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ANALES DEL
MUSEO
NACIONAL DE
ANTROPOLOGÍA

NOS OTROS

1994
NÚMERO UNO

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En un mundo que está cambiando cada día, puede surgir la cuestión acerca de la temporalidad o intemporalidad de las cosas y como afectan a nuestra forma de vida y al desarrollo de nuestras actividades.

En el campo de los museos y en especial de la antropología, la situación hoy, no es ni debe ser la misma que la de los siglos XVIII y XIX. Entonces, el interés por los «otros», por otros pueblos y culturas, motivaron e impulsaron campañas, expediciones científicas y exposiciones universales que acercaron al mundo occidental a un mayor conocimiento de otros mundos más lejanos y distantes en el tiempo y en el espacio. Desde principios del siglo XX, los anhelos de los antropólogos tomaron otro rumbo opuesto a las corrientes interesadas por los «otros», ganando posiciones los nuevos museos etnográficos dedicados al estudio de la propia cultura: «nos».

Hay que reconocer, sin embargo, que el relativismo cultural y el respeto a la diversidad es algo que ha interesado a muchos estudiosos, con independencia de aquellos que creen ser los exclusivos representantes del género humano.

En efecto, desde las manifestaciones culturales de un pequeño grupo tribal, pasando por las experiencias más complejas de la cultura burocratizada occidental, hay tal riqueza de manifestaciones, individuales y colectivas, en un país o época dadas, que sería vano pretenderlos reducir a un solo esquema y buscarles la explicación total en un solo substrato histórico y cultural o en una sola base social.

La confrontación de lo propio y lo ajeno (perfectamente resumida en la dicotomía «NOS/OTROS»), indisolublemente ligada a las tradiciones, a la problemática social y a la creencia racionalista de la historia y del hombre, cede paso, hoy en día, a un nuevo concepto que irá conformando el singular semblante de la nueva antropología.

La nueva idea de Museo Antropológico atraviesa un efervescente periodo de cambios que se manifiesta, fundamentalmente, en una superación de la fragmen-

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tación, en un amplio enfoque multidimensional de carácter global y comparativo.

Los museos discurren ya por los cauces de las nuevas concepciones: La superación de la dicotomía entre lo propio y lo ajeno para llegar a un conocimiento más profundo de la condición humana.

Con motivo de la publicación en el B.O.E. del 27 de mayo de 1993 del Real Decreto de creación del Museo Nacional de Antropología, surgían las bases para un nuevo museo que partía de la fusión de dos ya existentes: El Museo Nacional del Pueblo Español y el Museo Nacional de Etnología. Desde entonces hasta hoy, la aparición de esta revista, es uno de los primeros resultados de este Real Decreto del que no sabemos si llegará algún día a desarrollarse. Abordando la dura tarea y los grandes cambios que el nuevo Museo suponen, hemos querido invitar en este número monográfico a investigadores e instituciones de diversos países de Europa para que aportaran sus experiencias y personales visiones acerca del complejo mundo de los Museos de Antropología.

La respuesta ha sido inmejorable y resultado de la misma son los artículos del presente primer número, en el que contamos con interesantes aportaciones sobre los Museos de Antropología hoy, las tendencias museológicas y museográficas, los museos al aire libre, la adaptación a las nuevas necesidades sociales, etc.

B. T./F. S.

ARTIFICIULOS

NO TES ON

ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUMS IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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* An earlier version of this paper was delivered on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, on 21 October 1994.

ABSTRACT

Against the backdrop of a short history of the collecting of material culture documents, this paper discusses some indications for changes in public views of the function and organization of ethnographic museums. It is argued that rather than accept the need for a new paradigm, ethnographic museums should define themselves through the resources created in the past and to be created in the present and future.

* * *

Ethnographic museums, here defined as institutions collecting and preserving artifacts in order to represent cultures, have emerged since the late eighteenth century as a result of a paradigmatic change in the collecting of exotic artifacts. There are indications that we are currently witnessing another change of a similar magnitude, which some observers believe may herald the end of ethnographic museums (at least as we have come to know them). Before describing and commenting upon these recent developments, a few words will have to be said about the history of ethnographic collecting and ethnographic museums. This is necessary because (1) the potential usefulness of museums is in large part defined by their past activities and self-perception, and (2) the history of previous changes could serve as a warning about what may be about to happen again.

Collecting (i.e. the preservation of natural or artificial items outside their original natural and/or functional context) began as a cultural practice in early modern western Europe and from the very beginning included objects of foreign origin (Alsop 1982)¹. These, like other kinds of objects preserved in various types of princely or scholarly collections of artificial and marvellous things since the sixteenth century, were valued for their "rarity," but also for their part in representing the world – to be dominated by princes or to be explored by scholars. Arrangements of these various items could be according to the object's material (which would closely link artifacts to the natural materials they were made from) or by functional classes, such as weapons, tools, religious paraphernalia, or memorabilia (which would draw a clearly defined line between art and nature). As far as artifacts from far away places were concerned, there was only a slowly growing interest in their exact provenance, since in most cases it was thought to be sufficient for them to represent a generalized form of cultural "otherness."

In the course of the eighteenth century, the Linnean "system of nature" provided a new basis for natural history to assemble collections according to a

¹ For the history of ethnographic collecting as exemplified by a discussion of American Indian material in Europe, see Feest 1993a.

taxonomic scheme, which in turn offered a new model for ethnographic collecting, especially when such collecting was done by naturalists. The three voyages of Captain James Cook to the Pacific Ocean in the second half of the eighteenth century are usually seen as the first occasion on which this new style of collecting of ethnographic materials was practiced on a large scale. It was subsequently imitated by other European voyagers of the Enlightenment, such as Laperouse, Malaspina, or Krusenstern, and later by transcontinental explorers, such as Lewis and Clark or the Prince of Wied. In the absence of a genuinely ethnological taxonomy, "peoples" (sometimes called "races") were taken to be the species of the genus *Homo* and thus as the primary principle according to which artifacts were collected. It is also notable that this kind of collecting was sensitive to the need to record the context in which the objects collected had been found, and that great efforts were made to record as much of the context as possible in writing or in visual representations.

