools.

10. Duncan places The Met at the center of a spectrum, where the MFA represented the elite museum catering to the wealthy, but this really occurred in the 20th century after the appointment of Gilman. See Harris, (1962).

The Principles of Museum Administration

By 1895, when George Browne Goode wrote his celebrated treatise on American Museum Administration, these early US art museums had become fully-formed, inspiring other art museums to emerge across the US in the larger cities and fully replacing scientific museums as the dominant form of museums in the US. Nevertheless, they had not yet spawned extensive writings on the subject of museums. That role historically goes to Goode, Assistant Secretary at the Smithsonian Institute.

In 1846, per the bequest of British scientist, James Smithson (1765-1829) an “establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men” (Smithson, 1826) was to be founded in Washington, under the name *Smithsonian Institution*. The bequest did not require a museum, but Congress eventually decided that the best way to fulfill Smithson’s directive was through the creation of a library, art gallery, and museum, (Conn, 1998, p. 54) underscoring the traditional distinction between museums for science and galleries for art. Their primary focus, however, was originally science (Nagel, 1997, p. 348), as it seemed the obvious connection to knowledge to the men of the day. The first Secretary of the Smithsonian, Joseph Henry (1797-1878), developed a Program of Organization for the Smithsonian that reduced the role of both the library and the art gallery. The small collection of art it possessed was neglected. Henry’s plan requires any art collections to be “useful arts”. (Henry, 1847, Sec. I, Art. 3, Nos. 4 & 10) By 1850, Spencer Baird (1823-1887) was hired as the assistant secretary of the Smithsonian because of his experience classifying and recording zoological specimens (Rivinus & Youssef, 1992) further placing an institution-wide emphasis on science. Goode was hired for the same reason when Baird becomes Secretary. Meanwhile, the arrival of Darwin’s theories in the US had led to a decline of science museums, (Orosz, 2002, p. 181) whose serious specimen collections were unable to compete with circus “Freak Shows” for money. The first US museums, largely oriented toward science, faded into esoteric research collections and were soon replaced in academic stature by universities. (Conn, 1998, ch. 2; Mumford, 1931, pp. 39-42) Only the Smithsonian well endured this period in its capacity as an “institution” rather than “museum” through bequest and federal support.

Under these conditions, two of the first and best recognized American treatises on the subject of Museums were produced by Goode. Presented at the Museums Association conference in the United Kingdom – as there was yet to be a Museums Association in the United States¹¹ – the titles and substance already demonstrate a distinct reliance on practicality of museum work. What is less-known about this first American museological document is that “Relationships and Responsibilities of Museums” (Browne Goode, 1895) and then “Principles of Museum Administration” (Browne Goode, 1896) were predicated

11. Founded in the United States in 1906

on supplying a response for the “Use and Abuses of Museums,” an 1882 essay by William Stanley Jevons and published in 1883, an English economist, to which there had yet been none in the US or UK.

Jevons article criticized Europe’s museums in service to the people. Jevons himself lamented the lack of writing and training to be found on museum practice in the English language. Jevons call for professionalization spurred the founding of the Museums Association in England and subsequently inspired Goode to respond from America, where despite the boom in museums, there also lacked significant written treatises and training. It is also possible that already Goode sensed a direction in the new art museums that was heading counter to the public-minded institutions in service to the masses that both Jevons and Goode espoused. Goode, writing as a scientist for a scientific institution is intent to specify the “uses” of museums and implies a response to a lingering Puritan query of the value of arts or their usefulness.

Thus, when Goode responds to the question of the “use” of museums, he sets out his goals in scientific terms. These are: the “codification of accepted principles of museum administration” and the establishment of the “aims and ambitions of modern museum practice”. The use of the terms “codification”, “administration” and “practice” further underscore a general focus on practicality. Goode goes on to divide his essay into sections that define and quantify the logical elements of a successful museum practice. His approach is scientific and suited to his training in taxonomy. The final section on the “Future of Museum Work” presents Goode’s vision of museums playing an “important role in the increase and diffusion of knowledge”, echoing the foundational requirements of the Smithsonian Institution, but also creating “public appreciation for the material value of collections” and recognition of the function of public museums. (Browne Goode, 1896) On such ideals the Smithsonian Institute had been founded.

The Trusteeship: Managing Cultural Wealth and Taste

But Goode and Jevons, and to a great extent the Smithsonian and the museums of Europe, did not have to contend with private financing. Unlike European countries, America had no royalty, no ancient aristocracy that had accumulated vast collections over centuries. American art museums could not be started by opening the doors on existing collections. If art museums were to exist, they had to be started from scratch. Previous efforts had brought about societies to encourage fine arts, academies of art and design, and public galleries (Ibid., p. 15), but none had succeeded (Coleman, 1939, App. X). As the 19th century waned in the US, newly wealthy American industrialists, eager to shed the connotations of vulgarity and ostentation that came with the pejorative term “nouveau riche”, sought European commodities to prove their sophisticated taste (Coleman, 1939, p. 14; Dana, 1917, p. 8; voir aussi Mumford, 1931) and to legitimize links, even specious ones, to European nobility. But whereas personal collections were a source of social pride, involvement in fine art museums even

further enhanced the reputations of collectors and collections and through their business acumen they would change the model for the American museum.¹²

In the US, the federal government had long navigated religious tastes and mores about culture and education, usually avoiding discord by letting such enterprises be private, save for a few notable examples, like the Smithsonian Institute.¹³ Thus in general most American museums of any sort are to this day private institutions, who may apply annually for state funds or Federal project grants. The lack of government support accentuated the dependence of museums on either popular appeal or the generosity of the rich. The founders of The Met knew this when they stated:

“It will be said that it would be folly to depend upon our governments either municipal or national for judicious support or control in such an institution for our governments as a rule are utterly incompetent for the task.” (Howe & Kent, 1913)

Undaunted, founders of early art museums created a hybrid of private and government support. Along with land often ceded by cities (Tomkins, 1970, ch. 1), wealthy industrialists appointed themselves “custodians of culture” (Kouwenhoven, 1948, p. 88). In words of James Jarves, 19th century American art critic and collector: “Those who have won the leisure from making money, should know best how to expend it for their and their neighbor’s good (1882).” The wealthy supplied art, endowment, and leadership in the form of a Trusteeship. The Trust was a British legal structure designed to help nobles keep their wealth from generation to generation (MacGregor, 1996, p. 120) that had already been employed at the British Museum and National Gallery, London.

But whereas in Britain the Trust was a bastion of the aristocracy, in America it was the tool of the *nouveau riche* industrialists in the Gilded Age. Within the museum examples presented, the ideas of value and practicality still stand out. Museum Boards of Trustees were (and often still are) composed of the wealthiest and most influential citizens. If we consider The Met as one model and the Philadelphia and Boston fine art museums as the other, the differences are clear.

In an unabashed effort to be the Louvre of the US, The Met had in mind lofty national ideals: It would set the national standard of artistic taste. Long deprived of European fine art, Victorian America was overrun by “monstrous plaster figures, daubed with crazy paint; mammoth cast-iron wash-basins called fountains; cast-iron architecture and clumsy gateways to public parks; shoddy portrait statues and inane ideal ones; of ornaments, pictures, and sculpture

12. On the administrative revolution in business, see Zunz (1990), esp. Chapters 1-3; and Chandler (2005), introduction and chapter 14.

13. We should note however, for the sake of clarity that today’s national museums and institutes that comprise the Smithsonian receive only a portion of funding for the federal government. Collections are often acquired through private funds again avoiding conflict.

made to gull and sell (Jarves writing in 1864 as cited in Mumford, 1931, p. 185).” Rather than allow poorly manufactured imitations of cheap copies (Harris, 1962, p. 561) to continue to negatively influence the American cultural taste, those governing The Met tried to supply the *best* examples of the *finest* artwork in order to correct public taste and “inform on the subtle laws” of the arts. Membership on its Board of Trustees was thus limited to those who could contribute to this goal. By the early 1900s when financier J.P. Morgan presided over the trustees, he would assemble his wealthiest colleagues, turning the board into the most exclusive club in America (Tomkins, 1970, pp. 99, 106-107). Its orientation toward wealth created a model where membership was historically nepotistic, involving the same families for generations and the election of friends and colleagues in order to perpetuate the same values.

With fewer wealthy backers than in New York and in contrast to The Met model, the MFA and Philadelphia highlighted their intention to exhibit copies and casts in lieu of originals. This demonstrates the priority placed on education over collection. The importance placed on education was also reflected in a second model of Museum Trustees. At the MFA, for example, according to the articles of incorporation, Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology would each appoint three trustees, and that the Chairman of the Trustees of the Public Library, a Trustee of the Lowell Institute¹⁴, the Secretary of the State Board of Education and the Boston Superintendent of Schools would each serve in an ex-officio capacity (ibid.). Harris (1962, p 549) compares this with the roster of Trustees at The Met (Howe & Kent, 1913, pp. 126-127) which included financiers and businessmen at the forefront of institutional interests, rather than educators. Education and the emphasis of industrial arts were to be the difference between the “cadaverous” Met “filled with treasures and spoils of conquest,” and “*chefs d’oeuvre* of classic art, for the benefit chiefly of artists and amateurs.” (Harris, 1962, p. 555, nt. 27) Rather, as stated by the MFA’s first director “The designer needs a museum of art as the man of letters needs a library, or the botanist an herborium (Brimmer, 1880, p. 206).”¹⁵

Both models fell prey to the demands of capitalism in a society that did not fund their culture. The Trustees of both types were still dependent on a business and legal model that bowed to the need for financial support. Even if the museum itself was considered a not-for-profit enterprise it would soon be transformed by the governance of bankers, lawyers, and businessmen who were heavily influenced by the standards of efficiency, production, and preservation of investment. The very first Annual Reports issued by these first art museums demonstrates a dedication to the quantification of attendance for activities

14. A Boston charitable organization founded in 1836 to fund public lectures for instruction and education of all citizens. See Chisholm (1911)

15. It was only toward the turn of the century, as the museum collection increased in terms of size, depth and value that some of the casts, copies and lesser works were stored away, according to Harris (1962, p. 559) and later directors emphasized the arts over industry and education as secondary objectives. See Conn (1998, p. 224).

and services in order to establish the value of the service the museum provides. Additionally, Trustees were increasingly concerned with the preservation of the financial investment reflected in a precious collection of art. The art was subjected to constant inventory as a form of wealth census. In the earliest lists, documentation gave as much space to basic identification, as it did to the names of donors, methods of acquisition, and financial value of the work of art. (M. Little, electronic correspondence, March 31, 2015) At the MFA in Boston separate folders were kept on donor information and financial value. (J. McCarthy, *interview*, June 10, 2015) Ongoing inventory in us museums was less a source of knowledge for research than it was a proof of ownership and record of value.¹⁶

For the first time in the United States emerging art museums became the dominant museum model and “rich men hobbying at art”, as Coleman (1939, p. 14) put it, would alter the course of fine arts in the nation. (passim Kouwenhoven, 1948; Mumford, 1931) Subject to a federal government uninterested in funding national cultural institutions, museums became indebted to wealthy individuals forged in the ways of capitalism and industrial thinking. Moral propriety and usefulness gave way to practicality and value and bankers and business-men produced a new American product - US Museums Studies.

The First Museum Studies Course

“In the spirit of British Victorian reform, Americans wished to make the museum an instrument of education and inspiration to urban workers and artisans. Within a few short years, however, benefactors and trustees had transformed these museums by making them repositories for their private treasures and public legacies as well as their social ambitions.” (Duncan, 2007, p. 25)

The utilitarian ideals of art museums such as the MFA and the Philadelphia Museum of Art slowly declined as they failed to produce a tangible improvement in industrial production (McClellan, 2008, p. 26) New directors in the early 20th century would orient museums increasingly toward fine arts and masterpieces. (*Ibid.* Harris, 1962; 2008) Nevertheless the earlier emphasis on education by these institutions would inspire in the new century a backlash to the seeming disdain for craft and design and the impetus to continue to improve museum education as the century wore on. It is this that gives some momentum to John Cotton Dana’s ideas of a New Museum. Dana rejected museums as warehouses of the wealthy and sought to build in Newark, where he was founding director, a contrasting model that collected folk art and industrial

16. Even by the late 1930s, when the US finally founded a National Gallery, it, too, was at the behest and bequest of a wealthy founding donor who instituted a Board of Trustees composed of his friends and business partners. Their first actions were to establish and list the value of the collection and to hire a registrar (National Gallery of Art, 1938)

products and provided service to the community. His writings on museums serving a broader community through education are better known today.¹⁷

But the museum model provided by The Met and inspired by the Louvre attracted something even more important than public regard: wealthy donors. By the first decades of the 20th century, American art museums had gained an elite status thanks to the prominence of their founders, which further seduced rich patrons with the lure of reputation by association. Gifts of art, and moreover the acceptance and exhibition of such works, was a highly sought commodity. By 1917, only four years after the Revenue Tax had been established in the US, a deduction was established for donations of artwork to non-profit institutions (like museums) within the framework of the *War Revenue Act of 1917*. (Muthitacharoen & Goertz, 2011, p. 1) The deduction benefitted the rich by allowing them to deduct the value of donated art work from their federal income tax and sometimes allowed the complete avoidance of paying inheritance taxes. Because of the lack of government funding for museums, wealthy donors assured the supremacy of The Met as *the* museum model in the United States but moreover contributed to the rise of the art museum as pre-eminent to other museum types in the US (Fox, 1963, p. 18), an idea that can still be perceived today. It is under these conditions that Museum Studies began as a formal field of study at Harvard University.

Between 1908 and 1911, a few college-level education programs had been created and recognized by AAM (Cushman, 1984, p. 12). Each was short-lived or too narrowly focused to have as large an impact as the Harvard's. By 1917 at the formation for the American Association of Museum's Committee on Professional Training (COMPT) it was agreed that museum work needed to be professionalized. (Duncan, 2007, p. 177) In 1909, Edward W. Forbes, son of the co-founder of the Bell Telephone company, became the director of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard. Already an art collector and donor to the Fogg, Forbes encouraged Harvard's wealthy alumni to donate paintings, vastly expanding the number of important works and creating what he saw as a laboratory for art historians. (Mongan, 1971) In 1914, Forbes asked his classmate and fellow art donor, Paul J. Sachs, to join the staff at the Fogg. A banker from a family of bankers (of the investment firm, Goldman-Sachs) Sachs was a means to accessing wealthy patrons (Duncan, 2007, p. 145) but Sachs demanded a proper position with responsibilities in administration, collections and teaching.

Sachs had been part of the evolution in business management that had come about in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution. For over a decade he had worked in New York City as part of a new business culture that demanded efficiency and dynamic adaptation and a global perspective. When Sachs developed his famous "Museum Course" it was from this point of view, a practical engagement of museum work that embraced the values and models of business

17. See Dana (1914, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1927, 1929). For a longer treatment of Dana's impact on museum education see also McClellan (2008), pp. 28-31; 171-173 and Duncan (2007) *passim*.

management, not the theoretical engagement of art historians. “In museums, as in modern business practice, a managerial hierarchy with specialized skills replaced a generation whose authority came primarily from stewardship and wealth.” (Duncan, 2007, p. 80)

His course, fully titled “Fine Arts 15a : Museum Work and Museum Problems” reveals his objectives: the primacy of the collection and the acquisition of original and important works of art; well-ordered and pleasing exhibitions; academic rigor in museum research and publication; sound ethics and management practices, and constant networking with art world. (*Ibid.* p 3) Sach’s students experienced important practical aspects such as installation and publicity of exhibitions (*Ibid.*, 212), as well as the business of the art world. With his family connections and the wealth of his own art collections, he introduced students to an international network and required them to be fluent in its workings. (*Ibid.*, 130) Nevertheless, to meet the high standards of instruction at Harvard, Sachs’ Museum Course strongly emphasized the cultural value of masterpieces so as not to seem too vocational in nature. Students became connoisseurs of art, pursuing its academic foundations as well as the practical aspects of international dealing. Simultaneously, in order to avoid the lingering Puritan notions of art as useless, both Forbes and Sachs began to redefine the role of the Fogg and the *Museum Course* within the framework of “a Laboratory” (Lowell, 1924) for training professionals. (*Ibid.*, 171) This framing justified the usefulness of the art museum and museum studies as its sub category and positioned the museum to better raise money.

Just as the Museum Course was coming of age, the First World War brought a new international status to the United States. Largely avoiding the enormous economic losses of Europe, the US government attained new economic, political and military power, while US collectors took advantage of the art market, adding to their growing collections. As collections grew, so too did the prominence of Sach’s Museum Course driven by Harvard’s reputation, his own leadership in the field and the demands for his help forming new leaders for America’s museums. Simultaneously, new technologies and the ramp up to World War Two spurred new levels of professionalization and systemized approaches that were merging with the museum world. As the Museum Course grew in stature, Sachs began to place hundreds of his students in the most important museums around the continent, thus cementing the foundations of US Museum Studies (Duncan, 2007) in connection to the earliest US art museum models.

Conclusion

This article began with a description of the US culture in the post-Civil War cultural environment that helped launch the museum era in the US. The first museums studies course in the US likewise comes of age between the First and Second World Wars, benefitting from international prominence as well as modern and systematic approaches to museum practice. It is thus fitting

perhaps that we bookend the discussion of historical influences on US museum studies by mentioning how the upheaval of war turned the direction of museums and museum studies.

Today, Paul Sach's is not a well-known figure in US Museum Studies history. It is more likely that practitioners and students of the field will come into contact with the writings of Goode and Dana, or Theodore Low and Phillip Youtz among many others who tend to champion the more publicly educational approach of museums as opposed to the connoisseurship model promoted by Sachs. Moreover, the current trend in Museum Studies courses in and the US seems to owe much more to the idea of the museum in service to the public rather than the museum in service to a small group of wealthy benefactors. It is here where the specter of war once again shapes the museological discussion. While one museum era in the US is launched by the American Civil War, another is indirectly inspired by US intervention in Vietnam, an era which launches passionate challenges to institutional authority by previously disenfranchised groups (Duncan, 2007, p 18-19). The pluralism that we feel today being exuded by many of our most prominent writers is a direct descendant of this period that brought renewed focus to the previously invisible.

We are thus perhaps likely to disregard early contributions and histories that promote and respond to a different set of circumstances, certainly those that we are in the process of disrupting. Yet, as we have already considered here the direct influence of the early art museum models on the earliest museums studies course in the US, it perhaps merits some consideration of the extent to which the more progressive plural values prevalent in our museum studies courses today are present within our largest, wealthiest and most influential museum institutions. Do we still have a model based on practicality and value? Do the values of Sach's Museum Course endure?

Surely, in art museums at least, there is a significant focus on the primacy of collections. And though that statement chafes some philosophically, we must consider how today's collections are valued, insured, protected by security guards, alarms and locked glass cases. Their value is in their cultural importance but also in the financial investment made in them initially and continually. It is measured and assessed annually by numbers that reflect additions to their ranks and the upkeep of inventory and records. "Well-ordered and pleasing" exhibitions are still a mainstay of most museums with significant resources being put into their research and creation and maintenance. They require "academic rigor in museum research and publication" and therefore individuals who are well-trained to do so. These same individuals are required to have "sound ethics and management practices" and continually network in order to keep their museums running. These were the very tenets of Sach's Museum Course, which themselves echo the values of the first US art museums. And to this we can add the importance of the Trustees. They may be increasingly diverse in terms of age, gender, race or income in today's museums, but they still have a

powerful influence on the direction of museums, that may seem democratic except that we see its origins here in the protection of wealth and power.

There is certainly a tension in the dual legacies that we have considered here. Whether its science versus art, or public education versus warehouses for the wealthy, or useful versus decorative, or South Kensington model versus the Louvre model, we desire to promote one over the other. But one has not entirely replaced the other, nor may it be possible to do so. As a new generation of museum practitioners emerges, a broader understanding of these negotiated territories, rather than favoritism of one over the other might help spur the emergence of a more flexible museum model.

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The Origins of Puritan Politics in US Museums

Nation Building and “The Arts” from 1776 to 1806

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ABSTRACT

Established in 1776 by a Declaration of Independence from England, the early United States was in a unique cultural position. Much of what was considered art in Europe was condemned under religious moral codes and revolutionary fervor. Meanwhile the spirit of the Enlightenment encouraged the emerging nation to raise itself through scientific exploration, one of the most famous being the Lewis & Clark Expedition from 1804-1806. In this thirty-year period, the heady, sometimes volatile, combination of righteous morality and new-found power would forever mark the attitude towards “arts” in the United States and contribute to a unique iteration of museums and their practice. Using the first American science museum and art gallery, the Peale Museum, as a departure point, this paper explores the cultural environment of the early US to provide better insight on how early US religious attitudes continue to impact American museums. From modes of portraiture and the theater ban to the “Noble Savage”, these historical factors

reveal a unique and complex foundation that continues to impact the nature of US museums.

Key words: Museum, Art, U.S. History, Puritan, Peale.

RÉSUMÉ

Les origines de la politique puritaine des musées américains : la construction de la nation et « les Arts » de 1776 à 1806

Fondés en 1776 à la suite de leur déclaration d'Indépendance vis-à-vis de la Grande Bretagne, les États-Unis occupent durant ces premières années une position culturelle unique. Les codes moraux et religieux, aussi bien que la ferveur révolutionnaire, condamnent à cette époque l'art Européen. En même temps, l'esprit des Lumières encourage la nation émergente à se développer par le biais de l'exploration scientifique, ce dont témoigne l'Expédition Lewis et Clark de 1804 à 1806. Pendant cette période, la combinaison puissante et parfois versatile de la religion et du nouveau pouvoir marque fortement la définition des arts aux États-Unis, tout en contribuant à l'unicité des musées américains. Le premier musée de science et des beaux-arts aux États-Unis, le Peale Museum, constitue le point de départ de cet article qui montre comment l'environnement culturel de la jeune nation imprègne encore le modèle actuel. Qu'il s'agisse du regard religieux sur le portrait et de l'interdiction du théâtre ou du concept du « noble sauvage », ces facteurs historiques continuent d'influencer les musées américains.

Mots clés : Musée, Art, Histoire des États-Unis, Charles Willson Peale



In the thirty-year period between the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the Lewis & Clark Expedition from 1804-1806, the early United States found itself in a unique cultural position. A new citizenry outwardly shunned Great Britain and its culture as a souvenir of imperial occupation. Primarily Protestant, the former colonies also reviled more broadly European culture as a product of the sinful ostentation of the Catholic Church. Moreover, to a rebel nation impoverished by war, resources were too scarce to encourage or support the arts, especially when they had already been deemed frivolous, traitorous or immoral. And yet, it soon became apparent that the establishment of the United States as an independent country also required the formation of a national identity and thus, culture. How was such a feat accomplished under political, economic, and religious duress?

While the arts were branded as frivolous pursuits of wealthy, hedonist Europeans, science seemed the key to prosperity through the capitalization of abundant natural resources as well as to the legitimation of the intellectual reputation of the new country. Principles of the Enlightenment, resonant among many “Founding Fathers”, encouraged the new nation to raise itself through expanded knowledge and power. Education became the justification for rational museum entertainment. “Noble Savages” were positioned at the bottom of a new American mythology. And funding would be consistently dependent on popular appeal. In this new society, the heady sometimes volatile combination of righteous morality and new-found power would forever mark the attitude towards “arts” in the United States and contribute to a unique evolution of museums and their practice.

Collecting in the Colonies

The first colonies of North America possessed neither public museums nor libraries. The cost of importing objects from Europe and the necessity of concentrating on survival in the early American colonies limited the scope of private collections by placing value on the usefulness of things. Restricted by these conditions as well as by religious condemnation, art collections as we think of them today were non-existent. Books as well, though more useful than art collections, were fragile and heavy.

With art largely absent from the lives of the early colonists, early collections proceeded to be formed slowly along two trajectories: 1) as personal libraries grew with the increasing arrival of ships and immigrants, library societies began to form. By extension the library societies would begin collecting instructive objects, forming small object collections; and 2) the North American continent presented a new opportunity to add to the world’s scientific knowledge. Those possessing a curious spirit collected biological and geological specimens to better observe and understand the new environment (Van Horne, 1985, sec. 10:11), creating scientific collections that would testify to the wonders of the new territory.

Before shedding the yoke of British imperialism, the early colonies embraced the English model for intellectual societies, which quickly multiplied across the US.² Quickly in colonial history, groups of curious intellectuals sharing the same ideas created societies and combined their resources to create larger, more meaningful collections. By 1743³, the American Philosophical Society had been founded and had established a prototype for the American cabinet of

1. By 1740 the Library Company of Philadelphia began collecting objects. See Orosz (2002, p. 14).

2. Other early collecting societies include the American Philosophical Society, was founded in 1769, the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1791, and the East India Marine Society in 1799.

3. Coleman (1939, appendix X) gives the date of the founding of the American Philosophical Society as 1727, but this date rather corresponds to the founding of the JUNTO, a private club founded by Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) to discuss “Morals, Politics, or Natural Philosophy”.

curiosities. Like their European counterparts, these societies undertook scientific research and publication, but not public exhibition or access. (Alexander, 1983, pp. 64-65; Coleman, 1939; Conn, 1998) Before the War for Independence, the most exotic or important specimens were often sent to Europe to enrich the cabinets there. Yet the collections that stayed were a good indication that Americans imagined themselves as a manifestation of the ideals of the Enlightenment. (Orosz, 2002) It is these collections that forge the way for the first public museums in the United States.

Art in the Colonial Context

At the moment when the British Colonies were established in North America, “art” in England had been conceived around elitist standards, lifestyles and vocabularies, making it intentionally exclusive to the wealthy classes. On the other hand, science and scientific collections offered the opportunity to escape ignorance, to improve humanity and raise one’s (or a nation’s) reputation. These ideals were naturally in step with the work necessary to establish new colonies: Man could escape the social status conferred by birth thanks to manual and intellectual labor, and not simply by riches.

This was buttressed by Protestant teachings. Even if scientific societies followed European models, the accentuation of science in the first collections in the American colonies was in direct relation to moral codes dominated by Puritans. According to them, science was useful and encouraged progress, while art was frivolous. “Only ‘men of leisure’ have the luxury to expend time for the acquisition of knowledge that has no further application.” This observation implies that the “middling sort, who learn in order to advance their active pursuits in life,” contribute more to society than their wealthier fellow citizens.⁴ (Brigham, 1995, pp. 18-19) The acquisition of useful knowledge was a moral and patriotic responsibility.

The hostility of Puritans toward the arts of Europe discouraged the profusion of religious images as a violation of the First Commandment (McCoubrey, 1965, p. 3 and the first two sermons). Nudity in particular was condemned. Likewise, ornamental ostentation was suppressed by strictly utilitarian principals⁵. In contrast, “Simplicity, Innocence, Industry, Temperance are Arts that lead to Tranquility” (Poor Richards Almanac, 1786, cited in Neil, 1975, p. 4) were the proper characteristics of Americans. These explicit words constitute the Puritanical roots of the exultation of utility before beauty in American culture and had profound repercussions on museums in the US.

4. On the significance of useful knowledge at that time, Brigham suggests this article, “On the Folly of Engaging in Trifling Studies,” excerpt from the *Columbian Magazine* in the *General Advertiser*, August 14, 1792.

5. See Kouwenhoven (1948) for a discussion of these principals.

Under the strict conditions of the Protestant theocracy in 17th century, fine art in the US was limited almost exclusively to portraiture. Rather than perceived as a luxurious manifestation of ego as in European portraits of the wealthy, early American portraiture was permitted only if it met with the Puritan practice of introspection. Considered the nadir of European art (Silverman, 1976, p. 14), to the American Protestant, portraiture served as a *memento mori* if it were a true and humble likeness. The simple artistic styles with which these portraits were created came directly from the English and Dutch provincial styles of the time (McLanathan, 1973, p. 36) and were limited to a “journeyman’s” approach (McCoubrey, 1965, p. v), making early American portraiture a tradition of sober objectivity and brutal reality. Indeed, early portraitists were not considered “artists” or “painters” in the grand European traditions, but rather as “limners”, amateurs who only sought to produce a basic resemblance to the sitter. By the 18th century, new generations of artists found the restrictions of portraiture frustrating, though they had significantly advanced its quality. Nevertheless, even after the American Revolution in the late 18th century, artists complained about their low status in society. “I am fully sensible that the profession [painting], as it is generally practiced, is frivolous, little useful to society, and unworthy of a man who has talents for more serious pursuits.” (John Trumbull, American artist, 1789, cited in McCoubrey, 1965, p. 40)

While the religious sentiments had created distance between the art of Europe and the art of the Colonies, revolutionary sentiment required keeping a distance from cultural British models as well.⁶ The debate over the value of art versus science in the early US manifested principally as Colonist, often working class, pitted against the hedonistic, aristocratic British. The Europe that produced such fine arts was also the Europe that produced rigid class distinctions and sinful degeneracy, (Elson, 1964, pp. 233-234) both of which the Colonists wished to escape. In seeking independence, the former colonies promoted American industry and the “useful arts”, and sought to undermine British culture. (Nathans, 2003, p. 16) In October 1774, the Articles of Association forbade all commerce with Great Britain until colonial disputes had been settled, citing specifically:

We will, in our several stations, encourage frugality, economy, and industry, and promote agriculture, arts and the manufactures of this country, especially that of wool; and will discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially all horse-racing, and all kinds of gaming, cock-fighting, exhibitions of shews, plays, and other expensive diversions. (*The Continental Association, October 20, 1774, Art. 8*)

Two elements are noteworthy in this excerpt: 1) The singular mention of the wool industry to illustrate “arts and manufacture”; and 2) the comparison of theater and public entertainment to gambling and cock fighting. The former

6. 90% of respondents to first census conducted in the US indicated a British origin. See Key (1971, p. 63).

reflects the religious and revolutionary sentiment of utility and art. And the latter reflects a long history of religious sentiment against theater and public entertainments as other art forms⁷. By forbidding theater as a product of British culture, Congress began to eradicate British influence and promote a national moral code: the American virtue in contrast to British luxury⁸. These sentiments also began to influence all forms of public exhibition, eventually impacting museums and their conception in the US.

In 1788, the Articles of Association and their cultural strictures were abandoned for a national constitution. (Bartron, 2003, p. 86) Nevertheless, anti-theater sentiments persisted long after the birth of the nation in a number of the former colonies, especially those founded for religious reasons. (Nathans, pp. 47-48) In Pennsylvania, for example, the first capital of the new nation, Philadelphia, had served as a battlefield for pro-and anti-theater sentiments since the founding of the state's government in 1682. (Bartron, 2003, p. 81) Pennsylvania had been founded by Quakers, to whom seeing a play was "an offense against God" and incited men to "Disrespect, Cruelty, Debauchery and Sacrilege". (Nathans, 2003, p. 14 et note 3) But, after independence from Britain, colonists were less susceptible to blind adherence to religious ideals. Social debates after the Declaration of Independence concentrated on personal liberty on which the principals of the new country had been founded. (Bartron, 2003)

As immigration increased, the entertainment industry flourished and religious influence began to further wane, introducing a transition from theocracy to democracy. (Shiffler, 1962, p. 218) British tastes and their cultural and social models, first rejected in a fit of revolutionary and anti-establishment fervor, would be resuscitated in a selective manner by national leaders who were resolved to create a new national identity (Anderson, 1991, p. 129; Silverman, 1976) and in an effort to create an international reputation. (Nathans, note 38) Nevertheless the heritage of these laws continued to influence American entertainment forms during the decades to come, and the earliest museums had to delicately navigate the complex politics and social tastes.

The First Museums of the US

Much like in Europe, the first museums in the US arose from private cabinets of curiosity made public, placing useful education far above the arts. The first public collection to call itself a "Museum" in the Western Hemisphere was the Charleston Museum in South Carolina according to Coleman (1939, p. 6) and Alexander (1983, p. 65). It debuted as an extension of the Library Society of Charleston in 1773, collecting articles and objects of learning relative to local history. The majority of its collections were destroyed during the Revolution.

7. See Bartron (2003) and Nathans (2003) for a longer discussion of anti-theater sentiment in the early US.

8. For more historical context, see also Silverman (1976), particularly chapters 25, 28, 42-46.

After the Revolutionary War, it became incumbent on the young nation to demonstrate a lack of inferiority to European countries and their cultures. In the case of fine art, the US was ill-equipped and uninterested in rivaling European fine arts. But where it came to science, the exotic and unknown terrain of North America provided a splendid opportunity to rival Europe and establish a national reputation by radically expanding human knowledge. Whereas early colonists and voyagers might have sent back to Europe the best American specimens of flora and fauna, the new independent nation desired to forge its own spectacular collections (Peale *et al.*, 1983, p. 446). The rise of science museums, scientific societies, as well as private and public collections is a direct result of this desire. (Bergeron, 2015, p. 48)

The first museum to claim the title “American” epitomized this attitude toward science and only relied on art as documentary. The short-lived (1783-1784) American *Musaeum* of Pierre-Eugène du Simitière was an eclectic private collection of books, documents, portraits and landscapes, engravings of natural specimens, ethnographic objects, and biological specimens. Its brief life leaves little to emulate, but demonstrates a Protestant hierarchy of science and art.

It is only when Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827), began to exhibit his own paintings as a public gallery in his own house around 1782 and later as a scientific museum in 1786 that the nation finally had a museum of lasting impression and one that incorporated visual arts more fully. Nevertheless, the inclusion of art in a public museum necessitated some political agility on the part of Peale. Former soldier, revolutionary, self-taught artist and polymath, Peale was the perfect incarnation of an American entrepreneur to found what is often recognized as the first museum in the United States and to navigate the tricky and precarious politics and religious opinion of the time.

It is no coincidence that one of the key phrases employed by the Pennsylvanian legislature to justify the eventual abolition of longstanding anti-theater laws—“rational amusement”—was the same as that employed by Peale in his publicities to attract visitors.⁹ (Brigham, 1995, p. 19) The timing of his endeavor was perfect. The public was hungry for entertainment after war and religion had kept it scant. To navigate the complexity of the times, museum entertainment was advertised as education. His many efforts to navigate the complexity of the emerging American culture, still caught between politics and religion, created the original museum model that still finds traces in today’s American museums.

Peale’s first gallery, a sales gallery for his own work, was an unabashed commercial endeavor. Peale was well-placed and well-connected, his military past giving him access to important men. Taking advantage of these connections, of revolutionary sentiment and of a nation searching for heroes to venerate,

9. A term that is repeated as late as 1908 by Frederic A. Lucas, director of the Brooklyn Museum, in his speech given to the Staten Island Association of Arts and Sciences in 1908. See Genoways and Andrei (2008, p. 60).

Peale painted icons for a new world. (Alexander, 1983, ch. 3; Neil, 1975, p. 46) When Peale added to his personal picture gallery a “Repository of Natural Curiosities” (Brigham, 1996, p. 183) he founded the first *popular* museum (Sellers, 1980). This new Peale Museum distinguished itself by recognition of both science and religion. The portraits that had been the central focus of Peale’s sales gallery were now placed high on the wall above natural specimens. As representations of humanity, rather than works of art, portraits were a means of exhibiting the highest creation of God “placed at the head of animal creation” (Hardie, 1793, p. 230). The portraits, following Puritan tradition, were “good and loyal likenesses” (*Ibid.*) to demonstrate the paragon of progress (Neil, 1975, p. 31) – a level to which visitors could aspire. (Brigham, 1995, p. 59) Favoring natural science over art allowed Peale to appeal to the proper moral and patriotic sympathies of the time, but it also allowed him to feature art within this approved context.

This public museum, like the original gallery, was a private enterprise. According to the Peale Papers (published family archives) the idea of a “museum” (a scientific focus) as opposed to a “gallery” (solely art) was suggested by a friend, who mentioned that he would prefer “seeing such articles of curiosity than any paintings whatever”. (Peale, Miller, Hart, & Appel, 1983, p. 445) Following the lure of the more popular appeal of science was a strictly business decision geared toward earning more money. (*Ibid.* p. 337) Having trained as a leatherworker and cobbler, Peale developed an interest in enriching his natural collection with taxidermy specimens (Brigham, 1996), launching his museum in 1786 after he felt he had acquired enough.

Mr. Peale, ever desirous to please and entertain the Public, will make a part of his House a Repository for Natural Curiosities. The Public he hopes will thereby be gratified in the sight of many of the Wonderful Works of Nature which are now disclosed and but seldom seen. The several Articles will be classed and arranged according to their several species; and for the greater ease to the Curious, on each piece will be inscribed the place from whence it came, and the name of the Donor, unless forbid with such other information as may be necessary. (Peale et al., 1983, p. 448)

It is important to note that Peale, from the beginning, attaches labels to every object in the museum, staying true to the proposed educational nature of his museum and perhaps anchoring an American museum perspective toward education above all. Indeed, in the young nation learning and freedom were mutually supportive ideas, though both were still colored by religious standards. Natural Philosophy, the study of nature, was the height of scientific learning and therefore encouraged American progress and continued independence. To highlight the serious scientific nature of his Museum, Peale published the fact that his museum followed the Linnaean System of scientific nomenclature (Alexander, 1983, p. 62; Brigham, 1995, p. 59). While the history of the

Peale's Museum often cites his use of the Linnaean System, this is more likely a product of advertisement and desire rather than fact¹⁰.

One thing is certain: the effort to follow Linnaeus' System fully ascribes the Peale Museum into modernity. (Bergeron, 2015, p. 52) Within a couple weeks of turning his venture toward science and education, The American Philosophical Society offered Peale a membership later granting him status as Conservator of the Society's own collection.¹¹ (Orosz, 2002, p. 20) By centering his museum on science, and subordinating art to a supportive role, Peale sought to position himself and his museum at the center of political and religious thought that demanded the utility of knowledge, art, and even leisure.

As a Pennsylvanian, a Philadelphian, a Revolutionary, an artist and naturalist, Peale helped begin to give shape to the distinct American culture (Warner, 1990, p. 119) for which Americans sought in the years following the revolution. His placement in Philadelphia, a *de facto* US capital for a while, ensured that the scope of his efforts and influence would be national. Peale established the trajectory for the museum in America for decades to come.

National Identity Without National Funding

The nation that took form after its independence was impoverished and politically precarious¹². Without large financial or military resources to establish a national identity, there was little room for the creation of capital or culture, or moreover the enjoyment of either. Nevertheless, it was evident to the founders that these were imperative to the survival of the new nation. The creation of myths and culture would help forge a national identity and a competitive international reputation on an image of fortitude and durability. (Neil, 1975, p. 13) Nevertheless, even if such things were clearly important, there was hesitation by the federal government to finance museums which promoted these things.

Peale's museum once again provides an excellent example: Shortly after its founding, Peale's museum became famous. Peale announced his intention to make the museum national. He invited wealthy men to become trustees, counting among them many of the Founding Fathers of the nation. (Alexander, 1983, p. 69) Thanks to his astute involvement of Thomas Jefferson, elected third President of the US in 1801, Peale was asked to sketch and document the exhumation of a newly discovered and fully articulated mastodon skeleton in the same year. (Pierpont, 2009; Semonin, 2000) The skeleton – the first fully articulated prehistoric in the world (*Ibid.* Pierpont, p. 9) – was exhibited

10. According to his private journal cited in the Peale Papers (1983, pp.581-2) Peale did not read Latin. (Peale., p. 525n) Moreover, many scientists found the taxonomy difficult and ambiguous. See Schofield (1989, pp. 25-27).

11. Bergeron (2015, p. 50), mentions this was a position previously held by Du Simitière from 1776 to 1781.

12. The US faced repeated wars: The War of 1812, the Mexican American War (1846-1848), the American Civil War (1861-1865) and the Hispanic American War (1898).

at Peale's Museum, attracting thousands. The mastodon achieved a celebrity status and soon became a national symbol. (*Ibid.* Semonin)

Peale's Mastodon would also cause a great stir internationally. Jefferson, a respected naturalist, entered into a debate with the famous French scientist, George Louis LeClerc, comte de Buffon (1707-1788) about the implications of the mastodon on biological superiority. The Count had declared that the American continents were impotent and unable to produce anything other than fragile creatures. (Baltimore City Life Museums, 1992; Jefferson, 1853 [1781], pp. 45, 48+). The implications for a new nation and all inhabitants of North and South America were clear: From this perspective, all American species were destined to become degenerate and inferior to European species. Referencing the massive mastodon and its clear superiority in size over anything found on the European continent, Jefferson refuted these allegations championing the reputation and legitimacy of the new nation and its citizenry. (*Ibid.* Jefferson, pp. 42-80+) From these debates, it is clear that science played an important role in national identity and reputation.

Encouraged by the success of the mastodon debates, Jefferson began planning the first US expedition into the western half of the continent. As well as adding to its burgeoning scientific reputation, the "Frontier" also posed an opportunity for the new nation to construct a mythology. In the context already devised by Peale, where the heroes of the Revolution and therefore paragons of human progress crowned galleries of natural specimens, Native Americans represented a stage of "uncivilized antiquity" that stood in contrast to this "progress". (Bennett, 1995, p. 82; Brigham, 1995, ch. 7; Conn, 1998, pp. 12, 35) The "Noble Savage" and his archeological and ethnological artifacts became testaments to an "uncivilized savagery" (Poulot, 2000, pp. 51-54) that God ordained to be eradicated by progress (Americans). This process of "patrimonialization, identification, valorization, appropriation and reinterpretation of ancient objects in a contemporary perspective permitted a society to project itself into the future." (Bergeron, 2010, p. 152, author's translation) In 1804, the Lewis and Clark Expedition began its scientific exploration of the largely unknown territories of the west. Its collection of objects and specimens became the foundation and much of the justification for Manifest Destiny. At the end of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1806, Peale's museum became the repository for these collections, firmly underscoring his museum's value to the nation. (Schofield, 1989, p. 22)

To Peale, this seemed the perfect moment to obtain an official national title as well as national funds. But Jefferson refused to consider federal funding, whether the museum was "national" or not, (Alexander, 1983, p. 69; Schofield, 1989, p. 22) even though Jefferson had secured federal financing for the exhumation of the mastodon as the "First Scientific Expedition of the Nation". (Pierpont, 2009) Perhaps uneasy because the patronage of culture in Europe was dominated by the aristocracy and the Church, it is also likely that Jefferson was unwilling to disrupt the delicate and emerging balance of state power

under federalism, when he insisted on the fact that the US Constitution “left such encouragement to each State”. (Jefferson, 1809)

The Peale Papers suggest an alternative and perhaps complementary reason for Jefferson’s resistance to federal funding of museums—a reason that once again implicated the Puritans. In Pennsylvania, Quakers feared the interference of the government in education as something that would defy or contradict their strict religious teachings. Since the Colony’s founding, education had been directed by religious standards and religious groups. An education managed by the government was considered almost heretical, and at minimum undesirable. Museums, modeled by Peale’s and in order to avoid similar religious dissatisfaction on more social grounds, already evoked educational goals instead of frivolous entertainment. While this education was clearly supplementary to a larger educational system, government funding of museums may have been considered tantamount to government management of education. By this logic, educational institutions, including museums, remained separate from the government. (Peale et al., 1983, p. 583) The lack of government funding, meant that Peale and every other private museum holder was forced to constantly appeal to popular tastes in order to gain admissions. Many museums failed and others found their collections absorbed into travelling road shows of curiosities that were more concerned with spectacle than truth.¹³ It is a issue with which US museums continue to contend today.

Conclusion

Peale ultimately failed in his desire to obtain national funding to create a national museum, the likes of which would not be seen until half a century later with the opening of the Smithsonian and almost a century after that the founding of the National Gallery. But Peale did succeed in establishing an initial model of the American museum, one that still pervades the existing system, whether we know this history or not. Consider the American relationship to art, the role of education and funding in US Museums and the treatment of objects related to indigenous peoples.

In the United States, art, its practice, study, collection and exhibition continue to be colored by a view of frivolity. Those who are more “rational” or “useful” tend to be more highly regarded. Even as recently as 2014, President Obama famously stated, “[F]olks can make a lot more, potentially, with skilled manufacturing or the trades than they might with an art history degree,” revealing the lingering adherence to Puritan values in relationship to the arts in the US. By extension, art in the US continues to be the province of the wealthy. While there is a long history of how art museums came to dominate the museum

13. For a longer treatment of the American museum history in relationship with travelling circuses, see Dennett (1997).

model in the US, it does not begin until the industrial revolution in America massively expands the wealth in the US, creating a new aristocratic class.

Even in light of that, the focus of US museums continues to be their utility, wherein education is paramount. Certainly these efforts were emphasized by movements towards improved public education in museums in the 1930s (McClellan, 2008, pp. 171-172) and 1970s, but we see from this earlier history that it has always been imperative. Furthermore, the utility of museums continues to be linked to their financing. US museums continue to be privately funded institutions. While federal funding sources exist (National Endowment for the Arts, among others) competition for their limited funds is fierce, often won by larger, better funded museums, and is limited to the duration of special projects. State funding as well through humanities councils is so wide-spread that it often amounts to only a small percentage of a museum's total budget. These and funds from private foundations are almost always tied to goals measured by the number of people who benefit (find useful) from the project and so are frequently tied to educational activities.

Finally, there is one further area in which today's museums follow in the footsteps of the original US Museums. Collections comprising Native American objects, many of which were collected long ago, reflect the outdated view of Native Americans as a curiosity, and an "uncivilized" element of the "untouched" frontier. Certainly, there are museums that excel at re-examining such traditions, the National Museum of the American Indian, for example, but there are a remarkable number of museums which still imply that Native American cultures are all but extinct, referring to collections objects as "specimens" - implying non-human qualities - and "artifacts" - implying a dead culture. There is as well a tendency to refer to Native Americans as a homogenous culture, despite the vast and numerous nations that existed here before ever a European settler set foot. These small acts of miscomprehension perpetuate stereotypes and betray latent values that we can trace directly to the early politics of US museums.