The new goals of collecting also resulted in the establishment of new types of collections, including the first separate collections of ethnographic material, although these collections continued to be part of larger museums (mostly of natural history). Since anthropology or ethnology were not yet academic disciplines, the collections had to be curated by specialists in other fields. It may have been for this reason that techniques of display lagged behind the systematic approach to collecting. Although objects now tended to be grouped by provenance, not only was there little attempt to contextualize them with visual or verbal information, but indeed most displays remained purely ornamental. Thus, European notions of formal order helped to domesticate objects of foreign origin to accustomed frameworks of perception.

Since the new collections were selected and arranged on the basis of provenance, the ethnographic materials in the old Kunst- und Wunderkammern, for which little or no data on their whereabouts were

available, were initially regarded as useless for the new purposes. One of the results was a dramatic and irretrievable loss of material documents of many historic cultures of this world. Evidence at hand indicates that this paradigmatic change in ethnographic collecting was responsible for the loss of more than 90 percent of the ethnographic material in the older collections.

From an institutional point of view, the establishment of separate ethnographic museums (or at least departments within natural history museums) with an increasingly professional and specialized curatorial staff since the second half of the nineteenth century, was certainly an important step. The simultaneousness of this development with the second wave of European colonialism is certainly no coincidence, but the fact that important ethnographic museums were also established at that time in countries (such as Austria or Sweden) with little or no colonial agenda indicates that the link was mostly of an indirect nature. On the other hand, ethnographic museums with a global rather than local or regional perspective remained limited to Europe (excluding some of its fringes) and North America, with only token efforts in this direction even in Latin America or Australia, and virtually none at all in Africa or Asia (with isolated Japanese attempts after World War II only confirming the general pattern).

With one major exception, however, little did change with regard to the underlying strategies of collecting. Ideally, collections were to be assembled in order to provide a full documentation of the material aspects of specific cultures, and were to be accompanied by verbal and visual information to contextualize the artifacts removed from their original context of function and meaning. In practice, since fieldwork by trained ethnologists remained the exception well into the twentieth century, most of the materials now in ethnographic museums were at best collected by naturalists and at worst either by tourists or by the military, with principles of collecting often hardly exceeding the quest for "rarity" that had defined the earliest

collections. To display artifacts as part of reconstructed cultural habitats (emulating, of course, natural habitats and reflecting a certain leaning toward environmental theories of cultural difference), was only possible in case enough material from one particular people had been collected. Thus, most museums had to settle for compromises (such as representing whole culture areas) or to continue with more or less ornamental displays of strange and unusual artifacts representing "savage" ways of life.

In the larger context of the theories of cultural evolution, which dominated late-nineteenth century ethnology, the displays of ethnographic material formed the final step in a sequence of halls of geology (including fossilized evidence for human origins) and of archaeology (showing the growth of —mostly local—cultures). While representing the live evidence for earlier stages of cultural evolution, ethnographic cultures were almost always displayed by continent and region rather than by evolutionary stage².

The major exception to this general rule was the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and its few followers (such as the Horniman Museum in London), which displayed their collections according to the evolutionary theory of A. L. F. Pitt Rivers by artifact types arranged in developmental sequences (Chapman 1985). Although this approach was doomed to fail together with the theory upon which it was built, it did provide important lessons about the range of cultural variation and the typology of artifacts³.

The end of the colonial era did not instantly change the nature of ethnographic collecting and of representing other cultures, although together with the increasing Westernization of the world and with a greater mobility of populations (as tourists, work force, or refugees) than ever before in history, it changed the conditions under which ethnographic museums had been operating since the late nineteenth century. The current crisis, which today affects ethnographic museums everywhere, is only triggered by the financial problems of their operators (mostly fede-

² A partial exception was provided by the 1926-1927 installation of the ethnological collections of the Vatican in the Lateran Museum by Father Wilhelm Schmidt, who based this display on the quasi-evolutionary «Kulturkreise» of the Vienna school of culture-historical ethnology (Schmidt 1964). In the 1960s, this exhibition was dismantled when a modern ethnographic museum was opened as an integral part of the Vatican museums. Some unique objects from eighteenth and nineteenth century collections were apparently discarded at that time as being unfit for a «modern» presentation.

³ In the 1960s plan were made for a complete remodeling of the Pitt Rivers Museum, which were only half-heartedly implemented in the 1970s, when it turned out that the intended transformation would have destroyed a unique document for the history of ethnology in exchange for a run-of-the-mill contemporary installation. In the meantime, the museum has opened another building for temporary exhibitions a few blocks away from the old installation which will remain as is.

ral, state, or local governments) in times of an economic recession, but is a crisis relating to meaning and social relevance of ethnographic museums in a rapidly changing world.

In discussing the current crisis, I will limit myself to just five aspects, which are only in part interrelated, and each of which will allow a different speculation on the possible future paradigm for ethnographic museums.

COMMODIFICATION OF ETHNOGRAPHIC OBJECTS

Except for the earliest period, when exotic objects were still hard to come by in Europe and were thus considered rare and valuable, ethnographic material for the most part of the history of collecting had a scholarly value far exceeding its material value. Following the discovery of so-called "primitive art" by modernist European and American artists (and in their wake by the art-loving public), however, and most notably during the past thirty years, the visual forms produced by non-European peoples became a commodity on rapidly expanding markets, which helped to complete the transformation of exotic artifacts into "art" by Western standards. The presumed higher social status of "primitive art" has in the past led some ethnographic museums to neglect their original purpose of documenting and interpreting other cultures as wholes in favor of the culturally decontextualized display of forms of artifacts as "art."

Even where museums have not followed this fashionable trend, they have not been able to escape the results of the development of a "primitive art" market. Increasingly higher and sometimes even astronomical prices for exotic artifacts, now repackaged as "art," have made a more or less systematic documentation of material cultures and their historical changes next to impossible for merely financial reasons. Most of the politicians and bureaucrats in charge of these museums, however, have apparently not yet fully gras-

ped the implications of this development. Acquisition funds often remain as low as in the "good old days," when ethnographic objects still were mere curiosities. On the other hand, the increased market values call for improved conservation and storage, all of which is costly and can hardly raise the enthusiasm of the politicians responsible for the deficit-prone museums.

Since adequate storage space is generally quite expensive in the inner cities where most European ethnographic museums are located, there is an ongoing trend to separate storage areas from exhibition space (and thus the educational aspect of the museum from its archival and research responsibilities). In some (still exceptional) cases, the preoccupation with the mere conservation of artifacts has led to a virtual ban on curators to handle the material they are supposed to study and interpret; in other cases, lighting in exhibitions was lowered by conservators to levels which no longer threatened the objects' integrity – but also made it next to impossible for a public now used to look at brilliant pictures of artifacts in books to see the originals in their museum cases.

PRIVATIZATION OF MUSEUMS

The public operators of museums, once they have seriously begun to realize that economically speaking museums are a losing proposition, attempt to withdraw from their historical responsibilities. "The exploration of foreign peoples ... cannot be the concern of a commune," the city treasurer of Frankfurt remarked in 1967 with respect to the ethnographic museum the city had operated since 1904 (Agthe 1994: 19). More recently, the same city spent substantial sums of money on the construction of new buildings for its museums. The ethnographic museum had the bad fortune to be the last in line, and plans for its new building were cancelled when the city was overtaken by a major financial crisis. (Perhaps the fortune was no so bad after all, since the star archi-

tect hired by the city had taken little interest in the specific needs of an ethnographic museum. The city of Frankfurt must be blamed for trying to collect museums by famous architects rather than to provide its museums with functional buildings.)

In current practice, "privatization" does not yet mean the sale of objects from the collections; fortunately, administrative barriers against such sales are rather high. In Austria, however, the minister responsible for museums had voiced such ideas with respect to the storage collections of art museums at the time he took office several years ago. He may have learned in the meantime that museums are more than exhibition halls and that reserve collections have important functions.

More typical is the recurrent demand to reduce the burden for the public operators of museums by bringing in private sponsors. For ethnographic museums in particular this path to financial independence is blocked by at least two facts: First of all, and despite the increased interest in "primitive art," ethnology offers much less social prestige than art; thus, potential sponsors invariably will be much happier to support art museums than associate their good name with a branch of scholarship as dubious in the public's eye as ethnology. Secondly, most of the truly potent sponsors are plainly unacceptable to ethnographic museums themselves, because few of these multinationals have not at least in part earned their wealth by exploiting the very peoples of the Third and/or Fourth Worlds represented in the museums. Most of the traditional visitors of ethnographic museums would hardly accept such sponsorship⁴.

The fact that there is precedent for a successful private sponsorship of ethnographic museums is not helpful. Half of the collections of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna obtained between 1876 and 1918 were donated or paid for by private individuals, whose major incentive was the hope to be given peerage or at least some nice decorations that would

⁴ The most publicized case of this conflict of interest occurred in the preparation of an exhibition of Native Canadian art organized for the 1988 Winter Olympics by the Glenbow Museum of Calgary, Alberta, with money supplied by Shell Oil Company. The fact that Shell was drilling for oil on land claimed by a band of Cree Indians in the province of Alberta dawned upon the organizers only after the Crees and their well-organized supporters called for an international boycott of this exhibition. This call was only partly successful, but the Glenbow Museum's reputation suffered nevertheless. For conflicting accounts of this case cp. Harrison, Trigger, Ames 1988, Gerber 1992, Feest 1987, 1988.

impress their neighbors. Today, the Republic of Austria no longer elevates sponsors to the rank of nobility, and the tax breaks offered for donations to museums are simply not big enough to be of significant interest.

MEDIA AND THE MESSAGE

In displaying parts of their collections, museums have always somehow hoped to make a more or less lasting impression on the minds of their visitors. But most museums, at least in Europe, were not founded as educational institutions. Fairly recently, museums have started to improve their badly neglected didactical strategies, and nobody will quarrel with the goal to help the viewer understand the context and meaning of the objects displayed, nor with any efforts to guide children in their first steps into the strange world of museums.

There is a problem, however, with passing on to museums educational responsibilities which traditionally had been the obligation of schools. In view of their focus on the artifacts they are collecting and displaying as well as of the often haphazardous nature of their collecting, museums are especially ill suited to provide an easily comprehensible story. Contrary to the view expressed by the adherents of the "ethnography as primitive art"-school, i.e. that these works were speaking for themselves and thus needed no explanation, the objects in question do not speak at all but require a substantial amount of explanation to make up for their lack of proper context in the museum setting. Any more or less well produced video clip can offer better and more memorable information about cultures as wholes of interrelated parts, than any ethnographic exhibition including an average museum educator.

The conclusion to be drawn from this observation, however, should not be that museums have to install video recorders next to every display case. Wherever this was tried with the best of intentions (as

it was about fifteen years ago at the Übersee-Museum in Bremen), the only result was that all children and most adults were crowding around the screens and totally neglected the objects. The ultimate consequence of such a trend would be the transformation of ethnographic museums into ethno-video parlors, which could be financed from the sale on the art market of the objects nobody cares to look at any longer.

This is not to say that video technology should not have a firm place in an ethnographic museum in the late twentieth century. Museums have libraries, where visitors can deepen their understanding of the cultures whose objects they have seen on display, and yet museums will not generally place a stack of books next to every display case. Thus, museums should indeed also have video libraries (including public viewing facilities), but not use videos to compete with artifacts⁵.

Interestingly, there are other trends in current museum display techniques that also seem to relate to the contemporary dominance of the electronic media and the moodel they provide. The architectural design for the new installation of Native American cultures at the Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde consists of boarded up display areas, which can be viewed only through TV screen-sized windows. Like so many ideas of well-paid architects how to enliven dusty old museums, this one works only if you happen to be alone in the hall. Otherwise you have to get in line behind whoever is occupying the place at the window, and will be greatly inconvenienced in your own viewing of the displays by the knowledge that so and so many people were already waiting behind you.

The most frequently encountered problem with architects designing ethnographic displays and promoting their own, uncalled-for message through their use of the media is, of course, that they are far better paid than any possible museum curator and even most museum directors. This difference ultimately decides who is right and who is wrong.

⁵ The Webber Resource Center at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago provides a good model for public access to video material inside the museum but outside the exhibits.