Today's US museums might seem very similar to their European and British counterparts but there is a unique feel to museum practice and museum study. While cross cultural similarities may be evident, differences in character are harder to detect let alone comprehend. When this history is unfolded we begin to gain a greater understanding of the founding characteristics of our field, some of which continue to have impact. Moreover, more knowledgeable of the past, we can better plan our path into the future.

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The Politics of Representation in South African Museums

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“Most people have little or no say in the depiction of their own history in textbook, libraries and research institutions [museums]. The meaning portrayed about Africans is painful to recall. Our museums represented the kind of heritage which glorified whites’ activities and colonial history.”
(Nelson Mandela, 1997)

ABSTRACT

Politics are an integral part of our museums, and, in light of the question of power this paper aims to unpack the politics of representation in South African museums in the post-apartheid era. I argue that the politics of the colonial era and apartheid era still prevail in South African museums today. In South African politics during apartheid, certain race groups had privileges over the others, and museums and public commemorations were affected. Museums represented the power holders, their concepts of museology, of public commemoration and society. In apartheid South Africa, the focus was on white control and Afrikaner Nationalism. Following the first democratic elections

of 1994, the focus in representations in the heritage sector, thus in museums, shifted to reconciliation (as the country was divided in a way that certain groups were deprived of basic human rights) and nation building. There were major policy changes to enforce transformation. McGregor & Schumaker (2006) pointed out that state-led commemorations were selective, liable to elevate the ruling party ignoring the youth and women. Kratz (2011) placed emphasis on the importance of rhetorics of value in museums. Rhetorics of value invoke a range of experiences, deal with thematic content, thread throughout an exhibition or museum conveying ways objects are treated and presented, and are also related to visitors' own identities, judgments and perceptions of worth (Kratz, 2011). There are a number of techniques that one can apply to study the politics of museums. I will use this concept to analyse the museums within eThekweni Municipality and unpack the politics of representation. This paper pays attention to the emphasis on representing settler histories and male leaders and questions how women and Africans are represented in museums.

Key words: Representation, politics, settler, museums.

RÉSUMÉ

Les politiques de représentation dans les musées sud-africains

La politique fait partie intégrante de nos musées et, à la lumière de la question du pouvoir, cet article vise à explorer les politiques de représentation dans les musées sud-africains à l'ère de l'apartheid. Je soutiens que les politiques de l'époque coloniale et de l'apartheid prévalent encore dans les musées sud-africains aujourd'hui. Durant l'apartheid, certains groupes raciaux avaient des privilèges sur les autres, cette politique affectant les musées ainsi que les commémorations publiques. Les musées représentaient les détenteurs du pouvoir mais aussi leurs conceptions de la muséologie, des commémorations publiques et de la société. En Afrique du Sud au temps de l'apartheid, l'accent était mis sur le contrôle par les blancs et le nationalisme afrikaner. À la suite des premières élections démocratiques de 1994, les représentations dans le secteur du patrimoine, donc dans les musées, se sont concentrées sur la réconciliation (le pays étant divisé de manière à priver certains groupes des droits humains fondamentaux) et à édifier la nation. Des changements majeurs ont été apportés à la politique pour imposer cette transformation. McGregor & Schumaker (2006) ont souligné que les commémorations dirigées alors par l'État étaient sélectives, susceptibles d'élever le parti au pouvoir en ignorant les jeunes et les femmes. Kratz (2011) a mis l'accent sur l'importance de la rhétorique utilisée dans les musées. Ces rhétoriques se déclinent en une gamme d'expériences, de contenus thématiques, illustrant tout au long des

expositions ou des musées des manières de traiter et de présenter les objets. Elles sont également liées à l'identité, aux jugements et aux perceptions des visiteurs (Kratz, 2011). Il existe un certain nombre de techniques que l'on peut appliquer pour étudier la politique des musées. J'utilise ce concept pour analyser les musées de la municipalité d'eThekweni et révéler leur politique de représentation. Cet article met l'accent sur la représentation de l'histoire de colons et des leaders masculins et s'interroge sur la représentation des femmes et des Africains dans les musées.

Mots-clés : représentation, politique, colon, musée.



Introduction

It is important to note that history chronicles past events as they unfolded, and, on the other hand, heritage encompasses our past that is worth celebrating. It is a historical fact that black South Africans were oppressed for decades under colonial rule and apartheid, and it is heritage worth celebrating that they were able to overcome oppression and the country became democratic. History and heritage are interlinked and museum professionals mainly consist of historians. Museums are public heritage and seek to present public memories and are also places of public engagement. The hegemony of European dominated museum exhibition dates from when the first museum was established in South Africa. Attention is paid to settler histories and male leaders, and the representation of women and Africans as a society is in question. To understand this, it is imperative to look at the politics of representation from a global perspective, then look at the background of South African museums and some of the changes in the post-apartheid era. It is important to note that efforts have been made to transform museums, however the museums established during apartheid have not been drastically transformed to represent the people of South Africa and the status quo has not been adequately changed. The efforts can be seen in policy changes and the establishment of new museums, but it is questionable how much transformation has been applied in museums that existed in the pre-democratic era and what informs representations of history and society in museums.

The politics of representation

This paper is concerned with the politics of representation in South African museums; it studies exhibitions in two museums that represent national history. Debate on the politics of representation has been welcomed by scholars from different parts of the world. It is important to note that the politics of

representation is about power dynamics in what is represented, by whom, and the purpose for which it is represented. It embodies different aspects that include language, context, perspective, social meanings and the political atmosphere of a place. The museums that are the focus of this study opened during apartheid and represent the hegemony of European rule. There are a number of other countries in different parts of the world that also were colonised by Europeans. Museums were established in those countries and also represent the hegemony of European rule, disregarding or misinterpreting other groups. It is also apparent that patriarchy is a global phenomenon and museums also represented the power of men; women fell under the marginalised groups, and even European women were marginalised. This section offers a discussion of the politics of representation from different parts of the world with emphasis on groups that were marginalised by colonial authorities. Pre-colonial societies, mostly in Africa, relied on oral tradition to pass on history and heritage from generation to generation. Europeans wrote books; these books were based on their interpretations of the people they encountered, and they were at liberty about how to chronicle events of the past. As Africans participated in formal education, schools administered by Europeans, the books that were used were written by Europeans, and other forms of transferring knowledge were dominated by them. After decades of colonisation, post-colonial societies suffered with the hegemony trap and South Africa is not an exception to that. Gender, race and culture remain dominant in the study of museum representations.

Politics of representation and the non-Europeans

Society in general treats museums and archives as barriers of knowledge and what they see in museum displays as unquestionable facts. Desai (2000) outlines that representation can be understood as a historically determined construction that is mediated by social, ideological and cultural processes; however many forms of representation are presented as facts using selective processes that define, order, classify, and name social reality. Power holders and, in most cases, government structures are able to make decisions about what aspects of history are represented in museums and what is celebrated as public heritage. Museums arose as complements to the formation of European nation states, and in the rest of the world they developed as a colonist phenomenon (De Gorgas, 2016). Methods of analysis of culture and heritage were imposed by European countries upon non-European countries (De Gorgas, 2016). This is why one would find statues and museum displays in India, for instance, that look the same as those you would find in South Africa. These statues and museum displays would not be representative of Indians nor Africans but rather of colonial power. For example, in the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata, India, one found statues that are identical to the ones found in the city centre of Durban, South Africa. The notion of European imposition on non-European identities has been expanded in various debates.

Desai (2000) argues that the marginalised criticize dominant modes of representation as they produce and perpetuate stereotypes. They also represent what those with power think of them and how they interpret their history and cultural heritage. Dos Santos (2005) in her paper on the representation of black people in Brazil argued that museum narratives either silence or exaggerate the race issue and operate by means of denial and the use of stereotypes. In her paper, she found it critical to unpack the concept of race and stated, 'The concept of race is a social construction that supposes differences between groups of human beings to be fixed and natural (biological and hereditary), limiting each individual member or group of a fundamental type. The concept has mostly served dominant groups who wish to mark off other groups as inferior' (Dos Santos, 2005, p. 52). It is also critical in the South African discourse, as race has been used to define people and for apartheid's divide and rule strategy that still poses a challenge in the country today. De Gorgas (2016) further argues, 'The museum that arises from a hegemonic political project remembers 'Black' identities solely to place them in the frame of the past history, thereby crystallizing their figures in history as subaltern people and slaves in the public imagination' (p. 298). This paper is mainly concerned about the representation of black people and women in South African museums, and De Gorgas' analysis is imperative in understanding the politics of representation, especially of the previously marginalised and neglected. White supremacy continues to be supported in museums from the early beginning of African slavery to the present day (De Gorgas, 2016). It is therefore not surprising for the racially and culturally marginalised to have deep concerns about meanings produced with regards to their history, culture and experience (Desai, 2000). Even though white supremacy continues, it does not go unchallenged; different parts of the world, including South Africa, have criticised how museums support the superiority of white people.

In Brazil, like other parts of the Americas and Africa, black movements have been influenced by political actions against racial inequality in the United States of America (Dos Santos, 2005). Initiatives on the black history of Afro-Brazilians led to the creation of the Afro-Brazilian Museum, which opened only in 1982, and another in 1988 through an agreement between Brazil and several African nations (Dos Santos, 2005). The politics of the time, the growth of black movements in that part of the world, influenced the changes in heritage projects. In the post-colonial era of different states, multiculturalism emerged as a way of promoting and representing diversity and to redress imbalances of representation. It was adopted in South Africa and promoted both in policies and through the media. However, Desai (2000) argues that multiculturalism needs to address complex relationships between subjectivity and power in relation to culture. Desai further asserts that it has been criticised for often speaking for entire groups of subordinate people and thereby positions them in relation to the dominant group; additionally, she states that representations in multiculturalism are positioned in relation to unequal power dynamics (Desai, 2000). What is exhibited as history, values, beliefs and identities of the

community in major museums are in fact representations of certain powerful groups in society (Desai, 2000). However, there are exceptional cases where the experiences of ordinary people are presented in exhibitions, but the process is guided by powerful groups in most cases. Desai suggests that the relationship between representation and power be analysed in terms of historical moments, locales and subject positions that arise out of the complex network of domination and subordination. However, there is a question of how the previously marginalized are presented when these changes are being made, who informs what is represented, and what happens to the existing representations. In the case of South Africa, there are notable developments, however, previous exhibitions have not been adequately challenged and transformed. In emerging multicultural nations like South Africa, cultural identity, social justice, productive diversity and civic engagement are fundamental for their diverse citizenship (Galla, 2016). Galla also analyses problematic issues that are in the way of redressing past imbalances of biased representation. In addition, gender needs to be addressed. The predominance of academic publication has a profound impact on the erosion of intangible heritage elements and living cultures (Galla, 2016). The majority of museum exhibitions are informed by the institution's archives and published work. Galla also recognises that heritage institutions have transformed and makes an example of the Arts of Islam Gallery at the Louvre. Galla (2016) argues that museums focusing on the identities of other racial or cultural groups have inadequately addressed the centrality of gender equality in museums, the issue being a space of sharing authority, power and quality of life.

Politics of representation and gender

Public history has excluded the domestic world and focused on prominent figures (Daniels, 2012). The domestic world often involves women and youth. However, it is important to note that the work of women has been beyond domestic constraints and has made a great contribution to building the nation, much of which has been unrecognised. Anna Reading (2014), with reference to the Parramatta Female Factory site in Australia, which served as a workers factory for women and girls and as a mental asylum and later as a Catholic girls' orphanage, explored how women have been featured in heritage and critically analysed the history of gendered heritage. The project involved former inmates, academics and artists interested in the site from a feminist perspective; they took tours, conducted oral history interviews and documented the site, producing online content (Reading, 2014). This paper is also concerned about gendered presentations as a feature of the politics of representations in museums. According to Reading (2014), this project produced hidden aspects of women's lives as part of the larger stories of forgotten Australians. The Female Factory Memory Project is used to show one of the current ways in which gender and feminism have come to engage with heritage campaigns, practices and studies in ways that are increasingly international and digital (Reading, 2014). The way that women's histories have been featured in recent

heritage projects has also been described by scholars as a way of producing previously neglected heritage. In support of this view, Reading states that heritage structures have turned a blind eye on the issue of gender and it is only recently heritage has expressed interest in gender and women's histories. Such sites have started being interested in finding ways for heritage to be inclusive of the empowerment of women and gender equality.

Reading (2014) suggests that attentiveness to gendered curation, protection, and preservation of the past are some of the ways in which a feminist approach to heritage and heritage studies can be used to illuminate particular gendered processes. Reading argues that gendered processes are structured around four broad areas of enquiry, which are heritage representation, consumption, production and policies. These areas were used to examine gendered heritage and developments in this sector. There has also been a critique on how men and women relate to exhibits differently, or in the same ways, and how masculinities and femininities are constructed through heritage sites in relation to visitors (Reading, 2014). This also indicates how issues of gender come to play in the heritage sector and how visitors encounter heritage with a gendered perspective. By 2013, there were new heritage policies that entered a new phase responding to gender inequality within heritage and culture, and they have been acknowledged as key drivers to developing international policies (Vinson, 2007, cited in Reading, 2014). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) mentions the significance of women's involvement in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The heritage sector has shown a shift in the way heritage is presented, as academics find pieces of history that were not recognized as having heritage significance but the worthiness of such heritage representation has been challenged and pushed to recognize the neglected parts of history and heritage.

Background of South African museums

Dlamini (2001) looked at the concept of heritage and argued that sites can be understood to represent an individual's or group's inheritance from ancestors; however, it is not always inherited but can be presented by created relics of the past. From the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, southern Africa experienced major heritage transformation (McGregor & Schumaker, 2006). That was a period of heightened political control for colonial authorities, where they marked their territories and passed segregation laws. Heritage during that era was categorised as colonial and settler state nation building and national pride for the white minority. Politics played a role in how identity was shaped; heritage sites represented British expansion while African heritage was undermined, there was a lack of cultural representation for Africans and major racial division (McGregor and Schumaker, 2006). Those in power had control over how heritage was represented, and which racial and cultural groups were represented. In that period, there was a focus on white control, Afrikaner nationalism and the achievements of colonial authorities.

An example would be the Voortrekker Monument in South Africa's capital city, Pretoria, which is a representation of Afrikaner nationalism and pride. The monument still stands today and there are differing views on what it represents in present-day South Africa.

Dlamuka (2003) asserts that museums played an instrumental role in fostering myths about whites' land ownership. This was not a challenging task as it is not easy to find archival records by South African societies before the arrival of Europeans. These societies relied on oral tradition to pass on history and heritage to different generations. It is mainly in the 1980s that histories paid attention to oral history, using it to tell histories of the marginalised. Museums were an integral part of the colonial and apartheid systems and the government dictated what was represented in museums. Museums have been segregated as a result of white supremacist influences that deterred other groups; this also applied in Durban, as displays in their museums attempted to improve on white seniority and heroism (Dlamuka, 2003).

Dlamuka argues that local history museums have been manipulated to become political arenas, in which definitions of identity, presentation and culture are asserted, becoming sites of contestation. The power holders decide on what is suited to be public heritage and how history is represented in museums. In the early 1900s, museums entered a terrain that was influenced by racism, segregation and then apartheid, thus becoming centres of both historical and political discourse and mirrors of white domination in South Africa (Dlamuka, 2003). Dlamuka points out how museums were concerned about the conservation and collection of biased history that only registered the triumph of whites and marginalisation of indigenous knowledge. Much of this still prevails in our museums today, in the post-apartheid era. According to an interview with Paul Tichmann, former researcher of Durban Local History Museums (by Dlamuka), pre-colonial knowledge systems and history were not well recorded thus history became relevant only when there was contact with white people. The politics of the day often played a role in how monuments and museums represented the past and what the emphasis should be on. The year 1924 marked the centenary of the arrival of Europeans in Port Natal (present-day Durban). Museums, including the Durban Museum, were mounted with the theme of the 1824-1924 centenary (Dlamuka, 2003). Museum collections of that time period served an ideological purpose of enriching the idea that Afrikaners were noble and innocent migrants in pursuit of civilization and Christianization (Dlamuka, 2003). Dlamuka's main argument is 'Museums always involve the cultural, social, and political business of negotiations and value judgements and they always have cultural, social and political implications' (p.1).

Following the victory of the National Party and the institutionalisation of apartheid in 1948, the segregation laws of the colonial government were strengthened. The official discourse during apartheid resulted from affirmed racist beliefs about black inferiority and lack of civilization, as commonly held by whites from the time of their first contact with the indigenous people of South

Africa (Marschall, 2009). Museums represented history from the perspectives of whites and the representation of Afrikaner struggle for self-determination dominated. Exhibitions on South African wars represented African participation as peripheral and not worthy of being exhibited. There has been a biased representation of war or military history in museums, where Africans were shown as being barbaric and standing in the way of civilization. The Old House Museum was opened in 1953 with the emphasis on how it would be a useful resource for the 1924 centenary of the Borough of Durban, and that was a reflection of the ideological view of the white settlers (Dlamuka, 2003).

The 1980s had a number of political events such as violence in the townships but the end of the decade marked the collapse of apartheid as major laws were reversed. Dlamuka argued that exhibitions established in KwaZulu-Natal in this period were influenced by the nature of political instability following the establishment of the KwaZulu Monument Council. The KwaZulu Cultural Museum was established in 1985; according to Dlamuka this museum overlooked certain aspects of history and downgraded the history of Zululand. As the apartheid system enforced segregation, museums were divided into 'own affairs' (whites) and 'other affairs' (others); the segregation policies applied in museums were opposed by the South African Museum Association of South Africa (SAMA) in the 1980s (Coombes, 2003). Rassool (2000) points out that it was during the 1980s that in South African scholarship, history 'from below', emerged as a counter-narrative to power and domination, seeking to incorporate subaltern, ordinary voices in an approach to resistance that was understood as founded upon ordinary experience. New content was being produced for museums to use. SAMA opposed segregation in museums in different forms; at their 1988 conference, the participants challenged heritage institutions and representations of heritage, arguing for dynamic and interactive cultural representation (Coombes, 2003). Coombes points out that the conference outlined four major areas that needed to be addressed in museums; culture – represented settler history; cultural and social history of the working environment; black labour – virtually hidden histories of slavery's contribution to white settler wealth; and natural environment.

Museums in apartheid South Africa were discriminative just like the apartheid laws. The politics of apartheid prevailed in museums; they did not fairly represent the diversity of the country. They focused on political power, domination and superiority. The post-apartheid era sought to transform this.

Museums in post-apartheid South Africa

In 1994, South Africa had its first democratic elections after decades of racial segregation that ensured unequal distribution of the country's wealth and public services. It became necessary for the country to be reconstructed and find new meanings of being South African. As a country that was racially divided for decades, South Africa had to undergo reconciliation; there was a need for the country to be rebuilt and create a space where people belong to

this one nation that is not racially divided and nobody experiences discrimination. Nation building and rainbow nation – due to diversity in culture and language – became the major themes of the democratic dispensation of the new South Africa. The new notions of nation building were centred on inclusivity, reconstructing public institutions and adding black history and heritage to build new nations with a focus on black nationalists and liberation struggles.

Museums in democratic South Africa claimed to redress past imbalances and offer representations of previously marginalised groups. There is an aspect that these new museums and new exhibitions continued to neglect, which is the issue of gender. According to Dlamuka:

The realities of male dominance that museum professionals, regardless of gender, contribute to those gender notions with judgement and decisions on how and what to display... The act of collecting and interpreting women's history is subject to an acceptance that history is a discourse about the past. The past itself has gone and only being brought back again by historians in books, not as actual memoirs. The challenge, then, is to establish the right of women to share in the past in such a way as to reinforce their state of the present. (Dlamuka, 2003, p. 94-95)

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‘Controversy over public representations of the past has fostered a range of self-conscious efforts to create displays and experiences more suited to postcolonial and post-apartheid contexts. Such initiatives can provide insights into postcolonial identity politics, cultures of state power, and the configuration of transnational interests and flows of ideas that have, in some contexts, allowed for innovative changes and in others have perpetuated old exclusions and division.’ (McGregor & Schumaker, 2006, p. 649). In South Africa, this controversy can be traced back to the late 1980s when museum officials started discussing ways in which museums could be more inclusive and not one-sided. The 1980s was also when major apartheid laws collapsed and there were major talks on the possibility of political transition in South Africa. However, it was only in the late 1990s that policies of heritage transformation were passed. McGregor and Schumaker (2006) argued that the construction is closely linked to identity politics thus has a close relationship with nation and state building projects. Ideas of national identity and shared history are likely to influence how the past is represented in heritage institutions. They point out that, even in the post-colonial era, particular views of the African past are promoted. African history, to a large extent, has not been reinterpreted in ways that move away from the colonist state of writing. Themes like ‘Rainbow Nation’ are state monopolized definitions of national culture and are similar to pre-democracy (McGregor and Schumaker, 2006). ‘State-led commemorations of nationalist

achievements and struggle histories have been highly selective, liable to elevated ruling party histories and heroes often ignoring unions, youth or women and dealing with violence selectively or not at all' (McGregor & Schumaker, 2006, p. 654).

Rankin (2013), in her study on post-apartheid museums and monuments, points out that the challenge that equals redistribution of wealth is the need to transfer cultural capital to give recognition to those who were long marginalised. She argues that the ruling party has chosen not to obliterate all signifiers of white culture as it vaunted a policy of inclusivity. This resulted in new sculptures and new museums joining those that have long existed and praised the achievement of white people as black people were barbarically fighting against civilisation. Statues of South African Nobel Peace Prize awardees (Luthuli, Tutu, De Klerk and Mandela) were erected in Cape Town in 2005, and Rankin (2013) argues that they project an appealing sense of vulnerability rather than authority. However, in post-apartheid South Africa, there have been projects to rename institutions and roads, replacing colonial heroes with struggle heroes. The Museum of Military History still focuses greatly on European wars and white heroes; the changes that have been made in this museum are the elimination of offensive terms in the inscriptions (Rankin, 2003). A number of other exhibitions and museums that represent military history still focus on white heroes, like the Fort Durnford Museum, Talana Museum and Fort Schanskop. At the Museum of Military History, there is only one display on Umkhonto We Sizwe, the military arm of the African National Congress, and it focuses on the uniform (Rankin, 2013). She further states, 'It is no easy take for museums to change ideological focus when their collections and exhibitions were initiated under colonial rule and shaped under apartheid' (Rankin, 2013, p.76). There is a slight shift in newly formed museums, however the bulk of old representations have not changed.

Approaches to studying exhibitions

The ways in which museum exhibitions are set up and presented to the public or intended audiences influences the different meanings of the exhibitions. In Crooke's study on the Northern Ireland Museum and museums in Cape Town townships, he argues that exhibitions in museums have a role to play in engaging the complex and contested history of a region (Crooke, 2005). I aim to unpack the politics of representation in two selected South African museums with emphasis on the dominance of settler history and the way in which men dominate the representation of history of society. Corinne Kratz worked on a travelling photographic exhibition entitled 'The Okiek Portraits', with photographs taken in Kenya. In exhibiting these photographs, Kratz (2002) aimed at eradicating stereotypes attached to the people of Kenya and African people. She discussed issues of representation and explained how certain groups may have been represented in a particular way on previous occasions and were attached to particular stereotypes that are difficult to change. A trend that

can be noticed in past colonies is that the colonisers presented themselves as powerful groups that sought to bring civilisation to people they considered inferior. This was done in such a way that even written material had that same thinking which was represented in different spaces. In analysing the Okiek Portraits, Kratz looked at the text placements, photograph order and the manner in which they were hung, and described distinctive features and the type of captions. She argued, "... exhibition texts are more than a source of information. They are also design elements whose placement, order and typography might signal beginnings and endings, differential emphases, sectional shifts and appropriate paths through an exhibition" (p. 196).

In order to understand how museums and exhibitions shape values and identities, one has to consider how museums were developed as institutions, their embedding within cultural and political economic dynamics (Kratz, 2011). Kratz also notes the importance of considering political economic histories and their changing relations to other cultural institutions. In the sections that follow, I will give great details of how the study sites were developed as heritage institutions. Kratz placed emphasis on the importance of rhetoric of values in museum exhibitions. The concept of rhetoric is described as a concept that addresses processes of circulation, re-contextualisation, exhibition production and interpretation, seeking to illuminate how social meanings and judgments are constituted and understood through persuasion from exhibition, combining poetics and politics. In examining how rhetoric of value is produced in relation to framework and processes of exhibition communication, she considers lighting and texts as critical media that are part of exhibitions. Lighting and texts have both practical and rhetorical aspects (Kratz; 2011). They convey intercultural messages about exhibitions and museum contribution to exhibitory values (Kratz; 2011). Texts are important to understand the messages that are presented to museum patrons through the exhibition. The font of texts, the language used and style of writing are factors that play a role in the visitors' understanding of an exhibition and what it stands for. It is then important to give a description of the museums and its exhibitions.

The Old Court House Museum

As Kratz notes the importance of understanding how museums became heritage institutions and why, this section starts with a brief history of Old Court House Museum. The Old Court House Museum is housed at the oldest public building in Durban, which served as a court from 1866 to 1911, when a new Court House was erected (Bevis, 1962). During the Zulu War in 1879, it was used to store ammunition, and then at a later stage it was taken over for use as Corporation Offices (Bevis, 1962). It became a museum in 1965, incorporating exhibitions and artefacts of the Durban Museum, which was housed in another building and founded in 1887, then became the Local History Museum, and today is the Old Court House Museum.

The museum has three exhibition rooms for temporary exhibitions, and the permanent exhibitions are found in the passages, open space and in the Durban Room, which has a combination of different aspects of history. The temporary exhibitions consider events of historical significance and national anniversaries. The main focus is on the early history of the region. Dlamuka points out that this museum registered white settlement only and legitimised and justified whites' domination in Natal. When debates on South African museology occurred in the 1980s, Indian representation emerged. The artefacts that represented Indians were taken from the Phoenix Settlement, dedicated to the life of Mahatma Gandhi, after the site was destroyed in 1985. Over time, they have been part of temporary exhibitions but remain part of the museum collections in the storerooms.

Gender representation and African males in an attempt to redress past imbalances

In post-apartheid South Africa, as instructed by government, museums had to be more inclusive and embrace multiculturalism. This was expressed in the Constitution of 1996 and policies such as the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Heritage and Culture, which clearly stated that heritage institutions should represent the different citizens of South Africa and cater to the previously marginalized; also supported was the use of oral history and nation building through arts, culture and heritage. Displays in this museum added different components in an attempt to be inclusive and redress past imbalances. However, I have determined that the patriarchy of settler representations has not been questioned or reinterpreted. The museum is about the history of the city of Durban and links it with other parts of the province of KZN. The additions in the democratic era include the Lembede Tombstone, for the first president of the African National Congress Youth League. The African National Congress has been the ruling party since the first democratic elections of 1994; it has been recognised as the main organisation that delivered the country from the evils of apartheid. Formed in 1912, the party was banned by the apartheid government and its leaders, with other political activists belonging to various movements, were greatly harassed and killed by the apartheid government and labelled as terrorists. The party has been celebrated in varying public engagements and heritage institutions. A photographic exhibition of the Bambatha Rebellion, with small texts that can easily be ignored by visitors, is found in the staircase. The Bambatha Rebellion resulted from opposition to the 'Poll tax' imposed by the colonial government in 1906, which led to war, with Africans against the white government. Chief Bambatha kaMancinza Zondi is recognised as the hero in texts written about this war; this exhibition ignores the involvement of individuals in this war such as Gandhi, who was believed to be a stretcher bearer for British soldiers. There is a focus on the heroic act of a male leader. A display labelled as 'The Movers and Shakers' recognises historical figures who contributed to the political history of Durban. This display consists of

50 three-dimensional figurines that represent these people, with a name label under each one. This display was created in the late 1980s, the period when historians were producing histories of the marginalised and agitating for multicultural and inclusive representations of South African societies. Tichman (1999) described this period as the time when Africans were soon to be recognised as producers of history rather than victims of circumstances; the time for African experiences to gain momentum in museum exhibitions had come. The figurines represent a variety of individuals; religious leaders, black political activists, colonists, traditional leaders, and other individuals who became prominent in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The lighting in this space places emphasis on this display and suggests that one must move close to see who are the people being represented. Out of 50 figurines, only 3 represent women, and these 3 women are white. This display represents history as being pioneered by men, men being the forefront of the nation. An opportunity was missed to recognise communities that made Durban what it is, women who were at the forefront of the liberation struggle, and activists in societal issues. For instance, there is a figurine of Dr. John Langalibalele Dube, who was the first president of the ANC and highly recognised as the founder of the first school established by a black person in South Africa, Ohlange Institute. He has also been recognised for his attempts to fight against the Native Land Act of 1913. His first wife, Nokutela Dube, co-founded Ohlange Institute and equally worked for the community but she is not represented in this display.

Museum exhibitions do not represent women as leaders or producers of history. This museum should be about the history of Durban; there is also more that can be exhibited as the history of Durban and preserved as public heritage. Women are not being represented, considered as having inferior roles or restricted to domestic work, as is the case with African women. They are either represented in domestic settings or they are left out. An exhibition on Henry Francis Fynn can be found in the Durban Room; Fynn was one of the settlers who, according to history books, encountered King Shaka Zulu. The history of this Zulu king is recorded in his diary which becomes the main source when studying this leader. Just outside the house is a mannequin of Fynn seated and covered in a blanket. Inside are artefacts relating to a Zulu home. As one approaches the cottage, one notices that inside there is a black woman also covered in a blanket; in front of her is a table filled with kitchen utensils. The cottage inside and outside is filled with artefacts and figurines that can be described as items belonging to a Zulu or African home in rural areas. Fynn is represented as a white man who adapted to the ways of living in KwaZulu-Natal during the 1800s. The woman in the cottage is said to have been married to Fynn. He is presented as one who is not racist, willing to understanding the way of living of the people he settled amongst, and not one who considered them barbaric. The woman is seated in the house with kitchen utensils as if she were making food or just made food, creating an image that the woman's place is in the kitchen or is only related to looking after the home. Fynn, together with the black woman, had coloured children. In the presentation of Fynn, the history

of coloured people of KwaZulu-Natal is left out. There are also other opportunities for the stories of coloured people to be told. Even in the democratic dispensation, coloured people are not represented in museums, especially in KwaZulu-Natal. The Pinetown Museum is the only museum within eThekweni Municipality that has information on display about the coloured community. The representation of women does not recognise their contribution in the public history of Durban. It ignores the activism of women such as Bertha Mkhize. In addition to the issue with regards to the representation of women, certain groups get left out such as the coloured communities.

Domination of European settler history and heritage

I have determined that the dominant history represented in this museum has not reinterpreted settler history, and their heritage remains one of the main themes of the museum. It does not recognise that there was life and human activity prior to the arrival of European settlers. Exhibitions such as Harvey Greenacres and Co., Miss Fann's Fancy Repository and the David Anderson Apothecary chemist represent the development of Durban city centre by settlers. These exhibitions were considered important as they preserved some of the 'precious' elements that contributed to the growth of the city. African people have been part of the area long before the arrival of the settlers; even after the arrival of the settlers, they became part of communities that make up Durban and they still are. Their contribution in all activities that took place is not well represented. The addition of the 'Movers and Shakers' display is a positive one as it recognised individuals who were active in different fields. My argument is that colonists remain recognised as the pioneers in the development of Durban, while different aspects of the past are ignored. The city centre is vibrant and diverse in culture and language thus there are various ways of looking at the development of Durban. Durban has been diverse for centuries, thus the domination of settlers and their businesses is not a true reflection of Durban, its past and its people. The city also witnessed major political activities that shaped the country and produced leaders. There is minimal reinterpretation of the knowledge produced during apartheid and also of what constituted public heritage during apartheid. However, I do recognise that there have been attempts to recognise new national heroes and to have new museum displays with different representations. Another positive addition to this museum are the temporary exhibitions that present histories that could never be found in museums during apartheid.

Bergtheil Museum

Bergtheil Museum is located in the Westville suburb of Durban and named after Jonas Bergtheil, who is recognised as the founder of Westville. He was a German Jew who came to Natal from the Cape in 1843; he left his hometown in the period of industrial revolution and due to a crisis of unemployment in Europe (Peters, 1992). In 1847, Bergtheil was granted permission by the governor

of Natal. Martin West, to establish a village and settle German immigrants as a business man who owned a cotton company (Peters, 1992). People from Bavaria (his hometown) did not take Bergtheil's proposal as it was a frightening experience for women and children to occupy the same space as near-naked Africans (Peters, 1992). This is the way in which Europeans perceived the Africans and this perception became part of museum exhibitions. People from Bremen did come to his farm and work for the cotton business. The cotton business was not successful and they moved over to food production. Indians started occupying Westville in 1870 and joined the business. The German immigrants then 'established' New Germany not far away from Westville and later incorporated into eThekweni Municipality.

The Westville Cultural History Society, formed in 1983, established the museum under the auspices of the Borough of Westville. The 1986 Restoration Plan shows that the museum was to take on a Victorian (late nineteenth century) design typical of Westville dwellings of the era. According to the report of the curator, dated 6 October 1987, 'It was decided that the museum was entitled to adopt early German settlement as its main theme.' First donations for the museum were received in 1987 and the museum was officially opened in 1990. The museum was opened in the oldest house of Westville, built circa 1840s but altered and extended over time. The museum has six exhibition rooms, namely: Bedroom, Kitchen, Dairy, Early Inhabitants Room, Main Room, the Indian Room, and three storage rooms.

Dominant representations of the past

The dominant representation of the past is still centred on the German settlers and European settlers in general. The aim of this museum, as stated above, has not been adequately reinterpreted to align for the heritage policies of democratic South Africa. The museum is a house museum, understandably the exhibitions have the settings of a home. However the home is representative of the period when the settlers first arrived until the early 1900s. There is an opportunity for continuity, as the homes of white people were taken care of by black domestic workers until the present day; they became part of the area and were part of non-European social societies during apartheid. Black people were not allowed to own housing in areas that were classified through the Group Areas Act of 1952 as white areas. The Act compelled black people when moving around white areas; there were certain conditions attached, such as carrying passbooks. Westville was also classified a white area. The museum missed the opportunity to present the experiences of black domestic workers when travelling to work in Westville with their passbooks. It misses the opportunity to represent the experiences of black domestic workers when taking care of white households. The dairy room and the kitchen exhibitions have industrial revolution equipment showing the life when people worked hard in farming to sustain a living. It does not show the farming techniques that existed before settlers arrived and some of the shared skills. The history

of white males as leaders, settler families, and the Christian religion dominates the museum through exhibitions found in the main room. There are postcards of Durban streets in the early 1900s and black workers with labels such as 'wash boy'. The use of 'boy' to refer to a black male adult is insulting and a sign of great disrespect. However this section is not the most notable display, the writing is small, and can easily be missed by visitors. Exhibitions are informed by museum archives, the information recorded in the archives has not been questioned, and new knowledge has not been adequately added in the archives. The exhibition on Indians has a strong focus on wedding rituals; there is a small section with some of the Indian business that is in the corner and can easily be missed by visitors. Presented in this museum are medals of German settlers when they participated in World War II, these were presented to them for their bravery and heroic acts. This representation of them remains.

Attempts to redress imbalances of the past

The early inhabitants exhibition was added in 2014 to represent different aspects of the history of Westville. This exhibition is an exception to what has been argued above. It does contribute to redressing imbalances of the past. This room has an exhibition on archaeological findings from Palmiet Nature Reserve in Westville, and early people of Westville from the early Stone Age to arrival of European settlers and some short information on the Indian market. Some of the artefacts exhibited became part of the museum collection in the late 1990s but have not been used in this manner. This exhibition challenges the myth of the empty land; archaeology proved that there were human activities before the arrival of the settlers. The archaeological items discovered, dated from the early 1900s, include glass and a bullet cartridge. The panel at the front is entitled 'Protecting the Settlement' and the text below explains that Bergtheil was concerned about the possible attack by King Mpande Zulu. It is explained that this led to Bergtheil being the commandant of the settlement, and later the defence rifles were formed. The bullets might have been linked to settlers' plans to protect themselves. The contact between settlers and the people from surrounding communities is not told. Even if the settlers found the land of Westville empty, there are other surrounding communities, and contact with those communities is not presented. Just before the text on European settlers, marked by the portrait of Bergtheil, there are texts that explain the pottery found in iGwalagwala shelter was near glass bottles, and this is possible evidence that the modern-day Zulu people did have contact with the European. This exhibition was an attempt to give a different perspective of the history of Westville and also represents some of the histories that post-apartheid South Africa aims to represent in our museums.

Possible ways of moving forward

The museums analysed in this paper are mirrors of museums that were established under apartheid and continue to exist as institutions of public heritage

in the post-apartheid area. Thus this phenomenon is not unique or an issue of only these two museums. There have been attempts to be inclusive in both museums; the display on early inhabitants at Bergtheil Museum is a good example. Perhaps this was a start of new ways of thinking about our history and representation of our heritage. However, much more needs to be done. There is a need to challenge the dominant discourse in old museums and question what is exhibited. It is important to note that Africans prior to European schools relied greatly on oral traditions. Indigenous knowledge systems need to be utilised. Indigenous knowledge has contributed positively to different fields such as health, but it has not been recognised and given due credit. The history of apartheid has been discussed in the public sphere, however we cannot ignore that it is part of the history of the areas covered by these museums. It should not be ignored, as the fact that South Africans fought greatly against the evils of apartheid and achieved democratic rights is part of our heritage. Communities, the social life of people, should be included, as they made South Africa what it is today and should be visible in our museum exhibitions. There is a need for new ways of thinking about our history, museums and society as people of South Africa, regardless of race and culture. South Africans need to instill new ways of thinking to free themselves from the hegemony trap. As new knowledge is produced through upcoming researchers in institutions of higher education, this research needs to be incorporated in museum research. There is a need for a link between museums and institutions of higher education.

Conclusion

In this paper, the background of South African museums was discussed. It is clear that the history of European settlement was initially the dominant discourse in the representation of history in our museums. Political powers manipulated history for their own gratification; the misconceptions and undermining mentality that European settlers had about Africans when they came to Africa prevailed in museum exhibitions. The politics of the time had a great influence on which history was represented and how. This was the only perspective that was represented in museums. This also meant that archives are filled with accounts of European settlers, which makes it a challenging task to completely change the status quo. In the apartheid era (1948-1994), anniversaries of events that the power holders found important became major themes of museums and public commemorations. The manner in which history was represented included exhibits that legitimised white ownership of land.

As apartheid was coming to an end, the 1980s were the beginning of a new era that led to the foundation of present day museums. The democratic era came up with their own themes that would inform representations in museums. The plan was to address past imbalances, for museums to be inclusive and multicultural. As a result of our political history, the history of men as the main leaders dominated. Museums built in the apartheid era were not well transformed, and representations were not effectively transformed. Yes, there

have been some changes and attempts to be inclusive. However, alterations were made in museum exhibitions to accommodate new ways of representation in the new South Africa. Generally, the history of coloured people, Indian people, communities as a whole, and the contributions of non-whites in the development of Durban and surrounding towns has not been represented. The representations that dominated in museums of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries still prevail today. As heritage institutions of the twenty-first century, we need to reinterpret the history that was a colonial product. We need to be inclusive, in a sense that power holders do not determine every aspect of society but people have a sense of ownership in such institutions so they can relate to what is represented and how. The efforts that have been made in building new museums cannot be ignored. On the other hand, there is a need to question archives and museum exhibitions that have existed for decades and during the years of oppression. There is a need to produce new knowledge in museums, creating a link between heritage scholars in the different institutions of higher education and museums, as they have critiqued these representations and may have solutions. The way of thinking needs to change in order to change old representations. There need to be new ways of thinking and more recognition of indigenous knowledge.

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Museos militares

Dispositivos exhibitorios y el borramiento de la memoria de la lucha social en México

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*—Para liquidar las naciones — decía Hübl—,
lo primero que se hace es quitarles la memoria.
Se destruyen sus libros, su cultura, su historia.
Y luego viene alguien y les escribe otros libros,
les da otra cultura y les inventa otra historia.
Entonces la nación comienza lentamente
a olvidar lo que es y lo que ha sido.
Y el mundo circundante lo olvida aún mucho antes.*

Milan Kundera

RESUMEN

Los museos castrenses en México constituyen no solo un medio de comunicación y vinculación con la sociedad civil, sino que son plataformas escenográficas del poder, espacios visuales que ejercen autori-

dad ante la mirada del visitante. Las tácticas discursivas utilizadas en los museos militares mexicanos tienden a crear narrativas heroicas y patrióticas sin fisuras sobre la actuación del Estado. Sin embargo, en la narración de esta historia oficial se ejecutan acciones de borrado de la memoria de sucesos perturbadores en los que ha participado el Ejército Mexicano, provocando una disputa política al interior de la institución museística. En este trabajo se reflexiona y explora acerca de distintas estrategias pedagógicas relacionadas con la curaduría del olvido y las violencias fundacionales de la nación donde se manifiesta el desdibujamiento, silenciamiento, la ausencia y supresión de ciertas memorias como un ejercicio de violencia simbólica.

Palabras claves: museos, ejército, política, violencia, memoria

ABSTRACT

Military museums in Mexico are not only a channel of communication and linkage with civil society, but also are scenic platforms of power, visual spaces that exert authority before the eyes of the visitor. The discursive tactics used in Mexican military museums tend to create heroic and patriotic narratives without fissures about the performance of the State. However, in the narration of this official story, actions are carried out to erase the memory of disturbing events in which the Mexican Army has participated, provoking a political dispute within the museum institution. In this work we reflect and explore different pedagogical strategies related to the curatorship of oblivion and the founding violences of the nation where the blurring, silencing, absence and suppression of certain memories is manifested as an exercise of symbolic violence.

Keys words: museums, army, politics, violence, memory



Introducción

Los museos castrenses en México constituyen no solamente un medio de comunicación y vinculación con la sociedad civil mexicana, sino que son plataformas escenográficas del poder, espacios visuales que ejercen autoridad ante la mirada del visitante. Esta disposición se evoca en sus representaciones, narrativas y enunciaciones vertidas en la exposición permanente del Museo del Ejército.

En este ensayo me ha interesado discutir el Museo del Ejército, ubicado en el centro de la Ciudad de México como un complejo y dispositivo exhibitorio,

según la propuesta de Bennet (1988), cuya labor es el despliegue de tecnologías y regímenes visuales en su quehacer institucional. Para comprender la situación castrense en México, he tratado de ofrecer un panorama general acerca de las condiciones actuales de las Fuerzas Armadas en México, para así desarrollar posteriormente un puente con el tema de la visualidad en el espacio expositivo militar. También desarrollé una propuesta de análisis vinculada a la pedagogía y/o alfabetización visual de los libros de texto gratuitos como fundamentos que posibilitan la lectura e interpretación de esta visualidad confeccionada y fundamentada bajo la égida de la historia oficial nacional, la cual es retomada en el Museo del Ejército. Finalmente, abordé el tema de la curaduría de la nación reflexionando acerca del borramiento de la memoria de la lucha social para comprender los procesos que se ejecutan en este dispositivo exhibitorio.

Preámbulo de las Fuerzas Armadas en México

A pesar de la aparente tranquilidad militar que se ha vivido en México después de su pequeña participación en la Segunda Guerra Mundial con el escuadrón 201 y de no haber padecido una dictadura militar como en Argentina, Paraguay, Brasil, Uruguay, Bolivia o Chile, no se ha podido suturar el señalamiento de los militares por su participación en el caso de la represión y matanza estudiantil de Tlatelolco en 1968 o la Matanza de Acteal en Chiapas ocurrida en 1997, sucesos que siguen manteniéndose como una razón de disputa entre la población y el Estado mexicano. Este antecedente es central para comprender el contexto de los museos militares en México.

En cuanto a la situación del Museo del Ejército adquiere interés no solamente a razón de la problemática vinculada a la construcción de la nación mexicana con relación a su unicidad e indivisibilidad, sino también, y como se plantea en el artículo segundo de la Constitución Mexicana¹, acerca de su origen y desarrollo como Estado pluricultural que ya de por sí es una disputa evidenciada después del levantamiento zapatista en 1994. Me interesa especialmente la situación del Museo del Ejército contextualizado en las condiciones políticas que desde el 2006 se viven en México cuando fungía como presidente Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (2006-2012), quien instruyó a las Fuerzas Armadas a iniciar una “Guerra contra el narcotráfico”. Tal contexto estimuló una mayor atracción no solo de los medios de comunicación por cubrir la nota de las acciones militares contra el narcotráfico, sino de los académicos e intelectuales para poner en cuestionamiento el problema de la seguridad nacional y la participación de los cuerpos castrenses en las tareas que oficialmente correspondían a las policías federales, estatales y municipales. Sin dejar de lado que ante el violento escenario se sumó el levantamiento de grupos de autoprotección como policías comunitarias y grupos de autodefensas en distintas partes del sur del país desde 1995.

1. Constitución de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Disponible en http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/1_240217.pdf. Consultada el 20 de agosto de 2017

Asimismo, en el 2010 y bajo este panorama se insertó otro proceso que era la celebración del centenario de la Revolución Mexicana y el bicentenario de la Independencia de México, aunado a que en el 2013 se celebraban los 100 años del Ejército, razón que desplegó la creación de distintos complejos exhibitorios que se sumaron a los ya existentes, como es el caso del Museo del Ejército y la Fuerza Aérea (MUEFA) en el 2010, también la construcción de la Plaza del Servicio a la Patria en el 2012, así como la inauguración del Museo del Centenario del Ejército Mexicano en el 2013, sin olvidar la exhibición itinerante “Fuerzas Armadas... Pasión por servir a México”. Igualmente son relevantes otras exposiciones que se abrieron en diversas entidades federativas e incluso en el metro subterráneo de la Ciudad de México, sumándose a los otros museos militares que ya existían en el país.