REPATRIATION

To get rid of the objects, one does not even have to sell them today, if one is prepared to return them to any of the various petitioners increasingly requesting artifacts which had supposedly been unlawfully alienated from their quiet possession and/or which are today regarded by the claimants as needed to articulate their traditional cultural identity. The Third World nation states, which began to lodge such claims against the former colonial powers in the process of decolonization, have since been joined by the so-called "indigenous" peoples or non-state nations, which have generally been roughly treated by the first three worlds. What may be disturbing to Western liberals (although it is perfectly understandable to the claimants) is the fact that these are not requests for a fair share of the cultural heritage of the world, but narrowly nationalistic demands.

The situation has become highly emotional, especially in the United States, where Native American activists have focused on the question of the return of sacred objects and skeletal remains preserved in museums – a true stroke of populist genius, because by identifying scholars as iconoclastic grave robbers widespread non-Native sentiments about the sanctity of the dead and about the ghoulish side of science are rallied in support of Native American demands (cp., e.g., Echo-Hawk and Echo-Hawk 1991, Bolz 1993, Reeves and Kennedy 1993).

On the surface, at least, it would appear that "indigenous" peoples had a much better claim to any of the artifacts requested than the new nation states, whose national identity is both recent and built upon the destruction of pre-state identities. In actual practice, things can be much more difficult than the public or its servants may suspect. A Mexican mestizo who claimed to be an Aztec, but who dressed like an Apache and put up his tipi in front of the ethnographic museum in Vienna, made a deep impression on the Viennese, including office holders of all political par-

ties, who would have gladly returned what has erroneously been known as Moctezuma's headdress to the self-styled avenger of the vanquished. The Mexican embassy in Vienna showed more sense when it dissociated itself from his claims. In the long run Mr. Gomora (a.k.a. Xokonoschtletl) lost the public's affection when it became known that he had mistreated some Mexican Indians he had brought to Austria to give more credibility to his mission (cp. Feest 1992; Möller 1992: 68-87).

This is not the place to fairly and fully discuss the complex issue of repatriation. All that will concern us here is the apparent readiness of the Western public to fulfill any such request without critical reflection of the relative merits of the cases and the claimants' legitimation. This reaction invites the conclusion that the public at large has never fully understood why ethnographic artifacts should be collected by Western museums in the first place.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Much of the recently revived scholarly interest in material culture is of a fashionably semiological kind. Because of the arbitrary nature of the relationship between the sign and its meaning, as well as because of the poor contextual documentation accompanying the majority of historical collections of ethnographic artifacts, there are obvious limitations for this approach within the framework of traditional museum collections. In a similar manner, the renewed interest of archaeologists in contextual studies of artifacts has uncovered many past sins of omission on the part of the ethnologists. Archaeologists have consequently reinvented ethnographic studies of material culture under the name "ethnoarchaeology"⁶.

No sensitive curator of an ethnographic museum will deny that a substantial portion of the presently available collections are of limited scholarly usefulness, exactly because the principles on which ethno-

⁶ For recent German views on the ethnological study of material culture, including a discussion of approaches elsewhere, see Johansen 1992 and specially the subsequent debate in Feest et al. 1993.

graphic collecting had been founded in the late eighteenth century have all too often only been honored in the breach. If this is the case, the solution cannot be to kill the messenger and to dispose of the paradigm, but rather to follow it more closely. Just like collections dating from the old chambers of artificial and marvellous things, more recently accessioned objects of a similar documentary weakness may still be used for the elicitation of information otherwise unavailable. If the material at hand does not answer our current questions, it is both possible to look for new material that will and to ask a different question.

As a former curator of an ethnographic museum with thirty years of experience in the field, who is now training university students to become ethnologists, some of whom will undoubtedly find employment in ethnographic museums, I am fully convinced of the importance and meaningfulness of ethnographic museums in the late twentieth century and beyond. But if these museums are to survive in a changing world and in a changing society, they will have to remind themselves and the public about their strengths and strategic advantages. Despite the admitted importance of books and visual images for our understanding of other cultures (including those of our own past and neighborhood), what makes museums unique is their focus on objects as immediate documents of and sources for an understanding of those other cultures.

If ethnographic objects have become so expensive, would it not be appropriate to explain this fact to those who might be impressed by the sheer material values which ethnographic museums are preserving, conserving, and increasing for the public good? Requests for repatriation should also rather remind us of the symbolic values artifacts may have for and in cultures. For our own culture, the culture of the collectors, of which these objects had usually been part for a much longer period of time than of the cultures of their producers, these material documents symbolize our sustained interest in understanding

other cultures; this is one of the happier traits of our civilization, and one that is not shared by many other cultures.

Artifacts thus offer us an immediate encounter with the cultural productions of peoples past and present, they make us acquainted with aspects of cultures, and they may hopefully help to overcome whatever notions of the strangeness of other cultures. Like all of cultural anthropology, ethnographic museums may not only help us to understand cultural differences, they can also plainly show what humankind has in common. In an increasingly smaller world, the propagation of this perception is timely and of indubitable importance.

We should also be ready to admit that any attempt to understand the mute artifacts is impeded by manifold difficulties. In our society of consumers, ethnographic objects staunchly refuse to be easily consumed. Museums will thus always have to remain places of scholarship, because without research the meaning of things will not become obvious to the viewer (cp. Feest 1993b). The difficulties encountered in "reading" objects require that museums remain places of contemplation, which also means places of quietness – another resource that is getting increasingly rare and valuable in our own society. I would see this as a positive value which cannot be expressed in the statistics of museum visitors, on which too many politicians appear to rely in their evaluation of the importance of museums.

Ethnographic museums are (and hopefully will also come to understand themselves as) archives for the material productions of humankind⁷, and they represent an irreplaceable and precious variety, which is daily reduced along our way into a global society. Any community which preaches fashionable multiculturalism should regard such an archive as its special concern. The archival nature of ethnographic museums is made clear by the fact that few of them can publicly show at any one time more than five percent of their collections; very often it is much less; and

⁷ The view of museums as archives is obviously not shared by the «new museology» as propounded by Evelyn Figueroa of the Smithsonian Institution, the largest archive of them all. At the 1994 Americanist Congress in Sweden. Ms. Figueroa declared «museums as stores of objects... obsolete» (Bankes 1994:[2]).

with the number of artifacts displayed per square meter of exhibition space constantly decreasing since the late nineteenth century, while collections continue to grow, this figure is bound to decrease further.

It would, however, be a grave mistake to conclude from the archival nature of ethnographic museums that they were necessarily institutions dealing only with the past. A few decades ago, the dominant view was indeed that the indigenous peoples around the world were immutable witnesses of earlier stages of the history of humankind. Today we have come to realize, partly also thanks to the material documents preserved in museums, that all living cultures are undergoing processes of continuous change – only the dead has more or less ceased to change. It must remain an important task for ethnographic museums to continue their documentation of these vital changes of cultures, and to explain them to the general public.

My own experience in the museum world has taught me that – despite a prevailing sentiment of romanticism – the public's interest in contemporary issues should not be underestimated. Everybody is convinced to know how the American Indians had lived in the past; very few people know how they live today, and many are ready even to revise their stereotypical views of the past through a better understanding of the present (cp., e.g., Feest 1986, King 1989). And if ethnographic museums still have only the budgets of ethnographic museums, perhaps they should primarily devote themselves to collecting contemporary ethnographic material. Such material is usually affordable, because most of it has not (yet) been classified as "art," and its context can be reasonably well documented, while the ancient artifacts turned into "art" in the auction houses and the dealers' shops usually retains not much of a reliable history that would tie it to some specific past.

The lesson to be learned from all this, is that for every crisis there is also a solution. A look at the history of ethnographic museums may help us not to

repeat past mistakes and not to overestimate the painful experiences of the present. The future place of ethnographic museums in society at large as well as within the community of scholarship will in a large measure depend on clearly stated goals compatible with the potential of historically constituted collections.

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TEMPLE OF THE MUSES OR A FORUM FOR DEBATE? OXFORD'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL COLLECTION

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Pitt Rivers Museum

ABSTRACT

With a view to current theoretical challenges to former orthodoxies, it would seem useful to reflect on the recent history and relations between ethnographic museums and anthropology, and to comment on contemporary museological trends and related teaching and research in cultural anthropology, with specific reference to the Pitt Rivers Museum.

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Bronislaw Malinowski once confessed to some impatience with museum ethnologists. He regarded

the study of technology as scientifically sterile: «At the same time», he acknowledged, «I have come to realize that technology is indispensable as a means of approach to economic and sociological activities and to what might be adequately called native science» (1935:460). It is difficult to imagine how he might have written about the Trobriand Islanders if there had been no necklaces or armshells to exchange. No anthropological monograph however abstract can entirely omit reference to technology or material representation of some form, nor discount its relevance to a society's self conception – be it the Ashanti gold stool, an Azande rubbing-board, or the Scottish Stone of Scone.

Why therefore did ethnographic museums and material culture –that 'ugly rubric' as George Kubler quipped– become separated from the interests of mainstream social anthropology in the post 1920 period in Britain during the so-called Malinowskian revolution? And why is the situation now reversing itself with an increasing emphasis on museum related teaching today – reminiscent of the late nineteenth century?

Much of the following discussion will be concerned with the situation in Britain, with specific reference to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and its historical and contemporaneous role in anthropology. Developments in the subject over the past decade have tended to underline the increasing relevance of the museum to current research and teaching in relation to post modernist interests in anthropology. It is however necessary to firstly look at the wider historical perspective of the interrelationship of anthropology and the role of the museum.

«Frequently in anthropological collections... a vast fund of thought may be expressed by a single object or by no object whatever, because that particular aspect of life may consist of ideas only... » (Boas 1907:928). If nineteenth century anthropology could be accused of an over-preoccupation with things rather than people, then twentieth century post-functio-

nalists might be indicted for their obsession with 'ideas'. These were not ideas in the strict sense that Boas intended but were concepts related to the development of analytical models and paradigms which became the guiding principle of the subject. This principle tended to relate more to the incipient theoretical basis of the subject of anthropology as an intellectual discipline, rather than one intrinsic to native or indigenous perceptions which could be dismissed as mere ethnocentrism. And as for museums: «At the beginning, and in the prehistory of anthropology, typological studies of artifacts (both archaeological and ethnological) were important for the development of evolutionary theories... But interest soon shifted to social evolution, and a good deal of the most important anthropological work done during this period had no relation to museum collections and could have been conducted equally well if they had not existed at all» (Sturtevant 1969:622). A comment still relevant today, as British social anthropological interests still tend centre on traditional subjects of kinship and gender, social institutions and systems of exchange.

The growing lack of interest in material culture was the keynote in the Presidential Address to the Royal Anthropological Institute in the mid 1940s given by Professor Hutton (1944). But his plea fell on deaf ears and the subject was no longer discussed in Britain. By contrast in América a decade later, a veritable plethora of papers were published by both distinguished anthropologists and museum curators concerning the relevance of primitive art to anthropology and the growing isolation of ethnographic museums, from contemporary intellectual trends¹. Indeed, it was not until the mid-70s that the subject was seriously reconsidered in Britain with Forge's Introduction to *Primitive Art* (1973), when doubts about the wisdom of disregarding material culture and the whole field of art and aesthetics were raised.

In fact it was Lévi-Strauss over a decade earlier who, by pointing to ambiguities in the subject and

¹ The reference here is to a number of influential papers published in the late 1950s and 1960s. Of these Fenton (1960), Collier (1962) and Sturtevant (1969) have been cited in this text.

calling for new modes of thinking, began placing ethnographic museums back on the anthropological map through structuralism. This move towards a more conceptually related anthropology involving linguistics and semantics inevitably led to a re-evaluation of material culture in relation to contemporary social and cultural anthropology.

How did this so-called ambiguity come about – this separation of the study of material objects from the social context and hence the museum from anthropology? It was not just in post first-world war Britain that this happened. It also occurred to a lesser degree on the continent, and also in America. The usual argument centres on the immobility of museums based on evolutionary, diffusionist and comparative technological models to change with the times thus leaving them intellectually stranded in the post first world war period. This of course is one among many reasons for the separation, but is worth examining further.

In America, the origins of anthropology lay in the European settlers' westward migration and with it the decimation of the indigenous people. Liberal intellectuals realized that a form of creeping, almost unacknowledged, cultural and actual genocide was being perpetrated, a sentiment which only really surfaced with the recognition that the indigenous tribal Indians of North America had all but been annihilated, and were no longer a significant threat to European expansion.