Por otro lado, y en el marco de las celebraciones del centenario del Ejército (2013), se organizaron y produjeron eventos académicos, publicaciones y una amplia oferta cultural y artística referente a las Fuerzas Armadas, aunado a una fuerte campaña de visibilidad del Ejército que incluye anuncios de las fuerzas castrenses en distintos formatos, soportes y espacios de exhibición como la televisión, cápsulas en el cine, anuncios y videos en el metro de la capital del país, tarjetas de pago para el transporte público, entre otros dispositivos que siguen difundándose en 2017.

Si bien es cierto que todo indicaba que las celebraciones patrias justificaban en apariencia este despliegue y bombardeo de imágenes de las Fuerzas Armadas durante el gobierno de Felipe Calderón, también se atravesaba con una fuerte crítica hacia las acciones militares por los miles de desaparecidos y muertos causados por la acción directa y los daños colaterales de la Guerra contra el Narcotráfico. A este escenario se suma el cuestionamiento que se ha efectuado a las fuerzas castrenses por su participación en casos de desaparición forzada y matanzas como el caso de los 43 estudiantes desaparecidos de Ayotzinapa o la masacre de civiles en Tlatlaya durante el 2014, esto durante el actual gobierno de Peña Nieto.

Aunque en cada cambio de gobierno existen modificaciones en los programas y políticas de comunicación social de la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (SEDENA), es posible notar una secuencia y reforzamiento de las visualidades militares que se exhiben en el país. De manera que la política de difusión militar emprendida mediante diversos dispositivos comunicacionales por Felipe Calderón se ha proseguido y reforzado en el sexenio del actual presidente Enrique Peña Nieto (2012-2018), a la cual también se han sumado los distintos convenios firmados entre la Secretaría de Cultura y las dos secretarías encargadas de las Fuerzas Armadas y la Marina (SEDENA y SEMAR).

Estas escenas de conflictividad militar despertaron una inquietud y preocupación inusitada en México, puesto que el Ejército se había mantenido en aparente tranquilidad sin provocar un impacto como el que actualmente se vive. Tampoco se puede prescindir que desde el 2016 se encuentra en las cáma-

ras un altercado acerca de la reforma de seguridad nacional que permitiría la participación abierta de las Fuerzas Armadas en la seguridad pública, tema polémico debido a la crítica situación con respecto a la violación de los derechos humanos señalada por diversos organismos internacionales hacia las Fuerzas Armadas en México como la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH) hacia el gobierno mexicano. Esta es la enmarañada situación que rodea a las Fuerzas Armadas en México y lo cual despierta mi interés por analizar tal tema, ya que en medio de estas circunstancias encontramos múltiples dispositivos de exhibición en el espacio social usados por la SEDENA para difundir las tareas de ejército.

Por tanto considero que a partir de la guerra contra el narcotráfico en 2006, la legitimidad de las acciones del ejército ha sido cuestionada desde distintas tribunas nacionales e internacionales, incrementando su crisis. Un análisis de este dispositivo museístico al servicio de los cuerpos militares mexicanos, considero que tiene la posibilidad de mostrar las pedagogías museísticas que nos permitan comprender los procesos de reproducción cultural del silenciamiento de la memoria, especialmente de la lucha social y política.

En este sentido me interesa retomar algunos elementos que considero destacables del Museo del Ejército, aclarando que no intento realizar un estudio museológico estricto en el sentido de dar pormenores del continente, la colección, la conservación y otros temas técnicos, sino que me interesa la problematización de las presencias y ausencias, especialmente en cuanto al borramiento. Al referirme al concepto de borramiento, lo comprendo como una acción de desdibujamiento donde la conflictividad es evadible pero no erradicable, este borramiento puede ser calificado como una manipulación o distorsión según Verónica Cobos y Jesús Estrella (2011, pp. 67 y 68), para estos autores el borramiento y la conflictividad son procesos inseparables que conviven en expresiones sociales específicas, en contextos particulares dependiendo de la diversidad social en la que nos situemos. De manera que me interesa explorar el problema del borramiento en el caso de los museos militares.

El museo como complejo exhibitorio, escenografía del poder y dispositivo visual

El museo es un lugar en el cual surge una singular convivencia de lenguajes, dado que no solamente es posible encontrar en estos recintos el uso de objetos y textos tratando de contarnos algo acerca de un tema específico, sino que estamos ante un complejo confeccionado por diversos códigos auditivos, lingüísticos, visuales y espaciales que están en una búsqueda comunicativa constante dirigida a los visitantes. Las lecturas posibles de los espectadores comienzan desde la ubicación del museo, la arquitectura del edificio, la museografía, los textos de sala, los interactivos y en todo aquello que pueda generar un interés significativo de quien visita alguna institución museística. Al respecto, Belting reflexiona acerca de la situación de los museos afirmando que:

El museo se cuenta entre los lugares alternativos, o heterotopías, propuestos por la Modernidad. Como apunta Foucault, las heterotopías, de manera similar a los cementerios, estaban “ligadas a cesuras temporales”. Pertenecen a otra época y establecen un lugar más allá de aquel tiempo en el que las cosas aún se encontraban en su proceso vital. Al excluirse del flujo del tiempo, estos lugares son capaces de transformar el tiempo en imagen y de suscitar su recuerdo en una imagen (...) El museo no es sólo un lugar para el arte, sino también un lugar para cosas que han dejado de servir y para aquellas imágenes que representan otra época, convirtiéndose así en símbolos del recuerdo (...) En el museo intercambiamos el mundo presente con un lugar que entendemos como imagen de un lugar de otra naturaleza (2007, p. 85).

”

En este sentido Belting apunta a reflexionar el museo como un recinto fundamentalmente visual debido a las imágenes que este produce y conserva. Por tanto, el museo como productor de cierta visualidad da lugar a la circulación y consumo de imágenes que se ponen en juego en la producción social del sentido. La perspectiva teórica de Belting parte del pensamiento foucaultiano desde el cual se piensa el museo como una de las instituciones disciplinarias de confinamiento en las que se articulan dinámicas específicas de poder/saber.

Esta discusión acerca del museo como desarrollador de tecnologías visuales en la modernidad ha sido abordada por diversos estudiosos de museos, de los cuales me interesa retomar la perspectiva de Tony Bennett, quien acuñó la noción de complejo exhibitorio hacia 1988 y la cual retomaré. Bennett también había pensado el museo partiendo de una perspectiva foucaultiana. Al respecto de la noción complejo exhibitorio de Bennett, Rufer explica que:

El historiador Tony Bennett acuñó en 1988 el término de “complejo exhibitorio” para estudiar la importancia que las grandes exhibiciones y los museos adquirieron en la escena europea internacional durante el siglo XIX. De algún modo lo que Bennett intentaba exponer es que las nociones científicas de orden, jerarquía, clasificación y pertenencia se volvieron un “problema de cultura”: esto es, se tornaron parte de una estrategia pedagógico-formativa fundamental de las nuevas esferas públicas y la construcción de civilidad (incluso para las clases trabajadoras). Una tecnología visual con procedimientos específicos se volvió parte de una rutina para crear ciudadanía.

(Rufer, 2014, p. 96)

”

Por tanto, podemos considerar que el museo se constituye como una tecnología visual poseedora de estrategias pedagógicas y formativas, tema que me interesa retomar más adelante. El museo es también un escenario donde se efectúan procesos comunicativos mediante distintos lenguajes, de manera que funciona no solo como un complejo exhibitorio sino también como dispositivo.

Entiendo el museo como un dispositivo² partiendo del concepto de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española, la cual afirma que dispositivo se refiere al “mecanismo o artificio para producir una acción prevista”, a la “organización para acometer una acción”, “que dispone”. Asimismo, el verbo disponer³ sugiere la acción de “colocar, poner algo en orden y situación conveniente”. Por su parte, Giorgio Agamben, retomando a Foucault describe:

el dispositivo siempre está inscrito en un juego de poder, pero también ligado a un límite o a los límites del saber, que le dan nacimiento, pero ante todo, lo condicionan. Esto es el dispositivo: estrategias de relaciones de fuerza sosteniendo tipos de saber, y [son] sostenidas por ellos. Resumamos brevemente en tres puntos: 1) El dispositivo se trata de un conjunto heterogéneo que incluye virtualmente cada cosa, sea discursiva o no: discursos, instituciones, edificios, leyes, medidas policíacas, proposiciones filosóficas. El dispositivo, tomando en sí mismo, es la red que se tiende entre estos elementos 2) El dispositivo siempre tiene una función estratégica concreta, que siempre está inscrita en una relación de poder. 3) Como tal, el dispositivo resulta del cruzamiento de relaciones de poder y saber (Agamben citado por Ortiz, 2014, p. 50)

”

El museo como dispositivo produce acciones y mecanismos de ordenamiento en el que se articulan discursos textuales y visuales. Además, se ponen en juego diversos saberes y disciplinas que se conjugan con una dinámica de poder circunscrita en complejas tramas políticas, económicas, sociales y culturales (Ortiz, 2014, p. 51). Esto da lugar a la producción de significaciones con el objetivo de comunicar diversos mensajes según los intereses de los agentes que participan en los recintos museísticos. Tampoco podemos dejar de apuntar que la producción del sentido en los museos se genera en situaciones que manifiestan cierta opacidad en sus prácticas como parte de las estrategias curatoriales y museográficas.

2. Dispositivo. Real Academia de la Lengua Española. Liga: <http://dle.rae.es/srv/fetch?id=Dx09GVr>. Consultado el 20 de julio de 2017

3. Disponer. Real Academia de la Lengua Española. Liga: <http://dle.rae.es/srv/fetch?id=DxZ9aNj>. Consultado el 20 de julio de 2017.

Esta opacidad que se manifiesta en estos dispositivos es una de las problemáticas que me interesa abordar respecto a los espacios museográficos militares en México.

Aludiendo a la condición del museo de historia, en este caso militar y comprendiendo que se configura como un dispositivo complejo donde lo visual y lo textual dialogan, necesitamos comprender las particularidades visuales/textuales del museo, para lo cual los teóricos de los estudios visuales nos permiten discutir tal situación. Por un lado Mirzoeff explica que:

La cultura visual se interesa por los acontecimientos visuales en los que el consumidor busca información, el significado o el placer conectados con la tecnología visual. Entiendo por tecnología visual cualquier forma de aparato diseñado ya sea para ser observado o para aumentar la visión natural, desde la pintura al óleo hasta la televisión e Internet (2003, p. 19)

”

Mientras Bucks Morss afirma:

El lenguaje está lleno de imágenes, y no hay manera, dentro de los estudios literarios, de que se pueda sostener una distinción analítica entre imagen y palabra. Pero la imagen que es visualmente perceptible es distinta. En ella la palabra misma participa como imagen, como en el caso de la caligrafía, o como material impreso (en el collage, por ejemplo); el sentido de estas palabras está atado a su visibilidad, y no puede ser reducido a su contenido semántico. (Buck Morss, 2009, p. 26)

”

Para el caso de los museos esto es determinante, ya que como tecnología visual confeccionada para enfatizar y difundir ciertos conocimientos de lo exhibido en sus salas, apela al aumento de la visión natural tanto de la imagen como de la palabra. Esto conlleva una importante carga de visualidad debido al diseño museográfico que implica, así como cada uno de los detalles visuales que se disponen para ser leídos y contemplados por los espectadores, entendiendo que las operaciones de la cultura visual y los modos de ver están condicionados por diferentes dispositivos tanto tecnológicos como epistemológicos. Estamos por tanto ante un dispositivo que nos exige mirar, leer y recorrer una trayectoria mientras caminamos, lo cual apela a la peculiaridad virtual y espacial del museo, sin olvidar por supuesto que uno de sus objetivos es el consumo de imágenes por parte de los visitantes. Destacando como afirma Belting: vivimos con imágenes y entendemos el mundo en imágenes. (2007, p. 14)

Retomo el campo de los estudios visuales y la problemática de la cultura visual porque considero que tiene el potencial de aportar un análisis respecto al tema de las tecnologías visuales del Museo del Ejército, que no solamente se encuentran en lo expuesto estrictamente en la exhibición y los núcleos expositivos, sino en el exterior del museo, el museo mismo, en su opacidad discursiva e incluso en la problemática de las ausencias y/o el borramiento. La importancia de la visualidad museística proviene desde su devenir histórico, ya que en el museo occidental, la preponderancia del sentido de la vista sobre otros sentidos y percepciones hicieron del ojo un órgano todopoderoso, tal racionalidad construyó un determinado orden de las palabras y las cosas, lo cual dio lugar al museo como un escenario del pensamiento visual, como lo argumenta Luis Gerardo Morales (2003).

El discurso visual del Museo del Ejército

En este apartado me interesa retomar la problemática de la visualidad y las imágenes en el Museo del Ejército, por un lado, porque la imagen se considera como un medio de transmisión de la realidad material (Buck Morss, 2009, p. 28), por otro, porque las propias imágenes pueden considerarse como medios del conocimiento, que de otra forma se manifiestan como textos (Belting, 2007, p. 15), por lo que es posible leerlas e interpretarlas. Asimismo es central comprender que “la producción de imágenes es ella misma un acto simbólico, y por ello exige de nosotros una manera de percepción igualmente simbólica que se distingue notablemente de la percepción cotidiana de nuestras imágenes naturales” (Belting, 2007, p. 25).

Sin embargo, es necesario puntualizar que la visualidad museística trasciende la condición de las meras imágenes, ya que incluye necesariamente la espacialidad y la objetualidad en un determinado contexto social y cultural que permite la activación del sentido, aludiendo precisamente a la virtualidad museística. Entendiendo lo virtual como un concepto que está cambiando tanto los hábitos de pensamiento y la manera de percibir, incluyendo la forma de organizar las relaciones sociales, modificando profundamente la percepción de la imagen (Deloche, 2002, p. 17).

Para este análisis retomaré específicamente el Museo del Ejército Mexicano⁴ dependiente de la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (SEDENA), específicamente de la Dirección General de Archivo e Historia de la secretaría.⁵ Este sitio fue

4. El museo se encuentra instalado en la Capilla del ex convento de Bethlemitas, construida en 1673. Después de la independencia se destinó al Colegio Militar (S.XIX), por órdenes de Guadalupe Victoria. También fue utilizado como hospital y como Biblioteca Popular de la Compañía Lancasteriana. Asimismo, en su atrio estuvo el edificio sede del periódico antireleccionista “Diario del Hogar”, fundado por Filomeno Mata. Horario. Martes a Sábado de 10:00 a 18:00 horas. Domingos y días festivos de 10:00 a 16:00 horas. Admisión. Entrada libre.

5. Los datos recopilados en este trabajo respecto al Museo del Ejército están fundamentados en un ejercicio de análisis etnográfico realizado el martes 4 de julio de 2017 en este museo, el cual también

inaugurado a principios de la década de los noventa durante el gobierno de Carlos Salinas de Gortari, meses antes del levantamiento zapatista en 1994⁶. Asimismo es relevante que se ubique cercano a otros tres museos como el de la Tortura, el Museo Interactivo de Economía (MIDE) y el Museo Nacional de Arte (MUNAL), por lo que esto lo convierte en parte del paisaje que constituye la oferta cultural de la Ciudad de México en el Centro Histórico. Recordemos que el centro de la Ciudad de México fue declarado Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad hacia 1987 por la UNESCO junto con sus edificios históricos/artísticos emblemáticos. Cabe precisar que las instalaciones del Museo del Ejército forman parte de los edificios patrimoniales, lo cual agrega un valor arquitectónico y estético significativo.

El espacio geográfico en el que se encuentra el Museo del Ejército es central ya que México carga con la imagen internacional de ser uno de los países poseedores de más nombramientos patrimoniales a nivel latinoamericano. Por otro lado, es importante mencionar que el centro de la ciudad de México es reconocido porque concentra la mayor oferta cultural museística del país, de manera que esta es una de las primeras visualidades de peso en que se inscribe este museo. La tecnología visual de este dispositivo exhibitorio no solo reside en lo que contiene en su interior⁷, sino en la complejidad del entorno en que se encuentra inscrito, dado que dialoga con el paisaje cultural y con los elementos externos que a continuación expondré.

En el exterior del Museo del Ejército se encuentra un jardín en el cual se hallan tres esculturas de Jesús F. Contreras. Estas tres figuras representan a los gobernantes Izcoatl, Nezahualcóyotl y Totoquihuatzin, tales efigies formaron parte de uno de los pabellones para las exposiciones internacionales con el tema de tlatoanis mexicas (estos enormes altorrelieves están empotrados en estructuras de piedra con marcos metálicos). En una placa externa se explica que estos tres líderes conformaron la Triple Alianza y se ofrece una breve semblanza de los personajes representados (las piezas forman parte de la Colección del Museo

se aplicó al Museo del Ejército y Fuerza Aérea (MUEFA).

6. Una placa a la entrada indica con el logo de la SEDENA que “El gobierno de la República durante la administración 1988-1994, dentro del programa de modernización del ejército y fuerza aérea mexicanos, y con la finalidad de incrementar el acervo cultural del pueblo de México, adquirió y remodeló el Ex Convento de Behtlemitas convirtiéndolo en un Museo Militar, el cual con esta fecha se pone a su servicio. (México, D.F., Mayo de 1993)”. Cabe señalar que hay otro documento en una maqueta de la exposición permanente que especifica que el 15 de septiembre de 1991 fue cuando se inauguró este edificio como el actual Museo del Ejército. El lugar está ubicado en calle de Filomeno Mata 6, esquina con Tacuba, Centro Histórico, C.P. 06040, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, CDMX. Frente a la entrada se encuentra el Palacio de Minería (UNAM) y en contra esquina se encuentra el Museo Nacional de Arte (MUNAL). También en la misma calle se localiza el Museo de la Tortura y el Museo Interactivo de Economía (MIDE).

7. Núcleos expositivos 1. Conquista 2. Colonia 3. Independencia 4. Luchas por el poder y las intervenciones extranjeras 5. Reforma 6. Batalla del 2 de abril de 1867. 7. La intervención francesa y el segundo imperio 8. Porfiriato. 9. Revolución Mexicana. 10. La Fuerza Aérea Expedicionaria (Escuadrón 201). 11. Industria Militar. 12. Heráldica Militar

Nacional de la Artillería, la técnica es altorrelieve en bronce y su tamaño es de 360 x 225 cms).

Ahora bien, en esta composición del jardín externo llama la atención la necesidad de aludir al pasado indígena mexicana y su tradición bélica mediante estas tres esculturas para fusionarlas al actual discurso militar y museográfico del ejército mexicano. En este sentido surge nuevamente la crítica generada por diversos autores como Canclini o Villoro respecto a que México como nación retoma el mítico origen mexicana para fundamentar su pasado, dejando de lado a todos los demás pueblos indígenas que existen en el país. Esta puesta en escena se repite en el Museo Nacional de Antropología donde la sala principal nuevamente es la dedicada a los aztecas. Tal acción de borramiento de los otros relatos produce un cuestionamiento acerca de cómo se constituye una curaduría de la nación como expresaría Rufer (2009b). Por tanto, uno de los mensajes depositados en esta selección es que la nación tiene un origen, no varios, y este origen es el mexicana o azteca, por lo que la imagen bélica de la Triple Alianza en el jardín exterior ilustra el origen de México como nación moderna, que por cierto está dispuesto a la mirada de cualquier persona que pasa por fuera del museo.

Para corroborar el origen de la nación y el discurso militar, el primer núcleo expositivo al interior del museo es nuevamente el pasado indígena mexicana, el cual se ilustra con un extraño maniquí que representa a un supuesto guerrero azteca, pero que curiosamente está confeccionado con materiales como brillantina y lentejuela. Esta pieza en especial llama la atención no solo por el aspecto del extrañamiento de materiales, sino por la problemática de lo original y la obligatoriedad que tiene el museo de construir imágenes-representaciones fidedignas, aunque estas no correspondan necesariamente a una visión estrictamente del discurso arqueológico “legítimo” acerca de la indumentaria mexicana.⁸ Por otro lado, el diorama es significativo en tanto que revela la importancia que el museo le otorga a la acción pedagógica de la recreación o escenificación, esto alude a la tradición positivista de la educación en México, así como a la teatralidad escenográfica museística que recuerda el surgimiento de la museografía moderna en el país, donde surgió la tradición de exhibir objetos del pasado indígena para generar la sacralización del origen e historia de los mexicanos (Morales, 2007, p.33). El discurso museístico se refuerza con máscaras de los guerreros águila y jaguar.

Por otro lado y retomando el caso de las esculturas de los tlatoanis mexicas, me refiero a este tema puesto que considero que es un buen ejemplo para iniciar y ejecutar la tarea imprescindible que incite a reflexionar/cuestionar la práctica de seleccionar ciertos objetos para ser mostrados en un complejo exhibitorio. Ya que también es importante pensar ineludiblemente acerca de

8. Ante los diversos uniformes que se pueden encontrar en la entrada del museo y en cada núcleo expositivo, este maniquí se constituye como parte de la gramática que conforma la indumentaria militar, resolviendo así el tema del “atuendo especial” como un signo de estatus y posición social.

los lenguajes que se ponen en juego para construir los relatos de la historia oficial de la nación.

En este sentido, la presencia de las esculturas de los tlatoanis son un disparador de varias preguntas acerca de cómo se constituye el discurso curatorial y museográfico en el Museo del Ejército, el cual sostiene la visualización museística de la construcción de la nación mexicana, respecto no solo a la presencia de imágenes/objetos/relatos que ilustran ciertas escenas de la historia militar, sino de manera especial que aluden al problema de las ausencias, de aquello que no está presente en el complejo exhibitorio. Con esto quiero decir que se prolonga la vieja tradición de los museos nacionales mexicanos de principios de siglo que se centraban en la exaltación de la ancestralidad de los aztecas y, en consecuencia, en el dominio de la ciudad de México sobre el resto del país (Morales, 2007, p. 36), cuya acción como ya mencioné, produce el borramiento de las distintas culturas que habitaron lo que hoy es el territorio mexicano, como el caso de los tarahumaras, mayas, otomíes, tarascos, entre otros, quienes tuvieron procesos singulares e independientes del relato homogeneizador nacional del pueblo azteca.

Esta acción de construir el relato de la historia nacional teniendo como figura principal al pueblo azteca, borrando el origen cultural polivalente de la nación mexicana, ejemplifica la discusión foucaultiana acerca del conocimiento y el poder que trata Buck Morss, quien considera que esta conexión da forma al mundo de manera general y fundamentalmente respecto a la dimensión política (cfr. 2009, p. 22), tal profundización podría revelarnos más acerca del funcionamiento de la permanencia (presencia) y el borramiento (ausencia) de los mecanismos exhibitorios.

En esta primera parte me interesó rescatar algunas peculiaridades del Museo del Ejército que hacen referencia no solo al reconocimiento y legitimidad de la institución museística en la cultura occidental, sino que también a la procedencia institucional del cual proviene este recinto, o sea, la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (SEDENA). Pero sobre todo me interesa resaltar la forma en que se establece el entramado de relaciones de poder puestos en juego en la construcción de relatos que construyen la nación, de manera especial en la curaduría que se instituye acerca de lo presente y lo ausente en el museo.

Las imágenes que perviven en el museo son en cada núcleo, un referente de la historia patria mexicana. Muestra de esto es una de las vitrinas que contiene 20 retratos metálicos de los héroes de la historia nacional, así como la presencia de las banderas históricas y los colores patrios: verde, blanco y rojo. Al entrar a la exhibición permanente, el Museo del Ejército nos recibe con esta leyenda: “En este recinto se rinde homenaje a los héroes de la patria que con sus actitudes y acciones han dado sentido y razón a nuestra historia. Guardemos y respetemos su recuerdo”.

Al respecto, Belting afirma que “las imágenes que fundamentan significados, que como artefactos ocupan su lugar en cada espacio social, llegan al mundo

como imágenes mediales (2007, p. 25), de manera que estamos ante la mediación de un conjunto de objetos y textos que construyen la imagen de la nación. Por supuesto que estas imágenes podrían tener otras lecturas en otros espacios y versiones de la historia no oficial, sin embargo Buck Morss afirma que “una imagen está atada al contenido que transmite” (2009, p. 28), a lo cual añadiría que también está atada a las intenciones y motivaciones del poder, así como a las condiciones escenográficas en que el poder las exhibe. Debemos comprender en este sentido lo que explica Mitchell respecto a la cultura visual ya que esta no solamente trata de “la construcción visual de lo social, sino también de la construcción social de la visión” (Mitchell, 2003, p. 26), con esto me refiero a que existe una producción y reproducción de la cultura visual que permite la formación de lo social y de la visión, lo cual logra la implementación de referentes culturales que se manifiestan en los elementos visuales de la nación.

¿Qué objetos participan en este montaje de la nación? Básicamente banderas de múltiples períodos históricos, armamento de diferentes épocas y orígenes que van desde espadas hasta ametralladoras del siglo XX, maniqués con uniformes o armaduras, retratos, pinturas con temática de batallas (intervenciones, batalla del 5 de mayo, revolución mexicana), maquetas, documentos de sucesos históricos (especialmente del proceso de Independencia y la Revolución Mexicana), esculturas, botones, vitrales, fotografías del siglo XX (Revolución Mexicana y del Escuadrón 201 respecto a su participación en la Segunda Guerra Mundial) y finalmente insignias militares. Pero ¿cuál es la trascendencia de todo este conjunto de objetos e imágenes que buscan justificar la permanencia del ejército actual como heredero de todas estas gestas tan diversas que se dieron en momentos y contextos históricos específicos, los cuales partían de diferentes posturas ideológicas, inquietudes e intereses políticos, económicos y sociales?. Esto es posible pensarlo desde la perspectiva que Belting propone acerca del uso de la imagen, afirmando que: “El poder de la imagen es ejercido por las instituciones que disponen de las imágenes a través del medio actual y de su atractivo con el medio, lo que se promueve es la imagen que se pretende inculcar a los receptores” (2007, pp. 28-29).

Con respecto a lo anterior, podemos compartir la visión de Mitchell que afirma que “vivir en una cultura cualquiera es vivir en una cultura visual” (2003, p. 26), por lo que pienso que la problemática de esta cultura visual expresada en un museo militar es encontrar precisamente qué se inculca en esta y cómo funciona a partir del poder del estado para construir los relatos nacionales. Mitchell señala que “la tarea verdaderamente importante es describir las relaciones específicas de la visión con las prácticas culturales particulares” (2003, p. 26), razón por la que me interesa dilucidar acerca del funcionamiento de estas prácticas culturales vinculadas a la pedagogía visual que se efectúa en el Museo del Ejército, en búsqueda de un esclarecimiento que nos permita comprender el proceso curatorial de la nación.

La pedagogía visual

En este apartando me interesa retomar la problemática de la comprensión y lectura de lo visual como una cuestión pedagógica, por tanto considero necesario retomar esta cuestión educativa como una parte fundamental de la cultura visual que nos permite acceder a los mensajes que se emiten en los museos. Así pues me interesa entender esta práctica cultural como una alfabetización que nos permite identificar y reconstruir discursivamente varios elementos de la cultura visual nacional, esto a través de las imágenes con que nos educan desde ciertas instancias de formación social como es el caso de la enseñanza pública en México. Al respecto de esta reflexión Mitchell explica que:

Todos estamos familiarizados con este momento crucial, en el que revelamos a nuestros colegas y estudiantes que la visión y las imágenes visuales, las cosas que (para los principiantes) resultan aparentemente automáticas, transparentes y naturales, constituyen construcciones simbólicas, en la misma medida en que lo supone un lenguaje que ha de ser aprendido, un sistema de códigos que interpone un velo ideológico entre el mundo real y nosotros. (Mitchell, 2003, p. 26)

”

De manera que efectivamente los códigos y lenguajes con que percibimos la cultura visual nacional están entramados en un velo ideológico, dado que las historias oficiales de las naciones son construidas socioculturalmente, situación que es posible identificar al entender que habitamos comunidades imaginadas como diría B. Anderson hacia 1983. Cabe señalar que la vinculación entre museos y su función pedagógica en México deviene desde los orígenes de la museología mexicana, ya que desde 1916, Jesús Galindo y Villa había realizado su primera reflexión acerca del museo-escuela con el objetivo de promover la formación de una cultura social fundamentada en las prácticas educativas (Morales, 2007, pp. 41 y 42), las cuales fueron adoptadas por el Estado mexicano desde el proyecto pedagógico porfirista a principios del siglo XX.

Me interesa por tanto retomar la consideración explicativa de los discursos visuales que atiende Mitchell: “(...) ya que la audiencia vive, ciertamente, en un mundo visual, y, pese a ello, tiene que aceptar que no lo es y que todo lo que parece transparente y evidente requiere de una explicación (Mitchell, 2003, p. 26).

La posibilidad explicativa de este aprendizaje de códigos y lenguajes visuales se remite a entender los montajes y ensamblajes que se ejecutan en el Museo del Ejército, espacio que logra mediante la conjugación de los distintos lenguajes la producción del sentido, dando lugar a la construcción de una cultura visual nacional que puede ser leída a raíz de procesos formativos que le antecedieron.

Aclaro que no es de mi interés comprender de una forma purista el sentido original de un determinado objeto, cosa o imagen que se encuentra en el museo, atendiendo precisamente a lo que señala Bucks Morss:

La queja de que las imágenes son sacadas de su contexto (de su contexto cultural, intención artística o cualquier otro tipo de contexto previo) no es válida. Luchar por unirlos de nuevo a sus fuentes no sólo es imposible (pues esto, en efecto, produce un nuevo significado); es además no entender lo que es verdaderamente poderoso de ellas, su capacidad de generar significado y no simplemente de transmitirlo. (Buck Morss, 2009, p. 40)

”

Mi preocupación es cómo se seleccionan, organizan, clasifican, dialogan y administran los elementos exhibidos para producir la historia nacional oficial en el Museo del Ejército. Para tratar de explicar mi argumento aludiré nuevamente a la problemática pedagógica ya que considero que existe necesariamente un entrenamiento visual y epistemológico mínimo para posibilitar la interpretación y el proceso de construcción del sentido desde una lectura nacional al visitar un museo. Este proceso de instrucción se ofrece necesariamente desde la institucionalidad educativa del Estado mexicano. Esto lo tomo a consideración porque todos los elementos que contiene el museo sacados fuera del espacio museográfico no podrían dar lugar a una lectura de la nación mexicana por sí solos, sino que solicitan la intervención de un metarrelato que posibilite la comprensión narrativa, o sea, una puesta en escena que es ofrecida por el dispositivo exhibitorio, en este caso del ejército mexicano.

Así pues, parto fundamentalmente de la labor pedagógica emprendida por el sistema educativo en México, el cual ha desempeñado una ardua labor desde principios del siglo XX bajo la égida vasconcelista para promover la educación pública y construir una Historia Oficial a través de distintos recursos, entre estos se encuentran los museos nacionales de historia y antropología, así como la repartición de libros de texto gratuito en todas las escuelas públicas del país y, por supuesto, el nacimiento de la museología moderna mexicana impulsadas por Galindo y Villa. Esta herencia museológica del porfiriato fue asimilada por parte de la nación posrevolucionaria (Morales, 2007).

Al respecto, me interesa inscribir a los actuales libros de historia de cuarto y quinto grado en educación primaria (básica), los cuales afirman que: “En este libro encontrarás ilustraciones, fotografías y pinturas que acompañan a los textos y que, por sí mismas, son fuentes de información. Al observarlas notarás que hay diferentes formas de crear imágenes”.⁹ Estos libros de historia destacan puesto que son el primer material pedagógico en el sistema actual

9. Libro de Historia, quinto grado, Secretaría de Educación Pública, Ciclo Escolar. 2016-2017

educativo mediante el cual se enseña la historia de México en las 32 entidades federativas. Los materiales bibliográficos resaltan la importancia de la información contenida en las imágenes, por lo que podemos afirmar la importancia de la alfabetización visual que se promueve desde la educación básica.¹⁰ Según las cifras oficiales, más de 4 millones y medio de personas de cuarto y quinto grado recibieron estos libros en las escuelas de todo el país solo en el período 2016-2017, lo cual revela numéricamente su impacto.

Por otro lado, si bien es cierto que estos materiales son fundamentales en la formación de los futuros ciudadanos, también es necesario no dejar de señalar los rituales nacionales que replican los mitos fundacionales, así como las ceremonias que se replican en todo el país durante los festejos que se realizan en fiestas patrias. Sin dejar de lado la transmisión masiva por televisión y actualmente todo el material que se aloja en Internet.

En una revisión temática y visual acerca de los libros de historia de texto gratuito, específicamente del cuarto y quinto grado, es posible realizar una comparación con los núcleos temáticos de la exposición del Museo del Ejército, los cuales, por supuesto son correspondientes a la historia narrada. Sin embargo, existen algunas menciones y escenas como la Matanza de Tlatelolco que merecen algunos párrafos en el libro de quinto grado (Bloque V, México al final del siglo XX y los albores del siglo XXI), así como una mención superficial de un renglón como el caso de la matanza de Acteal, las cuales como ya mencioné en un principio, fueron los elementos del Ejército señalados como culpables de las muertes de varias decenas de personas. Por supuesto, el tratamiento es superficial y no se apunta a las Fuerzas Armadas como parte de estas dolorosas escenas. Tales escenas están totalmente suprimidas del discurso expositivo del Museo del Ejército.

Cabe señalar que el libro de quinto grado es el único que trata sobre la participación del Ejército Mexicano en la Segunda Guerra Mundial con el escuadrón 201 y retoma superficialmente las tareas del ejército en el PLAN DNIII, el cual está diseñado para colaborar en acciones específicas en desastres naturales. Al respecto, el Plan DNI sobre protección a la nación o seguridad exterior en un contexto de Guerra o el Plan DNII que se refiere a la participación del Ejército en materia de seguridad interior no se mencionan. Cabe destacar que el Plan DNIII ha sido durante varios lustros una de las cartas de presentación que se promueve positivamente la imagen del Ejército Mexicano.

Quiero resaltar la problemática de la visión, ya que es esta la que mediante los elementos pedagógicos ofrecidos por la educación pública y los rituales

10. Datos respecto a los libros de cuarto y quinto grado a nivel primaria. Historia, cuarto grado. Segunda reimpresión, 2016 (ciclo escolar 2016-2017), 20,5 x 27 cm., 192 pp. Tiraje: 2'377,000 ejemplares. Historia, quinto grado. Segunda reimpresión, 2016 (ciclo escolar 2016-2017). 20,5 x 27 cm., 192 pp. Tiraje: 2'371,000 ejemplares. Los datos pertenecen a la Secretaría de Educación Pública en su catálogo-informe de Libros de Texto Gratuitos Ciclo Escolar 2016-2017.

nacionales recibe la alfabetización visual de la historia nacional para acceder a un grado de formación o entrenamiento que permite dar lectura a las gramáticas históricas de la nación mexicana. Acerca de la visión, Mitchell señala que:

La visión es una construcción cultural, que es aprendida y cultivada, no simplemente dada por la naturaleza; que, por consiguiente, tendría una historia relacionada (...) con la historia de las artes, las tecnologías, los media, y las prácticas sociales de representación y recepción; y (finalmente) que se halla profundamente entrelazada con las sociedades humanas, con las éticas y políticas, con las estéticas y la epistemología del ver y de ser visto. (Mitchell, 2003, p. 19)

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Es necesario considerar que para producir una visión cultivada que pueda posibilitar la lectura de los signos, imágenes, ilustraciones, representaciones y demás fenómenos visuales, que permitan la experiencia e introyección de la historia nacional se utiliza por un lado la instancia de la educación pública en su nivel básico. Esto como un primer entrenamiento visual formal de los códigos identitarios, aunque por supuesto tendríamos que remitirnos también a la dimensión lúdica y otras expresiones audiovisuales con las que tenemos un primer contacto en la infancia. Sin embargo, el museo militar funciona también como un dispositivo pedagógico, de instrucción y aleccionamiento que se convierte en una opción más, ya sea de acercamiento o de reiteración de los relatos nacionales institucionales.

Ante este panorama podemos afirmar la necesidad de una ejercitación pedagógica que logre dotar a los espectadores de los códigos para comprender los lenguajes que permitan identificar personajes, escenas relevantes, el vestuario y otras representaciones que están dispuestas en los distintos complejos exhibitorios de la nación. Podemos aseverar que la tríada 1) museo de historia 2) libro de texto 3) rituales patrióticos, son dispositivos fundamentales en los procesos pedagógicos para la apropiación de los elementos que permiten entender los referentes visuales y dar lugar a la apropiación identitaria de la nación imaginada.

Otro tema que es importante retomar es el tema del montaje como proceso en el que se construye museográficamente un dispositivo exhibitorio. Pensar en el montaje exige la comprensión del sentido entre espacio museográfico, objetos, textos, colores, narratividad, temporalidad y contexto de la exposición, pero también en las condiciones políticas en que se insertan estos discursos. Pensando precisamente en las condiciones políticas, y como ya lo he venido desarrollando y explicando, considero pertinente hablar del borramiento en el Museo del Ejército.

El abordaje que me interesa rescatar se refiere al ajustamiento de los elementos textuales y visuales a un discurso político militar que embona con el rompecabezas de la historia oficial nacional. Ejemplifiqué a través de cómo se genera la apropiación de la dimensión bélica de la cultura mexicana para fundamentar los orígenes de la nación y como precedente del Ejército Actual contemporáneo. Esto sucede con las distintas escenas de los ejércitos, luchas y batallas que realizan una expropiación en favor del discurso estatal para construir una historia del ejército que se disloca al cuestionar y profundizar ideológicamente en los intereses y objetivos de cada grupo militar o armado que se representa en los núcleos del Museo del Ejército. La situación expuesta da otro salto al retomar el tema de los libros de texto gratuito que ilustran algunas escenas del autoritarismo y la violencia ejercida por el Estado a través de los cuerpos castrenses, que por supuesto nunca se mencionan, ni hay rastro de ellos en este museo.

Esta reflexión incita a elaborar un ejercicio de profundización en los aspectos curatoriales en donde se realizan la selección de eventos que ponen en escenas a la nación mexicana, pero que también desarrollan una política de borramiento y olvido. De manera que el relato institucional de la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (SEDENA) en este museo se perfila como herencia del pasado nacional heroico, pero que renuncia a relatar los eventos incómodos en que el ejército mexicano ha estado inmiscuido, cabe preguntar ¿qué implica la implementación de políticas de borramiento que conduce a silencios y ausencias en el Museo del Ejército?, este es el tema que trataré de reflexionar en el siguiente apartado.

La memoria y los silencios

Para reflexionar acerca del borramiento de la memoria en el Museo del Ejército Mexicano y dado que existen varias discusiones del tema que sería imposible abordar en este trabajo, me interesa comenzar nuevamente con el concepto de la RAE, que explica que memoria significa la “facultad psíquica por medio de la cual se retiene y recuerda el pasado”, así como al “recuerdo que se hace o aviso que se da de algo pasado”¹¹. En este sentido me resulta ineludible pensar qué sucede en torno a los acontecimientos en que el ejército mexicano ha sido señalado por su implicación y responsabilidad en el ejercicio de una violencia injustificada y que atenta contra la dignidad humana como las intervenciones y matanzas que expliqué en un principio.

El cuestionamiento acerca del por qué no existe un recuerdo o aviso del pasado referente a estos eventos incómodos en el Museo del Ejército parece evidente, pero no por eso inexcusable en el escenario de violencia que se vive en el país, donde los militares han tomado un papel protagónico en una sangrienta lucha contra el narcotráfico que ha dejado miles de muertos en lo ancho y largo

11. Real Academia de la Lengua Española (RAE) Memoria: <http://dle.rae.es/?id=OrlyaVd>. Consultado el 22 de julio de 2017.

del territorio mexicano. Es posible que a juicio de muchas opiniones sea una pregunta torpemente lanzada y, sin embargo, no dejo de considerar que está intrincada en una atmósfera de obviedad y de sentido común que se instala en un terreno de vaguedad que conviene al poder.

¿Acaso sería aceptable e imaginable que la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional como aparato de coerción estatal exhiba en la narración de la heroica historia nacional una imagen que denigre su condición jerárquica como representantes de los más “altos valores patrióticos”? ¿Es posible que una institución museística muestre una visión crítica en su quehacer retomando las problemáticas y los eventos incómodos de la historia? ¿Solamente lo valioso, honroso, estimable y apreciable de la cultura puede estar enmarcado en un museo de historia? ¿Qué sucede con aquellos acontecimientos vergonzosos para la humanidad que necesitan no ser olvidados? ¿Qué pasaría al cuestionar el liderazgo y valores exaltados por las fuerzas armadas como el honor, la disciplina, la lealtad, el patriotismo, el valor, la honradez y la abnegación que predicán, al irrumpir con relatos de dolor y malestar social por causa del ejercicio de sus funciones?. Estas son algunas preguntas inquietantes en relación a la función pedagógica de los museos y como dispositivos ejecutores de tecnologías visuales que construyen los imaginarios sociales que conforman la identidad nacional.

Si bien es cierto que existen otros espacios alternativos como el Museo Casa de la Memoria Indómita o el Museo Memorial de Tlatelolco referente a eventos dolorosos en la historia de México, y que precisamente denuncian la participación del ejército mexicano en acciones como la tortura o la desaparición forzada, es imprescindible señalar que tales eventos no se encuentran en lo escenificado por el poder en las representaciones de la historia oficial de la nación. Esto ejemplifica cómo se implementa una curaduría de la nación que exalta los valores de la libertad, la igualdad, el respeto y otros ideales de las democracias modernas predicadas por los estados nacionales, los cuales buscan continuamente exhibir en los museos de historia los grandes metarelatos que justifiquen la existencia del estado nacional.

Asimismo, es evidente que aceptar, disponer y promover una cultura visual de la memoria en espacios museísticos nacionales que no esté apegada a las políticas culturales de valoración patrimonialista daría lugar a escisiones, críticas y repudios a la configuración del estado nacional en cuanto a la violencia que ejecuta para mantener la cohesión política. De manera que probablemente exponer las vergüenzas históricas nacionales tendría metafóricamente los efectos de una bomba de tiempo que provocaría seguramente la indignación de distintos sectores sociales.

Es adecuado señalar que nos encontramos ante una disputa no solamente por la memoria, sino también por las formas, modos, métodos y soportes que permiten su exhibición, así como su presencia textual y visual en el espacio social. El problema de su exhibición es la contención de su naturaleza dinámica y cambiante. Al respecto De Certeau explica que: “Además, su fuerza de inter-

vención, la memoria la debe a su misma capacidad de poder alterarse: puede desplazarse, es móvil y no tiene lugar fijo (...) Muy lejos de ser el relicario o el bote de basura del pasado, vive de creer en lo posible y en esperarlo, vigilante, al acecho. (2000, p. 96). Esto implica un gran problema para las instituciones museísticas en las cuales aún pervive el fetiche de la permanencia y la estabilidad.

La ausencia de los incómodos eventos del ejército mexicano en este museo militar manifiesta la importancia de las imágenes como archivo de la memoria colectiva (Buck Morss, 2009, p. 40). Por otro lado, así como hemos comprendido que cuando algo no se nombra carece de existencia en el lenguaje y tiene por tanto implicaciones socioculturales, en el museo algo que no se muestra carece de existencia en el discurso visual de este dispositivo exhibitorio, aunque no por eso la ausencia suprime la posibilidad interpretativa que refiera a una decisión política de lo seleccionado para estar presente en el museo. Es precisamente en este borramiento donde lo político se manifiesta de forma impetuosa y violenta, donde el poder se hace presente y donde podemos comprender que quienes están en el poder son quienes producen el código narrativo (Buck Morss, 2009, p. 41). En relación a las políticas curatoriales que hacen referencia a las visualidades que se manifiestan en el museo militar, es posible retomar la reflexión de Belting que declara lo siguiente:

En tanto fundadoras y herederas de las imágenes, las personas se encuentran involucradas en procesos dinámicos en los que sus imágenes son transformadas, olvidadas, redescubiertas y cambiadas de significado. Transmisión y pervivencia son como las dos caras de una moneda. La transmisión es intencional y consciente, puede convertir las imágenes conductoras oficiales, como la Antigüedad en el Renacimiento, en modelos para una reorientación. La pervivencia, sin embargo, puede ocurrir a través de medios ocultos e incluso en contra de la voluntad de una cultura que se haya organizado con otras imágenes. Estos procesos atañen a cuestiones de la memoria cultural, en la que las imágenes tienen vida propia y no pueden ser clasificadas bajo un esquema histórico con conceptos rígidos. (2007, pp. 24 y 25)

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Estas contra políticas de la memoria, que se presentan como políticas del olvido en el museo militar confirman que el poder actúa, en el sentido de acción y de actuación teatralizada (De Certeau, 2000, p. 94). En este sentido, el Museo del Ejército se funda como parte del complejo exhibitorio que escenifica el poder estatal y que pone en marcha una maquinaria de olvido, bien dice De Certeau que: “Sólo se deja aprehender una reliquia colocada en el no tiempo de una superficie de proyección. En su calidad de visible, tiene como efecto volver

invisible la operación que la ha hecho posible. Estas fijaciones constituyen los procedimientos del olvido” (2000, p. 109).

La problemática del olvido y el borramiento por la actuación del poder ya han sido formuladas en otros espacios museográficos como en el caso de los museos de la memoria sudafricanos que retoma Rufer, en los que precisa acerca de la disputa simbólica sobre las posibilidades y los alcances de la significación en la representación del pasado (2009:316), así como una reflexión acerca del testigo de la memoria historizante que destruye las evidencias y se erige en el evento fundante de una amnesia omnipresente y total. Violencia y amnesia como resultantes históricas (Rufer, 2009, p. 329). El desasosiego que aborda con respecto a los museos de memoria resulta alarmante, puesto que idealmente estos espacios deberían proceder como soluciones contra hegemónicas a los discursos del borramiento y el olvido, y sin embargo se intrican también en la avasalladora actuación del poder y los intereses de quien lo ejerce.

La reflexión de Rufer (2009) respecto a las políticas de amnesia, borramiento y olvido en los complejos exhibitorios son nodales para abrir un puente que conecte a la situación de los museos militares en México, dado que problematiza respecto a los artefactos que son salvados fuera del tiempo por la acción arbitraria de la autoridad y la autorización del poder, los mismos que son vitrinizados mediante la museificación. Esta voluntad del poder también produce metanarrativas impuestas a una historia imaginada, las cuales manifiestan la continuidad de la violencia y refuerzan la normalización de la historia, esto lo lleva a afirmar que la fidelidad al pasado no es un dato, sino un deseo, lo cual permite dislocar las pretensiones de objetividad histórica presentes en los libros de textos así como en el mismo museo.

Rufer (2009) también señala cómo la pedagogía estatal intenta reescribir el texto de la nación en un presente ambiguo para domesticar y capitalizar su significado, así como para silenciar el pasado mediante los rituales legitimadores de la historia que contribuyen a borrar la violencia sucedida y erosionar la posibilidad de un recuerdo del oprobio (violaciones, segregacionismo, torturas, desapariciones, etc.), esto es precisamente lo que ocurre en la pedagogía instaurada por la Secretaría de Educación Pública en los libros de historia de educación básica. Las necesidades operativas y legitimadoras de la historia oficial dan lugar a una constante reelaboración del pasado según el investigador, donde se disputa la inclusión de las imágenes respecto a la violencia fundadora del Estado nacional.

Encuentro básicamente las siguientes estrategias para proceder al borramiento:

- El ocultamiento de información y hermetismo de las Fuerzas Armadas. En México, como en muchos países los archivos militares no son de acceso público, esta acción es forjada mediante la legalidad de los aparatos jurídicos que evitan la transparencia. Tal información es seleccionada y negada a la población de manera legal, por lo que es imposible acceder

en cualquier museo del ejército a los archivos de los eventos incómodos en que ha participado el Ejército Mexicano.

- El silenciamiento de las violencias producido mediante la acción expositiva. En este sentido son notables las lagunas que los museos militares han estructurado en contraste con otros museos impulsados por la sociedad civil y organizaciones que registran la participación negativa de las Fuerzas Armadas en los procesos históricos del país. Esto da lugar a una disputa por la memoria y la historia mexicana.
- El ejercicio de autoridad institucional de los aparatos militares. En este sentido, los espacios de enunciación y habla son negados a quienes no administran ni participan en las decisiones de un dispositivo exhibitorio. Los museos militares no son espacios democráticos, esto no es nuevo, ya que la misma naturaleza institucional y posición jerárquica del museo en la cultura occidental los inviste de esta particularidad de saber/poder. Tampoco existe un ejercicio con respecto a la construcción colectiva del conocimiento ni de la memoria. Y de igual forma no se genera una discusión acerca de sus contenidos, puesto que la SEDENA forma, selecciona e instituye a todo el personal que participa en sus museos.
- La segmentación arbitraria y autoritaria. Los núcleos y saltos que se hacen entre estos se presentan sin una reflexión crítica, por lo que cualquier conflictividad discursiva es desechada.
- La acción curatorial de la nación promovida por el Estado mexicano. La historia oficial implementada por las instituciones en los distintos dispositivos pedagógicos museísticos permanece indeleble y con mínimos cambios que reflejen una visión crítica. Tal problemática no solo es percibida en los museos militares, sino en los museos que tratan la historia nacional, que responden a los intereses del gobierno en curso y a las políticas culturales implementadas en cada sexenio por las instituciones del Estado.

Ante el ejercicio de borramiento institucional de la memoria por parte del estado, es preciso recordar que no es posible depositar una confianza de certeza total en las prácticas museísticas que luchan incluso por la preservación de la memoria. Al respecto Belting afirma acerca de la memoria que “las culturas del mundo, al parecer, emigran a libros y museos, donde son archivadas, pero ya no vividas” (2007, p. 85), mientras que De Certeau expone que la memoria es el antimuseo: no es localizable. (De Certeau, 2000, p. 120), esto es una discusión central, porque implica replantearse las dinámicas y procesos museológicos con respecto al ejercicio dinámico, nómada y vivo de la memoria.

Reflexiones Finales

El Museo del Ejército, como he tratado de explicar, no solamente funge como un medio de comunicación, sino que también constituye un espacio visual que forma parte de los mecanismos y dispositivos que despliegan las distintas escenografías del poder.

Ahora bien, el Museo del Ejército es un dispositivo narrativo que ofrece relatos textuales y visuales, que presentan la historia oficial de la nación desde una visión heroica y lineal. Esto lo afirmo con base al análisis estructural de sus núcleos expositivos que replican los fundamentos históricos que se enseñan desde la educación básica en México. Ejemplo de tal afirmación es la recuperación de los mitos fundacionales y nacionales que desbordan el patriotismo en este recinto, como el caso de ciertos personajes reconocidos en la historia del país: Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos y Pavón, Miguel Allende, la corregidora Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, los niños héroes, el presidente Benito Juárez y Porfirio Díaz, así como los emblemáticos representantes de la revolución Mexicana: Francisco Villa, Emiliano Zapata y Venustiano Carranza. Este último de gran trascendencia pues el Ejército Mexicano tiene su origen en la conformación del Ejército Carrancista y por supuesto en la creación institucional que se da desde la Constitución de 1917, promulgada por este personaje.

Por otro lado, las estrategias discursivas implementadas en el interior del museo postulan una herencia narrativa que a pesar de sus variaciones, se mantiene un discurso homogeneizador que manifiesta una historia patria sin fisuras sobre la actuación del Estado. En este sentido, se fortalece la predicación del orgullo de la mexicanidad mediante una historia oficial heroica y legendaria a través de la construcción de una imagen militar que apela a los valores de honor, disciplina, lealtad, patriotismo, valor, honradez, abnegación y espíritu de cuerpo. Tales valores se encuentran por escrito en la propaganda que el museo ofrece acerca de sus exposiciones itinerantes en las ciudades más importantes de México.

Sin embargo, en la narración de esta historia oficial se ejecutan acciones de borramiento de la memoria de sucesos perturbadores de las acciones del Ejército Mexicano, provocando una disputa política al interior de la institución museística. Es cierto que toda memoria implica un olvido, pero en este sentido me interesó reflexionar acerca de la ausencia como una curaduría del olvido, en tanto que es posible la selección de escenas que deben ser suprimidas para mantener la legitimidad y cohesión de la nación como afirmaría Renan acerca de las violencias ejercidas para constituir a las naciones.

La Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional en México (SEDENA) a través de sus museos, en este caso específico el Museo del Ejército, se tipifica en el discurso expositivo como fuente autoral de una narrativa simplificada que reclama la solemnidad de la historia patria del Estado mexicano. En este recinto se entretene de manera indistinta escenas históricas que se presentan de manera heroica bajo la égida de una perspectiva castrense del actual Ejército Mexicano. Sin embargo este dispositivo exhibitorio se suma a otros elementos de una fuerte campaña desplegada a lo largo y ancho del país que busca reposicionar positivamente la imagen del ejército mexicano en medio de una guerra contra el narcotráfico, la cual ha dejado daños incalculables tanto económicos, como políticos y sociales, pero sobre todo humanos.

Precisamente ante el descrédito en que se sitúa actualmente el ejército mexicano, el cual manifiesta una imagen decadente ante una gran parte de la sociedad, se hace patente la necesidad de una serie de intervenciones mediante diversos dispositivos visuales, entre los que se encuentran los museos como complejos exhibitorios al servicio de las Fuerzas Armadas.

Sin embargo, ante este despliegue y bombardeo de imágenes militares también se hace imprescindible mantener un ejercicio crítico, reflexivo y politizado de la memoria por parte de las colectividades, esto exige la tarea de constituir mecanismos que permitan la creación de archivos que alimenten la memoria colectiva fuera de la institucionalidad del estado. Esto precisamente porque como he explicado a lo largo de este ensayo, en los dispositivos exhibitorios se hace presente un desdibujamiento de ciertas memorias incómodas en las que el ejército funge como actor responsable. El Museo del Ejército muestra una vinculación singular con respecto a las tecnologías visuales y las tecnologías de la violencia simbólica por el trato y abordaje, no por lo que exhibe, sino por lo que oculta y silencia.

En esta disputa por la memoria y sus medios de exhibición es necesario fortalecer el ejercicio de narraciones autónomas que posibiliten la multiplicación de relatos de quienes no poseen la autoridad y autorización de la voz institucional, especialmente de quienes han experimentado la violencia militar.

Considero importante seguir en el ejercicio de reflexión e investigación respecto a los dispositivos performativos, rituales, pedagógicos y exhibitorios del estado nación para comprender el ejercicio del poder, tanto en lo que produce, como en los silencios, olvidos y borramientos que posibilita. De manera especial en el ámbito castrense, dado que es donde detecto una gran ausencia de discusiones respecto a su participación en las políticas culturales, este argumento lo fundamento en tanto que la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional ya ha implementado colaboraciones importantes con la Secretaría de Turismo así como una participación importante que ha comenzado en 2017 con la Secretaría de Cultura. El peso de estas articulaciones recae por supuesto en las políticas culturales que serán implementadas a corto plazo.

Considero que estos análisis permiten ahondar en la dramaturgia y teatrocracia del poder, permitiendo un acercamiento que logre desentramar las prácticas en este caso del poder militar, así como favoreciendo a una comprensión acerca de las violencias fundadoras reflejadas en las políticas de inclusión y exclusión, así como de selección y borramiento en el proceso curatorial de la nación mexicana.

Ante la problemática del borramiento, se requiere emprender la visibilización y empoderamiento de otras narraciones no oficialistas que permitan desnaturalizar las memorias institucionales homogéneas y lineales que gestionan el pasado. En cuanto a las instituciones museísticas surgen varios cuestionamientos en este ensayo: ¿Cuál es el tratamiento que solicita la memoria en un dispositivo exhibitorio como los museos que no generen un proceso de osificación y patrimonialización inmovilizadora? ¿Tendría que ser el museo un espacio para

la memoria? ¿Cómo se produce y soluciona la necesidad de crear/construir una visualidad a favor de la memoria? ¿Qué otras estrategias se necesitan para hacer presente la memoria y cómo puede abordarse en espacios museográficos sin arrancar su potencia política?

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Museología – Poética, Política y Ética

Dimensiones transformadoras de las relaciones entre lo Humano y lo Real

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RESUMEN

El texto aborda el tema en distintos planos. Al inicio, rememora la naturaleza esencialmente poética del Museo, derivada de la figura mítica de *Mousaios*, hijo de Selene y maestro de Orfeo, asociado a la actividad creativa del canto, una de las muchas interpretaciones de las Musas en la Grecia arcaica; o de *Mousaion*, instancia de manifestación de las Musas (palabras cantadas), expresión del proceso creativo, fundamentado en la memoria y movilizador de las representaciones simbólicas que conforman la base del proceso cultural. Un Museo cuyo fundamento es el proceso creativo, expresión más noble de las relaciones entre lo humano y lo real, se traducirá, por cierto, en el desarrollo de una Museología como *poiesis* (en su sentido más pleno, de acto creador), capaz de movilizar todos los sentidos y emociones

humanas, bajo las más diversas representaciones. Se puede tratar así de una “Museología del Espíritu”, que traduzca por medio de la praxis todas las dimensiones perceptuales de lo humano: una Museología como instancia permanente de percepción de lo real, de creación y de transformación. El segundo plano trata de la esencia política del Museo, fundamentalmente libre, dinámico y plural; aquí, la Museología se desvela como instancia que permite al humano actuar en lo real, para transformarlo positivamente, traduciendo, por medio de la praxis, las expresiones legítimas del deseo humano de libertad, justicia y derecho a la igualdad. Se trata pues de una “Museología de la Acción”, no mera praxis, sino acción transformadora, capaz de desvelar para individuos y sociedades su potencia. El tercer plano articula poética y política en la dimensión ética, creyendo que es en ese encuentro donde se realiza el verdadero Museo, capaz de desvelar la potencia creativa de la voluntad humana, reveladora de la más legítima forma de libertad: la sintonía entre cuerpo y espíritu, entre lo que cada individuo es, percibe, siente y realiza, en relación continuada con las múltiples dimensiones de lo real. Se llega aquí a una “Museología Política”, comprometida con la felicidad humana (en el sentido Aristotélico) y con el bienestar social.

Palabras clave: museo, museología, poética, política, ética.

ABSTRACT

Museology — Poetics, Politics e Ethics: transformative dimensions in the relationships between humans and reality

This paper approaches the theme on different planes. The first one reflects the essentially poetic nature of the Museum which is derived from the mythical figure of *Mousaios* (son of Selene and master of Orpheus, being associated with the creative activity of singing, one of the many interpretations of the Muses in Archaic Greece) or of *Mousaion* (sphere of manifestation of the Muses (emitted words), expression of the creative process founded in memory and responsible for the symbolic representations which form the basis of the cultural process). A Museum based on the creative process, the noblest expression of the relations between humans and reality, will be certainly translated into the development of a Museology as *poiesis* (in its fullest sense – creative act), able to move all the human senses and emotions in their most varied representations. This may thus be referred to as a “Museology of the Spirit”, which translates into the practice of all the perceptual dimensions of the self: Museology as a permanent sphere of the perception of reality, of creativity and of transformation. The second plane looks at the political essence of the Museum, thoroughly free, dynamic and plural. Here, Museology unfolds as a sphere that enables humans to act beyond reality to transform it in a positive way – by

translating, through practice, the legitimate expressions of the human desire for freedom, justice and right to equality. It is a “Museology of Action”, not merely of practice but a transformative action, able to unveil their potency to individuals and societies. The third plane articulates poetics and politics within an ethical dimension, believing that it is precisely in this encounter that the real Museum exists and able to unveil the creative potency of human will – that which reveals the most legitimate form of freedom: the encounter of body and spirit, of what each individual is and what is perceived and accomplished in the continuous relation with the multiple dimensions of reality. Here a “Political Museology” may be identified as being committed to human happiness (in the Aristotelian sense) and to social wellbeing.

Keywords: museum, museology, poetics, politics, ethics.



Introducción

Tratar de Museología, en sus relaciones con la dimensión poético / política del Museo constituye un interesante desafío. El tema no es nuevo para el campo –seguimos creyendo que la Museología es un campo–, pero ha sido casi siempre abordado bajo una perspectiva socializante, a partir de análisis de coyuntura que privilegian las relaciones entre museos y gestión, en el recorte de las dichas *políticas culturales*. En los países donde la gestión del patrimonio y de los museos se articula a partir de las interfaces con el poder público se reconocen esas políticas, cuando existen, como políticas públicas, y se las dimensiona en un ámbito de la praxis ampliamente relacionado a los aspectos administrativos. En las dos últimas décadas, se vienen multiplicando los estudios en dicha vertiente, casi siempre aunados a los aspectos económicos, financieros y gerenciales de los museos tradicionales. Esos estudios privilegian las relaciones entre museos y públicos, museos y turismo, museos y patrimonio edificado, y en muchos casos apuntan las ventajas y desventajas del uso de las nuevas tecnologías, así como las complejidades de la gestión patrimonial, en el ámbito de una economía de mercado. Se ha vuelto casi un mantra, en algunos países, decir que las dificultades de gestión de los museos se deben a la inexistencia (o inoperancia) de políticas para el campo, y sugerir que el poder público se haga cargo de la creación, implementación y gestión de esas políticas y también de los museos que, al final, deben estar al servicio de la sociedad...

El tema tampoco es nuevo para el ICOM, que desde sus primeros tiempos viene reflejando sobre la dimensión política de los museos y de la Museología, tanto en su discurso oficial como Organización como en el ámbito de producción de varios de sus Comités. Es especialmente caro para el ICOFOM, como veremos

adelante. En nivel personal, las cuestiones relativas a la poética y a la política del Museo fueron elegidas como objeto de investigación en el campo de la Ciencia Política, cuando analizamos las relaciones entre Museo y Poder en la realidad brasileña¹; y como objeto de estudios en Comunicación y Cultura, desarrollados bajo el análisis del Museo como lugar de Representación²; y de las interfaces entre Museo, Comunicación y Patrimonio³. Desde 2001, la política del Museo fundamenta asimismo un proyecto permanente de investigación en nuestro Programa de Postgrado⁴.

Este nuevo contacto con la dimensión poética y política del Museo tiene, pues, la forma y el gusto de una inmersión en universo conocido – donde buscaremos ahora desvelar nuevas perspectivas, nuevas sutilezas, nuevas sintonías entre Museo y Real.

Museo: esencia poética

Empecemos por acordar la naturaleza esencialmente poética del Museo, derivada de la figura mítica de *Mousaios*, hijo de Selene, maestro de las Gracias y de Orfeo, asociado a la actividad creativa del canto, una de las muchas representaciones de las Musas en la Grecia arcaica. Orfeo es una representación metafórica de la expresión poética de la cultura humana y su descenso al Hades para rescatar a Eurídice correspondería al deseo humano de recuperar, por el canto, lo que se ha perdido. Cantar es un modo de presentificar, por medio de la palabra y de la música, lo que se oculta en la noche eterna del olvido. Rezan los textos de la tradición órfica que cuando Orfeo tocaba su lira, los pájaros dejaban de volar para escuchar y las fieras perdían el miedo; los árboles se volcaban para capturar el sonido en el viento. Como argonauta, silenció con su canto a las sirenas, responsables de los naufragios, otra bella metáfora, que indica el poder de la música y del canto de silenciar las voces que causan daños sociales. Ese canto habría sido enseñado por las doctrinas de Mousaios, indicando la fuerza de la palabra en la transmisión de la experiencia. Otros textos de la misma tradición relatan la importancia de Mousaios (nombre también grabado como *Musaeus*) como potencia oracular, responsable por la narrativa de ciertos aspectos de la génesis de la cultura griega⁵. Varios de

1. Master en Ciencia Política, 1985-1986. IUPERJ, Universidad Cândido Mendes, RJ, Brasil

2. Master en Comunicación y Cultura. RJ, ECO/UFRJ, 1996-1998. Disertación: Apolo e Dionisos no Templo das Musas. Museu: gênese, ideia e representações na cultura ocidental. Orientador Paulo Vaz.

3. Doctorado en Comunicación y Cultura. RJ, ECO/UFRJ, 2000-2004. Tese: Imagens do 'Não Lugar': comunicação e os 'novos patrimônios'. Orientador Priscila Kuperman.

4. Patrimonio, Museología y Sociedades en Transformación: la experiencia latinoamericana. RJ, PPG-PMUS.

5. En Eratóstenes, fragmento de *Katasterismoi*, Musaeus relata como Zeus, al nacer, fue dado a Themis por Rhea, y por esta a Amaltea, que a su vez lo entregó a Cabra, la hija del Sol, para ser creado en las grutas de Creta. Hippolytus Romanus, en *Philosophoumena* 5, menciona la importancia de los antiguos teólogos Mousaios, Linos e Orfeo, que elucidaban sobre las ceremonias de iniciación

esos textos son directamente dedicados a Mousaios, uno de ellos, de autoría de Eusebio⁶, atribuye al Moisés bíblico (*Mouses*, o *Moses*) el nombre Mousaios, que sería como los griegos lo llamaban.

Orfeo y Mousaios personificarían una de las formas de potencia oracular del humano: la potencia de crear y/o recrear, por la palabra enunciada, por la música y por el canto, la poesía de las cosas. Pero no solo es de la poética de las cosas que hablaban Mousaios y Orfeo: Plinio, el Viejo, en su *Historia Natural* (21.84 y 25.5) menciona las enseñanzas de Mousaios y de Orfeo, asociados a Hesíodo, sobre las propiedades de ciertos vegetales. Estrabón, en su *Geografía* (10.3.17) asocia Orfeo y Musaeus a la cultura Tracia, acordando la importancia del monte Hélicon como lugar de culto a las Musas; y menciona la influencia de la cultura del Oriente sobre esos ritos⁷. La voz de esos dos personajes revela aún la fuerza política de la música y del canto: Platón, en la República (2.364a-365b), menciona narrativas de Musaeus y de Orfeo, hijos de Selene y de las Musas, de acuerdo a las cuales organizaban sus ritos, convenciendo individuos y ciudades de que es posible liberarse y purificarse de la injusticia.

Recordemos también el concepto de *Mousaion* como instancia de manifestación de las Musas (palabras cantadas), expresión del proceso creativo, fundamentado en la memoria y movilizador de las representaciones simbólicas que configuran la base del proceso cultural⁸. La idea de Museo se asocia aquí a *poiesis*, la potencia creativa que permite la generación de lo nuevo y que impulsa el ser hacia la inmortalidad, más allá de la idea de finitud.

Un Museo cuyo fundamento es el proceso creativo, expresión más noble de las relaciones entre lo Humano y lo Real, se traducirá ciertamente por el desarrollo de una Museología como *poiesis* (en su sentido más pleno, acto creador), capaz de movilizar todos los sentidos y emociones humanas en las más diversas representaciones. Es a partir de la *poiesis* como emergencia de lo nuevo que se articula el arte poético (*poiétiké*), y también la figura del poeta (*poiétés*), el que narra lo real de forma siempre creativa. Ahí está la esencia del Museo: la capacidad creativa de decir lo Real. En esa relación, el Museo es a un tiempo la poesía y el poeta, el oráculo y la función oracular, el que narra y el mismo acto de narrar.

y sobre los misterios de la vida, fundamentando, con sus ideas, el sistema completo de la doctrina concerniente al nacimiento. Aristophanes, en *Los Sapos* 1030-33, comenta la nobleza de los poetas Orfeo, que reveló los misterios, y Mousaios, que enseñó la cura de las enfermedades y los oráculos. Herodoto, en *Historias* (7.6 e 8.96) menciona igualmente la actividad oracular de Mousaios. En <https://smokywords.wordpress.com/mousaios/>. Acceso en 24.08.2017

6. Eusebio, Preparación, 9.27. Ella (...) tomó un niño supuestamente de uno de los judíos, y lo llamó Mouses (Moses): pero al crecer, los griegos lo llamaban Mousaios. Y ese Mouses, decían, era el maestro de Orfeo. En <https://smokywords.wordpress.com/mousaios/>. Acceso en 29.08.2017

7. Estrabón recuerda también que esos autores (y otros más) han consagrado toda Asia, hasta India, a Dioniso, y que su música denota esta influencia.

8. Para detalles sobre las relaciones entre *Mousaion* y Museo, ver SCHEINER, Tereza, 1998, Cap. 01.

Pensar el Museo en esa sintonía nos permite creer en la posibilidad de existencia de una ‘Museología del Espíritu’, un modo muy específico de percibir lo Real, fundamentado en el acto creativo. La Museología se revelaría así como instancia permanente de percepción de lo Real, de creación y de transformación, capaz de traducir, por medio de la praxis, todas las dimensiones perceptuales de lo humano y todas las manifestaciones de capacidad humana de creación.

Cabe explicitar que la expresión ‘Museología del Espíritu’ es una metáfora que se utiliza para defender una Museología que va más allá de las prácticas cotidianas, de la técnica y de la prevalencia del logos – mas allá del empirismo científico que presupone “una relación unívoca y verificable entre el lenguaje y el mundo, las palabras y las cosas” (Sodré, 1994, p. 21). Se propone aquí una Museología que abarque, además del logos, aspectos no mensurables de la conciencia, asimismo como la dimensión mítica de la producción cultural. Para ello se debe aceptar que el pensamiento contemporáneo ha revisado el concepto de conciencia, “criticando la presunción común de que la conciencia es la base de conceptos, aprendizaje, razonamiento, pensamiento y juzgado” (Sodré, 1994, pp. 40-41). Ello es fácil de comprender si se acepta la Museología como un modo de pensar lo Real (¿la relación específica?) y no meramente como un conjunto de prácticas relativas a los museos⁹.

Ya en el ámbito de la praxis, el Modo de Ser del Museo se traduciría por medio de la exposición como itinerario poético, trayectoria que permite conyugar, en todas las perspectivas, direcciones y sentidos, las dimensiones creativas del espacio, de la forma, de la luz y del color, y sobre ellos y a través de ellos tejer la malla efrática¹⁰ de la significación. Con ello queremos decir que toda exposición se configura como itinerario poético, aun cuando no se la reconoce o asume como tal.

Hay todavía casos en la que dimensión creativa se desplaza hacia el primer plano, y la narrativa de la exposición desvela de modo ejemplar los movimientos y sutilezas del acto creador. Eso en general sucede en exposiciones de arte, en

9. Hemos tomado como base algunas reflexiones de Sodré que nos recuerdan los estudios realizados por Planck, Einstein, De Broglie, Heisenberg, Born, Schrödinger y Bohr, a partir de los cuales se ha buscado en las ciencias humanas “un encuentro gnóstico entre la racionalidad científica y la creación mítico-imaginaria” (Sodré, 1994, p. 64). Dichas ideas se han utilizado en nuestra tesis doctoral, que defiende, fundamentada en algunos de esos autores, las relaciones entre imaginario, museos y patrimonio (Scheiner, 2004, cap. 2).

10. El término griego *Ekphrasis* o *ecphrasis* describe una obra de arte producida como ejercicio retórico; frecuentemente usada en su forma adjetivada efrática, es una descripción verbal vivida, casi siempre dramática, de una obra de arte visual, real o imaginada. En los tiempos antiguos, se refería a la descripción de cualquier cosa, persona o experiencia. El término adviene del griego *ek* y de *φράσις* *phrasis*, respectivamente ‘fuera’ y ‘hablar’ e o verbo *ἐκφράζειν* *ekphrázein* significa “proclamar o llamar por el nombre cualquier objeto inanimado”. En <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekphrasis>. Acceso en 04.09.2017.

las cuales el lenguaje plástico/poético materializa sentidos ya existentes en el universo sígnico del artista, generando nuevos sentidos¹¹.

Dicha tendencia se expresa en las instalaciones de artistas como Lucio Fontana¹², los ‘ambientes espaciales’; o en las variadas expresiones del arte *site-specific*¹³; pero puede revelarse asimismo de modo pleno en exposiciones de historia, ciencia o técnica, cuando el ‘*quantum*’ museográfico privilegia las sutiles articulaciones entre espacio, tiempo, forma, color y objeto, generando superficies discursivas que se revelan como pura poesía. O aún cuando la misma ciencia es el objeto, revelada en su dimensión más poética, como en la muestra digital “Botánica Poética”, desarrollada por el Jardín Botánico de Nueva York¹⁴. La muestra aborda el movimiento del siglo XVIII, según el cual la botánica se ha tornado objeto de la poesía; e introduce a los botánicos que integraron dicho movimiento, con sus obras, que generaron nuevos conocimientos científicos, presentados en libros, obras de arte y jardines.

Ejemplos del uso intencional de la exposición como *poiesis* pueden encontrarse en museos de todos los países. Mencionamos aquí dos trabajos recientes, desarrollados en Francia: la intervención “Brigada Poética Volante”, realizada en marzo de 2016 en la galería central de esculturas del Museo d’Orsay, por jóvenes actores del grupo teatral Rhinocéros, en homenaje al Douanier Rousseau¹⁵; y el “Pequeño Museo Temporario de la Gran Droguería Poética”, experiencia realizada entre el 30 de marzo y el 7 de mayo de 2017 en el Museo Magritte, en homenaje al artista¹⁶, obra surrealista construida a partir de términos, metáforas y de las experiencias de los participantes, escenificando una especie de botica con productos imaginarios ligados a la mejora de la condición humana, bajo formas de frascos rellenos de sentimientos. La instalación, expresión poética objetivada, como interpreta el director Dominique Maes, hace recordar las experiencias *ready-made* de Marcel Duchamp, como el encapsulamiento del

11. Maluf, Maria Fernanda (2009). La autora comenta que “fueron necesarios veinte siglos para que el arte lograra alcanzar el horizonte mundano y definirse como categoría de ser, renunciando a la representación como proceso intelectual” (p. 123).

12. Maluf, Maria Fernanda. 2007, p. 124.

13. Ver Casimiro Otto, R. C., 2014.

14. Ver <https://www.nybg.org/poetic-botany/#def>. Acceso en 10.09.2017.

15. *La Brigade Poétique Volante* (31.03.2016). Museo d’Orsay, ala central de las esculturas. Exposición temporal. Amigo de Apollinaire y Alfred Jarry, Douanier Rousseau vivió cercado de poetas. La Brigada Poética Volante evolucionó por la nave del museo y por la exposición durante toda la noche, desvelando una selección de los más bellos poemas del Douanier y de sus amigos.

16. *La Grande Droguerie Poétique* es la expresión poética objetivada. De esta vez, rindió homenaje a René Magritte. Tuvo lugar del 30 de marzo al 7 de mayo, en el Museo Magritte, donde el programa *Sésame et les Midis de la Poésie* propuso un nuevo proyecto, después del éxito de “*Ceci n’est pas un Poème I et II*”. Con base en la exposición del Museo Magritte, “*La Grande Droguerie Poétique*” invitó dos asociaciones culturales: Asbl Nativas, que ayuda a personas con necesidades, y el Ceria, que se dedica a la alfabetización, representado por un grupo de estudiantes de francés como lengua extranjera. Fuente: https://www.rtbfb.be/culture/arts/detail_un-petit-musee-temporaire-de-la-grande-droguerie-poetique?id=9567413. Acceso en 09.09.2017

aire de Paris (1919); o el frasco de Alicia en el País de las Maravillas, con la inscripción “Tómame”, cuestionando la veracidad de la etiquetas.

Otro ejemplo sería la muestra “Poética de la Percepción” (*Poetics of Perception*), del brasileño Vik Muniz, realizada de enero a abril de 2014 en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Virginia, EUA. Esta, más tradicional en su concepción, emociona sobre todo por el uso poético de la luz y del color¹⁷.

Más reciente es la muestra “Poética de la Luz” (*Poetics of Light*), realizada entre marzo y junio de 2017 en el Museo Nacional de Ciencia y de la Media, en Bradford, UK¹⁸. El museo, volcado hacia la ciencia y la cultura de la luz y del sonido, reúne en su colección objetos icónicos ligados a la fotografía, a la cinematografía, a la televisión y a las nuevas medias. La exposición, organizada en asociación con el Museo Histórico del Nuevo México (EUA) y la *Bradford School of Art*, reunió alrededor de 200 imágenes realizadas con la técnica fotográfica de ‘pinhole’. El contenido incluyó imágenes sobre arte, política y ciencia.

Finalmente, la exposición “Poético y Político” (*Poetic and Political*), abierta desde 15 de junio de 2017 en el Museo Harn de Arte, de la Universidad de Florida, extendiéndose hasta 08 de julio de 2018, explora dos planos perceptuales aparentemente opuestos, generando un impacto visual provocativo. La muestra sobrepone imágenes de Josef Albers, artista dedicado a las cualidades emotivas y psíquicas del color, a imágenes de artistas africanos y afroamericanos que confrontan los trazos del colonialismo. Las trayectorias estética, histórica y política se entrelazan, con énfasis en el tema de la Diáspora – contribuyendo para una percepción más apurada del tema de la colonialidad, y para concienciar los visitantes sobre las situaciones y actores representados¹⁹.

Hablamos de la esencia poética del Museo. ¿Y cómo ese Museo-poeta se desvela en el ámbito político?

En Simposio (diálogo socrático compilado por Platón), la *poiesis* puede ocurrir bajo tres formas distintas: 1. La procreación (*poiesis natural*); 2. La fama heroica (*poiesis política*); y 3. El cultivo de la virtud y del conocimiento (*poiesis del alma*). Asociada a la *physis* por Platón, es referida por Heidegger como ‘lo que adviene’ – la *physis* como emergencia, acto de desvelamiento o momento extático, en que una cosa se transforma en otra. La idea de *poiesis* está asimismo asociada a la posibilidad de emergencia de una potencia plena, de real fundamento de la transformación.

Para comprender mejor dicha potencia en su dimensión política, recordemos que el término deriva de los términos griegos *politiké* (política en general) y *politikós* (de los ciudadanos), o sea, el conjunto de normas y acciones directamente relacionadas a los intereses de la *polis*, a los intereses colectivos. La

17. <http://www.virginiamoca.org/vik-muniz-poetics-perception>. Acceso en 09.09.2017

18. <https://www.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories>. Acceso en 09.09.2017

19. <http://harn.ufl.edu/poeticandpolitical>. Acceso en 10.09.2017

dimensión política de la *poiesis* estaría, pues, en su potencia de generar acciones transformadoras en pro del bien común. Hablemos aquí no de sistemas de gobierno o de ideologías específicas, sino de la política en su dimensión más plena: como forma de pensar lo colectivo, con la pretensión de atender a los intereses y necesidades de cada individuo, volviéndolo un verdadero ciudadano.

El Museo revela su potencia política al desvelarse como instancia que deflagra el acto creativo, actuando como lugar de transformación.

Logos y Mousaios

Seguimos aquí el movimiento, propuesto por Dioguardi (1995, pp. 7-15), de pensar el Museo como una forma de discurso sobre el conocimiento, como representación de un método de trabajo intelectual. En esta perspectiva, más que un lugar de ‘exposición de memorias’, el Museo se realiza como instancia de captura y traducción de un mapa dicotómico que oscila entre el conocimiento adquirido (como cultura histórica) y el conocimiento que se construye por casualidad, y que resulta en una “cultura de la acción práctica, susceptible de determinar el devenir en el hacer” (p. 11). No se trata de reificar el par ‘saber x hacer’, o de dar énfasis a la oposición clásica entre cultura humanista y cultura científica; se trata de percibir el conocimiento como “una victoria sobre la facultad de olvidar” (p. 14). El conocimiento se da como presentificación de la experiencia, en acto, o memorizada; como resultante del movimiento de traer a la presencia lo que, de otra forma, se ocultaría en la noche del olvido, donde por veces el pasado parece querer ocultarse.

Dioguardi (1995, p. 15) comenta que “la existencia del hombre se manifiesta como un viaje por los meandros de un conocimiento que aumenta a la medida en que proseguimos por el camino de la vida”. En este viaje, comenta Serres, espacio y tiempo se articulan para generar capas perceptuales progresivas: de la autopercepción (¿quién soy yo?), o *ipseidad*, revelada como consciencia-de-sí, a la consciencia del Otro (Ego x Alter); y de ahí hacia la percepción de lo colectivo (Nosotros). Es entre esos pliegues que nos definimos y que elegimos “donde y como investir nuestra *libido* de pertenencia” (Serres, 2015, p. 126). Es entre esos pliegues que nuestro Yo se vuelve Nosotros.

Son esos pliegues que nos permiten aún organizar nuestras capas perceptuales bajo la forma de narrativas de mundo, creando guiones significantes que hacen posible articular los distintos planos vivenciales que se nos presentan y que recurrimos, en todas direcciones, de la individualidad al colectivo global. Por medio de las narrativas, buscamos ordenar la demasía de lo Real: “Cada cultura, cada música, cada narrativa, todas singulares, todas como fuente de gozo de pertenencias, irán a beber en la universalidad de ese murmullo, en el aliento que precede el sentido. Después la narrativa, sensata, lo olvidará” (Serres, 2015, p. 140). En ese proceso todo se articula a partir de un centro que será inevitablemente la ipseidad, el ego, el yo-mismo, la consciencia-de-uno. Pues apenas se nos hace posible percibir lo Real a partir de lo que somos y es

con nuestra piel, nuestros sentidos, nuestra conciencia que podemos articular un mapa de mundo que sea verdaderamente significante. Y como todo se despliega a partir del Yo, es a partir de mi colección de experiencias y memorias que gana cuerpo y forma mi primera experiencia de Museo, que algunos reconocen como Museo Interior.

Mi experiencia personal del mundo deflagra, pues, una ‘narrativa de Real’ personalísima, que a su vez influencia y define los modos y formas bajo los cuales deberé avanzar en mis vivencias. Tiempo, espacio, movimiento, causa y consecuencia, pensar, sentir, hacer, todo se confunde en una inconmensurable nube perceptiva y vivencial de la cual es justamente la capacidad narrativa que me permite construir, por la selección, una memoria²⁰.

Es por medio de la selección que se configura el Museo Tradicional. Directamente constituido por una identidad segmentada, el Museo Tradicional, con sus colecciones formadas a partir de elementos elegidos y retirados del mundo, comprueba que es de la naturaleza humana evaluar y analizar los hechos aislados, “antes de reunirlos en la síntesis del juzgamiento” (Dioguardi, 1995, p. 35). Se evidencia aquí la capacidad del Museo en provocar emociones: pues el acto de exponer, más que una función de mostración, puede también evocar el misterio, la síntesis, el descubrimiento, distintas facetas del desvelamiento.

Pensar el Museo como narrativa de lo Real lleva a otro movimiento: desvelar como este fue pensado y narrado, a lo largo de distintos momentos de la Historia. Se entrecruzan aquí varias narrativas, predominando la que enumera distintas fases (o representaciones) del Museo basadas en la vivencia histórica de lo que se ha convenido llamar ‘cultura occidental’, y que se inicia por el *Museum* de Alexandria en 284 a.C., se despliega en las colecciones de manuscritos y objetos sacros medievales, en las colecciones de objetos científicos y obras de arte de los siglos XV y XVI; y se multiplica en el Renacimiento, bajo la forma de gabinetes de estudio y de curiosidades, galerías de arte y colecciones profanas y/o religiosas, mantenidas en espacios privados o en universidades para fines de estudio y contemplación. En este momento, el Museo pasa a ser percibido como un ‘teatro de la memoria’; y la idea de ‘museo’, siempre asociada a los sistemas de pensamiento de cada sociedad, en cada tiempo y lugar, es articulada para representar cadenas relacionales muy al gusto del conocimiento de la época.

Dioguardi (1995, p. 99) recuerda los ‘museos de la utopía’ mencionados por Giordano Bruno – y el “Sistema del Saber Universal” descrito por Francis Bacon en 1621 en su libro *Nova Atlantis*: un “complejo museo imaginario reproduciendo exactamente el sueño epistemológico de la época, que recusaba la división de distintas partes del saber, siempre concretamente documentadas, e investigaba asimismo sus interfaces” (Vercelloni, *apud* Dioguardi, 1995, p. 99).

20. “Memoria de itinerarios, de lugares, de hechos, de museos encontrados y de obras que les son vinculadas” (Dioguardi, 1995, p.18).

Volvamos a la idea de Museo como expresión del conocimiento generado por el Hombre. En este sentido el autor defiende una idea doble, de museo tradicional “como receptáculo inmutable, como *hardware*”, pero asimismo como

algo flexible y modificable en función de los conocimientos, como un fenómeno que debe ser comprendido, organizado, generado. El museo sería una especie de ‘software’, capaz de crear a cualquier momento una atmósfera específica que caracterizaría una casa para hacer de ella un verdadero hogar (Dioguardi, 1995, p. 81).

”

El autor denomina ‘efecto museo’ al proceso de sedimentación de ideas, eventos y hechos que nos lleva a memorizar la experiencia humana como parte de la historia. Pues es precisamente de la sedimentación de los productos de la inteligencia humana que nacen las disciplinas que describen el arte y la ciencia, por medio de las cuales se expresa la imaginación.

El efecto museo – sedimentación y recomposición de lo Real por el conocimiento – constituye un verdadero método de trabajo antiguo y también siempre actual, particularmente útil en los días de hoy, para afrontar nuestra época caracterizada por la complejidad, la redundancia y el ruido (Dioguardi, 1995, p. 3).

Metodológicamente, eso corresponde a los procesos de selección, conservación y evocación de los hechos y eventos que los profesionales del campo de la Museología identificarían como ‘funciones del museo’. Pero aquí el autor no limita dichos procesos a la existencia de registros materiales, sino que alarga la percepción del ‘efecto museo’ a los procesos de selección y redimensionamiento de elementos originales vinculados a los hechos históricos, muy comunes en las ciencias humanas y sociales y en la literatura. En este sentido, el museo se vuelve un laboratorio “donde se realiza una experiencia sobre el acto de vivir” (Dioguardi, 1995, p. 109) – ya que la experiencia se puede ampliar hacia todas las actividades humanas.

Museo: esencia política

Se desvela aquí el segundo nivel de la esencia del Museo: la esencia política, que reconoce el fenómeno Museo como fundamentalmente libre, dinámico y plural (Scheiner, 1991, 1998). La Museología se desvela aquí como instancia que permite al Humano actual en lo Real, para transformarlo positivamente, traduciendo, por medio de la praxis, las expresiones legítimas del deseo humano de libertad, justicia y derecho a la igualdad.

Traducir hacia la praxis la esencia política del Museo significa actuar en el plano de la cotidianidad, revelando, como preveía Heidegger (2000) la dimensión de mundanidad de su ser. ¿Qué significa eso? Significa traducir para el mundo la realidad cotidiana, vivencial, de los fenómenos y de las cosas, moviéndonos

hacia lo que se oculta en esa cotidianidad. Como en un juego de luces y sombras, la esencia política del Museo se revela precisamente en el sutil espacio de frontera que se construye entre el *logos* y la *physis*; entre lo intencional y lo realizado; entre lo deseado y lo posible; entre lo que *es* (mundo), *el modo posible de ser* de las cosas (*Da-sein*) y los límites de la experiencia (*finitud*).

¿Y cómo se realiza esta esencia? Pues, por medio de los pliegues de una “Museología de la Acción”, no mera praxis, sino acción transformadora, donde cada museo se vuelve capaz de desvelar para individuos y sociedades su potencia; no como instancia reveladora de Verdad, sino como indicador privilegiado de los múltiples sentidos de lo Real, entendidos como posibles manifestaciones de realidad. El Museo se realiza así en el movimiento y en la diferencia: en el movimiento del acto creativo, que evita la repetición y que reactualiza, por la dinámica de los procesos vivenciales, su fundamental libertad.

Es en la dimensión política, dice aún la Museología, que el ser del Museo se abre hacia el lenguaje en su manifestación más amplia, ya indicada por autores como Saussure (*apud* Carvalho, 2003), que recuerda la importancia del signo lingüístico como entidad psíquica dual, donde *significante* (imagen acústica) y *significado* (sentido) se articulan y complementan, traduciendo el concepto generado en el plano de las ideas por medio de planos organizados de expresión. Hay que considerar que el Museo se instaure como fenómeno en el ámbito de la palabra, y que se instituye por un acto de nominación, tanto en la teoría (esto es Museo) como en la praxis (este conjunto de representaciones se constituirá como museo).

La potencia política del Museo se inicia por la transposición, al nivel de la praxis, de su dimensión poética, en un movimiento sutil que hace uso estético del lenguaje, del lenguaje poético, como diría Eco (1976). La misma transformación es parte del acto creativo, y abarca la capacidad de comprender, relacionar, ordenar, configurar y significar lo Real. Y, así como Ostrower (1996) considera el arte, la arquitectura, la música y la danza²¹ como ordenaciones significantes, ordenaciones de lenguaje por medio de las cuales se definen los contenidos expresivos, se puede también decir que esta es la esencia del Museo. El Museo²² sería, entonces, *una de las formas más completas de ordenación significativa de lo Real*, donde se articulan la materialidad, como lenguaje simbólico, y la inmaterialidad, como aliento o ‘anima’ que confiere al todo su plena significación.

Ostrower nos acuerda también que todo acto creativo es simultáneamente individual y social, articulando continuamente el plano intuitivo a la percepción de mundo desarrollada por el individuo en su relación con las cosas. Es precisamente esta dimensión social, actuada creativamente, que confiere al Museo su fuerza política y su potencial de transformación.

21. Exactamente lo que la Filosofía presenta como instancias de manifestación de las Musas.

22. Él mismo, una instancia de manifestación de las Musas.

Hablemos ahora de la dimensión política del Museo cuando esta se refleja directamente en las interfaces sociales. Aquí, estarán expresas las relaciones entre Museo, como instrumento de renovación social, y Política, como el conjunto de normas y acciones direccionadas a los intereses colectivos. En esta dimensión la potencia del Museo se relaciona a la idea de poder como resultado del contrato social, y puede revelarse bajo distintas formas, como el *poder simbólico*, ejemplarmente trabajado por Bourdieu y sus seguidores; el *poder de comunicación*, vinculado al uso pleno de la potencia transindividual y transsocial de interacción; el *poder informacional*, producto de los intercambios sociales en todos los tiempos y lugares, y especialmente enfatizado en la contemporaneidad con el advenimiento y popularización de las nuevas tecnologías. Y aún como *poder político*, en el sentido de la búsqueda de un equilibrio relacional entre actores sociales (Arendt), o estrategia resultante de movimientos tácticos de esos actores (Foucault).

Ese poder político/estratégico puede organizarse por medio de dispositivos específicos, como instrumentos normativos, códigos deontológicos y códigos legales. Y asimismo bajo la forma de las llamadas *políticas de acción*, que en el ámbito de las relaciones entre Estado y Sociedad pueden ser reconocidas bajo la leyenda de *políticas públicas*. En el campo de la cultura y del patrimonio, dichas dinámicas se articulan con el perfil de *políticas culturales*. Es en el ámbito de las políticas culturales que las relaciones entre estado, sociedad, patrimonio y museos se revelan de modo más específico, muchas veces presentando una dimensión particularísima, reconocida como *políticas museológicas*.