They recognised that these rapidly disappearing people with their rich cultural traditions and languages which were being assimilated into the new order of European domination, should be recorded before it was too late. The drive for this collection of materials and data was stimulated through the burgeoning museums and their financial backers².

However, this efflorescence of intellectual endeavour and the collecting that went with it began to abate once this rescue operation became bogged down

² For a résumé of the early development of museum and particularly anthropological collections in museums see Sturtevant (1969:621). He considers that around 1840 a separation of such collections from natural historical and historical collection took place. He refers to phases or periods which apply to American museums from 1840 to the 1960s which also have a bearing on European museums. These periods roughly correspond to a collecting and research phase, a teaching related phase and a teaching separated phase terminating in 1969 when Sturtevant wrote the article. Since then the trend has been back to a closer museum and teaching association. Numerous factors other than academic ones are involved, and not least finance. In America funding for research came via museums in the early period while subsequently such sources usually came from outside the museum sphere. In Europe and particularly in Britain during the colonial period it tended to be government which provided funding for research, not museums.

in the inevitable process of cultural and technological change. «The salvage of disappearing languages and cultures was a preoccupation of American anthropologists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but as most North American Indian tribes became extinct or highly acculturated this feeling of urgency and obligation waned among American anthropologists in and out of museums» (Collier 1962:324).

On the continent of Europe, including Britain, changes in anthropological research also took place, but these were guided by other political considerations – the beginning of the end of overseas empires, a period when anthropology, somewhat unjustly has been referred to as the «handmaiden of colonialism». In Germany after an initial florescence, the subject became fossilized into a third Reich cultural-historical school of thought, only slowly recovering in postwar decades. France and Belgium, like the other continental schools tended to follow a pattern not unlike Britain of research based on their various colonies encouraged by their respective governments to promote better administrative and politico-humanist understanding of their colonial subjects. Holland and Britain were particularly active in this respect, while France was less orientated towards field research it provided, through its influential journal *Année Sociologique*, the inspiration for much of British social anthropology in the middle decades of this century.

The American 19th century experience could be said to have moulded cultural anthropology as an eclectic anthropology, traditionally museum based, with a historical bias, and both archaeology and ethnology provided rich pickings which formed the basis for the great American collections of today. Conversely, though British anthropology was active over the same period, it was more of a museum based armchair anthropology. There was a rich accumulation of material objects coming in from the colonies and from expeditions and exploration; a tradition going back to the Tradescants in the seventeenth century,

though intellectual interests tended to derive more from an intense curiosity in other peoples than by any humanist reaction to a human tragedy and sense of urgency.

However, colonial attitudes and university institutions tended to be prejudicial towards anthropological pursuits. In Oxford, the building of the University Museum and the Huxley-Wilberforce debate on Darwin's evolutionary precepts had only recently taken place when General Pitt Rivers agreed to his collections being placed in a purpose-made building annexed to the University Museum. The Deed of Gift stipulated that a lecturer be appointed to teach on the collections. This post was occupied by E. B. Tylor who thus became the first Lecturer in Anthropology in Britain. However, Pitt Rivers collections were not viewed with unmitigated joy by all within the University and it was a cause of regret to the General in old age that he had in fact made his bequest to Oxford. A church upbringing and a classical education caused reservations among some influential academics as to the wisdom of incorporating such an assortment of exotica within the confines of the University³.

Although the principle of teaching on the collections has been maintained even if at times tenuously, the vicissitudes of anthropology in Britain are to some extent reflected in the Oxford collections, as is the history of other great university based ethnographic museums in the country. In Oxford at the end of the nineteenth century the remnants of a monastic tradition within the colleges remained, and within Britain as a whole severe academic strictures still prevailed and guided the studies of young scholars. They had to look to their future within the prevailing consensus if they wished to follow an academic career. It is perhaps understandable that as Britain's role within the empire came increasingly into question, so students within the humanities would turn to the works of Muller, Lang, Tylor and Fraser and be inspired by the ethnographic accounts of missionaries like Codrington and

³ The general's disenchantment with Oxford may have also concerned his difficult relations with Tylor and Balfour and his wish to have continued access to his collections which was discouraged (See Chapman 1985:38).

Junod, and of the later more professional observers such as the Seligmans, Haddon, Rivers and Spencer and Gillen among others. Versed in the classics, English literature and history, the lure of research and writing about other worlds would have been powerful incentives for these scholars. For them the staid museum, gripped within now outmoded evolutionary theories, seemed to offer little of interest, and despite the esoteric nature and iconographic richness of many of the objects, there was the faint air of disapproval hanging over these collections. The Ashmolean was respectable. The Pitt Rivers definitely suspect – an attitude held by some Oxford academics even into recent decades.

It was in this ambivalent situation that anthropology languished from the first decade of this century until 1922 when Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* was published, and literally changed the face of British anthropology. Teaching at the LSE, he influenced a whole generation of anthropologists, and his books still remain a must on every reading list. It was not so much his evocative writing skill, his insights as an anthropologist, or indeed his linguistic abilities, that made such an impact, though all these were present. It was perhaps that he set an example in fieldwork methods and proved to be an inspiration for young anthropologists to follow in the aftermath of the disillusionment of the first world war⁴.

For the next fifty years until the late sixties, while collections like the Pitt Rivers came to be seen by some as embodiments of colonialism, social anthropology followed a pattern based on a fieldwork ethic, as in America in a previous fifty year cycle, but on a very different premiss. Utilizing first Malinowskian functionalism, then structural-functionalist methods based on Radcliffe-Brownian principles, this field research was exemplified by the work of the dominant Africanist school. By the late 1960s French structuralism began to pre-empt fieldwork theory, which was however still firmly based on the principle of participant observation. From the moment that Malinowski

⁴ Although his interpretation of his data was singular, Malinowski's fieldwork methods were only unique to British anthropological research at the time. In America Franz Boas had carried out solo fieldwork in Baffin Land (1883-84), and Frank Hamilton Cushing spent four years with the Zuni from 1879 onwards and no one could have been more of a participant observer than him. Nearly six decades prior to that, from 1822-41. Henry Schoolcraft had undertaken his remarkable researches among the Chippewa. Although a number of American ethnologists were involved in fieldwork well before their European colleagues (with the notable exception of the Russian Nicolai Miklouho-Maclay who over three years from 1871 undertook research on the Dutch coast of New Guinea), Europeans seemed to have established ethnographic museums at an earlier period. Though it is difficult to ascertain exactly when a museum can be truly defined as 'ethnographic', it seems that the Russians were first with the St. Petersburg Ethnographic Museum in 1836, followed by Leiden in 1837 and Denmark in 1841 or 1849 (cf. Sturtevant 1969:621).

began lecturing at the LSE with his clique of brilliant students, catapulting social anthropology into the forefront of the humanities, it would be fair to say that museum based anthropology, and the Pitt Rivers in particular, with its magnificent collections was relegated to a minor role, contributing very little to current interests and theoretical developments over the middle decades of the twentieth century⁵.