En el universo de las políticas de acción, se revela la importancia de los grupos de presión y de los grupos de interés²³, cuyas articulaciones contribuyen para dimensionar el continuado juego de fuerzas que Bourdieu denominaría ‘disputas de poder’. En el campo específico de la Política, dichos grupos se mueven prioritariamente a partir de cuestiones ideológicas; ya en el campo dicho ‘cultural’ las disputas de poder se ejercen mediadas por las agencias y movimientos de negociación diplomática. Este es el territorio simbólico donde se mueven agencias de especial relevancia para el patrimonio, los museos y la Museología, entre ellas, el ICOM, importante instancia de mediación teórico/práctica, cuya actuación tiene alto grado de resonancia en los instrumentos jurídicos y deontológicos que fundamentan la práctica llamada ‘museológica’.

La reflexión epistémica sobre las relaciones entre Museo y Política es relativamente reciente en el campo de la Museología, habiéndose articulado especialmente a partir de 1983, cuando el ICOFOM eligió como objeto de análisis crítico el tema Museo, Territorio, Sociedad; y de 1986, cuando eligió reflexionar sobre las relaciones entre Museología e Identidad. Más adelante, en 1993, eligió

23. Grupo de interés (o de presión) es toda asociación organizada de individuos o de entidades que, con base en intereses compartidos, se proponen influenciar las políticas públicas a su favor, a partir de una causa definida. Son una evolución natural de las comunidades de interés. Thomas, Clive S. En <https://www.britannica.com/topic/interest-group>. Acceso en 10.09.2017.

como tema de estudio y debate las relaciones entre Museo, Espacio y Poder²⁴, tema replicado en el mismo año en el ámbito del ICOFOM LAM, con el recorte Museo, Espacio y Poder en América Latina y el Caribe²⁵. En 1995, el dibujo e implantación, por Vinos Sofka, del Movimiento Internacional “De la Opresión a la Democracia”, destinado a documentar y analizar la memoria de los antiguos Estados totalitarios²⁶, enfatizó la importancia de los museos y del patrimonio en los movimiento de autoreconocimiento y de empoderamiento de las sociedades posttotalitarias, en distintos contextos geopolíticos. Dichas iniciativas legitimaron, de forma emblemática, los abordajes de los teóricos del campo con respecto a la Museología como lugar de pensamiento sobre la dimensión política del Museo, especialmente en el ámbito del ICOFOM. Alargando la mirada, percibimos que el mismo ICOFOM debió su creación a un conjunto de imposiciones claramente políticas: en el artículo sobre su trayectoria en el ICOM, Sofka se refiere al proceso de constitución del Comité como una conquista ideológica; y a los miembros del ICOFOM como “militantes en la lucha por la museología y en la búsqueda de sus fundamentos” (Sofka, 2016).

Pero no se puede olvidar que ya existe hace décadas, tanto en el ICOM como en el universo académico y en el ámbito de las agencias vinculadas a las políticas culturales (incluyendo la UNESCO), un considerable conjunto de reflexiones críticas sobre la dimensión política de los museos y de la Museología²⁷, del que forman parte documentos emblemáticos del campo como la Declaración de Grenoble (1971)²⁸ y la Carta de Santiago (1972). Sobre esta última, de Varine (s.f.)²⁹ comenta que a partir de Santiago se legitiman en el ámbito de la Museología la noción de Museo como herramienta de desarrollo, y la idea de función social del Museo y del rol político del museólogo.

Entre los estudios relevantes para el campo de la Museología se han destacado asimismo en los años 1990, las reflexiones sobre el rol político de los museos en sus relaciones de inclusión con todos los grupos sociales, especialmente las sociedades poscoloniales. Algunos de esos estudios alcanzaron resonancia global, como aquellos desarrollados por Amareswar Galla (1993, 1996). Al mismo tiempo, los teóricos adeptos de la Nueva Museología se concentraban en el

24. Atenas y Thessaloniki, Grecia, 1993.

25. Quito, Ecuador, 1993. Ver Astudillo, L; Decarolis, N. & Scheiner, T. (1993).

26. Profesionales de distintos países se adhirieron al proyecto. En Brasil, dio origen al proyecto de investigación “Patrimonio, Museología y Sociedades en Transformación: la experiencia latinoamericana”, creado en 2001 y desde 2006 vinculado al PPG-PMUS, teniendo a Sofka como investigador asociado. Ver Sofka, Vinos, 2016.

27. Ver Scheiner, Tereza, 2012.

28. Resoluciones y Recomendaciones de la 9a. Conferencia General de Museos - “El Museo al servicio del Hombre, hoy y mañana”. El evento dedicó especial atención a la educación y a la acción cultural. En <http://icom.museum/la-gobernanza/asamblea-general/resoluciones/grenoble-1971/L/1/>. Acceso en 09.09.2017.

29. VARINE, Hugo. (s.f.).

reconocimiento, defensa y musealización de los patrimonios comunitarios, en el ámbito local.

En 1992, el ICOM creó, por recomendación de su Consejo Consultivo, un Grupo de Trabajo sobre Temas Transculturales (*Working Group on Cross Cultural Issues* - WGCCI). Los resultados de producción de ese grupo impregnaron positivamente el trabajo de la Organización, que pasó a enfatizar los temas vinculados al desarrollo de “una Museología incluyente, capaz de abordar los contextos de la diversidad cultural, más allá de las fronteras de raza, etnicidad, color, género, clase, edad, habilidades físicas, regiones, lengua, fe, credo, estatuto económico, preferencias sexuales”³⁰; y a explorar los modos de relacionar el desarrollo económico y cultural de las comunidades a la percepción de espacio, identidad y autoestima de los distintos grupos. Esto incluyó la concienciación sobre las necesidades culturales de los grupos minoritarios, poblaciones indígenas y sociedades ‘en transición’ (desapoderadas por la diáspora, por la pobreza o por los conflictos armados), en un movimiento de rechazo a las prácticas colonialistas e imperialistas aún existentes en museos, y a las tendencias homogeneizantes y universalisantes del discurso cultural.

Las políticas y retos adoptados por el ICOM a partir de 1992 promovieron la importancia de las interfaces entre las culturas de la diáspora y las culturas enraizadas en sus territorios de origen; y también la percepción de que todas las manifestaciones son válidas en un mundo culturalmente democrático³¹. Como resultado se eligió el tema “Museos y Diversidad Cultural” para la Conferencia General de 1998. En diciembre de 2005 se conformó una Fuerza de Trabajo Intercultural (*Cross Cultural Task Force*), coordinada por Galla e integrada por especialistas de distintos países³², cuya actuación profesional ya se articulaba con los temas del interculturalismo, del respeto a la diferencia, de la libertad y de la inclusión en museos, temas que algunos años más tarde serían cooptados por la propuesta teórica de la ‘descolonización’.

El trabajo de la CCTF tuvo resonancia directa sobre la revisión del Plan Estratégico de la Organización, introduciendo la idea del Museo Inclusivo como tema prioritario³³. No por casualidad, fueron siempre estrechas sus interfaces con el Comité de Ética del ICOM, articulando la idea de diversidad cultural

30. Ver ICOM, 1997.

31. *ICOM Cultural Diversity Policy Statement and Action Plan*.

32. Alemania, África del Sur, Barbados, Brasil, China, Congo, Ecuador, Estados Unidos, Filipinas, Fiji, Francia, Holanda, Inglaterra, Japón, Mali, Turquía.

33. Interfaces desarrolladas en Camberra, Australia (2006) resultaron en el aporte de nuevos e importantes asociados, especialmente en la región Asia-Pacífico. En 2007, una sesión de trabajo sobre diversidad cultural y transformación en los museos fue el primer paso para el establecimiento de una serie de conferencias sobre el tema: Leiden, Holanda, 2008; Brisbane, Australia, 2009, Estambul, Turquía, 2010. Ver Galla, 2007. Dichos movimientos se insirieron en un contexto de nuevas articulaciones políticas del mismo ICOM, que entre 2004 y 2010 alargó su acción transorganizacional, formulando acuerdos de cooperación, entre otros, con el ICOMOS y la WIPO - World Intellectual Property Organization.

como concepto ético (Galla, s.f.). En 2012 la CCTF fue disuelta y en su lugar se creó el Instituto Internacional del Museo Inclusivo, una organización virtual también coordinada por Galla³⁴.

A pesar de esos avances todavía permanecen, en el seno de la comunidad ‘museológica’ internacional, ecos de una falsa idea de que los museos son agencias apolíticas; y de que los temas vinculados a los modos y formas por los cuales los museos experimentan las relaciones de poder y legitiman sus experiencias en distintos contextos político-ideológicos son temas meramente secundarios. De parte del cuerpo social, el creciente interés por los museos y por el patrimonio, resultante de las políticas de acción y difusión social implementadas en las dos últimas décadas en nivel nacional e internacional, si por un lado destacaron los retos de inclusión social, desvelando el rol de los museos como creadores de ‘capital cultural’ y productores de una “experiencia social y colectiva” (Krebs, A. & Maresca B., 1995), por otro lado horizontalizó el discurso sobre museos y Museología, creando una falsa impresión de que se puede solucionar la apertura de los museos hacia la libertad de expresión y la diferencia con la mera adopción de nuevas tecnologías, nuevos dispositivos museográficos y nuevas interfaces institucionales; o con el diseño, en ámbito local o nacional, de ‘políticas culturales’, ‘patrimoniales’ o ‘museales’.

De esa forma la propuesta de una ‘Museología de Acción’ que efectivamente se articule para abrir los museos a los intereses comunes se agota en el ámbito del discurso. Esa tendencia es enfatizada por la producción académica en el campo de la cultura, del patrimonio y de la Museología, muy desarrollada en las dos últimas décadas, especialmente en los países que cuentan con programas de postgrado dedicados a los museos y al patrimonio. En muchos países, la profundización de las reflexiones epistémicas sobre los aspectos constitutivos del campo y sobre las relaciones entre sociedad, cultura, patrimonio y museos no ha generado movimientos similares de actualización y modernización de las prácticas especializadas: en muchos casos, la acción es ahogada por la reflexión; y la práctica, por las narrativas de lo que se debe realizar. Entre los ejemplos de ese descompaso podemos mencionar la dificultad de implementar, en museos comunitarios, los inventarios participativos, de los cuales muchos hablan, pero cuya metodología muy pocos conocen; o de realizar de modo pleno la documentación de las manifestaciones intangibles del patrimonio, para efecto de musealización.

En los museos tradicionales, hoy operando en contexto de concurrencia abierta con las nuevas formas de prácticas culturales (ver Krebs & Maresca, 2005), la apertura hacia nuevas camadas de visitantes (incluyendo los turistas) y a

34. Ver <http://inclusivemuseum.org>. Se conformó asimismo una ‘comunidad de conocimiento sobre el museo inclusivo’ (*The Inclusive Museum Knowledge Community*), red que articula intereses comunes sobre el futuro rol de los museos y hace interfaces entre la academia y el cuerpo social, bajo acciones de impacto que incluyen enseñanza, investigación y debates. En <http://onmuseums.com/assets/downloads/museum/Z16FinalProgram.pdf>. Acceso en 10.09.2017.

contingentes de público cada vez más grandes no significa necesariamente estar en sintonía con una dimensión política plena: puede apenas consistir en una respuesta administrativa a las nuevas demandas de gestión financiera de los museos. Museos, especialmente los grandes y emblemáticos museos de resonancia global, necesitan continuamente comprobar que son capaces de sobrevivir en un ambiente en que, más que la poética y la política en su sentido más noble, lo que predomina son las leyes del mercado. Como resultado, lo que se tiene no es la esencia, es el ruido, que se revela por el uso exagerado (o desnecesario) de dispositivos tecnológicos, o por la *espectacularización*. Aquí, la Museología de Acción se pierde en las mallas de una ‘Museología del Espectáculo’.

Dimensión ética del Museo

En un tercer plano, poética y política se articulan en la dimensión ética. Defendemos un concepto de ética como la capacidad de percibir el Otro que nos habita (Badiou, 1995). Ello genera una percepción natural de las diferencias entre lo Igual y lo Mismo, evitando alejarnos de la diversidad asociativa del mundo. Creemos que es en ese encuentro que se realiza el verdadero Museo, capaz de desvelar la potencia creativa de la voluntad humana, reveladora de la más legítima forma de libertad: la sintonía entre cuerpo y espíritu, entre lo que cada individuo es, percibe, siente y realiza, en relación continuada con las múltiples dimensiones de lo Real.

En esa perspectiva, es importante el aporte intersocial posibilitado por las metodologías de acción fundamentadas en la idea de un Museo Integral. Esa matriz, configurada en Santiago (1972) y globalizada a través del discurso de la Nueva Museología y de la propuesta de un Nuevo Museo, fundamentó en parte las prácticas de los ecomuseos y de los museos comunitarios creados en la segunda mitad del siglo XX; y evolucionó hacia la idea de Museo Inclusivo, que a partir de los años 1990 se convirtió, como hemos visto, en meta prioritaria del ICOM. El Museo, percibido y actuado como espacio de inclusión, podría así volverse un ‘ágora absoluta’ (Scheiner, 2012), articulando de forma plural grupos sociales de las más distintas configuraciones. Se trataría aquí de una “Museología Política”, comprometida con la felicidad humana (en el sentido Aristotélico) y con el bienestar social.

Sin embargo, hay que tener en cuenta que el Museo verdaderamente inclusivo no es el que se alinea a la apología de un ‘derecho a la diferencia’, “percibiendo al Otro como el que posee hábitos, creencias y comportamientos diversos” (Scheiner, 1998, p. 113): dicha ética, que “idealiza un mundo donde sería posible la coexistencia tranquila de las comunidades culturales, religiosas, nacionales, y que niega la exclusión, se fundamenta en una fascinación por el culturalismo” (Scheiner, 1998, p. 114) cuyo origen podría ser una “sociología vulgar, directamente heredada del espanto colonial delante del salvaje” (Badiou, 1995, p. 34), olvidando que toda configuración colectiva se caracteriza por una inagotable multiplicidad y complejidad de trazos y patrones. Si creemos, como Badiou, que “la ética no existe, no hay sino ética-de” (Ibidem), sabremos que no hay un

sujeto uno, sino tantos sujetos como verdades existiesen. No existen una ‘ética general’ y un ‘sujeto abstracto’, lo que existe son seres particulares, invitados por las circunstancias a volverse sujetos. No hay, pues, “una ética general, sino ética de procesos, por los cuales se tratan los posibles de una situación” (Scheiner, 1998, p. 114). Se trata pues de una “ética del Otro, apertura principal hacia el Otro” (Badiou, 1995, p. 26).

Esta es la perspectiva que deseamos para el Museo: el abrirse a cada Otro en su *ipseidad*, subordinando la identidad a la diferencia – no como registro social, sino en esencia. Un museo vinculado a la esencia de verdad de cada individuo, avieso a una falsa ética consensual, indicadora de resignación subjetiva y de consentimiento hacia lo que hay. La dimensión poético-política del Museo se revelaría aquí plenamente, articulando una ética de los procesos (ética-*de*) y “una estética de la creación como ontológica, cuya belleza se da en la relación, poblada de afectos. Ese encantamiento con la vida es lo que hace posible generar lo nuevo, producir nuevos sentidos” (Scheiner, 1998, p. 92).

Museo, ética y poética – transformaciones

Las recientes articulaciones del campo cultural han agregado nuevas responsabilidades al ámbito museológico: el desplazamiento progresivo de las prácticas culturales para consumo de los nuevos medios, ocurrido a partir de los años 1980, obligó a los museos a desarrollar alternativas de acción más abiertas y sintonizadas con las expectativas de sus públicos potenciales. Sin embargo, es preciso tener en cuenta que, en la Actualidad,

la verdad se presenta al juego político a través de formas de representación de lo imaginario, todas ellas más o menos vinculadas a una teatralización de lo Real. (...) Legitimada por las elaboraciones [simbólicas] del pasado colectivo, dicha teatralización permite al poder generar y asegurar sus privilegios (Scheiner, 1998, p. 126),

colocando en escena una herencia donde están presentes todos los mitos e idealizaciones colectivas que articulan identidades. Sabemos que la expresión teatralizada del poder fue utilizada en todos los tiempos, “dando origen a lo que Duvignaud califica como ‘sociedades visuales’, donde todo se muestra y se representa” (Scheiner, 1998, p. 126); hoy el poder se constituye por medio de operaciones simbólicas que lo hacen cada vez más seductor (acordémonos de Foucault), presentándose bajo la forma de dispositivos técnicos e irradiándose con el apoyo de los medios, especialmente los medios digitales. En consecuencia, el día a día se transforma en espectáculo y la demostración substituye a la argumentación. Esta dramatización permanente de la vida nos conlleva a percibir que, como ha dicho Balandier (1982, p. 69), “el poder debe mantenerse donde está la imagen”. Se comprende así porque, en el escenario de la Actualidad, los museos ganan una relevancia tan especial: en su ámbito reposan imágenes de poder de todos los tiempos.

Afirmamos que la exposición es la principal forma de expresión de la esencia poética del Museo. Nos corresponde a nosotros actuar de modo pleno esa esencia, analizando continuamente las relaciones entre los museos y los distintos grupos sociales, y actualizando las narrativas elaboradas por los lenguajes dichos ‘museológicos’, sin caer en la trampa de la espectacularización y del discurso vano.

En el actual contexto epistémico, en el que se piensan las estructuras sociopolíticas a partir del par finitud/recomienzo, la idea del ‘nuevo’ pasa a ser el argumento alrededor del cual se articulan las ideas. Las recurrentes narrativas sobre un Nuevo Mundo, la Nueva Historia, las Nuevas Identidades, los Nuevos Patrimonios, la Nueva Museología, el Nuevo Museo, pueden generar la ilusión de que sería posible engendrar el cambio a partir de una concepción ‘renovada’ de Real, donde la transformación pudiera darse bajo la falsa perspectiva de un uso exagerado de las nuevas tecnologías. ¿Qué le correspondería pues al Museo?

Creemos que es en el pasaje de la teoría hacia la práctica, justamente ahí, en ese lugar de encuentro donde el pensamiento se transforma en acción, que la poética de las cosas pierde su fuerza y su énfasis, dando lugar a prácticas muy poco comprometidas con el cambio. Pensar el cambio no significa necesariamente estar preparado para cambiar, al revés, el pensamiento de lo nuevo puede actuar como un sustituto para la instauración de lo nuevo, negando la acción por la prevalencia de la idea. Cambiar duele, y no hay dolor más grande que dejar lo conocido para osar el salto hacia el abismo; pero es lo que se tiene que hacer, si deseamos que el Museo se abra hacia una *poética de lo nuevo*, capaz de transformar, de forma política, lo Real, instaurando nuevas realidades: como decía Heidegger, la realidad no se transforma por una proposición teórica, sino por la acción, en la cotidianidad.

Reconocer y actuar de forma integral los espacios simbólicos híbridos, las interfaces y relaciones de cada grupo con el patrimonio y los museos, a partir del tiempo social de cada uno, respetando las representaciones que les son significantes, puede ser el camino para identificar donde se revela la ‘*éticade*’ indicada por Badiou, la verdadera matriz poética y política que mueve los afectos hacia la transformación. A partir de ahí, hay que dejar que el Museo ‘hable’, — usando de modo pleno y articulado sus lenguajes: del espacio, del objeto, de la forma, del tiempo, del movimiento, de la luz y del color, para componer una narrativa Órfica de lo Real.

La poética de Orfeo se desvela en la precisión del canto por medio del uso ético del lenguaje, cuando se dirige a la verdad interior de cada uno de nosotros.

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Crafting a Poetic Museology

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ABSTRACT

Museological scholarship that engages an audience which must be persuaded to read a given text requires as much craft as any creative work. Scholars, like any professional writers, can learn and practice the techniques of this craft, many of which are touched on here, revising their work for clarity and grace. Why write clearly as well as thoughtfully? Because thought without communication has no impact on the world—and the world needs experts who can communicate the importance of aesthetics for civil society today.

Key words: stylistics, writing, clarity, poetics

RESUMEN

La erudición museológica que involucra a una audiencia que debe ser persuadida a leer un texto dado requiere tanto arte como cualquier trabajo creativo. Los eruditos, como cualquier escritor profesional, pueden aprender y practicar las técnicas de este arte, muchas de las cuales se tocan aquí, revisando su trabajo para la claridad y la gracia. ¿Por qué escribir claramente así como pensativo? Porque el pensamiento sin comunicación no tiene ningún impacto en el mundo, y el mundo necesita expertos que puedan comunicar la importancia de la estética para la sociedad civil de hoy.

Palabras clave: estilística, escritura, claridad, poética



François Mairesse asks in his 2017 conference call for a poetics of museology, “Can we find in museum literature an admirable creative breath...or are we doomed to gloomy and technocratic gibberish?” As a professor of English studies who directs a professional writing program and teaches rhetoric and style, I say that yes, persuasive, engaging writing is possible, and desirable, if we are to have an impact beyond the small circle of people who feel they *must* read us. Clarity and grace are not antithetical, nor are vivacity and scholarship, and there are indeed specific techniques we can master to cut the gibberish and write with force. As Mairesse notes, strong writing is not merely an aesthetic pleasure, it is the way to ensure that our insights circulate and have an impact. No one quotes—or remembers—what they cannot understand.

Am I saying that memorable style is more important than a great idea? This debate has raged in the field of rhetoric through two millennia. The Greek philosophers Socrates and Gorgias asked each other, “Do you need to communicate well, or is thinking well the only honest pursuit?” Or at least they did in Plato’s retelling of the debate. Plato, Socrates’ student, fell squarely on the side of thinking well—but he conveyed that message in beguiling little dialogues that we still read with pleasure 2500 years later.

The ancient Roman rhetor we know as Longinus called this attention to the poetics of language *hypsos*, the elevation we often translate as “sublimity.” Sublimity, he wrote, would move an audience to *ekstasis*, would put it “out of place.” Longinus’ point was that great ideas required elevated language, in which a confluence of passions and careful attention to rhythm and diction could knock an audience off balance, moving it to take a new stance and, thus, look at the idea presented in some new way, moving it even, perhaps, to action.

Modern rhetorical theory, which springs in the West from the work of 20th century rhetorician Kenneth Burke, examines just what it means to combine logical argument with emotional appeal and personal authority in the cauldron of language. For Burke—who was both a literary critic and a social activist, and who wanted his writing to make a difference in the world—the wedding of eloquent language to persuasive thought was critical: You simply could not convince people to change their ideas if you didn’t first sweep them along with language.

I’ll come back to Burke later, but let me first dive into a variety of techniques I teach and use myself to make prose eloquent and, therefore, persuasive to an audience. I will group my points around classical rhetoric’s 2500-year tradition of three kinds of appeals to an audience—*logos*, appeals to their logical mind, *pathos*, appeals to their emotions, and *ethos*, appeals to their desire to believe in you, the speaker or writer.

To appeal stylistically to an audience's *logos*, their innate sense of logical reasoning, you need first to make it absolutely clear what your argument is about. In other words, you need a *clear thesis statement*, a topic and your argument on that topic—and you need it early. This may seem rudimentary, but I can't count how many professional pieces I've edited over the years—including my own—that bury the thesis on page 6 or, worse, avoid it altogether. Why is it so hard for us to write a clear thesis statement? Linguist Steven Pinker calls it The Curse of Knowledge: “a difficulty in imagining what it is like for someone else not to know something that you know” (2014, p. 59). Psychological studies show that we all unconsciously fall prey to this, “mistakenly assum[ing] that [our] private knowledge and skills—the words and facts [we] know, the puzzles [we] can solve, the gadgets [we] can operate—are second nature to everyone else, too” (p. 60). We know what we're writing about, and we know our stance on that topic; surely it is obvious to the audience as well. But an audience needs its writer to make it clear what the argument will be, early on, because it is the scaffolding they use to understand the building the writer is constructing, and it tells them why they're bothering to read all the rest of that lovely intelligent prose.

Here is the thesis statement of Hughes de Varine-Bohan's article “The Modern Museum”: “Instead of being there for the objects, museums should be there for people” (2015, p. 77). Concise, balanced, clear, therefore memorable. Indeed, de Varine's full thesis paragraph applies two other key rules of eloquent writing to set up that thesis sentence: *vary sentence lengths* and *add end-punches*. His lead-in sets up the thesis with two long sentences laying out the status quo that he wants to upend: “The museum was there for the objects and the public was authorized, sometimes paying a high price for the privilege, to contemplate these objects without touching them and often without understanding them. We propose that the order of the factors be reversed and that the starting point be the public, or rather two types of user—society and the individual. *Instead of being there for the objects, museums should be there for people*” (p. 77, emphasis mine). Notice that his short end-punch thesis sentence isn't even strictly necessary: it is repeating the information in the previous sentence, but it is doing so in a more memorable way. This is the power of sentence-length variety and end-punches.

Notice as well that I called the thesis “scaffolding” for the argument “building.” I'm using a key rhetorical trope for *logos* appeals, the *metaphor*, the description of something abstract and unknown in terms of something concrete and known. Duncan Cameron's classic “The Museum, a Temple or the Forum” is a quintessential example of the use of metaphor. His whole argument is based on setting up the supposed dichotomy of stuffy *temple* vs. frivolous *funfair*, and then proposing a third way, the dialoguing *forum*. Notice how well this carefully chosen metaphor works for his argument: the forum is, in classical architecture, a public space nearby-but-outside the temple, and as Cameron argues, “While our bona fide museums seek to become relevant, maintain-

ing their role as temples, there must be concurrent creation of forums for confrontation, experimentation, and debate, *where the forums are related but discrete institutions*" (1971, p. 68, emphasis mine). His temple/forum metaphor encapsulates whole concepts in concrete, visual entities. Museologists should be particularly expert at metaphor because our museums are filled with such symbols--concrete visual entities that encapsulate large, complex ideas. That carving of a king or a god, that historical breastplate or famous gown, are all so much more than merely hunks of stone, wood, metal, or fiber. We can have the same effect with our words.

That leads to the next appeal to logical reasoning: the use of *clear topic sentences*. Feamster and Gray, in an article on improving academic writing, argue for thinking of the thesis as the ground floor and the topic sentences as the frame of the building above it. Write the topic sentences of each paragraph first, they say, and only later fill in details. "Your 'paper' should roughly make sense if you read these topic sentences in sequence," they advise. "If reading your topic sentences in sequence doesn't make sense, something is wrong with your flow" (2013). Personally, I can't write this way—it's too much like outlining—but what I advocate instead is to *gloss*, to go back after writing the first draft and read the topic sentences of each paragraph, making sure that the flow of the argument moves in a logical persuasive way.

Here, for instance, are the topic sentences to the first six paragraphs of Bruno Brulon Soares' article "Museums as Theme Parks":

In the land of unimaginable experience designed by fairy tale, or in the heart of a museum exhibition, fantasy, as an artifice of the mind, is responsible for the creation of new worlds of imagined meaning within the well-known reality.... Museums are supposed to be imagined and not just created or developed.... The focus of this paper is the study of museums as social agents that produce performances....Theme parks, as much as many museums, alter the perception individuals have of themselves, of their own bodies and space....The cultural performance [instantiates] a reflexive perspective to the social order in which, like in many successful museums or musealized sites, the audience is allowed to confront its place in history and in society....By comparing museums with theme parks and highlighting the value of reflexive experience, the present analysis aims to deconstruct the notion of museums as informational institutions and to propose a new frame for museology's subject of study. (2016, pp. 17-18)

These sentences need not be always the first in the paragraph, note, but they are the ones clearly carrying the point—and they flow here from general imagination to museums to theme parks to the promise to compare museums to specified aspects of theme parks. The longer the piece, the more the need to gloss during revision to maintain this kind of clear flow to the argument. Doing so alerted me in revision to several sections of this very article that I had first written down as they occurred to me, only to determine later that their logical place in the flow of the argument as written was someplace quite different.

Next, you can fill in the scaffold—adding the walls, floors, curtains, etc.—with a method for paragraph development called by the acronym P.I.E., or *Point, Illustration, Explanation*. In brief, PIE reminds us that, again, each major paragraph has a topic sentence, the Point, that extends the thesis. This Point is then made concrete by adding to the paragraph an Illustration—that is, statistics, a description, a quote, an anecdote or story. The Illustration is the bulk of the paragraph, making clear and concrete the abstract ideas in the topic sentence. The E of PIE, the Explanation, then, is the pause to clarify how or why the Illustration supports the Point. The Curse of Knowledge often keeps us from including an explanation, since it is so obvious to us what the illustration means or why we included it. But our readers do not live in our heads, so the explanation, a sentence or two clarifying the ties, allows an audience to reason through the argument—and this is appealing to their logical mind. A simple guide is to try not to end a paragraph with a quote—add a sentence explaining its presence.

As an example, skim through Ann Davis's introductory article to the ICOFOM Study Series 44, "Two Humanistic Communication Theories for Museums, Libraries and Archives." Paragraph after paragraph sets up its point (e.g., "Bauman contends that architects and urban planners have added to the very real difficulties of urban life..." [2016 p. 6] or "As Nicholas Carr describes, perceiving and remembering space and location is linked [to] how navigation works in the mind and memory" [p. 7]). It then illustrates that point with a quote or series of quotes in conversation with each other, and finally it explains the paragraph with a short sentence or two ("This creates a sense of place" [p. 6] or "Space and place, then, seem to have considerable importance for memory and associations" [p. 7]). Point, Illustration, Explanation.

Memorable museum spaces are similarly devised to appeal to visitor logos, I would argue—and we can see in them the museological difference with more linear narratives, in which an aesthetic logos promotes but does not demand adherence to the curated experience. I noticed this logos structure, for instance, in Britain's Imperial War Museum North. The visitor entering the main gallery is encouraged to follow "The Timeline," which narrates a selective account of British history in which World War I leads to World War II, the Cold War, Bosnia, and the present day. The timeline functions as topic sentences, Points, for each advance of the overall narrative. Visitors may opt to break away from the timeline at each display and enter a themed room that offers an Illustration—personal stories, examples, artifacts. This more aesthetic experience is curated by Explanations—the visitor is not left to wonder why they are looking at propaganda posters, for instance, they are called to question "What Shapes Our Impressions of War?" And when the visitor is finished with the paragraph/gallery of each war, the timeline narrative is always right there to carry the visitor—if they choose—forward through the experience.

The logos of the IWMN demonstrates a key advantage of the four-dimensional space-time of a museum over a two-dimensional text. The museum can

enable visitors to juxtapose multiple narratives within a larger frame (call it the overarching thesis), not losing the point because competing simultaneous narratives are held not only in the mind but in the eyes and ears as well. It is as if, in reading this paragraph on the IWMN, you could have next to it at the same moment the broader point about appeals to logos and the even broader point about museological poetics—and you might even walk over and interact with my conclusion while keeping this paragraph sight. This is the museum as aesthetic space—something writers on the page must struggle to approximate. Indeed, the IWMN provides an example of the next rhetorical appeal as well, as visitors are presented with Longinus' concourse of passions, ranging here from celebration to hopeless despair, all of which fall under the category of pathos.

The second set of devices for persuasive writing are those that appeal to an audience's *pathos*, their emotional connection to the argument being made. These are the methods used by every good fiction writer. Pathos appeals to the stylistics we often overlook in writing, thinking it an art rather than a craft to learn, or an unnecessary dressing, or simply the trickery used by advertisers. But its techniques are necessary for persuasion and open to all. They include:

Strong language

- Look to your verbs—they are the action words of all sentences, but too often academic verbs are restricted to variations of *to be*: *Poetics is key to good museology* can be more memorably written *Poetics enlivens museology*.
- Look also to your nouns. Are they specific? The poet Natalie Goldberg advises new writers to honor the names around them, writing not “trees” but “oaks” or “palms” or “baobabs.” The difference matters. And this name is not just its scientific or theoretical name. Working across disciplines, I try to be particularly aware of the possibility of losing my audience, and here a simple device called an appositive is especially helpful. An appositive is a noun or noun phrase that renames another noun right beside it—like saying *The hutia, a hairy-tailed rodent, is native to Cuba*, or *I study rhetoric, the art of persuasive communication*. Experienced readers read over the that extra descriptive information, while new readers bless you for your consideration.
- Finally, be on the lookout for nouns created out of verbs. The linguist Pinker points out that “English grammar is an enabler of the bad habit of writing in unnecessary abstractions because it includes a dangerous tool . . . called nominalization [which] takes a perfectly spry verb and embalms it into a lifeless noun by adding a suffix like -ance, -ment, or -ation. Instead of *affirming* an idea, you *effect its affirmation*; rather than *postponing* something, you *implement a postponement*. Helen Sword calls them ‘zombie nouns’ because they lumber across the scene without a conscious agent directing their motion” (2014, p. 50).

Luckily for museology, the writers of museum signage often provide some of the best examples of strong language in the service of *ekstasis*, moving the audience to a new stance, because economics dictates that they consider how to draw in their audience. It is easy to focus solely on the transmission of knowledge when trying to capture complex events or artifacts, but numerous guides to good practice have by now emphasized the need to, as writer Elmore Leonard put it, “try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip” (Wallace, 2014, p. 228). Margot Wallace’s *Writing for Museums* demonstrates the two forces propelling good writing within the museum: Aesthetically, she notes, “When such respect for wordcraft comes from people who daily rub shoulders with visually exquisite objects and tangibly ingenious displays, writing assumes new gravitas” (ix). And pragmatically, she adds, “As all these words thread through and wrap around your museum, you begin to see how powerfully they can propel your marketing efforts” (ix).

The Kigali Memorial Centre in Rwanda, for instance, in its signage and literature does not say, *Many people were killed in the ensuing genocide* or even worse, *At a certain time, those who facilitated the impact on their brethren significantly expedited the process of such activity and brought about its organization through the means of various devices near at hand*. It says instead, “The perpetrators had promised an apocalypse and the operation which emerged was a devastating frenzy of violence, bloodshed and merciless killing. The murderers used machetes, clubs, guns, and any blunt tool they could find to inflict as much pain on their victims as possible” (2004, p. 20). With the first version we merely nod impassively, with the second we scratch our heads in confusion, but with the third we feel the chaos and pain. Academic writing is, of course, more dispassionate, but memorable academic writing remembers that words have power to move their audience.

Strong descriptions

Creative writers call this *show don’t tell*. Rhetoricians Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca speak of rhetoric making “present, by verbal magic alone, what is actually absent but what [the rhetor] considers important to his argument” (1991, p. 177). Is that reference to a museum exhibit *showing* readers scenes full of sights, smells, sounds, tastes, feelings? Or is it telling us *about* those feelings in some abstract place? One creative writing trick is to add to a description one other sense beyond sight. Sound, smell, taste, feeling—with one other sense the silent image is suddenly filled with the laughter of children or the shush of a fan, it is fetid or minty, cool or stifling. It lives. The “you are there” interactive visitor experience is the musealized version of this injunction. The Te Papa Tangarewa National Museum of New Zealand, for instance, can tell visitors of the loss of its forest cover and many unique species with the coming of human settlers to the islands—but the loss is made more sublime, both beautiful and terrible, by the brief experience of walking through its recreated native forest alive with the sounds of extinct birds and

animals. This appeal to pathos is neither window dressing nor trickery but an attempt at *ekstasis*, moving the visitor psychically to new perspectives as the visitor moves herself physically through the descriptive space.

Tell a story

So much can be said, and has been said, about the persuasive and clarifying power of narrative in museum exhibits that I will not bother to recap it here. In expository writing, we may overlook its worth, but an academic description of an exhibit can think carefully about orienting the reader so the space described is clear. A description of a policy decision can consider when is the best moment to begin *in media res*—the middle of the action—and what is the climax it is building toward, as well as who are the actors involved and how do they interact. From the earliest bards, humans have told stories in order to not just entertain an audience but to help it remember and make meaning of its world, and academic writing is enriched when it can incorporate some of that power.

The final set of writing devices are those that appeal to the audience by establishing your *ethos*, your authority to speak. When people accept your *ethos*—that you are knowledgeable, trustworthy, and have their best interests at heart—research shows they are likely to believe what you’re saying based on no other evidence, especially on issues where there is no one definitive answer. But classical *ethos* is not something one possesses alone, it is something one builds by demonstrating that one is speaking as the audience expects to the audience’s values. While scholars can in part rely on their known authority as experts, that authority is built upon a growing body of solid research *and* a style that invites readers to see them as trusted guides. In other words, we demonstrate that we have the audience’s best interests at heart by giving them the information they need to follow our argument, not obscuring it with pointless verbiage, and using a tone that reaches out to them with confidence and empathy. You can see why a clear, well-described argument using a conversational tone and understandable words becomes so vital.

Pinker, the linguist, points out that academics often are too self-referential, too self-conscious, when we argue. We become defensive or self-conscious—concerned chiefly, Pinker says, with “being convicted of philosophical naïveté about [our] own enterprise” (2014, p. 28). In other words, we don’t want to look foolish, so we load our writing with phrases that make us look both cautious and intelligent—qualifiers like *perhaps* or *some say*, long Latinate words and convoluted phrases rather than straightforward conversational prose, meta-discourse that speaks about the text rather than just letting the text speak.

Let me give you an example from this presentation. My original metadiscourse in the second paragraph of this essay was heavily self-conscious. I wrote: *I propose, therefore, several avenues to approach the poetics of museology. First, I will examine the question of whether the creative concepts themselves or the ways of evoking them are*

what make for engaging prose. When I revised that the first time, I remembered Pinker's admonition to use a conversational tone to direct my audience's gaze, so I changed those two sentences to *Let's begin with the question of whether great ideas aren't more memorable than engaging prose.* Revising a second time, I realized that in fact I was inviting us to ask a question, so I just wrote the question: *Am I saying that memorable style is more important than a great idea?* This is not simply shortening the prose—it is asking myself sentence by sentence, “What am I really trying to convey?” “In what direction do I want to focus your gaze?”

Focusing the audience's gaze is, in a rhetorical sense, the definition of curatorship. As historian Dominique Poulot writes, “As has been shown by several generations of studies dedicated to the political manipulation of the past and to public uses of history, the collection of any museum is the product of reconstructions based on selection and choice, on selective omissions and voluntary commemoration” (2012, p. 7). Its displays are necessarily partial abstracted memory. As rhetorician Burke put it, in seeking to *reflect* reality they must *select* portions of reality and thereby *deflect* from portions not selected, highlighting particular aspects of the narrated history and obscuring other aspects as the present-day consensus of what matters in the past changes with the times. This was made particularly clear to me during the research for my recent book *Museum Rhetoric*, as the national museums of both Argentina and the Czech Republic closed in part to re-select (reflect, deflect) those aspects of their past more relevant to today's visitors. Exhibits are curated to reflect a reality that achieves a degree of consensus even as they push boundaries and encourage their visitors to rethink their premises. To be persuasive, though, the starting point must be the values and identity of the audience.

For instance, the U.S. National Museum of the American Indian exists to promote a narrative that runs counter to many Americans' expectations—that native peoples have survived into the 21st century, changing with the times yet maintaining important traditions. Its story is a challenge to the traditional American Dream story. Thus, its entryway begins not by condemning non-native visitors but by putting them at ease, welcoming them in dozens of indigenous languages. Informationally it is making the point that native peoples are diverse, but poetically it is saying “welcome”—making its audience feel comfortable with the ethos of trusted guide that will lead them to new perspectives as they travel through the museum.

Several other qualities focus on the audience's comfort and best interests in a written text. First is *readability*, which research agrees is a combination of word length and sentence length. How long should sentences be in a chapter or article? In a general English-language publication, 14-18 words is the average sentence length for maximum accessibility. Of course, academic audiences can probably follow longer sentences. But just because they *can* doesn't mean they *want to*, over and over, nor that they will remember what they read (Canavor, 2016, p. 67). Of course, “average” length does not negate the other maxim of

good writing—vary sentence lengths to maintain interest. It does, though, argue against multiple 30-word sentences.

Pinker adds another layer to readability, noting that “the order in which thoughts occur to the writer is different from the order in which they are easily recovered by a reader” (2014, p. 115). The writer thinks in a web of inter-connecting chunks of ideas, images, etc. This web of ideas must be strung into words, already a tricky process, but the words must then also be structured into a tree with orderly branches a reader can follow—and that means a right-branching tree. In a *right-branching sentence*, the main point occurs early on, with extra information added afterwards. Right-branching sentences can thus be absorbed one phrase at a time, with the most complex hanging at the end so the reader does not need to hold it in mind until getting to the point. Their counterpart, left-branching sentences, demand that the reader wade through (and remember) a lot of words before understanding the point—as in *my mother’s brother’s wife’s father’s cousin is visiting*. Practically speaking, this means we must resist the academic temptation to split up our main points with too many introductory or interrupting phrases. State the point, then follow up with more information. (To write those sentences in the more confusing, left-branching way, I’d say something like *Practically, speaking, and before we follow up with more information, we must resist splitting up the main points—a common academic temptation—with too many introductory or interrupting phrases before we state our point.*)

The final stylistic aspect of ethos we can discuss here is *argument flow*, the movement of the content from paragraph to paragraph. Attention to flow in an essay is the counterpart to attention to plot in a novel or attention to visitor movement in a museum. In all three instances, the need to present as a trusted guide means that creativity in structure occurs within established borders of audience expectations. The novel’s narrator may be unreliable, the museum’s entry point may be disconcerting (think of the Jewish Museum in Berlin), but the fulfilled expectation that these will be resolved is what allows the audience to suspend expectations *momentarily* and come out satisfied.

In an essay, the audience is less willing to suspend expectations, and so I tend to follow the classical format recommended by Roman orators like Cicero because we are so familiar with this structure that many of us follow it unconsciously. A Ciceronian argument has six parts:

1. It opens with an *exordium*, a kind of introduction that shows the audience why they should pay attention, and also why they should pay attention to *you*—your qualifications to address the issue. An exordium might begin with a compelling story—almost all history pieces use this opening—a vivid description, a shocking fact or compelling quote, all chosen to move the audience to identify with the topic. It should include (briefly!) your qualifications or personal interest in the topic and establish your trustworthy voice. It often ends with the article’s thesis. Its goal is to interest the audience and move it

to support both author and topic. If it is an “introduction,” it is only so in the same way that we introduce ourselves on a first date: “Notice me! Want to get to know me better!” not simply “Here I am.”

2. The argument moves to the *narrative* background, where the author provides the history or context for the argument—what came before this paper? What does the audience need to understand in order to understand the argument? They’re interested, now provide just enough needed context. In scientific papers, this is the literature review.

3. The *partition* may be a short sentence or two in some genres or a whole methods section in others. Either way it describes what the author did and what the audience can expect in the paper itself. Cameron is quite good at this: He opens with an exordium of multiple stories, then asks his main question: Are these museums? And his partition says we need to determine first what a museum is, that no one definition meets everyone’s approval, and that therefore “another attempt is made here to provide a definition...that may at least help to clarify the issue” (1971, p. 63). Thus he promises to debunk other definitions and argue for a new one—and the audience can proceed knowing what to expect.

4. Part four is the bulk of the article—the series of *confirmations*, or *confirming arguments*, in the best possible order, building them paragraph by paragraph, which is to say Point/Illustration/Explanation by Point/Illustration/Explanation. This is where it pays off to gloss, reading each topic sentence as you revise, considering whether that point would flow better before the other one, or this point would be clearer if it came later, or this other point has particularly strong emotional appeal for you to save for the end.

5. After all the confirmations, it’s time to follow up with their counterpart, the *refutation*. The refutation asks, “What would my critics say?” and addresses those arguments. Addressing critic’s counterarguments speaks to the rhetor’s ethos by demonstrating that you are not trying to trick the audience into believing your argument, instead presenting the evidence that allows the audience to choose. This is also where you can provide needed nuance to your argument, conceding certain points while still upholding the main thrust of your own, answering objections already in the readers’ heads preemptively.

6. Sixth and finally is the *conclusion*, where the goal is *not* to sum up but to tell us why the points being made are important. Why do you care? Why should we care? Why would the world care?

Let me end with a quick example from my own work on my new book *Museum Rhetoric: Building National Identity in Civic Spaces*. Organizing what felt very much like a web-like argument in my mind (and in the original draft!), I followed Cicero’s structure to come up with chapters that followed a more linear flow: The *exordium* opens with personal stories from Ethiopia and the Czech Republic to show the scope of the book, pique interest, and also signal that

I've done more than sit at home reading books in a library. It states my thesis that looking at museums rhetorically shows us how aesthetics can mirror and shape national identities that influence the public discourse. The *partition* outlines briefly what I will add to the ongoing conversations in museum studies and rhetoric and sums up each of the chapters to come. Chapter 1, then, is the *narrative* background, providing an overview of the theoretical and historical picture of national museums and discussing their rhetoricity. Chapters 2 and 3 begin the *confirmations*, analyzing museums first as narrative sites and then as material spaces—the verbal and the visual. Chapter 4 takes those two analyses and shows how they combine to promote visitors' identification with the communal identity created in the museum, while Chapter 5 examines how that aesthetic identity builds civic nationalism. That's it for the confirming arguments. Chapter 6, then, is the *refutation*, answering critics' questions about potential hegemony in national museums by considering the role of alternative museums in rebuilding civic identity after a divisive trauma. Finally, the *conclusion* proposes various reasons why—and how—the practice of rhetoric inside the museum matters to the security and justice of the world outside its doors. I don't expect readers to think "Ah-hah! The classical Ciceronian organizational structure!" But I do expect that by following that structure, pieces of the argument will fall into what feels to the audience like their right and proper places, so they can more easily follow my line of reasoning.

You may be thinking that this is a lot to consider when you're just trying to get words on a page, and I agree. When I'm writing, I just write. It's when I'm revising that anything good and stylish happens. So here are my final pieces of advice: Write your ideas. Get the words on the paper. Then revise. *All good writing happens in revision*—creative writers know this but busy academics often forget it. Revise several times, sometimes thinking about words and sentences, sometimes about paragraphs and structure. Solicit advice from peers—this piece was (I hope!) dramatically improved as I worked with the comments of its peer reviewers. And if all the sentence-level stylistics seems too much, simply do this: Whatever you write, cut at least 15% of it by the final revision. I have found repeatedly that cutting 15% of our drafts forces us to naturally eliminate wordiness and strengthen prose.

I could go on, but I'll instead take Cicero's advice and end with why this matters: Why try to write craft prose? Why not just throw around our nominalized verbs and left-branching sentences and sound smart? I think there are two reasons. The first is philosophical, a part of the unease with curation evidenced by David Balzar's recent *Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else*—an unease encapsulated in critic Dave Hickey's endorsement of the book as discussing the "current hegemony of curationism, a practice of jumped-up interior decorators who double as priests explaining the gospel to the unlettered masses." Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman argued back in 1987 that the Western intellectual was moving from patriarchally "legislating" the grand narrative of a particular history and culture toward more democratically

“interpreting” the varieties of history and culture extant in a locality (1987)—becoming less curator and more educator. This celebration of ambiguity over certainty, and multiple perspectives over one, is an important trend. However, allowing the audience to critically explore *content* on their own is not the same as backing away from *structure*. Expected structure is the helpful guide that allows an audience to follow an argument, even as they are deciding whether or not to agree with its particulars. The role of the poet-curator, I would argue then, is different from that of the legislator, focusing more on visitor experience than visitor knowledge. Balzar argues that we are living in what he calls “the curationist movement,” in which institutions rely on so-called experts “to cultivate and organize things in an expression-cum-assurance of value and an attempt to make affiliations with, and to court, various audiences and consumers” (2014, p. 9). He is troubled by this, but as a rhetorician, I view the attempt at value-assurance to court audience as an inevitable component of most successful communication, and while extreme curation is no doubt a problem, so is any extreme. In fiction we see the unease with the curation of an overly directive author in the overly expanded influence of Barthes’ “death of the author,” and more recently in the temporary infatuation with hyperlinked stories. The well-crafted guidance of plot and story, however, are what promote the concourse of emotions that move an audience to *ekstasis*, from what they already believe to a new stance. In the academic essay, the unease with curation arises when well-meaning writers view poetics as a muse-driven art and resist its craft as too manipulative and rule-focused to be useful. Crafted communication, though, asks its audience to be moved to think by making its points clear and compelling enough for the audience to continue reading. Curated communication is necessary for more thought, not less of it.

The second reason, then, why crafted aesthetic writing is important is that “more passion” and “more thought” have a pragmatic purpose. I’ve mentioned modern rhetoric’s debt to Kenneth Burke. Ironically, though, Burke’s most important work, a book he spent all of World War II writing as a treatise for the world on how to overcome war with dialectic, made very little impact when it first came out in 1945 because he couldn’t follow his own advice: he couldn’t make his writing poetic enough to be persuasive or clear enough to capture the imagination.

In these fraught times, I don’t want us to make the same mistakes. I believe that museums are our most poetic of public spaces, sites that ask us to ponder, where multiple intersecting and conflicting acts of communal identification can converge. We who write about such spaces need to be at least as poetic, to communicate to each other about what is at stake and communicate to the world about why what happens in cultural spaces is so important. As Burke put it when he tried to reach people again in 1950, “Indeed, the very ‘global’ conditions which call for the greater identification of all [people] with one another have at the same time increased the range of human conflict, the incentives to division. It would require sustained rhetorical effort, backed by the imagery

of a richly humane and spontaneous poetry, to make us fully sympathize with people in circumstances greatly different from our own” (1969, p. 34).

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Museology and Museum- making

Cultural Policies and Cultural Demands

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ABSTRACT

What does it take to make a museum? A building designed by world-known 'starchitect'? Public demand? Authentic and exciting collections to present? Committed staff? Generous sponsors? Depending on the context, more questions might arise. However, the question I aim to address is if there is a demand for museological competence in new museum projects, how this competence is being performed and what perspectives there are for further development. The article analyses and compares two museum projects. The first is the Orthodox Church's museum at the New Jerusalem Monastery near Moscow, Russia; the second is a pilot study for the national Museum for Democracy and Migration in Malmö, Sweden.

Key words: Museology, Museum Projects, Church Museums, Migration Museums

RÉSUMÉ

La Muséologie et la création de musées : politiques culturelles et demandes culturelles

Que faut-il pour créer un musée ? Un bâtiment conçu par un architecte reconnu ? Une demande populaire ? Des collections authentiques et intéressantes ? Des employés engagés ? Des mécènes généreux ? La liste peut s'allonger en fonction du contexte. Les questions auxquelles je souhaite répondre ici sont plus spécifiques : Existe-t-il un besoin de compétences en muséologie au sein des projets muséaux ? Comment sont utilisées ces compétences et quelles sont leurs perspectives de développements ? Cet article présente deux études de projets de musées : le Musée de l'Eglise Orthodoxe au Monastère de la Nouvelle Jérusalem qui se trouve près de Moscou en Russie et l'étude pilote pour le Musée National de la Démocratie et des Migrations à Malmö en Suède.

Mots clés : Muséologie, Projet Muséal, musée-église, musée des Migrations



Museums as complex institutions of modernity are entangled today in all sorts of power relations. Even though the ICOM museum definition does not say anything about politics, but focuses on collection, preservation, research and communication instead (ICOM, 2017), museums can also be defined as political institutions (Gray, 2015). Tony Bennett (1995) draws on Michel Foucault's theories of power to define the course of the modern museum's inception in the late 18th - 19th centuries. Since then, museums developed from the civilising devices set up to fulfil "the task of the cultural governance of the populace" (Bennett, 1995, p. 21) first into instruments to organize reality (Anderson, 2006) and now they are striving to turn into responsible social actors. The new approaches appeal to museums' social agency and responsibility (Sandell, 2002), promote participatory and inclusive environments (Simon, 2010) and even reduce museums' neutrality in exploring difficult issues (Roque Rodríguez, 2017). This development has taken more than two centuries and is still in progress as even now scholars are working on a new definition of a museum which can include and encompass all the developments (as in the recent ICOFOM anthology edited by François Mairesse, 2017). Nevertheless, Bennett's analysis of the "exhibitionary complex" or "governmental assemblages" as he addresses museums in his later works (Bennett, 2015) is still significant for many cultural institutions, not least because of the gap between museum theory and practice which I will identify in the following section.

Karsten Schubert (2000) argues, that museums have “responded to political and social shifts with seismic precision” (p. 11), not least due to the recent developments in the field of museology as a discipline, one might assume. But is it indeed so?

It is a common perception that museums cannot “continue to exist in their present form” in the twenty-first century (Black, 2012, p. 1). What is relevant then for museums that are being planned and designed now? What are the reference points in the world of museum professionals that project managers could use to emphasise the importance for their future museum institution – not an archive, an entertainment centre or a spiritual institution? Further on I will discuss the relationship between the existing paradigms in museum-making and the cultural policies that initiate such a process, and illustrate my reflections with two examples, one from Russia and one from Sweden. In both cases the awareness of museology as a discipline was implied from the beginning; however, the outcomes of the projects were as different as the questions posed during their development. The similarity between the two lies nevertheless in the policies and power relations that engendered both projects, commissioned first and foremost by politicians (and by Church authorities, which in contemporary Russia in some cases are almost interchangeable with politicians) of these respective countries.

The aim of my analysis is to answer the question: what does museology have to offer in the turbulent and politically charged field of museum-making?

Something Old, Something New: Exercising Museology in Museum Practices

In her essay *The museology's role in the museum* (2017), Kerstin Smeds points out that, before creating a new national museum in Sweden, it is essential to look into the power relations within museums and, at the same time, to define museology's position in the world of cultural institutions. She sees a lack of specific museological competencies in Swedish museums and Swedish cultural policies. This situation is not unique: in Russian ‘museumscape’, for example, the most valuable skills for the staff are also those of museum's discipline(s), which might be ethnology, archaeology, art history, natural history and others (Gnedovsky, 1997, p. 18; cf. Smeds, 2017, p. 70). However, when it comes to creating a new institution, key decisions, as well as design, are usually made by commissioners or policy makers, and often do not include a museological perspective at all.¹ As a result, in some cases organisations that are called ‘museums’ bear no taxonomical attributes of a museum, the words ‘to build a museum’ mean to, literally, ‘construct a building’. At the same time, there is a

1. Clive Gray cites Desvallées and Mairesse (2010, p. 20; cited in Gray, 2015, p. 4) who identify five major functions of museums: preservation, research, communication (which includes education, exhibition and mediation), management and architecture. Gray argues that the fourth function is underrepresented in Museum Studies (at least in the UK) and this might lead to some friction between managerial and collection-based museum professionals.

clear trend in Russian Museum Studies tradition: new competencies, such as project management, are being introduced to museological education (Lebedev & Shcherbakova, 2009). However, a gap between the theoretical knowledge and its practical implementation is still considerably big, which is common in many countries (for the UK see McCall & Gray, 2014).

As “many aspects of contemporary museum policies and politics have been generated out of the discursive co-ordinates which have governed the museum’s formation” (Bennett, 1995, p. 9), it can be concluded that the emerging demand of museological perspective both in museum projects and museum practices marks an important turning point in the development of museology as a reference system.

Museology itself is a subject to rapid growth. Having started from “anything relating to museums” and the applied discipline which is also called Museum Studies, museology today covers “all the efforts at theorisation and critical thinking about the museal field” (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010, p. 56). A specific development significant for this article is the ‘new museology’ which started in the 1970s as the idea that the role of museums in society needed to change (McCall & Gray, 2014, p. 20).

The term ‘new museology’ was introduced in the Anglo-American sector of museum studies in 1989 by Peter Vergo in the book of the same title (Vergo, 1989). The book focused on the context of museums, presenting them not as detached, objective institutions but as complex structures with relations to the social, political and economic environment. A decade earlier, the same term was used by André Desvallées (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010, p. 55) in his concept of *la nouvelle muséologie* that emphasises the social role of the museums and its interdisciplinary character. These concepts influenced the gradual changes in the role of Western museums since the 1960s–1970s.

The new museology principles are being perpetually used in diverse national traditions since then (e.g. Stam, 1993; Sandell, 2002; Black, 2012; the ICOM’s International movement for a New Museology which was founded in 1985), even if they are called by different names. Furthermore, as Deirdre Stam (1993) notices, “few New Museologists seem particularly conscious of the history of this discipline” (p. 56). Furthermore, even though the literature that can be considered as the part of the new museology’s discourse is burgeoning,² there

2. I am considering most of the recent changes in museological perspective that are mentioned in literature, as inherent to the ‘new museology’, even if the authors did not mean to draw on this movement. Sabine Coelsch-Foisner suggests for such changes a concept of the ‘museal turn’ which, according to her, includes “the creation of alternative or diverse narratives, a foregrounding of the dignity of people rather than their victimisation in history, the changing relation between the museum and the visitor, the levelling of social differences for the purpose of visitor identification, [...] a new democracy calling for community involvement and visitor interaction, as well as creative engagements with the museum” (Coelsch-Foisner, 2012, p. 15). The shift, therefore, is claimed to be made from the authoritative homogenous narrative to participative representation, from collec-

has been no definite shift from the theoretical stance to the practical field of museum work. Stam points out that the new museology “has not so far explained exactly how [its] theoretical framework should be translated into practice” (1993, p. 55); 20 years later in an extensive study of British cultural institutions Clive Gray and Vikki McCall state that “the ‘new museology’ is less useful for praxis – museums have been left to find their own routes to link ideas around the ‘new museology’ to what they are actually doing” (2014, p. 21). This, however, concerns already established institutions whereas this article is focusing on the museum projects.

The notion of ‘museum project’ can be perceived as a very broad definition of museum-based activity, from the exhibition design to museum education or social media management. In this article, I use it mainly for the whole institution designed from scratch, as it will be further shown in two museum examples. Museum projects always have a sociocultural meaning as sociocultural projects aim to make a difference in society through culture (Lebedev & Shcherbakova, 2009). Furthermore, as Richard Sandell (2002) argues, instead of focusing on complex outcomes that are difficult to measure, such as creating national identity (cf. Aronsson & Elgenius, 2015), museums are able to

impact positively on the lives of disadvantaged or marginalised *individuals*, act as a catalyst for social regeneration and as a vehicle for empowerment with specific *communities* and also contribute towards the creation of more equitable *societies* (Sandell, 2002, p. 4).

Such an ambition demands a constantly developing framework that will help to recognise both museums’ social agency and responsibility and to implement the theoretical findings of new museology in practice. As museums can be seen as turning gradually into ‘hybrid fora’ of modernity (Sadighiyan, 2017), museology as a discipline can also be perceived as such a forum or an institutional network, that will provide its knowledge to ‘profanes’, first and foremost to policy makers, and inform the actors involved in museum-making processes. The one ‘new museological’ feature that is most relevant for the two museum projects in this article is the ability of museums to serve as a platform for public dialogue; the cases were chosen to illustrate how this ability can be performed at the conceptual stage and the intersection of the political and museological power relations at this point.

There is another angle in the relationship between the museum and the visitor that should be mentioned. Bennett (1995) notes that there are ‘cultural barriers to participation’. As he states, the “sections of the population which make little use of museums clearly feel that *the museum constitutes a cultural space that is not meant for them*” (Bennett, 1995, p. 104, emphasis added by me). Other researchers, however, position museums in consumer cultures as an intersection of economy and culture, and use a wide variety of notions, from ‘edutainment’

to ‘McDonaldisation’ and ‘Disneyfication’ (Schwend, 2012). These phenomena provide grounds to ponder the inevitable changes in the relations between museums’ supply and public cultural demands. For instance, the recent studies on the interest in museums among the general public in Russia (Chuvilova & Shelegina, 2015) show that “the demand for museum services is directly related to the general educational and cultural level of a society and, in particular, to the culture of leisure” (p. 307).

Having in mind the appeal for ‘transforming museums in the 21st century’ (Black, 2012), we could pose a somewhat exaggerated question: what if it is more rational to create a brand-new museum, that will answer any relevant demand both from the audience and stakeholders than to remake an old one? Schubert (2000) states that it’s easier to come up with a brand-new project than to reform an established institution (p. 90). The museum as a ‘cultural technology’ (Bennett, 1995) has a specific catch in its mechanics that allows it to endure external changes, adjust to them and keep its internal structure. However, even recently created museums cannot avoid the publics’ preconception of the museum as an institution – as well as museums’ preconception of their audiences. For example, in a study on participatory techniques in museum narratives, the visitors longed “for an authoritative, expert voice, and... [did not] perceive their own contributions as necessarily relevant or interesting” (Becker-Proriol & Chanay, 2012, p. 327). Anna Leshchenko in her contribution at the 39th ICOFOM annual symposium (2016) suggests the term ‘conscious museum’ which, among other things, accepts “that there are ‘inactive’ visitors who prefer passive slow contemplation” (p. 4). So, alongside the demand for a new kind of cultural space, there is another demand which prompts museums to organise this space in a mindful, informed way (“to be all things to all people” as McCall & Gray describe these multiple demands; 2014, pp. 27–28). Museums are still perceived as instruments of public instruction and are supposed to form a context for “governmental programmes aimed at reshaping general norms of social behaviour” (Bennett, 1995, p. 6). However, these norms have changed. Where in the 19th century a Foucauldian disciplinary institution depicted by Bennett has emerged, there is now a place for multifaceted representation, as “norms have become more liberal and more pluralist, with the slow take-over by consumerism” (Schwend, 2012, p. 30).

The two case studies of this paper represent two different approaches to the implementation of the museological perspective in developing new museum projects. Simultaneously, both projects answer the current political demands of the respective country, be it the revision of the Orthodox heritage and the formation of the historical narrative of pre-Petrine Russia or the multiculturalism and democratic discourse in the context of so-called ‘migration crisis’ in Sweden.

A Progressive Museum-making, or There and Back Again

The Russian case includes a pre-existing museum that illustrates different phases of museum-building, from gathering personal memorabilia and historical curiosities in the 19th century to the universalist regional collections of a new secular establishment after 1917. This existing museum makes a discussion about creating a new museum rather complex. To begin, I will briefly address the place and its history.

The Resurrection New Jerusalem Monastery is an Orthodox male cloister on the outskirts of Moscow founded in 1656 as the residence for Patriarch Built during the Patriarch Nikon's Orthodox church reformation. The monastery was conceived as an earthly reflection of the Heavenly Jerusalem, where all the buildings and topographical elements represented corresponding parts of the Holy Land. The new monastery was commissioned jointly by the Patriarch and the Tsar, and its specific feature was the participation of Western architects and craftsmen in the construction, as well as the recruiting of Orthodox monks from all over the Muscovy state and beyond. During the 17th to 19th centuries, the monastery was a centre of arts, crafts, knowledge and spiritual activity; the second half of the 19th century was marked by the interest in the monastic and cultural heritage of the area. In the 1870s the Museum of Patriarch Nikon was founded by the monastery's rector.

The Soviet period enforced secularisation: the monastery was closed in 1918 and in 1920 the Museum of Arts and History was founded on its premises. The museum soon became a centre for regional history. A big part of the museum's collections was formed from the church treasures and expropriated liturgical objects. In 1941 the monastery was blown up by the German army, the bell tower and part of the cathedral were destroyed, along with the museum and some of its collections. Restoration work started in the 1950s and took more than a half of century to complete. The state museum was reopened in the remaining part of the monastery in 1956 and played an active role in preservation and restoration processes. The collections grew rapidly and presently include not only church history related objects, but also paintings, documents, photographs, archaeological and ethnographic materials.

In 1994 the monastery was re-established as an institution of the Russian Orthodox Church, and in 2012–2014 the state museum 'New Jerusalem' was relocated to the newly constructed building outside the monastery complex and renamed a regional museum and exhibition centre. At the same time, in the 2010s a new actor in restoration and re-establishing of the monastery has emerged, the Charitable Foundation, with honorary Board members such as the then-president Dmitry Medvedev or the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill, as well as senior officials from the state-run corporations. The Foundation and the Russian Orthodox Church suggested establishing a new, church-driven museum in the monastery, which would allow the presentation of outstanding architectural monuments and the sacral topography of the monastery both to

Orthodox pilgrims and profane visitors. It was also believed that the narrative of the Palestine-near-Moscow, as the monastery is often called, would not be relevant and authentic if located outside the cloister walls (in the new state museum's building).³ The future church museum was therefore conceived as a connection, a missing link between the monastic and church routines and a regional cultural centre (the relocated state museum).

The new museum project, named *Centre for Cultural Studies of the Muscovy State and the Museum of Patriarch Nikon* (Baranova et al., 2014),⁴ was presented to the Advisory Board of the Foundation in autumn 2014. The project development involved both archaeological and historical expertise, as in the 2010s the extensive archaeological investigations were conducted alongside the reconstruction process. A long-established view of the museum as a temple (Cameron, 1971) was also considered during the project design phase. However, the creation of the actual museum was postponed.

The Museum of Patriarch Nikon was envisaged as a core institution for a larger research centre, the mission of which would be to form the national and religious identity of the Russian people as Christian Europeans through representing the New Jerusalem cultural heritage from the 'golden age of the Muscovy state' (Baranova et al. 2014, p. 31). Here we can see a controversial point, as the interest in the pre-Petrine Russian history traditionally comes together with the national-building processes, for example in the 19th century when the monuments of the first tsars from the Romanov dynasty were memorialised, as I discuss elsewhere (Zabalueva, 2017). A historical discourse that emphasises the importance of the Pre-Petrine period is usually applied when the argument for advantages of 'non-Western' development of Russia is taking place. According to the popular belief, only Peter the Great made a decisive choice of turning Russia into a Europe-oriented empire. Russian archaeologist Leonid Beliaev (2013), though, addresses the New Jerusalem as 'the religious version of proto-St. Petersburg' of its time and argues that Patriarch Nikon has implemented one of the early modernisation programmes in Muscovy Russia, fifty years before Peter the Great and his reforms.

3. The problem of reassessing Orthodox heritage is a grave and significant issue for Russian cultural institutions. In 2010 a Federal Law was signed by the Russian president that among other things prescribed restitution of the state property to the religious organisations which owned this property before 1917 (The Russian Government, 2010). This law has no power over state museums' collections; however, in some cases of restitution, a clash between religious and cultural organisations has occurred. During the Soviet period, a lot of churches were perceived as historical and architectural monuments – sometimes musealisation of a building saved it from demolition. In the 1990s the Orthodox heritage became the focus of interests of diverse groups and communities, causing a tension in various levels of society. Even though this topic lies beyond the scope of the current article, it is still necessary to mention as it deeply influences heritage-related processes in this case setting.

4. I was a part of the project team, and I want to thank the project curator, Dr Svetlana Baranova, and the leading expert, associate member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Dr Leonid Belyaev, for the permission to use the unpublished concept for this paper.

During the establishment of the monastery the most important role was played by the personality of the commissioner – the Patriarch himself. It was Nikon who planned and performed the important turn in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church (the schism) as well as transformed a piece of countryside near Moscow into his own fragment of the Holy Land. His project was left unfinished for many reasons, and the modernisation of the ancient Russian state was postponed for a few decades. Ironically, the commissioners' role in the 2014 museum project was as vital for the project and its ambitious scope. The planned research centre intended to gather archaeologists, historians and other scientists focusing on the late Muscovy State's history and become a hub for national and international conferences.⁵ One of the aims was to attract public attention to the underestimated and controversial period of Russian history and inform the audience about issues that, to a large extent, had an impact on the nation-building of the modern Russian state. Contributors to the project had their own speciality interests in focus, and the idea of the museum as a universalist temple of science/knowledge/spiritual enlightenment was highly appreciated by commissioners, both from the side of the Russian Orthodox Church and of the State authorities.

It is hard to say why the proposed new museum has not become a reality. The restoration works were almost finished, and now the monastery's architectural heritage is presented to visitors in all its glory. Thus, a complex institution with the traditional mission of civilising the populace was substituted by establishing a tourist attraction. The eventual failure of the project might depend on the lack of dialogue with the local and professional communities as well as on the global range of the suggested institution. The cultural demand for this specific museum was not clearly articulated, whereas the more general idea of the musealisation has been traditionally performed by the state museum. The 'cultural space' of the prospective museum has not been conceived for any specific group, and the unique environment of the monastery, that was indicated as one of the important resources for the project, has been set aside. The studies of the New Jerusalem heritage, however, continue both in form of archaeological investigations and academic conferences, and it is still possible that further findings will help to reconsider the 2014 project and put it into action.

5. One of the technological innovations introduced in New Jerusalem in the 17th century was a vast usage of decorative ceramic tiles in architecture. Being perceived in literature as a 'laboratory' for ceramic arts and crafts, the monastery became a point of interest for all involved in this kind of research. In 2014 and 2015 two national conferences on Ceramic Arts and Crafts were held in the monastery's premises with the help of the project team, and one of the focuses for the Museum of Patriarch Nikon would have been the art of ceramic tiles of the late Russian Middle Ages (cf. Baranova, 2009).

A Commissioned Democracy or Flexible Networks on the Move

At first glance the Swedish case may seem different. There wasn't any previous museum dedicated to both migration and democracy issues, not to mention locating a national museum outside of Stockholm (Swedish national museums are located mainly in Stockholm except for the National Museums of World Culture which have headquarters in Gothenburg). The decision to establish such a museum was in many aspects a political one.

In 2015–2016 the European Union has faced a 'migration crisis', that, according to some of the analysts, threatened core European rights and values (Borg-Barthet & Lyons, 2016). Tightened borders, changing rules and the rise of populist rhetoric both inside and outside the EU have once again pinned the importance of the migration narratives communicated by the cultural institutions and museums in particular (Gourievidis, 2014; Levitt, 2015; Johansson, 2015; Levin, 2017). In 2015, the Network of European Museum Organisations published the recommendations for museum work in the field (NEMO, 2015).

For Sweden, the importance of such communication is obvious, as the country received more asylum seekers in 2015 than ever before (Migrationsverket, 2016). A lot of issues came up in the public debate, and most Swedish museums are, in one way or another, working with the questions of migration (Kulturförvaltningen, 2017, p. 41). The southern Swedish city of Malmö, which connects Sweden to the continent through the Öresund bridge, became one of the 'hot spots' for the migration discourse and a gateway for many refugees. In May 2016, the international conference *Museums in Times of Migration and Mobility: Processes of Representation, Collaboration, Inclusion and Social Change* was held at Malmö University. Here, among other things, the pilot study done by the Department of Culture of the city of Malmö was presented.

The study, initiated by the city council and supported by the Swedish government, aimed to investigate the preconditions required to set up a *National Museum for Democracy and Migration* in Malmö. The commissioners, therefore, were Malmö City's politicians and one of the project's aims was to contribute to sustainable city development. Located on the Swedish-Danish border, being historically a transit city and a door for the better future for hundreds of thousands of Swedes who left their country at the turn of the 20th century, fleeing famine and unemployment; a safe haven for refugees since the World War II, Malmö is conceived as an international meeting place. In the Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare of Malmö University, the migration studies are one of the research focuses. Other actors contributing to the pilot study for a new museum were the Swedish History Museum, the Swedish National Museums of World Culture and the Swedish Exhibition Agency; all three were assigned by the Swedish government to provide assistance to the Malmö city's Department of Culture. The study included field research on similar institutions and preservation/exhibition techniques (Museum of

Immigration and Diversity, London; Open Society Archives, Budapest; Le Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, Marseille; People's Museum, Manchester etc.) and academic peers were also invited to collaborate on the project (Kulturförvaltningen, 2017).

The study was conducted in the form of a public dialogue. The meetings with civil society actors and museum professionals were arranged all over the country to explore the issues of democracy and migration. National minorities representatives, as well as Malmö citizens, also took part in the discussion. The meetings' participants were encouraged to contemplate how the five basic notions for the pilot study (national, democracy, migration, museum and Malmö) could be represented in one institution, what kind of institution it might be, how the issues of democracy and migration would be addressed and if the city of Malmö is the right place to establish such a museum (Kulturförvaltningen, 2017, p. 27). The pilot study was conducted during 2016–2017, and a final report was published in Spring 2017 alongside an anthology of researchers' essays and the data from the meetings, workshops and study visits. The project has been transformed during the study, and the final report is called *Museum of Movements* (Kulturförvaltningen, 2017).

The theme of migration is sometimes overexploited in modern museums (Lanz, 2015). Joachim Baur argues that migration museums are contributing to the revision of the nation by putting the image of the 'other' on display (cited in Sutherland, 2014; see also Nikolić, 2015 for the similar critique of imagined migration museum in Malmö). In Sweden, a migrant figure in popular belief is presented by a foreigner ("invandrare", or an "immigrant" in Swedish) who recently came to Sweden, in most cases as a refugee. The Museum of Movements project, however, focuses on migration as a movement, and also on popular movements and activism as a core concept for democracy. This focus might serve as a way out of the framing and exhibiting the 'other'. The notion of 'movements' does not necessarily specify if the museum's narrative draws public attention to immigration, emigration, or the internal movements of the populace. Popular movements and public engagement as the future museum's themes also imply, if unconsciously, the acknowledgement of the new museology's principles, and not only let the prospective visitors' voices be heard but also include these visitors in the museum-making process.

The political importance of the project was debated in Swedish media and brought out some points in the public conception of what museums are. As an (extreme) example, a concern was expressed by the right-wing political Swedish Democrats party that such a museum will become a political instrument for multiculturalism and will promote further high immigration rates to Sweden (Sverigedemokraterna, 2017). From the other side of the political spectrum, the socialist writer Staffan Jacobson states in his blog that "it's not the left but the right that belong to a museum" (Jacobson, 2017). Being immersed into the political power relations from the very beginning, the Museum of Movements has already achieved agency and became, even if virtually, a place

for public dialogue⁶. Even though the museum is envisioned through and due to a certain political discourse and its conception carries the attributes of governmental regulation (it is supposed to create a broader understanding of the phenomenon of migration and make it more intelligible at the local level, see Kulturförvaltningen, 2017, p. 51), the very focus on democracy allows for engaging the audience and activates bottom-up initiatives. Another vantage point to be highlighted is an inclination towards the agile organisational structure for the future museum. As the museum has neither a specific building at its disposal nor the full-time staff or established collections, it acts as a flexible system of projects that complement one another and create the base for the future organisation. One can even say that the Museum is a Movement itself.

Conclusion

In both cases presented, the museum projects were directly affected by the current politics in their respective region. The influence of museological discourse, if intangible and somewhat tentative, can also be traced: for example, the conception of New Jerusalem's museum was reassessing the notion of 'museum as a temple' and turning it into 'the temple as a museum'; and for the Museum of Movements a demand for specific museological competence is stated in the pilot study's report (which refers to Kerstin Smeds, see Kulturförvaltningen, 2017, p. 67), not to mention the contemplation of the future museum's social agency and ability to 'make a difference' (Kulturförvaltningen, 2017, p. 7). Both were conceived as somewhat ideal museums for their respective contexts, be it a thriving 17th-century heritage or the multiculturalism and inclusive policies of modern "humanitarian superpower" as Sweden positions itself (cf. Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016, p. 326). The initial question for both projects, however, is disparate: in the Russian case, it is 'What kind of museum should be established?' and the Swedish one is 'Why do we need to establish a museum in the first place?'. Each of these questions requires different methods and addresses different aspects of museological discourse. Both projects were made after the commissioners' policies. The museum in New Jerusalem should have presented a vision of the Orthodox heritage and act as *Kulturträger*, a 'bearer of culture' in connection to the secularised state museum's collections. However, the extensive scope of the project and its universalist character hindered its implementation by the same commissioners who have voiced their demand for such an institution. Instead, the Museum of Movements enacted a public dialogue, based on the current policy of the Swedish Ministry of culture, even though the application of (new) museological methods was not fully recognised in the process.

6. It worth to mention that the idea of establishing the state-funded museum of immigration in Malmö was brought up already in 2006, but "the proposal did not spark any public debate and an immigration museum never materialized" (Johansson, 2014, p. 124).

Whenever the museum's social agency is discussed in the literature, the visitor/consumer based approach often comes into focus. Jerome De Groot in his piece on *Consuming History* observes that “those who live in a land are stakeholders in its history, owners, clients, customers; they have rights and the ability to demand” (as cited in Schwend, 2012, p. 26). Furthermore, a ‘conscious’ museum (Leshchenko, 2016) should be aware of the national and international practices in the field of museology and Museum Studies as well as their relevance to the specific situation – and through that be granted the ability to make an informed choice.

My implication is that the international museum community could be, in its turn, a ‘stakeholder, owner, client and a customer’ for museology just as visitors are for museums. The literature often stresses the politics and power relations in museums, however, museums are turning more and more into a process rather than being an institution (Smeds, 2017, p. 71), a fluid network of connections, and a technology (still aimed for differentiation and homogenisation at the same time, see Bennett, 1995, p. 28). An interdisciplinary research grounded in the museological perspective can contribute to the future museum projects by informing both museum professionals and policy-makers, designating important points in the process and mapping the cultural demand. This approach allows for applying a broad variety of methods in each individual case, for example, to explore further the engagement of civil society organisations in the museum-building process; or to perceive a church museum as a hybrid forum to discuss the controversial prospects of the Orthodox church and national heritage in Russia.

Museology, therefore, can have the same social agency and responsibility, and be as ‘conscious’ as a museum in general. In such a manner, it might perform as a key actor in the process of museum-making.

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CASE

STUDIES

ÉTUDES

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ESTUDIOS

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Objects from the Pacific and museums in mainland France

Appropriation, circulation, geopolitics

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“Objects now find themselves the flows of ethical and political debates about what they were in the past, about what happened to them, about what is happening to them now, and about who has rights in relation to them.”

Steven Hooper

Preserved in a great number of museums on mainland France, Pacific objects took on different values and meanings from the choices of the ones (owners both past and present) who took care of them. This asymmetry reveals the Western World's seizing on the definition of cultural goods, which is today denounced by postcolonial studies (Price, 1989; Karp & Lavine, 1991; Pagani, 2014).

By using examples of objects from the French Polynesia and the New Caledonia, this study will try to focus on the struggles that exist in the museum world. Both of these were French colonies in the Pacific but are now overseas collectivities (Collectivités d'Outre-mer: COM) and fully part of the French state. A retrospective view of the me-

thods of acquisition, taxonomies and exhibitions of these objects will help to understand what is in stake regarding their ownership and their control. A few current critical thoughts will also be analyzed. Pacific artifacts will then be included on a wider scale, from a more global geopolitical point of view, and a more equitable method of management will be examined.

Retrospective view: acquisition, exhibition, values

Artifacts have been acquired since the first voyages of discovery in the Pacific during the 18th century. They were exchanged by ships' crews and lost their original meanings (Hooper, 2006). After their arrival in Eu-

rope, they became curiosities as they entered private collections.

European imperialism grew during the 19th century and islands in the Pacific were colonized. Following the nationalization of private goods during the French Revolution, the first museums were created by using the artifacts from private collections and were displayed in a museum context. A first iteration of anthropology appeared and was built on the evolutionary paradigm (Dias, 1991). Pacific objects could be used for archeological or naturalist studies, depending on the type of museums in which they were exhibited (Grognet, 2009). Some museums intended for ethnography were also created. There, the displays – entire series of objects, full showcases and dioramas – showed the attempt to transfer and recreate the essence of a society within the museum (Grognet, 2005). However, objects from the French colonies were not distinguished from other objects, except during world and colonial fairs where colonial goods took on a peculiar significance to illustrate colonialist propaganda.

During the 1930's, a new trend appeared: the theory of *objet-témoin* (literally: “witness-object”) which included rules for the selection and valuation of ethnographic objects, a tendency that is still current in some museums. The artifacts became as metonymies of the societies from which they came, with a value of authenticity, while cultural norms for each were created (Jamin, 1985). After being collected with all the

information of their environment, artifacts were recontextualized in the museum thanks to panels and photographs (Grognet, 2009). In this paradigm, “objects are doubly ethnographic”¹, by their provenance and their restitution (Jamin, 1985, p. 70).

Critical thoughts

Since the end of the Second World War, people from the colonies demanded far more autonomy, and just before the beginning of the 21st century, these demands reached into the domain of heritage and museums. The critics focused on ethnographic museums and anticipated their destruction (Jamin, 1998). Reflections on critical anthropology appeared at the same time and called into question the unilateral ethnographic observation (Fabian, 1983; Bazin, 2008). Some ethnographic museums in crisis turned into aesthetic ones (De L'Estoile, 2010), such as the *musée du quai Branly Jacques Chirac* which opened in Paris in 2006. This opening occurred along with the growing use of the notion of *art premier*², which tried to achieve a recognition for the ethnographic objects but became the heart of a strong polemic (Price, 2011). A positivist approach towards the objects still exists in other museums.

1. “L'objet est doublement ethnographique” (personal translation).

2. This expression is particular to France and does not have a true equivalent in another language. Anglophones prefer the notion of “tribal art” which doesn't create an idea of hierarchy.

ICOM and UNESCO opened a discourse on the ethics of possession and the authority of museums over non-Western artifacts, even while scientific collection forays continued to empty the field of these objects¹. The spreading knowledge of the objects outside of their countries of origin is also in question. The current measures aim for a bigger implication for the communities exhibited by letting them speak about their own heritage (Pagani, 2014). This kind of inclusive politics is becoming the basis on how museums deal with non-Western heritage is being redefined.

Polynesian and Kanak heritages

Since the Organic Law No 2004-192 of 27 February 2004 on the status of the self-reliance of French Polynesia, the archipelagos became a COM and acquired a local government. For New Caledonia, on 5 May 1998, a special status inside the COM was created by the agreements of Noumea. It allows for the decrease of metropolitan power and the greater importance of the local laws and Kanak customs. The two following examples reveal different approaches to the local heritage and relational strategies with Metropolitan France.

Kanak people from New Caledonia have affirmed and claimed their distinctive identity from the beginning

of their struggle with the French thus creating tensions with the colonial administration. Following an uprising, an Agency to develop Kanak Culture (Agence de développement de la culture kanak, ACDK) was created in 1989 in order to promote Kanak material and immaterial heritage. The government of New Caledonia asked for an inventory to gauge the spread of Kanak culture (Inventaire du Patrimoine Kanak Dispersé, IPKD). Between 2011 and 2015, an undertaking was implemented with the intention of registering objects preserved in museums in Metropolitan France and in foreign countries and to share the knowledge about them (Mati, 2012). Moreover, a program of “ambassadors objects” (“objets ambassadeurs”) (Boulay, Kasarhérou & Togna, 2012) was set up to and some objects from metropolitan museums were placed on loan in the Cultural Center Jean-Marie Tjibaou in Noumea. Thus, these artifacts came back to their land of origin. These initiatives have helped Kanak people to know more about their past through their material culture.

“Polynesian islanders quickly began a relationship with Western travelers before some of the islands were incorporated into the French empire. The simultaneous Christianization brought about the destruction and large scale collecting of objects (Hooper, 2006). The “cultural awakening” (“réveil culturel”, Celentano, 2002) is relatively new and is more about cultural practices and sites proposed for inclusion as UNESCO World Heritage, which itself

1. Such as the ICOM Codes of Ethics in museums, first signed in 1986 and revised in 2013, or the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted in 2001.

is linked with the development of tourism in the archipelagos. New projects related to objects have just begun concurrently with the extension of the *Musée de Tahiti et des îles – Te Fare Manaha*. An inventory of the private and public collections is in process, and some objects could be placed in the museum over a period of time. (Assemblée de la Polynésie française, 2017).

Conclusion

The COM and mainland France have established a dialogue about heritage, which differs from island to island, depending on each of their histories and current social situations. The mutual management of the objects and the knowledge on them enables placing the role of heritage as an ambassador of its ori-

ginal environment (Dias, 2002). The current interest in the history of the collections is also a route whereby the objects speak for themselves so that we can better understand their “agency” and cultural role (Gell, 1998).

But there is still a split among museums in mainland France. If the COM are a part of the French territory, the display and the discourses tend to exclude them from this identity. Objects from the French Pacific are physically and academically separated from the artifacts from mainland areas. Finally, Pacific peoples and societies are associated with an exotic and distant world. This point is one of the major issues impeding the full recognition of the COM and their inhabitants as part of French territory.

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La historia en disputa

Los embates políticos en la construcción del proyecto patrimonial y museológico del “Museu da História do Estado de São Paulo”

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En enero de 2009, el Gobierno de la Provincia de São Paulo anunció la creación del Museo de Historia de São Paulo (MHSP). Nos proponemos en esta comunicación discutir las relaciones entre memoria e historia que atraviesan la propuesta de este museo. Se enfocará principalmente en la elección del espacio físico que albergará este emprendimiento cultural: la Casa de las Retortas, patrimonio industrial tumbado, construida en 1889. Para llegar a los porqués de la elección de un patrimonio industrial para representar toda la historia de São Paulo, hay que pensar en el discurso que se ha difundido sobre la función de este museo:

Projeto inédito no país, o Museu servirá de arquivo e memória do patrimônio cultural paulista, desde a chegada dos primeiros colonizadores até os dias de hoje, passando pela diversidade étnica e a riqueza natural do Estado, o espírito empreendedor dos Bandeirantes, a expansão cafeeira, a implantação do parque industrial, e as migrações e imi-

*grações que transformaram a população de São Paulo.*¹

”

El amplio espectro que el MHSP pretende abarcar refleja el fenómeno de los museos y de los monumentos en el mundo contemporáneo. Para Pomian, vivimos una musealización de la vida, ya que todos los objetos naturales o hechos por el humano están comprendidos dentro de colecciones y museos (POMIAN, 1984, p. 51). La obligación de recordar, y, en el caso del MHSP, de recordar todo, nace de lo que Huyssen califica como «el reciente crecimiento de expansión de la memoria» (2014: 139). Si varios motivos pueden ser señalados para ese renacimiento del interés en la memoria, el más refinado de ellos fue puntuado por Nora: se habla tanto de la memoria porque ella ya no existe. Esto porque la relación que la sociedad contemporánea tiene con el pasado ya no es una

1. Definición de la propuesta del MHSP en el enlace: <http://www.cultura.sp.gov.br/>

relación de mito, sino una relación histórica. La obsesión por la memoria viene de nuestra incapacidad de tener memoria: sólo podemos tener residuos (Nora, 1993, pp. 7-9).

¿Sería el MHSP un residuo? La Casa de las Retortas estaba abandonada hace unos 10 años, cuando fue elegida como espacio para albergar el MHSP. Las narrativas sobre el espacio hablan siempre de un lugar abandonado, que sufrió invasiones, vandalismos y graffiti, y que se encuentra en un área «degradada» de la ciudad - la región del Parque Dom Pedro II. Aquí está expuesto uno de los simbolismos del proyecto del MHSP, construir memoria sobre lo que se considera la tierra arrasada de la degradación. Elegir un lugar «degradado» para un museo histórico, para una «revitalización» a partir de la cultura histórica, es sin duda un elemento poderoso de ese proyecto. Si la elección del suelo tiene gran valor en el proyecto, la elección del edificio es igualmente importante.

Recuperar un «monumento del olvido», a partir de una lectura lineal y encadenada de acontecimientos del «progreso paulista» es, en verdad, atribuir a la Casa de las Retortas, como símbolo de la industrialización paulista, un papel histórico que nunca desempeñó (Assmann, 2011, pp. 334-335). No es sorprendente la elección, sin embargo, ya que en la historiografía tradicional el gran crecimiento económico experimentado por San Pablo a principios del siglo XX, que dio las bases para que se convirtiera en la capital finan-

ciera del país, habría nacido en la industria. La exponencial expansión económica vivida por São Paulo, sin embargo, no tenía relación con la industrialización (Machado Borges Pinto, 1994, p. 33). Ha tomado forma desde 1870, con el fortalecimiento de la cultura del café y la valorización del género en el mercado internacional. Hay muchos indicios que apuntan a que ese fenómeno económico se debe a la reproducción del capital en el propio hacer urbano de la ciudad (Brito, 2000).

La «incredulidad en el futuro de las sociedades occidentales» (Huyssen, 2014, p. 139), trajo una nostalgia que buscó refugio en la memoria. En esa reflexión quizás resida el por qué de buscar una historia total de São Paulo, en contraposición a las políticas de patrimonio de la ciudad que, en general, son variadas y fragmentadas. El Museo de la Ciudad, entidad de la Secretaría de Cultura del Ayuntamiento de São Paulo, no es uno, sino múltiple, siendo compuesto por diversos lugares. Las políticas estatales de patrimonio también seguían esa estera. Los poderes públicos de São Paulo por mucho tiempo evitaron representar en el patrimonio museológico una síntesis de la historia paulista. Las fracturas de la historia de ese territorio y del pueblo que en él vivió impidió esto por mucho tiempo. El MHSP se propone desde el lugar de memoria de la ruina del patrimonio industrial construir una síntesis de la historia del progreso paulista:

Não se considera legitimo um estudo do passado que tencione obter mero saber; do abismo do esquecimento só se deve resgatar algo passado quando se tenciona vitalizar tal coisa e dar-lhe continuidade [grifo nosso]. (Assmann, 2001, p. 336)

”

Continuidad. Ante la crisis en la «modernización», de la crisis en crear futuros posibles (Huyssen, 2014, p. 148), el MHSP sirve como un espacio para apostar a la continuidad del destino manifiesto de grandeza y progreso de los paulistas. Si la fuente de riqueza de São Paulo está realmente ubicada en la producción y reproducción de la ciudad, no hay muchas posibilidades de celebración, ya que es una metrópoli símbolo del caos urbano. El MHSP está situando el presente en la línea lineal del progreso paulista, definiendo «a partir de hoy, el museo del mañana» (Hartog, 2006, p. 271).

Las problemáticas traídas por el MHSP tocan una cuestión más profunda de la memoria y del patrimonio en Brasil. El museo no aborda elementos centrales de la propia constitución de la población que habita São Paulo, tendiendo a ser más un espacio cultural de re-

creación que de crítica y reflexión. En el discurso lineal de la historia de San Pablo que el MHSP aborda, que va de la llegada de los «primeros colonizadores» hasta la «implementación del parque industrial», vemos la ausencia de importantes agentes de ese territorio. Los indígenas y los negros africanos se presentan bajo un aura de «diversidad étnica», ocultando un pasado de esclavización y violencia. La propuesta del MHSP prefiere ocultar los altos y violentos costos de los caminos escogidos para el progreso de São Paulo.

La ausencia de las personas que con su trabajo produjeron el capital para la industrialización paulista, los africanos y negros esclavizados nacidos en Brasil, no se circunscribe sólo a las políticas patrimoniales paulistas. El gran trauma nacional, la esclavización de millones de seres humanos, negros, y todo su impacto transnacional, nunca fue tratado con la profundidad necesaria. ¿Será demasiado tarde para un memorial de la esclavitud transatlántica que refleje un reconocimiento de responsabilidad y compromiso de construir un nuevo futuro? ¿Será que antes de eso alguna política patrimonial puede tener alguna efectividad social en Brasil?

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Los Museos Comunitarios en La Habana

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En las décadas del 70 y el 80, se producen una serie de cambios a nivel mundial que favorecen las dinámicas de los diferentes países de América y el Caribe. Con la Mesa Redonda de Santiago de Chile en 1972 y Cuba con una situación política pertinente hacia la creación de Museos Comunitarios, se renueva la concepción tradicional del Museo.