This disassociation applied to ethnology and social anthropology, not to prehistoric archaeology. Archaeology has always had close associations with museums. In America the early collections were from indigenous sites and were a natural extension or introduction to ethnology and were placed in juxtaposition with them, thus emphasising a continuity from the past to the present. In the Britain it was different. There was classical archaeology based on the Ashmolean, and there was prehistory based on the Pitt Rivers.

It is not possible here go into the background of this distinction, but suffice it to say that although there is this conflict of interests within the archaeological camp, there is no ideological or intellectual ground for the removal of the subject from an association with the museum. Recent developments in anthropological archaeology and structural and symbolic archaeology, have not so much removed interests away from the museum ambience as it has created more positive academic links with anthropology. So at least, perhaps for the first time in decades archaeologists and anthropologist in Britain are talking to one another⁶.

This is not to say that all links between social anthropology of the Institute and the Department of Ethnology & Prehistory as part of the Pitt Rivers was severed during the middle decades of this century. Nor is it suggested that there was little activity of an academic nature going on in the latter institution at the time. During most of the period when Evans-Pritchard was Professor, from 1946-70, there was a component of museum related subjects taught in the

⁵ This statement concerns teaching more than research. Beatrice Blackwood's *The Technology of a Stone Age people in New Guinea* (1950) and Geoffrey Turner's *Hair Embroidery in Siberia and North America* (1955) are frequently cited as outstanding examples of research emanating from the Pitt Rivers during this period by American journals concerned with the growing isolation of ethnographic museums from mainstream research. Both these monographs were published in a series of Occasional Papers which had commenced in 1944 under the joint editorship of Penniman and Blackwood; a series which together with a Monograph series that commenced in 1977 continue to be intermittently published by the museum and unlike many current publications remain in print.

⁶ Among the developments in this field was the inauguration of a Masters Degree (M. St.) in Anthropological Archaeology in the former Department of Ethnology and Prehistory (Pitt Rivers Museum) in 1984 and an M. St. & M. Phil. in Ethnology and Museum Ethnography in 1987 which also incorporated archaeological options, and more recently a joint Honours Degree (undergraduate) was inaugurated in Archaeology & Anthropology. With the incorporation of biological anthropology in both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, this signaled a significant shift from the over specialization of social anthropology in previous decades.

Diploma for Social Anthropology, and several social anthropologists did contribute to the collections. There are several notable collections resulting from this. But the most remarkable field collecting undertaken for the museum was by its first Curator Henry Balfour and by Beatrice Blackwood. Balfour was largely responsible for the musical instrument collection which is now regarded by many as one of the finest and best documented in the world, while Blackwood, a distinguished ethnologist and teacher who was largely responsible for the museum's documentation, frequently went abroad for field research and collecting for the museum.

A number of distinguished ethnologists and social anthropologists were at various times on the staff of the department of the Pitt Rivers during this period and to imply that it was a backwater of academic endeavour is to be disingenuous. However it did struggle to maintain its status both within and outside the university. From the 1920s when Marett chose to lecture in his own college (Exeter) of which he was Rector and Radcliffe-Brown inaugurated the Institute of Social Anthropology as a separate unit, becoming Professor in 1937, the museums' links with teaching and research were seriously undermined. From that time to the present there has remained an essential ambivalence regarding anthropology at Oxford. Some might say the division has damaged the subject within the University. Others might contend that it has stimulated it⁷.

From the original bequest in 1884 of some fifteen thousand specimens given by General Pitt Rivers, the collection rapidly expanded, due in part to the endeavours and offices of Tylor. Both Balfour and Tylor were subsequently knighted and made Fellows of the Royal Society for their work – a reflection perhaps on the esteem of anthropology and the Pitt Rivers beyond the confines of Oxford at the turn of the century. Tylor himself, regarded by many as the father of anthropology, was totally committed to the museum and collected extensively for it⁸. Among his acquisi-

⁷ This ambivalence has been ostensibly resolved in the last five years with an 'amalgamation' of the Department of Ethnology & Prehistory (the teaching arm of the Pitt Rivers) with the Institute of Social Anthropology, under a re-organized combined department called ISCA (Institute of Social & Cultural Anthropology). Currently, course teaching and examinations in the combined department still remain separate. (Both wings of the new Institute had approximately similar numbers of students in 1993-94 studying for M. St. and M. Phil degrees). Presently there are moves to form a closer amalgamation, and not just one in name, a fact which would have been inconceivable twenty years ago, and underlines current trends in Anthropology and not just in Oxford.

⁸ Yet, according to Barbara Freire-Marreco, one of the three graduate students on Balfour's inaugural Diploma in Anthropology in 1907-8, Pitt Rivers was upset with Tylor because he was increasingly focusing his lectures on religion and mythology rather than the material culture lectures which Pitt Rivers thought he had been appointed to deliver (see Chapman 1985:38).

tions is the magnificent forty-four foot Haida totem pole from Queen Charlotte Island which now graces the museum court. He was also quite possessive about the museum, so much so that Balfour, when he went away on one of his fieldtrips abroad, requested that Tylor was not permitted free access to the collections in his absence⁹.

The subsequent expansion of the collections through the early decades of this century came almost entirely through donors. These included missionaries, colonial administrators and former Oxford graduates who had either inherited items or went on expeditions to collect themselves. In 1964 when the then Curator Tom Penniman, a prehistorian and former Rhodes scholar, retired and Bernard Fagg took office, the collections were estimated to number in the proximity of a million items. Counts of collections are notoriously fickle, but when a delegation of experts, including Sturtevant, visited the museum in the mid-60s, it was considered to be one of the six great ethnographic collections in the world. It was not so much the sheer size of the collection that fascinated the delegation, as the early provenance and fine condition and the extensive documentation that went with it¹⁰.