Esta concepción heredada de los primeros museos abiertos al público, ahora se proyectan desde la comunidad y la historia local, sus colecciones y el coleccionismo desde lo privado, dan paso a lo cotidiano o popular, como lo emergente en la dinámica social, según plantea Carlos R. Schelmaintr o como se discutió en Santiago de Chile, eran los primeros pasos para la impronta de la nueva museología. Al respecto se planteaba: *La nueva museología es la expresión de una ideología específica. Es una filosofía y un estado de espíritu que caracterizan y orientan el trabajo de algunos museólogos* (Maure, 1996).

Los Museos del siglo XIX fundados en Cuba y los que se crearon antes de 1959, en la etapa de la República Neocolonial, son los antecedentes

y las fuentes de las que se partió y bebió en la Isla, para el nuevo sistema de museos locales o comunitarios. En estos períodos señalados, antes de 1959, existían 13 museos en 6 provincias fundamentalmente, La Habana, Matanzas, Camagüey y Santiago de Cuba, que respondían fundamentalmente al coleccionismo privado de ciencias naturales y objetos personales (García, 2015).

Cuba no quedó retirada en cuanto a la protección de su patrimonio, el texto constitucional de 1976 asume la defensa y salvaguarda de sus bienes culturales y patrimoniales como una obligación estatal irrecusable, y a su vez hace que el Estado esté legalmente comprometido con ello. En 1977, un año después de aprobada la vigente Constitución de la República de Cuba, la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular [ANPP], órgano supremo de representación y aseguramiento de la voluntad estatal, aprobó las leyes fundamentales para la conservación de los bienes integrantes del Patrimonio Cultural. Sistema jurídico que se aseguraría una adecuada legislación que diera continuidad al espíritu constitucional; se trata de la Ley No. 1, Ley de

Protección al Patrimonio Cultural, y de la Ley No. 2, Ley de los Monumentos Nacionales y Locales, poniéndose en vigor a través de los Decretos 118 y 55, que constituyen los reglamentos para su ejecución.

Cuando se habla en Cuba de Museo Municipal, siempre lo asociamos con la red de instituciones que se crearon en la década del 80, del pasado siglo XX, para dar cumplimiento a la Ley No. 23 del 18 de mayo de 1979 dictada por la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular en la que se establece que: “En cada uno de los municipios de la República se creará un museo en el que se conserven y muestren, para su conocimiento y estudio, documentos, fotografías u otros objetos referentes a la historia nacional y local que reflejen las tradiciones del pueblo, los episodios sobresalientes de sus luchas, los hechos y la vida de sus personalidades destacadas en las diversas épocas y lo referente al desarrollo de su economía, su cultura y sus instituciones”. (Ley No 23. página 51)

Esta Ley 23, constituyó un paso decisivo en reconocer y jerarquizar a estas instituciones culturales como depositarias de la memoria histórica, social, política y económica de las diversas comunidades del país. En este sentido los museos municipales son más que un lugar de almacenamiento de reliquias, son un medio y difusor de la memoria colectiva de las comunidades (Arjona, 1986).

En la actualidad, por voluntad política del Estado Cubano, el desarrollo alcanzado por los museos

y la necesidad de organización del Sistema Nacional de Museos de la República de Cuba, se deroga la Ley 23 o Ley de Museos Municipales y se promulga el 13 de agosto de 2009, la nueva Ley 106 del Sistema Nacional de Museos como mecanismo de integración para la mejor protección de los bienes patrimoniales, la creación y extinción de estas instituciones en el territorio nacional.

A partir de este contexto, se aprecian múltiples transformaciones conceptuales en los museos municipales: desde la exposición organizada, viva y didáctica que niega la antigua idea del museo-almacén, hasta la institución que, con las tecnologías de la información y las comunicaciones, estará al servicio de los valores identitarios de cada comunidad, contexto que determinarán los retos y perspectivas de los museos municipales en el siglo XXI.

Los Museos Municipales en La Habana desempeñan un importante papel en la preservación del patrimonio cultural, sobre todo en la labor de concientización de la comunidad sobre el valor que representa el descubrimiento e interpretación de este patrimonio para su propia existencia.

En la actualidad la provincia de La Habana cuenta con 74 museos de diferentes tipologías y subordinados a diferentes instituciones del Estado, algunos por el Ministerio de Cultura y otros gestionados por varios ministerios u organismos. De estos museos, 23 se encuentran ubicados en 14 municipios de La Habana y son

atendidos metodológicamente por el Centro Provincial de Patrimonio Cultural de La Habana. Cada uno de estos museos comunitarios tiene un trabajo sociocultural significativo con el Patrimonio Natural a través de diversas acciones.

Estas acciones se materializan en los recorridos y grupos Arcoíris, los que obtuvieron el Premio Ibermuseos en el 2011; el Patrimonio Vivo con los Grupos Huellas, que parte de la identificación y revitalización de los Grupos Portadores, de las tradiciones y costumbres de las localidades, mediante la coordinación con las escuelas a través de visitas a las exposiciones, conversatorios y talleres siempre vinculados, y trabajando al servicio de la comunidad, con la que está identificada, conservando y salvaguardando su Patrimonio, convirtiéndose en instituciones defensoras de los valores y bienes de la comunidad y logrando la interpretación de su patrimonio in situ.

Se trata de un concepto diferente de público, porque no es el público visitante a la exposición del museo,

sino el público siendo visitado por el Museo Comunitario en sus múltiples expresiones y acciones variadas, en el propio contexto en que se desarrolla y vive. La principal obra del Museo Municipal, es la de interactuar con esa comunidad en todas las tareas culturales y sociales, es la preservación, conservación y la puesta en valor de todo el patrimonio cultural de su territorio.

Los museos en La Habana son instituciones del desarrollo local y social, donde la comunidad identifica, conserva y salvaguarda su Patrimonio, lo que es suyo por derecho propio. Los museos comunitarios desarrollan una labor educativa, continua y sistemática en la comunidad logrando el interés de la población y en especial de los niños y jóvenes, en la apreciación artística, y conocimiento de la historia nacional y local, la protección de los bienes del patrimonio cultural en su concepto más amplio, que incluye sus tradiciones, etnografía, medio ambiente y la cultura en todas sus manifestaciones.

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Museums and utopias

The museologist as social and politic worker in Waldisa Rússio, implications for the contemporary Brazilian Museology

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Utopia

Female noun

- 1. Ideal place or state, of complete happiness and harmony between the individuals.*
- 2. Any original description of an ideal society substantiated in fair laws and in political-economic institutions genuinely compromised with the collectivity's well being.*

Waldisa Simões Pinto Rússio Camargo Guarniéri (1935-1990) graduated in Law in 1959. She also received a master and doctorate degrees at the Sociology and Politics School Foundation of São Paulo (FESP - SP) in 1977 and 1980 respectively, with works that focused on themes such as museum transformations in the context of social changes and industrialisation. In the course of her career, it was remarkable that she was more connected to breaking up rather than to continuity (Bruno, 2010, p. 21). She became a member of ICOM in 1977 and worked mainly with ICOFOM. After 1976, she led the Museum's Technical Group at the Culture Secretary of São Paulo State. In 1978, she created, at FESP

- SP, the Course of Specialization in Museology, and, in 1985, the Museology Institute of São Paulo. Among her primary projects was the Industry's Museum, about which she dedicated her doctor's degree thesis, and the Science Station (1986-1988). She firmly adhered to the museology profession (1984) and one of her main ideas was to consider the museologist as a social worker.

What was the social and political character of museum workers to Rússio? What was the role of utopia in her thinking?

Utopia means the exploration of new possibilities and human wishes through insurgency of imagination

to what is established, in the name of something radically better than the humankind has the right to wish (Santos, 1995, p. 278). Rússio (1977) also associates this creative act with the transformative action:

(...) a utopia, longe de ser uma visão fantástica de cérebro doentio, sonho longínquo desligado das realidades mais chãs e das raízes da Vida, é pelo contrário, uma manifestação da racionalidade humana em que o chamado 'sonho' é apenas, a primeira fase que precede o planejamento. (p.179, as cited in Bruno, 2010, p. 24)¹

”

The beginning of her work in museums comes about, then, in a very emblematic decade and full of transformation, after the 1971's ICOM General Conference and in 1972 the Round Table of Santiago do Chile. Duncan Cameron, in 1971, publishes “The Museum, a temple or a forum”. He presents how museum profiles are similar to temples, places of winners and done products, versus forums, spaces for action, lawsuits, debates. A third image is possible: the museum as an arena, like all the patrimonial field, is, contest and conflict-riddled. However, also an arena in the sense of place of spectacle, in which agents meet to

demonstrate mastery of ritualism and compete in rhetoric (Brumann, 2012, p. 6). The museum as a place for traumatic history's catharsis, disputes, versions' fights, contradictions' acknowledgement, searching a kind of reconciliation with History that doesn't pass through the forgetfulness. Saying the unspeakable in museums, remembering the Museums International Day's theme of 2017, means to recognise this blood droplet they bring (Chagas, 1999). It is to put the museum tool at society's service with all its potency to evidence and question different aspects of memory and history that were neglected or deliberately overcast.

At the same time, it is necessary to discuss potentials and limits of museums and Museology in their role as a medium (Mairesse, 2011) able to influence, searching to avoid the empty use of the speech about a transforming museum. Looking for alternatives to the “museological imperialism” (Scheiner, 2016) we seek to highlight the production of a female museologist, Latin American, writing mostly out of the ICOM official languages, and because of her, other authors involved in the multivocal aspect of museums and Museology in Brazil. To reverse some geopolitics asymmetries, it is imperative that the “Southern” production gain ground in emblematic meetings such as ICOFOM and an occasion of having it together with the ICOFOM-LAM in the Latin-American territory be indispensable.

1. (...) the utopia far from being a fantastic vision of a sick brain, distant dream disconnected from the flattest reality and life roots is, on the contrary, a manifestation of the human rationality which is the called 'dream' it is only the first phase before planning. (Translated by the author).

At this moment the world faces a right turn. In Brazil a legislative bill called “Escola sem Partido”, (a school with a non-political view) has been discussed, it is compulsory reflecting about which will be the impact on these institutions by projects like that and what position the museums must assume. According to Rússio (1974):

“Cabe ao Museu restaurar o elo entre o passado e o presente, projetando a ponte para o futuro, através da preservação e da ênfase à manifestação do trabalho criador do homem, de sua inteligência e sensibilidade; cabe ao museu possibilitar a leitura não do símbolo, mas do elemento simbolizado, penetrando na raiz mesmo do Humanismo” (p. 55).

”

Through an exploratory study, with some quantitative indicators of the author’s quotes that demonstrate influence at the formation and professional practice at museums’ field in Brazil. We also present her militants ideas connected with the comprehensiveness of the museum as a power and utopia construction place: “There is, in reality, existing museology, real, that’s there outside, and a postulated museology,

dreamed, wished.” Rússio affirms, already in 1984, that it “is time to make a museum with the community and not for the community”.

We analysed six pedagogic projects of different courses (PPCs) of bachelor degrees in Museology available online in operation at the moment. Waldisa Rússio is not a reference to three of them: those from Universidade Federal do Pernambuco (UFPE), Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPEL) and Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO). The pedagogic projects from Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) and Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) mention her in the book organised by Bruno (2010).

The Universidade Federal de Goiás’ (UFG) project, previous to the publication of the book, doesn’t bring the authoress as a reference in the subjects but quotes her in the preambles of this project (Rússio, 1981). We highlight the relevance of the publication *in memoriam* organised by Bruno, due to Rússio did not wrote a book, only the postgraduate and the doctoral thesis and detached articles, what hardens not only the idea’s circulation but, especially, the indication as courses’ bibliography. Exist the obligation of purchasing the bibliography specified by the library, which brings, in cases of selling out or non-published titles, to the replacement of more accessible ones.

From the journals of the Brazilian museological field we analysed Mu-

1. It fits to the museum restoring the link between past and present, projecting the bridge to the future, through the preservation and the emphasis in the manifestation of men’s creative work, it’s intelligence and sensibility; it fits the museum to enable the reading of the non-symbol, but of the symbolized element, penetrating at the roots even of the Humanism. (Translated by the author).

seologia & Patrimônio (Museology & Heritage), by UNIRIO, with 18 published numbers since 2008, and *Museologia & Interdisciplinaridade* (Museology & Interdisciplinarity) by Universidade de Brasília (UNB), 11 published numbers since 2012. Both present six-monthly editions and an average of 12 to 15 texts per edition. The magazine by UNIRIO presents article sessions, experience reporting, inaugural meetings and translated texts, releases and post-graduation and doctoral dissertation's summaries. Waldisa Rúsio receives 13 mentions, notably her text "Cultura, patrimônio e preservação" (Culture, Heritage and Preservation, 1984) and *The interdisciplinarity in Museology* (1981). The UNB's journal has the session's articles, interviews and releases. Rúsio appears mentioned six times, five of them with the text "Culture concept and it is interrelation with cultural heritage and the preservation".

In the proceedings of the two performed editions of the *Seminário Brasileiro de Museologia* (Brazilian's Museology Seminar, SEBRAMUS), 2014 and 2015, we have perceived an increasing frequency of citations. Maybe, due to the release of a complete book in Portuguese with her texts in 2010, she was noticed by the most recent productions.

The mentions of her texts are more allotted, showing up in six of them, each one quoted once. Beyond the one already mentioned, it also appears "Museologia e Identidade" (Museology and Identity) (in Bruno, 2010).

On the 2nd edition of SEBRAMUS, almost two dozens of texts by Rúsio were mentioned, having even an article, from Carla Renata Gomes, dedicated to her thought's study and based in the book organised by Bruno (2010) among others. Even the postgraduate dissertation (1977), non-published, is quoted so that we can point out a recapture of her work by young researchers. The authoress is also mentioned as one of those who has diffused theories from the European west's Museology in Brazil; also as one of the primordial influencers of event's series called *Fórum Nordeste de Museologia* (Museology's Northeasterner Forum), which came to have eight editions, until 1996.

Closing remarks

We can assume that from this book publication (Bruno, 2010) and the facilitated access to Waldisa Rúsio's texts, there is a more significant diffusion of her thought, which always deserved interest primarily from the museum workers generation that was contemporary to her, but now renewed by undergraduate and postgraduate students. However, the books organised by Cristina Bruno for the ICOM-Brazil have not been works of large circulation, as standard in the area.

There are, therefore, enormous challenges to be overcome to broaden the dissemination of the Brazilian museological thought in front of the "museological imperialism". Because if the publications in foreign languages do not reach all of

our private public, the ones in Portuguese have limited international readers (mostly only in Portugal), usually a low print run, irregular distribution and quickly fading.

This work of survey and analysis of the implications of Waldisa Rússio's thinking for the contemporary Brazilian museology, still in progress, is more necessary than ever.

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English version: Andréa Dias Vial, Milena de Souza and Markus Garscha

Museos y utopías

El museólogo como trabajador social y político en Waldisa Rússio, implicaciones para la Museología Brasileña contemporánea

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Utopía:

Sustantivo femenino

- 1. lugar o estado ideal, de completa felicidad y armonía entre los individuos.*
- 2. cualquier descripción imaginativa de una sociedad ideal, fundamentada en leyes justas y en instituciones político-económicas verdaderamente comprometidas con el bienestar de las colectividades.*

Waldisa Rússio (1935-1990) se licenció en Derecho en 1959 y realizó maestría y doctorado en la Fundación Escuela de Sociología y Política de São Paulo (FESP-SP) en 1977 y 1980, respectivamente, con trabajos que versaban sobre temas como la transformación de los museos en el contexto del cambio social e industrialización. Ingresó en el ICOM en 1977, actuando especialmente en el ICOFOM. Desde 1976 conducía el Grupo Técnico de Museos de la Secretaría de Cultura del Estado de São Paulo. Creó en la FESP-SP, en 1978, el Curso de Especialización en Museología y, en 1985, el Instituto de Museología de São Paulo. Entre sus principales proyectos están el del

Museo de la Industria, al que dedicó su tesis de doctorado, y la Estación Ciencia (1986-1988). Bregó por la reglamentación de la profesión de museólogo (1984), para ella, un trabajador social.

¿Cuál es el papel social y político de los trabajadores de museo para Rússio? ¿Cuál es el papel de la utopía en su pensamiento? La utopía es la «explotación de nuevas posibilidades y voluntades humanas» por medio del surgimiento de la imaginación a lo que está establecido, en nombre de «algo radicalmente mejor que la humanidad tiene derecho a desear» (Santos, 1995). Rússio asocia

también este acto imaginativo con la acción transformadora:

(...) la utopía, lejos de ser la visión fantástica de un cerebro enfermo, sueño lejano desligado de las realidades más chas y de las raíces de la vida, es al contrario, una manifestación de la racionalidad humana en que el llamado 'sueño' es sólo, la primera fase que precede a la planificación. (Rússio, 1977, p 179, apud Bruno, 2010, p 24).

”

El inicio de su actuación en los museos ocurre por lo tanto en una década muy emblemática y de transformación, después del ICOM de 1971 y de la Mesa Redonda de Santiago de Chile en 1972. Duncan Cameron (1971, en Desvallées, 1992) publica «El museo: un templo o un foro». Donde presenta como perfiles de museos a los semejantes a templos, lugar de los vencedores y de los productos acabados, frente a los foros, espacios para la acción, los procesos, los debates. Una tercera imagen es posible: el museo como arena, así como todo campo patrimonial, espacio de disputas y conflictos, pero arena también en el sentido del espacio del espectáculo, en que los agentes se encuentran para demostrar el dominio de la ritualidad y para competir en retórica (a este respecto, véase Brumann, 2012, p. 6). El museo espacio para la catarsis de las historias traumáticas, de disputa, de reconocimiento de las contradicciones, de búsqueda de una reconciliación con la historia que no pasa por el olvido. Decir lo indecible

en museos, para recordar el tema del Día Internacional de Museos de 2017, es reconocer esta gota de sangre que traen (Chagas, 1999) y colocar la herramienta museo al servicio de la sociedad con toda su potencia para problematizar y evidenciar diferentes aspectos de la memoria y de la historia descuidados o deliberadamente oscurecidos

Al mismo tiempo es necesario discutir las potencialidades y los límites de los museos y de la Museología como medio (Mairesse, 2011) capaz de influir, buscando evitar un uso vaciado de discurso sobre el museo transformador. En busca de alternativas al «imperialismo museológico» (Scheiner, 2016), buscamos realzar la producción de una museóloga mujer, latinoamericana, escribiendo mayormente fuera de las lenguas oficiales del ICOM, y por medio de ella, a otros autores que contribuyen a dar a los museos y a la Museología brasileña un aspecto multivocal. Para revertir algunas asimetrías geopolíticas es imperativo que la producción del «sur» gane espacio en reuniones emblemáticas como las de ICOFOM, y la ocasión de llevarlo a cabo conjuntamente con el ICOFOM-LAM, en territorio latinoamericano, es indispensable.

En este momento en que el mundo se está produciendo un giro a la derecha y en Brasil se discute un proyecto de ley conocido como «Escuela sin Partido», es forzoso reflexionar acerca de cómo estas instituciones pueden ser impactadas por proyectos como éste y qué

posición deberán asumir los museos. Según Rússio,

Cabe al Museo restaurar el eslabón entre el pasado y el presente, proyectando el puente hacia el futuro, a través de la preservación y el énfasis en la manifestación del trabajo creador del hombre, de su inteligencia y sensibilidad; es posible que el museo posibilite la lectura no del símbolo, sino del elemento simbolizado, penetrando en la raíz misma del Humanismo. (Rússio, 1974, apud Bruno, 2010, p. 55)

”

Por medio de un estudio exploratorio, con algunos indicadores cuantitativos de citas de la autora que demuestran su influencia en la formación y en el ejercicio profesional en el campo de los museos en Brasil, presentamos también sus ideas militantes y conectadas con la comprensión del museo como espacio de poder y de construcción de las utopías: «Hay, en realidad, una museología existente, real, que está ahí fuera, y hay una museología postulada, soñada, deseada.» Ya en 1984 Waldisa afirmaba que «es tiempo de hacer el museo con la comunidad y no para la comunidad».

Analizamos 6 proyectos pedagógicos, disponibles en línea, de cursos (PPC) de los bachilleratos en Museología en funcionamiento en este momento. Y en la UFSC y UFRGS es mencionada por medio del libro organizado por Bruno (2010).

El PPC de la UFG, anterior a la publicación del libro, no trae a la autora como referencia para las disciplinas, pero es citada en los preámbulos (Rússio, 1981). Destacamos la relevancia de la publicación *in memoriam* organizada por Bruno, en virtud de que Rússio no ha dejado un libro, solamente disertaciones, tesis y artículos sueltos, lo que dificulta no solamente la circulación de las ideas, también especialmente, la indicación como bibliografía en los cursos académicos. Existe la obligatoriedad de adquirir la bibliografía indicada por las bibliotecas, lo que lleva, en el caso de títulos agotados o no publicados, a la substitución por otros más accesibles.

En los periódicos del área, analizamos *Museología & Patrimonio*, de la UNIRIO, con 18 números publicados desde 2008, y *Museología e Interdisciplinariedad* de la UNB, 11 números publicados desde 2012. Ambos presentan ediciones semestrales y un promedio de 12 a 15 textos por edición. La revista de la UNIRIO presenta sesiones de artículos, relatos de experiencias, conferencias inaugurales y textos traducidos, reseñas y resúmenes de disertaciones y tesis defendidas. Waldisa Rússio recibe 13 menciones, especialmente «Cultura, patrimonio y preservación» (1984) y «La interdisciplinariedad en Museología» (1981). El periódico de la UNB posee las sesiones artículos, entrevista y reseñas. Waldisa aparece mencionada seis veces, cinco de ellas con el texto «Concepto de cultura y su interrelación con el patrimonio cultural y la preservación».

En los anales de las dos ediciones ya realizadas del Seminario Brasileño de Museología (SEBRAMUS), 2014 y 2015, se percibe una frecuencia mayor de las citas. Posiblemente la disponibilidad del libro completo en portugués con sus textos a partir de 2010 comenzó a ser notado en las más recientes producciones. En los anales del 1er SEBRAMUS, en 2014, el epígrafe es de Rússio:

La preservación propicia la construcción de una memoria que permite el reconocimiento de características propias, es decir, la identificación. Y la identidad cultural es algo extremadamente ligado a la auto definición, a la soberanía, al fortalecimiento de una conciencia histórica. (Waldisa Rússio, 1984)

”

La mención de sus textos es mucho más notoria, apareciendo seis de ellos, citado una vez cada uno. Además de los ya mencionados, aparece también «Museología e identidad» (in Bruno, 2010). En la segunda edición del SEBRAMUS, casi dos decenas de textos de Rússio se mencionan, hay también un artículo de Carla Renata Gomes, dedicado al estudio de su pensamiento y basado en el libro organizado por Bruno (2010), entre otros. Incluso se cita su disertación de maestría (1977), no publicada de forma que podemos señalar que su obra es retomada por jóvenes investigadores.

La autora es también mencionada como una de las personas que difundió teorías de la Museología del este

europeo en Brasil y como una de las influencias primordiales de la serie de eventos denominada Forum Nordeste de Museología (que llegó a tener ocho ediciones, hasta 1996).

Consideraciones finales

Podemos suponer que a partir de la publicación de este libro (Bruno, 2010) y del mayor acceso a los textos de Waldisa Rússio, se está produciendo una mayor difusión de su pensamiento, que si bien siempre mereció un interés particular de los trabajadores de museos de su generación, ahora se ve renovado por el interés de estudiantes de grado y posgrado.

Sin embargo, cabe puntualizar que los libros organizados por Cristina Bruno para el ICOM-Brasil no han sido todavía de gran circulación, algo común en el área.

Existe, por lo tanto, enormes desafíos que hay que superar para ampliar la difusión del pensamiento museológico brasileño muy ligado al «imperialismo museológico» pues las publicaciones en idiomas extranjeros no llegan en su mayoría a nuestro público interno, y las realizadas en portugués se reducen a las de alcance de cierto interés de Portugal, y acostumbra a ser pequeñas series, de distribución irregular que se agotan rápidamente.

Este trabajo de levantamiento y análisis de las implicancias del pensamiento de Waldisa Rússio para la Museología Brasileña contem-

poránea, aún en marcha, es por lo tanto más necesario que nunca.

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Entre la política y la poética, la formación de profesionales en Museología en México

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Introducción

¿Cuáles son los objetivos en la formación de profesionales en museos en México?, ¿quiénes son los que realmente se dedican a dar significado a las exposiciones a través del orden y conjugación de los diferentes objetos y componentes que le dan forma? (Lidchi 1997). Es decir, ¿quiénes crean la poética y la política en el museo?, ¿cuáles han sido las políticas en la formación de profesionales en México? y ¿qué papel juega la enseñanza de teoría museológica en ello?

El objetivo de este cartel es presentar un panorama general de la enseñanza en Museología Mexicana. Los presentes resultados se basan en fuentes de segunda mano tales como: artículos en revistas y tesis de maestría, complementados con un análisis de diversos planes de estudio de aquellos espacios que tienen como objetivo la formación de profesionales en museos en México.

Enseñanza de Museología en México

1909-1911 – Cursos de profesionalización en la Escuela Internacional de Arqueología y Etnología Americana, que formaba parte del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía.

1943-1954 – En la Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, IPN (1937), INAH(1939) se imparte la materia denominada: “Teoría General de la Museografía”.

Esta carrera técnica cerró debido a altos costos y al poco ámbito laboral, formó a los profesionales que apoyaron el traslado de obra del Museo Nacional de Historia al Museo del Castillo de Chapultepec (1944) y la creación del Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales (1947). Las clases en un principio se impartían en el anexo del antiguo Museo Nacional.

1966-1968 – Centro de Investigaciones y Conservación del Patrimonio Artístico “Paul Coremans” del INAH/UNESCO con un enfoque museográfico y en restauración.

1968-1977 – En 1967 se crea la Escuela Nacional de Restauración y Museografía, INAH/OEA y al año siguiente se realiza el primer “Curso Interamericano de Restauración de Bienes Culturales y el Curso Interamericano de Capacitación Museográfica”.

1972-1978 – En la ENCRYM, INAH/ OEA se imparte el “Curso Interamericano de Capacitación Museográfica”, en el cual había una materia denominada “Seminario del Museo y sus funciones” y otra “Organización en museos”.

1978-1983 – El ENCRYM/ INAH crea la Maestría en Museología, la cual de 1978 a 1980 no llevó materias teóricas, será en 1980 a 1981 cuando lleve la materia de Museología, como historia de los museos; de 1981 a 1982 cuando enseñe la materia de Museología, como aspectos de los museos y de 1982 a 1983 cuando se imparta como Museología Teórica, después de esta generación se suspende la maestría por quince años.

1987-1993 – ENCRYM/ INAH imparte el Curso de Museografía Aplicada, con la materia “Introducción a la Museología”.

1993-1994 – ENCRYM/ INAH. El “Curso de Especialización en Museos” tiene la materia “Museología”, con la idea de presentar la historia de los museos, historia de la producción de bienes culturales, conservación preventiva, investigación para museos, manejo de Colecciones y un taller de Conservación. Esta especialización

también contenía talleres de museografía.

1990-Actual – En la Escuela Nacional Preparatoria de la UNAM, crea la carrera de Técnico Especializado Auxiliar Museógrafo Restaurador. Desde 2016 lleva la materia teórica llamada “Museología y Museografía”.

1991- 1992 – La Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia del INAH, crea un “Diplomado en Museos”. También ofrece a todas sus carreras la materia optativa en “Museología y Museografía”.

1993- 2003 – La Universidad Iberoamericana abre la Maestría en Museos, más enfocada a la sociología de la cultura y gestión del arte.

1996-1998 – La Pinacoteca Virreinal del INAH abre el Diplomado Universitario de Museología, en el que se imparte la materia “Introducción a la Museología”.

1997-Actual – El Centro de Arte Mexicano ofrece la Maestría en Museología, impartiendo la materia de “Museología ciencia de los museos”

1997-2008 – La ENCRYM/INAH reinaugura la Maestría en Museología con dos semestres de museología teórica.

2002-2003 – Diplomado en Museología, impartido en la ECRO, Secretaría de Cultura Jalisco, CONACULTA y Escuela de Diseño de la Universidad Autónoma de

Guadalajara, imparte la materia de “Introducción a la Museología”.

2001-Actual – Especialidad en Museografía ENCRYM/INAH, en la que se imparte la materia de “Museología y guion museológico”

2000 – Diplomado en Museología y Museografía impartido por la asociación: Promotores Culturales de Michoacán, A.C., este diplomado tiene una materia denominada “Museología”.

2008-2015 – Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm, se imparte la Maestría en Estudios de Museos y Gestión de Arte, que tiene dos semestres de Museología.

2009-Actual – Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm, imparte la Especialidad en Gestión Museográfica con la materia “Aproximaciones mexicanas a la Museología”.

2012-Actual – La Maestría en Curaduría de Arte Contemporáneo del Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm imparte la materia “Museología y Crítica Museal”.

2016-Actual – En el Centro Cultural Helénico se imparte la Especialidad en Museografía Práctica, que cuenta con la materia “Museología y curaduría”.

2012-Actual – La ENAP actual FAD/UNAM imparte diplomados con opción de titulación en “Curaduría y Museografía” donde se estudia el concepto museo y “Museo-

grafía”, este más enfocado a la creación de guiones museológicos.

2007-Actual – “Seminario de Estudios Museológicos” del Departamento de Estudios Museológicos de la UNAM se imparte en el Univer-sum, Museo de las Ciencias.

2007-Actual – El Laboratorio Estrategias Metodológicas I (Fenómenos y Medios: Museografía y Diseño del Entorno) de la FAD/UNAM se imparte para la Licenciatura en Artes Visuales como un taller.

2002-Actual – El Diplomado en Museografía 3D se imparte en la Facultad de Arquitectura/UNAM como parte del programa de Educación Continua.

2014-Actual – Licenciatura en Restauración y Conservación impartida en la Escuela Estatal de Restauración y Conservación de Zacatecas tiene la materia de “Introducción a la Museología y Museografía”.

2011-Actual – “Seminario de introducción a la museología” que se imparte en el Museo Nacional de Arte del INBA se enfoca en las funciones de los museos.

2017-Actual – Laboratorio de Museografía, impartido por Ars Museografía en el Centro de las Artes de San Agustín y el Centro Cultural “La Curtiduría”, CASA en Etlá, Oaxaca lleva la materia de “Gestión Museográfica”.

2017-Actual – Cursos de profesionalización en la Escuela Interna-

cional de Arqueología y Etnología Americana, que formaba parte del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía.

Conclusiones

Como se observa en la presente tabla son pocos los espacios en los que se ha impartido Museología como la teoría que se pregunta sobre el quehacer del museo, la mayoría de

los cursos impartidos actualmente en México se enfocan en la formación práctica, dejando al museo la poética de la exhibición, pero sin preguntarse sobre la política en la que se encuentra inmerso. La formación ética y profesional de los trabajadores de museos me parece importante ya que un museo no es un lugar neutral, por lo tanto se deben generar discusiones en torno a ello.

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Los Museos Cubanos en los primeros años de la Revolución

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En enero de 1959, fecha que marca el inicio del triunfo de la Revolución en Cuba, se sucedieron radicales cambios en el orden económico, político y social. El naciente gobierno revolucionario trata de establecer, desde sus inicios, una forma de gobierno donde se le da amparo a todas las clases sociales y se pretende integrar, por sobre todas las clases sociales, al proletariado cubano.

Dentro de las acciones tomadas fue la aprobación de la Ley de Reforma Agraria y la nacionalización de monopolios tanto latifundistas como productivos para que pasaran a manos de las clases proletarias con la intención de hacer de estas empresas una forma de producción democrática y equitativa. La primera acción masiva que se emprende es la gigantesca campaña de alfabetización que involucró a toda la juventud cubana con determinado nivel educacional, la que se movilizó hacia los puntos más intrincados del país con el propósito de erradicar el analfabetismo existente. Esta campaña de alfabetización marca un giro decisivo en el orden educacional y

cultural en el país. Constituyó, de hecho, una gran muestra del apoyo popular hacia el promisorio gobierno revolucionario.

En fecha temprana como fue en el año 1959 se creó el Instituto Cubano del Cine, se reorganizó el Ballet Nacional, conformó la Editorial Nacional y se comenzaron a construir las Escuelas de Arte con el objetivo de formar jóvenes instructores en danza, música, esta etapa 1950-1962, tendrá como eje central el conocido discurso de Fidel Castro “Palabras a los intelectuales” donde lanzó la controvertida y manejada frase: “Dentro de la Revolución todo; contra la Revolución ningún derecho”. (ALMAZÁN & SIERRA)

En Palabras a los intelectuales está el basamento de la política cultural de la Revolución:

La Revolución no puede pretender asfixiar el arte o la cultura cuando una de las metas y uno de los propósitos fundamentales de la Revolución es desarrollar el arte y la cultura, precisamente

para que el arte y la cultura lleguen a ser un real patrimonio del pueblo. Y al igual que nosotros hemos querido para el pueblo una vida mejor en el orden material, queremos para el pueblo una vida mejor también en todos los órdenes espirituales; queremos para el pueblo una vida mejor en el orden cultural. (Almazan Sierra, 2006)

”

Los museos fundados en la primera mitad del Siglo XX son heredados por este nuevo gobierno y se comenzará a implementar, progresivamente, una política tendiente a restaurar, catalogar, definir colecciones, en los museos que llegaron abiertos o cerrados hasta 1959 y se abre otra línea de acción en cuanto a museos se refiere, la apertura de instituciones museales de diversas especialidades en las décadas del 60 y el 70 del siglo pasado.

Bajo la euforia de este primer año del triunfo de la Revolución se inaugura el Museo de Matanzas, en septiembre de 1959, aspiración de la intelectualidad matancera que no se pudo cumplir antes de esta fecha, por tal motivo, al analizar el Museo de Matanzas afirmamos que fue el último museo republicano y el primer museo revolucionario.

Las colecciones que durante años fueron resguardadas por Israel Moliner Rendón son expuestas, finalmente en un salón del Teatro Terry de la ciudad y más tarde serían trasladadas al Ayuntamiento Provincial, donde se exhibieron hasta 1979 en que se le destina el Palacio de Junco

como sede definitiva y que hoy es el Museo Provincial de Matanzas. Así Matanzas, ciudad que brilló en el siglo XIX, en el orden cultural, llamada no sin razón la Atenas de Cuba y con una enorme impronta en el país en lo que se refiere al coleccionismo científico y de arte del Siglo XIX, que además, contaba con el renombrado Museo Oscar María de Rojas de Cárdenas, podía, finalmente, cumplir su sueño de poseer un museo municipal.

Por otro lado, en La Habana, se gestaba la idea de fundar el Museo de la Revolución, esta institución fundada en diciembre de 1959 en el Castillo de la Punta que sería su sede provisional estuvo dirigida por el Capitán de Corbeta (retirado) Mariano R. Gajate Erro, exhibía las colecciones que fue atesorando Celia Sánchez Manduley desde la partida del yate Granma de las costas de México, los documentos emitidos desde la Sierra Maestra relacionados con importantes figuras como Fidel y Raúl Castro, Ernesto Guevara o Camilo Cienfuegos y otras piezas que irían conformando las colecciones que hoy se muestran en este museo. El 18 enero de 1960 se le da fundación jurídica al emitirse el Decreto Ministerial No.58, mediante el cual el museo pasó a depender del Departamento de Instrucción del MINFAR (Ministerio de la Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias), años más tarde, luego de trasladar las funciones políticas que se ejercían desde el Palacio Presidencial a la actual Plaza de la Revolución, se decidió destinar el edificio para sede permanente del Museo de la Revolución.

Estos dos hechos, dentro del campo de estudio del tema que nos ocupa, son los que dan inicio a este proceso paulatino de reconocimiento y valoración de lo heredado. En cierto sentido son dos hechos aislados, el primero, como continuación de una larga intención de una ciudad de poseer un museo, en el segundo, como un acto consciente de la importancia de un museo que legitimara las recientes luchas libradas en el país, sin embargo, son sin dudas el principio de una tendencia que después cobraría sentido al inaugurar un gran grupo de museos en menos de 20 años y que conformaría, en la segunda mitad del siglo XX una impresionante red de museos en Cuba, hoy suman más de trescientos a todo lo largo y ancho del país.

La década del 60 del siglo pasado marcaría en la arena internacional un vuelco de 180 grados en lo que se refiera a las funciones que deben tener los museos, el cuestionamiento que se hace con respecto a “los mausoleos” donde se atesoran colecciones, se convierte en un interesante tema en la discusión sobre el futuro de la institución museal. Se trae a la palestra pública los conceptos de Nueva Museología y la intención de creación de los ecomuseos, inspirado en las experiencias

conocidas de fines del Siglo XIX de los países de los nórdicos.

Georges Henri Riviere, fundador del movimiento de los eco-museos, así lo explica: Un eco-museo es un espejo, donde la población se contempla para reconocerse, donde busca la explicación del territorio en el que está enraizada y en el que se sucedieron todos los pueblos que la precedieron, en la continuidad o discontinuidad de las generaciones... (Fernández,1999).

Bajo este criterio se establece la necesidad de que el museo cumpla una función social, que deje atrás la triste imagen del museo que colecciona objetos, los cuida pero no se sabe para qué o para quiénes. Pero en Cuba teníamos que reevaluar cómo insertar el mundo del museo a esa nueva realidad cambiante y en ello se erigirá el Museo Nacional con un papel determinante y rector en las decisiones que se tomarán en el país. La coexistencia en este espacio arquitectónico de Museo Nacional-Instituto Nacional de Cultura y Patronato Nacional de Bellas Artes y Museos desde 1954, será uno de los factores que inclinarán la balanza a favor de su protagonismo en los próximos 20 años de desarrollo de los museos en Cuba.

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Museología y Política, poniendo en cuestión ideologías eurocentristas

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Museos, museología, política, poética y poder

Ya ha sido dicho en repetidas oportunidades que los museos no son espacios neutros, que a través de su presencia como espacios de imaginación, de ensueño y hasta de trascendencia han ocultado los propósitos implícitos de imponer ideologías políticas y pensamiento dominantes. Cabe preguntarse si estamos hablando de museos y política o si estamos hablando de museología como estudio de una relación específica que siempre sucede en un espacio y un tiempo políticos; si las teorías museológicas que entienden que la relación específica sucede en ámbitos cargados de misterio aptos para la narrativa poética no promueven de cierta forma el ocultamiento o la invisibilización de la afirmación de posturas hegemónicas dominantes.

Las teorías museológicas al escoger su campo de acción y enfoque, han estado teñidas de ideología. Los museólogos al construir narrativas universales en que se incluyen todas las culturas, pueblos y territorios del planeta, presentes y pasados

han adoptado una mirada del mundo desde un determinado tiempo histórico y desde un determinado lugar. En estos contextos filosóficos *“Europa es -o ha sido- siempre simultáneamente el centro geográfico y la culminación del movimiento temporal”*. (Lander, 2000, p. 6).

La museología, el eurocentrismo y su influencia en el ámbito latinoamericano

La mayoría de las teorías museológicas están basadas en concepciones universalistas de la cultura propias del pensamiento occidental. La museología como decisión ideológica acerca de lo que debe considerarse “patrimonio” y como disciplina relacionada con la formación de profesionales que llevan a cabo el trabajo museal, se ha desarrollado en los países no europeos con un paradigma euro centrista.

En el ámbito de Latinoamérica son pocas las ocasiones en que se ha planteado el fenómeno museo como una de las formas de dominación colonial. Llama entonces la atención

que autores europeos como Deloche, hayan reconocido que la aspiración universalista de la cultura que comprendió al museo, en realidad encubría pocos universales y se trató más que nada de la imposición y reproducción de los sistemas de valores de la cultura occidental, estereotipando una única imagen de lo humano, de la cultura y el patrimonio. (Deloche, 2002)

El eurocentrismo ha fundamentado las narrativas museológicas en relación a la sociedad, cultura, espacio, tiempo y acontecimiento.

Esta fuerza hegemónica del pensamiento neoliberal, su capacidad de presentar su propia narrativa histórica como el conocimiento objetivo, científico y universal y a su visión de la sociedad moderna como la forma más avanzada -pero igualmente normal- de la experiencia humana, está sustentada en condiciones histórico culturales específicas. (Lander, 2000, p. 4)

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A partir del pensamiento eurocentrista y colonialista, basado en una comprensión monocultural del resto del mundo sustentada demasiado a menudo por la misma museología no europea, las sociedades aprendieron a mirarse y a considerarse ellas mismas el “otro cultural”, materia de estudio de la etnografía y no de la historia. La toma de partido, la definición de los relatos, los diseños curatoriales, las relaciones con el medio, han estado impregnadas de una mirada del “nosotros” como si

fuéramos los “otros”. El pensamiento eurocéntrico llama superstición a las creencias de los pueblos originarios, hechicería a su medicina, artesanía a su arte, dialecto a todos sus idiomas. Este desplazamiento de nombres no busca designar lo diferente, sino menoscabar lo tenido por inferior.

La construcción del fenómeno museo como espacio de poder, brazo ejecutor con otras instituciones sociales, de políticas culturales tendientes a imponer la forma de vida occidental como la mejor, ha instalado en las sociedades el convencimiento de que el progreso moral requiere de la extensión de su implementación. Se trata de un universalismo liberal que apunta a imponer sus instituciones al resto del mundo con el argumento de que son las únicas racionales y legítimas. Si consideramos las relaciones entre museología e identidad debemos subrayar el hecho de que la creación de una identidad supone el establecimiento de una diferencia construida sobre la base de una jerarquía. Jerarquía que está transversalizada por miradas políticas, ideológicas y de poder.

Actualmente nos preguntamos cuál ha sido el rol de la museología al analizar qué sucede cuando los otros que hasta entonces eran considerados simplemente diferentes comienzan definirse como cuestionadores de nuestra identidad. Esos intentos históricos de homogeneizar el mundo están suscitando violentas reacciones adversas en aquellas sociedades cuyos valores y culturas específicas pasan a ser considerados

ilegítimos a partir de la universalización impuesta por el modelo occidental.

Así mismo las metodologías de investigación museológica, tomadas de modelos europeos y de concepciones acerca de lo que es ciencia y no lo es, aceptadas en las unidades académicas latinoamericanas, han estado tradicionalmente influenciadas por el pensamiento positivista dominante en el siglo 19. Esta consideración de que la metodología científica es objetiva y neutra ha ignorado que el quehacer de la ciencia social parte de la elección de una perspectiva teórica que orientará la búsqueda del investigado desde una posición plenamente política porque tiene que tomar decisiones sobre las preguntas que es relevante hacer, orientadas por metas, valores e ideas.

El pensamiento positivista y el desafío de la presentación de lo inmaterial

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El pensamiento positivista tuvo su influencia en el valor asignado al “objeto” y a la consideración subalterna de lo inmaterial y su valoración patrimonial. En el positivismo y el pensamiento liberal hay una lógica de lo social basada en una concepción del ser como presencia que concibe la objetividad como inherente a las cosas mismas. Esto ha devenido en prácticas curatoriales que han ignorado el valor asignado por las culturas no europeas a lo intangible con las consiguientes ausencias en lo museográfico de aquello

que puede ser representado de formas alternativas, más coherentes con las cosmovisiones de, por ejemplo, los pueblos que han habitado el espacio de las Américas, pueblos originarios, afrodescendientes, etc.

En Latinoamérica, los institutos de formación en museología, el estudio de la historia del arte y de la clasificación de los museos de arte, se ha realizado tradicionalmente desde la concepción occidental de bellas artes (artes mayores) quedando relegadas las manifestaciones de arte popular a un segundo plano (artes menores), ignorando aquellas contribuciones que provienen de lo periférico, de lo indígena y artesanal. Se ignora así que estas manifestaciones suponen lógicas distintas, esquemas perceptivos propios, estéticas particulares: otras relaciones entre lo visible y lo invisible. A través de su experiencia en el Museo del Barro del que es fundador Ticio Escobar afirma que hay un plus de sentido que no puede ser absorbido por las taxonomías, las investigaciones y las interpretaciones. Escobar introduce a las lecturas del arte contemporáneo hegemónico (occidental) aquellas contribuciones que provienen desde lo periférico, más específicamente lo indígena y artesanal en Latinoamérica. (Castro Jorquera, 2014)

Nuevas corriente de pensamiento

La búsqueda de perspectivas del conocer no eurocéntrico tiene una larga y valiosa tradición en América Latina y cabe citar aquí al político y poeta cubano José Martí.

El cambio de paradigma en el concepto de museo que instala Latinoamérica está ligado a la comprensión de los museos como foro de discusión de problemas sociales y de confrontaciones ideológicas. Se parte de reconocer que hay más de una historia desarrollándose en el mundo y que esas historias tienen al menos una relativa autonomía. Se vienen imponiendo teorías que tienen en cuenta las geometrías de poder del espacio tiempo y que conciben el espacio como producto de interrelaciones. Estas teorías están sustentadas en una concepción relacional del mundo, esfera en la que coexisten distintas trayectorias, lo que hace posible la existencia de más de una voz.

Se promueven perspectivas museales en donde la presencia del conflicto y aún de lo negativo tiene como objetivo el desarrollo en las comunidades del pensamiento crítico y la

valoración de los valores que les son propios. Desde estas concepciones teóricas se concibe al museo como un ámbito donde puede relatarse la historia del mundo desde una perspectiva distinta a la de noción universal adoptada por “occidente”, reconociendo puntos de vista locales y específicos. Sin negar el conflicto que deviene de la diversidad en sociedades multiculturales se plantea el desafío de leer y narrar el misterio del mundo.

Los museos todavía son lugares privilegiados del misterio y de la narrativa poética que se construye con imágenes y objetos. Lo que torna posible esa narrativa, lo que fabula ese aire de misterio es el poder de utilización de las cosas como dispositivos de mediación cultural entre mundos y tiempos distintos, significados y funciones diferentes, individuos y grupos sociales diferentes. (Chagas, 2007)

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En quête d'identités

Rôles et responsabilités des musées d'histoire et de société au Canada. Recherche-création

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Les visiteurs se rendent aux musées d'histoire et de société en vue d'une meilleure compréhension de leur passé et de leur présent ; une telle visite s'inscrit alors dans une quête globale d'identité. Or, une identité est fractionnée en une multiplicité d'entités qui peuvent entrer en contradiction les unes avec les autres. Pour une part, être à la recherche de l'Autre au musée reviendrait donc à rechercher des réponses sur soi. Dans le contexte d'une société multiculturelle telle que celle du Canada, les musées sont ainsi tenus de représenter le récit et la culture des différents groupes qui composent cette société ; mais comment procèdent-ils, et y parviennent-ils ? Aussi, au-delà d'une réflexion théorique à ce sujet, ne pourrait-on pas imaginer un dispositif qui sensibilise et informe les visiteurs quant aux enjeux complexes de l'histoire et de l'identité, et surtout, de la part des musées dans ces mécanismes ?

Contexte historique et muséal

Le Canada doit son visage actuel à différentes vagues de migration depuis l'installation progressive des colonies française et britannique à partir du XV^{ème} siècle, puis l'arrivée de migrants européens au XX^{ème} siècle, jusqu'aux larges mouvements de population que l'on observe aujourd'hui dans le monde entier. De ce fait, cet État doit composer avec une pluralité de communautés qu'il accueille en son sein. Pourtant, nous voyons au parcours permanent et à la programmation d'expositions temporaires que la narration de l'histoire au musée se révèle inégale, principalement entre trois groupes : Canadiens francophones, anglophones et Autochtones. Certaines communautés se trouvent valorisées au détriment d'autres, que ce soit en termes de documentation, de présence, ou de perception ; ce qui témoigne de l'absence de neutralité de la part du musée.

Ce constat apparaît d'autant plus problématique que l'on se place dans un contexte post-colonial, où

L'Histoire a tendance à occulter le témoignage des peuples présents en territoires conquis. L'impérialisme de l'Occident, dénoncé par plusieurs auteurs, fut ainsi responsable de la fabrication d'un Orient – ou d'un Ailleurs – exotique (Gruzinski, 1999 ; Said, 1980) qui permit l'instauration d'une vision unilatérale et autoritaire du conquérant au sein du discours historique.

Le devoir du musée : informer et sensibiliser les visiteurs...

L'histoire peut être considérée comme une proposition, une interprétation, un discours élaboré par des hommes à destination d'autres hommes mus par des intérêts politiques, économiques et sociaux (Nora, 1997 ; Ricoeur, 2000). Ce discours historique est illustré et appuyé au musée par les biens du patrimoine. Le musée possède alors un rôle central dans l'élaboration des récits collectifs et identitaires (Bergeron, 2010).

Comme l'ont montré différents chercheurs dans un ouvrage collectif dédié aux musées de migration (Amar, Frenette, Lanouette & Paquet, 2015), ils sont le théâtre d'une concurrence de récits, du contrôle de la narration de l'histoire entre historiens, muséologues et autorités politiques ; ce qui fait que ces musées représentent avant tout des intérêts. Or, les musées de migration ne sont autres que des musées d'histoire, en témoignent les exemples de cet ouvrage, en particulier d'histoire nationale.

Étant donné que les visiteurs placent une confiance totale, si ce n'est aveugle, en les musées d'histoire où n'interviennent pourtant que peu d'historiens, du moins au Québec (Burgess, 2003), territoire où les jeunes n'acquièrent que de faibles connaissances sur l'histoire de leur pays (Létourneau, 2014), les musées d'histoire et de société ont par conséquent une responsabilité vis-à-vis des publics en matière d'éducation (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994) et d'apprentissage de l'histoire, une éthique à respecter. C'est pourquoi certains chercheurs soulignent l'importance de transformer les visiteurs passifs en visiteurs actifs (Allard, 1993), jusqu'à en faire des visiteurs critiques (Lindauer, 2006).

... au travers d'une expérience immersive et collective

C'est ce qui a motivé le dépassement du traditionnel cadre de recherche théorique pour se placer dans une éthique de l'action, par le choix d'une thèse en recherche-création. Celle-ci propose de mettre en place une expérience collective et individuelle qui aurait pour but, non pas de rendre justice aux communautés lésées par les défauts de représentation de l'histoire en tant que tel, mais de faire prendre conscience aux participants qu'ils sont le résultat singulier, la synthèse, d'une histoire personnelle et de l'histoire des différentes communautés dont ils relèvent ; plus encore, de prendre conscience précisément du rôle et de la responsabilité des musées dans les mécanismes de l'histoire et de

l'identité. À cet effet, plutôt que d'être à la recherche des différences qui séparent des groupes entre eux (Duhamel, Léger & Nantel, 2017), nous nous intéresserons aux points communs qui les rapprochent.

Si l'identité est multiple, complexe, et sans cesse changeante, comme l'a illustré Hermann Hesse (1927) dont nous retenons l'idée de « théâtre magique », qui offre la capacité d'incarner les différentes possibilités d'être, il faut alors envisager l'identité de manière critique et avec une certaine ouverture d'esprit. Si la vie est un puzzle, ce jeu dont il faut chercher à réassembler les pièces pour parvenir à un tout ordonné, tout comme dans l'ouvrage de Georges Perec (1978), alors l'histoire en est un aussi, tout comme l'identité.

Cette idée de jeu, à la fois de quête et de performance, se retrouvera au cœur de cette création.

Conclusion

Dans le cadre de cette thèse, recherche et création se retrouvent ainsi intimement liées ; les deux se nourrissant mutuellement. Aussi, nous utiliserons ce dispositif pour recueillir des données sur les participants quant à leur rapport à l'histoire et à l'identité, de sorte que cette création ne devienne pas un but en soi, mais une méthodologie. Ainsi, de la même manière qu'Ivan Jablonka le suggérait pour la discipline historique (2014), la muséologie considérée comme une science pourrait gagner à se renouveler *via* des méthodes davantage poétiques, sensibles, et participatives.

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Ante un Paradigma Actual de la Museología en Cuba

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En el Taller Nacional Museología y Sociedad¹, desarrollado en el Museo Palacio de Junco de la ciudad de Matanzas durante los días 22, 23 y 24 de septiembre del año 2015, sucedieron importantes acontecimientos de trascendencia para los profesionales del patrimonio y en especial de los museos. Asistieron generaciones diversas de museólogos, antropólogos, sociólogos, profesores universitarios, conservadores, restauradores y otros, que en buena medida iban con disímiles expectativas ante una década

de silenciamiento, por causas ajenas al comité organizador y a los decisores de la parte científica.

Signado por un grupo grande de intervenciones y conferencias en plenaria, con temas medulares que atañen al proceso museal, social y cultural, la ocasión pudo ser el marco perfecto para la reflexión, el debate profundo y sobre todas las cosas, las pautas para una teorización desde la riqueza que proporciona la praxis en Cuba y en particular en cada territorio presente en el certamen. Se notaba la ausencia de especialistas de grandes experiencias.

1. Los primeros Talleres se desarrollaron en 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, y en 2015 y el 2016 se retoman para comenzar a propuesta de la Presidenta Gladys Collazo a partir del 2018 con un carácter internacional. En su momento constituyó uno de los foros más significativos para los especialistas de los museos y aquellos que se vinculaban a él. Hoy se retoma bajo nuevos discursos y escenarios diversos. Auspiciado por el Centro Provincial de Patrimonio de Matanzas, el Consejo Nacional de Patrimonio Cultural y el Comité Cubano del ICOM, se reinicia en un contexto signado por nuevos paradigmas mundiales. Solo participaron delegados e invitados de provincias como Ciego de Ávila, La Habana, Mayabeque, Camagüey, Granma y la provincia anfitriona Matanzas.

Ahora bien, a luz de los cambios que experimenta la Museología como ciencia en formación a nivel mundial y con las experiencias museológicas acumuladas en Cuba desde el período colonial hasta nuestros días, se hace necesario subrayar algunas líneas discursivas evidentes y que son consecuencia del accionar de los museos en su inexorable misión de transmitir el legado cultural de las

localidades o comunidades donde están ubicados.

Como resultado de los primeros siglos coloniales hasta el actual siglo XXI, la defensa del patrimonio, el coleccionismo científico o de homenaje a la casa, a la iglesia, hasta el indiscriminado y metódico después, son la génesis de un legado patrimonial que hoy se conserva en instituciones estatales y privadas. Ha esto se le suma la enseñanza de la museología en varios tiempos históricos y la educación en pos de un pueblo que dialogue y proteja su memoria que es decir su propia identidad.

En Cuba existieron y existen desde los primeros años de la revolución acciones que provocaron el debate y la relectura de la labor de los museos. Son significativos los encuentros del Museo Nacional y los acontecidos en algunos territorios como sentimiento a flor de piel de aquellas actividades aisladas, pero de profundo arraigo local y sentido patriótico que desarrollaban las asociaciones, instituciones, patronatos y hasta las propias publicaciones del período republicano.

No es hasta después de la primera mitad de la década del 70^o que en

Cuba se comienza a tomar medidas de índole jurídica de carácter general y serio, para organizar, proteger y conservar el patrimonio. Con la creación del Ministerio de Cultura y dando cumplimiento al artículo 39 de la Constitución de la República (1976), en sus incisos h) e i) se dejaba claro la misión que esta tenía en la defensa de la identidad cultural y en velar por la conservación del patrimonio cultural y la riqueza artística e histórica de la nación; así como la protección de los monumentos nacionales y lugares notables para su belleza natural o valor artístico o histórico; así mismo promueve la participación ciudadana en la valorización de su política educacional y cultural.

Dentro del MINCULT jugará un papel decisivo la Dirección de Patrimonio Cultural encargada de elaborar y someter al Consejo de Ministros y de su Comité Ejecutivo la Ley 1 “Ley de Protección al Patrimonio Cultural” y la Ley 2 “Ley de los Monumentos Nacionales y Locales”, que fueron aprobados en noviembre de 1979 y publicados en Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba en Edición Extraordinaria No. 40 el 18 de diciembre del mismo año.

Con estas leyes y otras que seguirán el curso como la Ley 23 “De Museos Municipales” o los Decretos 55, “Reglamento para la Ejecución de la Ley de los Museos Municipales y Local”, y el No. 118 “Reglamento para la Ejecución de la Ley de Protección al Patrimonio”, se dan los primeros pasos para una política de conservación y protección de los bienes

1. Sin embargo los primeros intentos están en el trabajo desplegado por el Dr. Emilio Roig de Leuchening. En 1927, cuando era Comisionado Intermunicipal de La Habana primero, luego en 1935, como Historiador de la Ciudad, junto a la Comisión de Monumentos, propuso acciones precisas para la declaratoria de Monumentos Nacionales de la Isla como fue el caso de las siete primeras villas fundadas en la Etapa Colonial.

patrimoniales de la nación. Es loable en estos años iniciales y los posteriores, la labor de la Dra. Martha Arjona Pérez y sus colaboradores y especialistas en emprender estas primeras cruzadas.

En estos años iniciales se instrumentan diferentes materiales para la orientación y el trabajo diario en la vida de los museos, la preparación de todo el personal, tanto dentro como fuera del país y la constitución del CENCREM¹. Esta institución marcaría los pasos fundamentales para elaborar y aprobar, según corresponda, los proyectos para la conservación y restauración de monumentos, ejerciendo el control técnico de los mismos; desarrollar la formación técnica del personal especializado en la actividad del centro y participar en aquellos trabajos de restauración que por su complejidad así lo requieran.

A todo esto se une la preparación de muchos especialistas fundamentalmente en Europa y a la propia experiencia de Martha adquirida en diferentes eventos y reuniones tanto nacionales como internacionales, propias del patrimonio o de museología. Las experiencias cubanas en estos campos fueron trascendentales, a ello se suma los resultados obtenidos en el campo de la investigación científica por el Laboratorio de Ciencias Aplicadas, logros que

llevan a la UNESCO a aprobarla Cátedra Regional de Conservación Integrada de los Bienes Culturales para América Latina y el Caribe, al respecto Ma. Mercedes García diría

...con ello se logró un impacto en nuestra comunidad de especialistas brindando una gran diversidad de cursos y ello permitió que una gran cantidad de profesionales de la conservación del Patrimonio Cultural cubanos y latinoamericanos participaran en los cursos programados por la institución. Las funciones de la institución comenzaron a demostrar una mayor interdisciplinariedad (García, 2016).

”

Además de los resultados en estas áreas, y al calor de las corrientes de la Nueva Museología y las Tecnologías Modernas, muchos de los montajes fueron enriquecidos y algunos museos mostraban avances en estas esferas. La enseñanza de la museología en las carreras de Historia del Arte en las Universidades de la Habana y Santiago de Cuba, Gestión del Patrimonio Cultural en la primera y en Conservación - Restauración de Bienes Muebles en la Universidad de las Artes (ISA), complementan la ausencia de los cursos que ofrecía el CENCRM, graduando un universitario con nociones básicas de la ciencia.

A manera de conclusión los retos que enfrentan los profesionales de la museología son muchos, pero necesarios para el futuro de una disciplina que apuesta cada vez más por

1. El Centro Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museología (CENCREM), se crea el 23 de octubre de 1980, amparado por el Decreto no. 77 del Consejo de Ministros. Se extingue en el 2012 por decisión del MINCULT.

el reconocimiento y desarrollo de todos y cada uno de sus especialistas.

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L'aliénation : une nouvelle préoccupation pour les musées du Québec

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L'aliénation représente l'un des aspects les plus controversés de la gestion des collections muséales (Sarrantola-Weiss & Västi, 2016 ; Vecco & Piazza, 2015 ; Cornu, Fromageau, Poli & Taylor, 2012 ; ISS, 2010 ; Mairresse, 2009). Bien que marginale, cette pratique attire l'attention d'un nombre croissant de muséologues qui y voient un moyen de répondre aux impératifs de gestion des collections que le contexte économique actuel impose aux musées. Quelle est la position des musées québécois à ce sujet ? Au Québec, comme dans le reste du Canada et aux États-Unis, l'aliénation est permise et s'effectue selon les règles établies par chaque institution. Elle est d'ailleurs encouragée lorsqu'elle permet d'assurer la cohérence d'une collection (Corbo, Lacroix & Lavigne, 2013, p.119). Dans la pratique, elle a longtemps été perçue comme un aveu d'échec et une menace à la légitimité du musée (Gendreau, 2000). Des considérations éthiques ont fait de l'aliénation un tabou. Toutefois, le manque d'espace dans les réserves, la présence dans les collections de doublons ou d'objets jugés sans intérêt et des changements d'orientation motivent

aujourd'hui certains musées à revoir leur position sur le sujet.

Une vision renouvelée de l'aliénation

Une étude récente de la Société des musées du Québec (2014) rapporte que 75% des musées québécois possèdent une politique d'aliénation¹ et révèle que les pratiques d'aliénation sont une préoccupation réelle pour leurs professionnels. Ce constat a mené à la publication d'un nouveau guide pour la rédaction de politiques de collection (SMQ, 2016) et à la tenue, en mars 2017 à Montréal, d'une journée professionnelle intitulée *Voir autrement l'aliénation des objets de collections*. Pendant cette journée, les participants étaient invités à concevoir l'aliénation comme un moyen de réorganiser une collection en transférant à d'autres musées ce qui ne cadrerait plus avec leurs missions. Sous cet angle, l'aliénation est envisagée de manière positive. Elle est présentée comme un geste qui

1. À titre comparatif, la même étude relève que 90% des musées répondants ont une politique d'acquisition.

permet à un musée de recadrer sa collection tout en permettant à une autre institution de compléter la sienne. De plus, l'aliénation implique la réalisation au préalable d'une recherche rigoureuse sur le contenu de la collection et l'objet que l'on souhaite retirer. Conséquemment, l'aliénation entraîne une meilleure connaissance de la collection et facilite la mise en place de bonnes pratiques d'acquisition.

L'aliénation et le collectionnement concerté

Ce regard renouvelé sur l'aliénation doit être mis en relation avec cette tendance qui consiste à envisager les collections de manière globale, à l'échelle d'un territoire. C'est dans cette perspective que la Société des musées du Québec (2012, p. 47.) encourage le collectionnement concerté en invitant les musées à « adopter une vision commune du développement des collections » et à « disposer de politiques et d'axes de collectionnement complémentaires. » Pour les institutions adhérant à cette vision du collectionnement, l'aliénation devient un outil incontournable de régulation et de mise à jour des collections muséales.

De la théorie à la pratique

En contrepartie, la lourdeur du processus d'aliénation exigeant que le professionnel consacre temps et énergie à des objets qui lui sont sans intérêt est un aspect jouant en défaveur de l'adoption de cette pratique. De plus, l'aliénation par le transfert vers d'autres institutions demeure

une solution incomplète. Par exemple, la disparition prévisible de plusieurs communautés religieuses au Québec a entraîné, au cours des dernières années, un flot d'acquisitions d'objets leur ayant appartenu. Conséquemment, les collections muséales se retrouvent aujourd'hui saturées dans les secteurs du patrimoine religieux. Si bien des musées sont prêts à transférer des objets, encore faut-il qu'il y ait des musées disposés à les recevoir. Que faire des artefacts qu'aucune institution muséale ne veut acquérir ? La vente de ces objets non désirés demeure un sujet difficile à aborder et ce, même entre professionnels des musées favorables à l'aliénation.

L'aliénation et la collecte du contemporain

Alors que cette pratique est présentée comme un moyen de revenir sur des acquisitions passées, elle apparaît aussi comme un outil essentiel pour les musées – plus particulièrement les musées de société – qui se tournent vers la collecte du contemporain (Battesti, 2012 ; Rhys & Baveystock, 2014 ; Provencher St-Pierre, 2015), une tendance à laquelle n'échappe pas aux musées québécois (Provencher St-Pierre, 2012). Le manque de recul rendant le patrimoine contemporain difficile à identifier, les professionnels des musées exigent alors des politiques d'aliénation souples permettant de revenir sur leur choix par la suite (Laforge & Toupin, 2012).

Sous cet angle, l'intérêt des musées pour la collecte du contemporain et

le collectionnement concerté offre une occasion réelle de réévaluer le rapport à l'aliénation dans les musées du Québec. Voir l'aliénation

autrement, c'est aussi accepter d'en faire un véritable outil de développement des collections.

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The museum objects in the historic house museum

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Introduction

The historic house museum develops a specific poetic in the dialogue between the house and the museum. In these institutions, it is important to understand that what is at stake is not the musealisation of only mobile objects, but of the house and its rooms. This heritage is a testimony of the patron's life and of a social and cultural historical context.

This understanding and the objective of creating a museum documentation practice that could support this approach stimulated the emergence of the research entitled "Development of methodology for cataloging historic house museum environments, understood as museum objects". The study was performed under the Program of Incentive to the Production of Technical and Scientific Knowledge in the Cultural Area of the House of Rui Barbosa Foundation. The main target of the research is to create a cataloging

sheet and a register methodology for the rooms of the Rui Barbosa Historic House Museum. We believe that the understanding of the rooms of the historic house museum as museum objects, capable of passing through all the stages of the musealisation process, will certainly change the narratives displayed in the long-term exhibition, influencing directly in the house museum poetic.

Our methodology includes literature review, questionnaires applied to museum professionals and visitors of the Rui Barbosa Historic House Museum, and analyses of museum documentation manuals. This work shows and discusses the partial results of the research, concerning the theoretical reflections and the analysis of the questionnaires applied to historic house museum professionals.

1. In a literal translation: "House of Rui Barbosa Foundation". The institution is sometimes also called "Casa de Rui Barbosa" ("House of Rui Barbosa").

The rooms of the Historic House Museum of Rui Barbosa

Among the museum categories, there are the historic house museums which are museums that emerge from the musealisation of a house where once an important personality once lived. This category of museums joins two different concepts: the house and the museum. The first one belongs to a private universe, refers to the place where a family lived; while the concept of museum belongs to the public universe, related to a public place that exhibits a cultural heritage. The dialogue between the private and the public is the essence of the activities and theoretical reflections of the historical house museums. The patron of this museum category is the third element, and an important one, which conducts the historical house museum's functions of preservation and communication (Rangel, 2015). Thus, the poetic of the historic house museum is formed by these three elements which are arranged together in the exhibition's text in order to show both the patron's life and the social and cultural context of his former house.

The Rui Barbosa Historic House Museum is an example of the musealisation of the residence of an illustrious personage of Brazilian politics and history. The neoclassical style house, located in the city of Rio de Janeiro, served as a residence for the jurist Rui Barbosa and his family between 1893 and 1924 and was transformed into a historic house museum in 1930. Rui Barbosa

was born in Salvador, on November 5th, 1849, and was considered one of the greatest orators of his time. Acting and writing on several fronts, Rui Barbosa's legacy reflected on education in Brazil, the separation of Church and State, and the importance of international law, among other issues.

The mansion was built in 1850 by Bernardo Casimiro de Freitas, Barão da Lagoa, on the land that, prior to its subdivision, was part of the farm of Father Clemente Martins. Years later the property was sold to the Portuguese commander Albino de Oliveira Guimarães, who in 1890 sold it to John Roscoe Allen. Rui Barbosa was then the fourth owner of the house which was named Vila Maria Augusta in honor of his wife. Today, the Rui Barbosa Historic House Museum shows, in its long-term exhibition, approximately 25 rooms that are organized in a manner similar to that at the time when the family lived in the house.

The rooms understood as museum objects

The idea of the rooms of a historical house museum as museum objects does not fit in the traditional concept of museum objects, which are normally seen as mobile objects. However, recent reflections and practices of museum thinkers can sustain this understanding. In order to comprise the museum object, we can begin by investigating its creation, that is, the moment when an object has its status changed through the process of musealisa-

tion. We find an analogous process in reflections of philosophy, in the transformation of the thing into an object and by means of this comparison we can understand the main device of the transformation of an everyday object into a museum object. Heidegger (1967) explains that the thing establishes a relation of continuity with the subject and is something that is part of the quotidian in a kind of symbiosis with the individual. With the object, what happens is that it is based precisely on the separation from the subject, that is, the object is what the subject puts in front of him and makes it different from himself. Thus, unlike what happens with the thing, there is no relation of continuity here, but of separation - a relation that defines both the subject and the object.

In musealisation, we find a similar proposal whereby the object that is part of daily life, having utilitarian functions which may, in some cases, be musealized and separated from the subject and ordinary life, becoming a testimony of a culture or society. Musealisation is a complex process involving preservation, documentation, research and communication actions made on and from museum objects. The operation that stands out here is the one that refers to the communication of the object being the moment when museum objects are presented to the audience.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the understanding of the museum object was restricted

to mobile objects that, during musealisation, are framed in classification systems linked to scientific disciplines (Brulon, 2015). However, from the second half of the twentieth century, questions about the traditional conception of heritage arise, implying an extension of the museum object concept. For Desvallées (2015), such questions had among their causes the emergence in France, during the 1970s, of community museums and ecomuseums. These museums began to deal with the anthropological conceptions of heritage, resizing the boundaries of this concept (and of the museum object idea), involving elements deprived of symbolic values until this moment. It is also important to remember that the term musealisation itself transcends the process of transforming the thing into a museum object, and can refer to the transformation of a place, a building or a natural site into a museum (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010, pp. 50).

The researches that investigate the different conceptions of museum objects find resonance in historic house museums. In these museums, musealisation, when restricted to the mobile objects used by the ancient habitants of the house, inhibits the discursive potential of this conceptual model, which is so rich in possible interpretations and different insights. This specific poetic of the historic house museum can be strengthened by a methodology of research and documentations of the rooms, and the information gathered by this work can provide new forms of exhibition. However, it is

important that the documentation process recognize the importance of registering the social life of each room being understood as a museum object.

In order to study the social life of objects before and after musealisation, we can rely on research in the field of anthropology, more specifically those dealing with issues related to the circulation of goods. Appadurai (1988) believes that goods have a social life, since objects are valued and gain meaning during the exchanges that pass during their trajectory. Hence, we will think of each room in the museum as an object adjectival for the “becoming”, that is, an object that passes through different states and exercises varied functions throughout its life, even after its entrance in the museum (Brulon, 2015).

Museum documentation and communication practices in the historic house museums

In order to develop the methodology for cataloging the rooms of the Rui Barbosa Historic House Museum, we considered that it would also be important to know the museum documentation practices of other Brazilian historic house museums. This research was carried out through the use of questionnaires which were answered by professionals of historic house museums scattered throughout Brazil.

Fifteen institutions participated in the surveys and the results were

analyzed. An important result from the questionnaires was that the cataloging of the rooms of historic house museums is not a practice in these museums and there is not a registration methodology of the social life of these environments. Therefore, it is possible to say that the creation of a cataloging sheet and a registration methodology of the rooms can contribute to both the documentation practices of the Rui Barbosa Historic House Museum and to other Brazilian house museums as well. Besides that, the cataloging of the rooms looking to emphasize the social life will certainly impact not only just the museum documentation practices, but also the way the house and its objects are exhibited.

In Brazil, we have the example of the National Center of Folklore and Popular Culture that recently reshaped its long-term exhibition. The new exhibition, entitled “The objects and its narratives”, displays museum objects through different narratives, showing that many stories can be told by the objects of Brazilian popular culture. The main target is to show the voices of different social segments and the folklore and popular culture that can be expressed by the objects¹. In this way, the exhibition displays not just the objects but also the narratives that have been created by them before and after musealisation.

This kind of exhibition could not be created if the museum documenta-

1. For more information about this exhibition: <<http://www.cnfcp.gov.br/english/index.php>>.

tion had not registered the social life of the objects. These museum activities of research, documentation and communication are, in fact, connected. Brulon (2015) explains that the museums do not need to choose only one interpretation of an object, the important aspect is to work with the possible relations established in the collections. Musealisation can be a process that makes the museum object available to diverse interpretations. In this context, museum documentation has an important

role and this practice has the responsibility of registering the social life of the objects.

We expect that the registration methodology for cataloging the rooms of the Rui Barbosa Historic House Museum will provide new narratives for the long-term exhibition. With the new approach in the documentation practice, we can certainly show more and unexpected narratives about the rooms.

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Le Musée des beaux-arts du Canada

Un récit politique national et identitaire en mutation (1880-2016)

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RÉSUMÉ

Ce texte propose une comparaison du discours identitaire national canadien à travers deux documents relatifs au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada (MBAC) : les textes entourant la fondation de la Royal Canadian Academy of Arts et du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada (National Gallery of Canada) (1879-1880) et le Rapport 2015-2016 du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada¹ et pose la question du rôle d'un musée national dans les questions identitaires au Canada entre le XIX^e siècle et aujourd'hui.



1. Cet article constitue les premières conclusions d'une recherche plus développée : il est une ébauche d'un article ultérieur faisant suite au colloque « Musées en mutation. Logiques économiques, culturelles et sociales », tenu conjointement à l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières et au CELSA Paris-Sorbonne les 29 et 30 mars 2017.

Les musées nationaux, particulièrement européens, sont définis et explorés comme des processus de négociations institutionnelles dont les objets, comme leurs présentations, se réclament et sont reconnus en tant qu'articulations et représentations des réalités et valeurs nationales (Aronsson & Elgenius, 2011, p. 1). Le lien entre musée, État et politique est particulièrement fort concernant les questions identitaires et de communautés ainsi que les problématiques de la compréhension du patrimoine national.

Pour Aronsson (2011), les musées nationaux ont été dès le départ des projets utopiques, portés par des politiciens, des intellectuels et académiciens, mais aussi par les citoyens, dans l'État et la société civile. La création du MBAC se situe dans ce contexte historique, politique et culturel et s'insère dans l'idéologie et le discours nationaliste, capitaliste et bourgeois qui émerge et se développe au XIX^e siècle, en Europe occidentale et en Amérique (Bennett,

1995). Le musée a été créé en 1880 par le Gouverneur Général du Canada, John Douglas Sutherland Campbell, gendre de la reine Victoria. Son rôle est d'exposer les tableaux des lauréats de l'Académie royale des Beaux-Arts du Canada ainsi que de promouvoir l'art canadien, pour des raisons de délectation, mais principalement pour éduquer une nation et susciter à travers l'art une unité nationale et une identité commune (National Library of Canada, 1880, p. 18). Les œuvres de peinture canadienne constituent le noyau d'une collection nationale dont le musée est récipiendaire. Son but est de diffuser l'art canadien, non seulement aux amateurs d'art, mais également de façon pédagogique, en soutenant l'éducation (National Library of Canada, 1880, p. 18). L'utilisation des arts comme outil de revendication identitaire nationale apparaît au Canada : l'art fédère la nation politiquement et artistiquement, il sert l'unité nationale, le rapprochement des communautés anglophones et francophones et devient un levier du progrès national (Reid, 1979, pp. 267-298).

Les musées nationaux sont, pour Eilertsen et Amundsen (2012, p. 5), des producteurs centraux des narrations nationales, car ce sont des institutions ayant le pouvoir de définir la relation d'une nation au passé mais aussi de refléter sa situation actuelle. En Europe, où la notion d'identité nationale est débattue, les musées peuvent constituer des outils mis à disposition des politiciens afin de négocier l'identité, la diversité et le changement au sein des nations

(Eilertsen & Amundsen, 2012). Les musées nationaux sont aujourd'hui porteurs de visions différentes selon les pays, en Europe comme en Amérique du Nord. Au Canada, l'approche de la politique muséale dans les musées nationaux est fondée sur le concept du multiculturalisme : les musées suivent moins la narration nationale traditionnelle et invitent les nouveaux citoyens à adhérer à la conception d'une société plus diversifiée (Aronsson & Elgenius, 2011, p. 1).

Le rapport annuel du Musée (MBAC, 2016, p. 3), en reprenant la Loi sur les musées (1990)¹, énonce que :

Le Musée des beaux-arts du Canada a pour mission de constituer, d'entretenir et de faire connaître, dans l'ensemble du Canada et à l'étranger, une collection d'œuvres d'art anciennes, modernes et contemporaines principalement axée sur le Canada, et d'amener tous les Canadiens à mieux connaître, comprendre et apprécier l'art en général.

”

Son orientation stratégique est également définie ainsi :

Le Musée des beaux-arts du Canada s'est engagé à donner aux Canadiens un sentiment d'identité et de fierté envers le riche patrimoine en arts visuels du pays. Grâce à sa collection, ses expositions, ses programmes éducatifs et de prêt, ses

1. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/fra/lois/M-13.4/>.

publications et ses initiatives de rayonnement, le Musée aspire à devenir un modèle d'excellence dans l'avancement des connaissances en arts visuels, tant au Canada qu'à l'étranger (MBAC, 2016, p. 75).

”

En 2015-2016, le MBAC est plutôt tourné vers des thèmes internationaux dans ses expositions temporaires, en présentant cependant une exposition majeure sur un artiste canadien. Les dons d'œuvres d'artistes canadiens sont importants. Quant aux acquisitions, la priorité pour des œuvres canadiennes n'est pas mentionnée : le musée enrichit la collection nationale avec des œuvres de toutes provenances. Enfin, le MBAC prône un discours intégrateur : il sert un rayonnement international mais aussi la compréhension de leur culture nationale par les Canadiens (« tous les Canadiens ») en étant au service de la population canadienne (MBAC, 2016, p. 9, 33 et 47-48).

Le discours identitaire autour de l'art et du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada a évolué entre 1880 et 2016, mais il reste que l'art et le Musée des beaux-arts du Canada sont toujours un outil utile à la promotion de l'unité nationale. Au XIX^e siècle, le Musée sert à rassembler le Canada politiquement et artistiquement en étant un outil du progrès des arts et de l'industrie ainsi que de l'essor économique et artistique national. Au XXI^e siècle, il sert la compréhension de l'identité canadienne par tous les Canadiens avec une vocation d'intégration par l'art dans un contexte de multiculturalisme ; il permet aussi au Canada de rayonner culturellement à l'échelle internationale à travers une institution muséale de prestige. Cependant on peut questionner la définition du musée comme « zone de contact » (Clifford, 1997), le discours officiel actuel d'intégration ne mentionnant pas la place des communautés et minorités au sein du MBAC, tant au niveau des artistes que d public : les canadiens anglais et français, les autochtones ou les femmes.

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Towards a poetic of the needs

Beyond operator's role

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In Latin America, recognizing the museum as a legacy, an inherited disciplinary model produced by others, has been solved in a pragmatic way. Current circumstances demand that we acknowledge ourselves in our poetics. Beyond the disenchantment between model and praxis - that the museum shares with other forms of social management - we are interested in proposing a working hypothesis: Our region transforms this heritage not only by its inadequacy in relation to our reality, but also due to the specificity of our needs. The indiscipline or the deviation from the prescriptive schemes derive in actions that transcend the boundaries of the museum concept. In front of a *doxa* that distributes and assigns roles, the political act occurs when the *actant* transforms the structure of the network through a poetic of needs. (Cf Zizek, 2005; Latour, 2013)

If the creation of any *social apparatus* (Agamben, 2009) divides between those who produce this machinery

and those who operate it, in Latin America, the status of “operators” of an inherited entity is subverted thanks to the creation (*poiesis*) of devices that emerge from the social needs and that have public participation at their core.

Museological Research

This collective investigation proposes a revision of the emergency context of three cases: the Museum of Modern Art (MAM in Spanish), The University Museum of Science and Arts (MUCA in Spanish), and Casa del Museo. Experiences derived from these institutions are a throwback to the political centralization and the conception of the cultural field in Mexico during a period of major changes in museological ideas (1964-1972).

We approach the political dimension of these museums by analyzing their emergency context and contrasting them with changes that they introduced to the norm. Then

we analyze them through pairs of ideas that stress the arguments within the hegemonic museum conception and identify the underlying needs. In this way, we put the “universal values” of the museum in parenthesis. In simple terms, we propose to look at the museum through the *museoclasism* (Latour, 2006) glass instead of through the traditional *museolatry*.

The recent success of some museum management models generated the tendency to “Corporatize” those signs that represent the museum (building, collection) (Jiménez-Blanco, 2012). In contrast, the Latin American processes of management are the result of an adoption – rather than an appropriation – of the museum concept. In these processes, the peripheral cultural spaces shaped “museums” closer to their communities and moved them away from the colonial temples erected to sacralize the encyclopedic knowledge.

Three Mexican museums (1964–1972)

The proposed pairs of ideas: INCLUSION-EXCLUSION, ADEQUACY-INDISCIPLINE and INSTITUTING-INSTITUTED, work not as antinomial fields, but as means to register the exchanges in their borders. The first findings of this research, provide indications on this poetic of needs present in the analyzed museums and allow us to assess their possibility to “generate chaos” (De Sousa, 2006).¹

1960. The University Museum of Science and Arts (MUCA)

First space built in Mexico to fulfill the functions of a forum where science and art meet. It was conceived as a humanistic realm without a permanent collection. Located in the brand new Ciudad Universitaria, this museum was involved in the deep political and social changes of the university community that experienced one of the strongest convulsions in national history during the 1960's. (Escobedo, 2006)

1964. Museum of Modern Art (MAM)

Created for Mexico's recognition as a “modern country”, it focused on consolidating its permanent collection, but repeated the hegemonic vanguard chronological model (Cebey, 2015). The museographical operations that serve to neutralize the production contexts, social relations and institutional hierarchies, auto-excluded its singularity. If analyzed from the Web-Agent perspective, MAM is a museum that gathers modern productions in a context of social asymmetry.

1972. Casa del Museo

of the Modernity Project, we can difference two forms of knowledge. In one hand, we have the knowledge as regulation, in which ignorance is denominated chaos and in which knowledge is called order. In the other hand, we have the knowledge as emancipation, in which ignorance is called colonialism and in which knowledge is denominated solidarity. (Souza, p. 26).

1. The central idea of Souza de Santos: “Inside

It constituted a short term alternative museological experience, as well as a recognition of the elitist imprint on the recently opened National Museum of Anthropology. It forced a radical transformation on communication codes and structures, as well as the forced changes

in the type of instrumentality that was given to both cultural heritage and the political relationship proposed by the institution. (Hauenschild, 1998).

Our findings are summarized on the following table:

Theoretical framework	Conceptual pairs	MUCA	MAM	House of Museum
Web-Agent	Context of emergency	University Campus Δ Sociopolitical	Process of National Modernization	Crisis of the indigenist model and recognition of a museum model that exclude key social sectors
	Institute [↓] Instituted [⓪]	[↓] UNAM [autonomous] [⓪] Experimental lab	[↓] State-Nation [⓪] National canon	[↓] Museological team [⓪] Social agent
Sociology of Absences and Emergencies	Inclusion [+] Exclusion [-]	[+] University Community [-] Specialized Public	[+] Emergent artistic community [-] Artistic production not linked with a specific idea of modernity	[+] Excluded communities [-] Specialists
	Adequacy [=] Indiscipline [≠]	[=] Tradition of art halls or Kunstahalle [≠] World of the Art	[=] Hegemonic concept of Art History [≠] Realistic Socialism (muralism)	[=] Mediation with public [≠] Desacralization Ability of transform
	Δ → Needs	Knowledge through interdisciplinary experiences Collective creation	Apparatus of legitimation of the national production in face of the new “art world”	Ability to transform from social needs New form of establishing a relation

One or several entities (Institute) respond to a delimited phenomenon by specific circumstances (emergency context), determines a structure of *actants* and that which flows through the structure (instituted), this structure delimits the social fabric (inclusion-exclusion) and responds to the phenomenon in a

disciplined or undisciplined way in front of the hegemonic structures (Adequacy-Indiscipline).

Final remarks

The experience of the 1960's and 1970's critical movements that led to the re-thinking and revision of

concepts such as Museum, History and Art, had the emergency from the community and the public sphere as correlate (Habermas, 1962/1991) as well as relation center-periphery that mark the pattern of the contemporary museology.

This analysis contrasts the changes introduced into the museum model by specific needs ($\Delta \rightarrow$) and its impact towards the communities participating in each project¹. In MAM, for example, it's clear that is focused on the international positioning of the museum according to Art History, the benefits are clearly for the instituting entity and the solution is adapted to the museum of the modern art canon. In the other two examples, it is possible to observe how the needs surpass the instituting entity and generate platforms of inclusion. The model changes the *actants* positions and encourages them to an emancipation. (Rancière, 2010)

This ongoing research allows us to observe important displacements and transformations: the capacity to modify a museum's functions or mission in the face of its immediate community needs and to give the specialists a new role (Casa del Museo), the enrollment on international logics searching for interlo-

cution (MAM) or to place dialogue and collaborative production above the collection at the museum's core and to use it for interdisciplinary research (MUCA).

What is indicated above makes it possible to point that the poetic of needs derives from the operator's politics, that is, to identify the conditions of possibility that expand the alternatives of the museal thing (museum) as an action and not inevitably as an institution.

1. Souza proposes two articulated sociologies. One -the sociology of the absences- expands the present, the social experiences already available and the other -the sociology of the emergencies- serves as a bet on the future, that is, to expand the field of the social experiences (Souza, pp. 252-253)

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Museology in Poland

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The sad truth is that real museology is almost totally absent in Poland. The political situation and the history of the country are responsible for this. It is difficult to create science without its subject and with the independent Polish Republic being established in 1918, the most important problem to address was to first build museum collections. The next crisis, however, came soon thereafter – museums were destroyed and looted during World War II. Following that, Poland had to reconstruct from what was left. During the communist era and until 1989, museums were impacted by „one proper view”, so any discussion was impossible and any special science was not necessary. While the situation changed after 1989, there was nobody to explore these subjects. People who were interested in museums preferred practice, that is, creating collections and organizing exhibitions, both of which which needed big sums of money so all the efforts were consumed with finding those resources¹.

It was only after 2000 that two strong individuals appeared in the field: Dorota Folga-Januszewska and Piotr Piotrowski (1952-2015). The first, as Deputy Director of the National Museum in Warsaw (1995-2008), saw the need of formulating a theoretical base for museum existence and activity, and the second, created an idea of a critical museum and as Director of the same institution (2009-2010), tried to put that into practice. While the experiment did not succeed, Piotrowski did publish an interesting book on the subject in 2011.

Piotrowski's idea stemmed from the achievement of critical museums studies, so he presented some writings, firstly, *The New Museology* edited by Peter Vergo (1989), and, secondly, the only publication on the subject in Polish, *Muzeum sztuki. Antologia* edited by Maria Popczyk (2005), and a selection of the most significant texts by important scholars such as Hans Sedlmayr, Paul Valery, Theodor W. Adorno, Nelson Goodman, Joseph Margolis, Andre Malraux, Jean-Francois

1. There is no museology faculty at any Polish university. Between 2009 and 2011 Dorota Folga-Januszewska tried to create one at the University of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński (UKSW) in Warsaw but the idea has failed. However, Wojciech Gluziński in his doctoral thesis *U*

podstaw muzeologii [The Principles of Museology] published as a book in 1980 constated that museology could not be a «pure» academic discipline.

Lyotard, Douglas Crimp, Carol Duncan, Mieke Bal, Brian O'Doherty, Benjamin Buchloh, Joseph Kosuth, Jean-Marc Poinot, Victoria Newhouse, and Steve Dietz. Piotrowski thought, firstly, that the contemporary museum should have an active role in society, especially in the city, encouraging the public to understand the complexity of the present world and acknowledge the significance of memory and the past for the development of civil society which is transnational (cosmopolitan) and multiple. Secondly, he thought that a new identity of the museum should be forged by a critique of its tradition and the practices of key encyclopedic museums, and finally, that what should be recognized by a new museum is a non-traditional artistic geography, i.e. favoring the margins instead of centers of Western artistic culture, and challenging their hegemony legitimized by both tradition and the contemporary global tourist industry.

Piotrowski tried to embody his theoretical ideas into life by organizing two important exhibitions – *The Thaw* (at the National Museum in Poznań in 1996) and *Ars Homo Erotica* (at the National Museum in Warsaw in 2010). The first of these was strongly connected to politics, that is to changes in political life in Poland after 1956 when the impact of Soviet Union became weaker than what it had been and the people, in general, including artists, could feel a "breath of freedom". The exhibition corresponded to the situation in Poland during its transformation

in the 1990s and to the shape of the independent state and was thus strongly involved in the political context of that time.

The second exhibition presented a problem involving sexual minorities and provoked a wider discussion on the subject in a rather conservative Polish society. It was also involved in politics because this was a topic of never ending arguments between the left and right sides of the political scene in Poland. Folga-Januszewska stays distant from this subject, seeing a danger of involving museums in such problems and points out new possibilities created by neuroesthetics which explores changes in our seeing and helps us to understand what we can see. In her opinion, a museum is the best place for conducting such research. She founded her deliberations on works of Semir Zeki (*Splendors and Miseries of the Brain. Love, Creativity, and the Quest of Human Happiness*, Chichester 2009) who created a bridge between neurophysiology of seeing and artistic practice. Zeki continued with the discoveries of Ernst Gombrich (*Art and Illusion*, 1960) and even organized an exhibition as its curator entitled *Colore et Cervello* (Colour and Brain) in Casa Rusca (Locarno, 2003). He saw the evolution of art as an evolution of our brain creating imagined pictures of internal visions. Following that idea, Folga-Januszewska sees the museum as a kind of vision, an artificial reality built from works of art which contains many imagined worlds. Each museum exhibition also creates an artificial reality. What is more,

the museum can (and probably should) be even a kind of laboratory of perception. The process of organizing an exhibition contains many activities such as hanging paintings (or situating other objects) in a special way, adding labels and other explanations, all that serve to steer an audience in desired direction.

It seems to be more general and universal than the conception of the critical museum presented above. Of course, such methods could also serve to present political problems, and museums are always involved in contemporary life, especially in the actual political situation of the state. State museum activities (purchases, exhibitions) often depend mainly on funding from the state's budget. Sometimes, it is possible to obtain a private sponsor for supporting a purchase or an exhibition. Sometimes, the impact of politics on the museum could be even amusing whereby one Polish museum got quite a large sum of money for purchasing an interesting item from a candidate running for election to a local municipal council and who wanted to gain greater popularity and thus more votes.

But the best example of that could be an exhibition which will present the problem of colour in European painting and which has been in preparation for a long time at the National Museum in Warsaw, and while it was planned for 2018, it has had to give way for another exhibition devoted to the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Polish State in 1918 after World War I. Politics is

more important and the authorities will give money more readily for such an undertaking. So, I am afraid, we can deliberate different options in theory, but, and especially in such concrete situations, politics wins.

Yet, Folga-Januszewska defends a wider significance for museums and for a more general vision of the institution with the first being the presenting of art. During her work at the National Museum in Warsaw (1979-2008), she organized several important exhibitions, all presenting art and the problems connected to such, e.g. monographies of Paul Klee (2001) and Pablo Picasso (2002), *Perspective, Illusion, Illusionism* (1980), *The Problem of Space in Contemporary Art* (1984), and *The Symbol and the Form* (presented in Dublin and Petersburg, 2007-2009). As Deputy Director, she strongly supported large international presentations, for example, of French Impressionism (2000), one called *North-South* containing paintings from all over Europe (2005), and *Golden Age of Flemish Painting* (2007). All of these focused on artistic issues only although the topics could be also presented within a political context with Klee being a refugee from Hitler's Germany in the 1930s, with Picasso as a member of Communist Party in late 1940s, and with the domination of the Habsburg Dynasty in 17th Century Europe and its impact on life and art, etc.

This position presents the base question contained in the title of the conference – politics or poetics? But should we choose? Particularly as

sometimes politics could be poetic
and poetics political...

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THE POLITICS AND POETICS OF MUSEOLOGY

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