The Pitt Rivers is characterised not only for its typological system, but also its high density of display. While most modern exhibiting concentrates on single item low density, the Pitt Rivers is the 'lazy persons' ideal museum. You can stand in one place for minutes on end and still not have time to absorb the myriad of items surrounding you. Bernard Fagg who came with the intention of establishing a new museum, exasperated the situation considerably by creating an enclosed special exhibition space within the court, cramming existing display cases into the remaining area. This was partly from necessity, there being limited storage capacity for the reserve collections, and partly deliberate to impress the University of the urgent need for a new museum. The University was persuaded and planning went ahead.

⁹ See the Balfour letters; Pitt Rivers Museum archives.

¹⁰ Apart from Pitt Rivers, own collection the Ashmolean passed over a large amount of material in 1886, as did other departments in the University, including the University Museum, thus greatly increasing the size of the original collection within two years of its inception. The Ashmolean material included some objects from the original Tradescant collection and Captain Cook's third voyage material from the Pacific, now on display in the lower gallery. All of these materials have an early provenance. Much of the documentation on the collections was undertaken by Beatrice Blackwood with the help of the then Curator Tom Penniman, during the second world war, when the museum was quiescent. The product of her labours and her encyclopaedic knowledge resulted in the excellent documentation that exists today. She also published an Occasional Paper (1970) classifying ethnographic materials, which includes an introductory history to the collection.

Designed by the great Italian architect Pier Luigi Nervi the new museum with its various appendages would cover the equivalent of two adjoining city blocks off the Banbury Road, about a third of a mile north of its present site. A large scale model of this extraordinary structure is still retained by the museum. The main building was in the round with a vast glass-domed plant house at the centre, housing subtropical and tropical flora. Radiating from this centre piece like the frame and cross weave of a flat basket were the exhibit cases; typological one way and geographical-regional the other; ethnology on the second floor, archaeology on the lower level, with reserve collections and offices for the staff underground¹¹.

The main concourses were vast – over three hundred feet across. One less than enthusiastic academic remarked that staff would need bicycles to get around! It was even seriously suggested that the ethnographic collections from the British Museum should be amalgamated with the Pitt Rivers to form one National Museum of Anthropology in Oxford. This was before the Department of Ethnography's move to Burlington House, to become the Museum of Mankind.

These were grandiose ideas and signified the optimistic tenor of the 1960s and the visionary ideals of a Curator, and curiously reflected the obverse to the American situation at the time, previously alluded to. Fagg's museum required a prodigious fund raising and public relations exercise. He was successful in obtaining a long list of prominent backers and promises of financial support. The overall plan was not just for a museum complex, but also for a series of buildings to be placed on the site, surrounding the museum, which would bring social and biological anthropology and archaeology as well as ethnology all together on the one site. There were however surprisingly few distinguished academics backing the project and when Julian Huxley withdrew his support for personal reasons, and Bernard Fagg suffered a tragic stroke during

¹¹ In fact the building in the round was Pitt Rivers' own idea and at the British Association meeting of 1888; 'He called for the establishment of a national educational museum of arts organised as a «giant anthropological rotunda»'. The arrangement of exhibits within it which he advocated was similar to that planned for the Nervi project (Chapman 1985:39)

accessioning would be incomprehensible to them. And they might rightly insist that proper entries should be made in accession books – and there would be some sense in that¹².

It was stipulated in the original deed of gift that the typological system of display should be maintained until such a time as a better one might be devised. Although some flexibility has been introduced, this overall pattern with its high density of display still prevails. This density was partly advocated to show the widest selection of objects of any one category for comparative purposes, but it was also a simple necessity, owing to the sheer bulk of the collections and the restricted space available for storage. The museum has always been dogged by lack of space and the creative ingenuity employed by staff in past decades to house specimens, archives and even books, let alone its small staff was proverbial. Thus apart from the employment of better lighting systems, clearer labelling and enhanced and more attractive methods of exhibiting, much of the current emphasis and development in the fields of exhibiting and the impact this is currently having in the museum world, is more an adjunct to teaching on the collections, rather than a physical reality in the museum.

Public perceptions of museums, and their now increasingly politicized social role, is implicit in the temporary exhibitions, but the Pitt Rivers nineteenth century presentation still prevails. It is logical, if arguably unimaginative and practical if overtly politically incorrect. It is sensible for objects on display to reflect the order of their storage in reserve areas, either in the museum or elsewhere – a spear is always a spear and for storage purposes is easier to store in that capacity than in its regional, tribal or social context. That can be taught. And the Pitt Rivers Museum is a teaching museum – that was the original intention of the donor. If current academic preferences and inclinations are different today, it is not possible to reorganize the collections according to the current trends. Some visitors to the museum may find it an anachro-

¹² In the 1960s all assistant keepers in the Department of Ethnography of the British Museum were not only obliged to document and describe in-coming objects in black ink in the accession books, but also to make accurate drawings of them. Computer read-outs are a major facility today, but the familiarity with objects engendered by the older system, and the durability of the entries through actual impregnation of the paper, may have been important factors. Accelerated fading of the image was characteristic of early Xerox, and although modern printing is considered permanent, and despite the assurance of back-up systems, time will tell.

nism. Few are offended. Others are enchanted by the prevailing ambience of a Victorian museum. If any radical change were even possible, there would be a massive public protestation.

Pitt Rivers, Tylor and Balfour would have all been equally dumbfounded at the thought of restitution – the return of cultural property. The art market and anthropology have both over recent decades contributed to the current awareness and expectation of individuals, communities, tribes and even nations (the Elgin marbles), for the repossession of what may have been once theirs. It has become a major political issue, and involves identity, memory, pride and incipient nationalism.

When Pitt Rivers gave his collections to the University, no one considered them to have any intrinsic value, monetary or otherwise. They may have been fascinating objects, but were essentially 'curiosities' from which man's technological and cultural development could be evaluated. They did not come under the same category as 'classical' materials which derived from the northern Mediterranean or Near East for example. Nor was it anthropology that initially influenced the gradual change in attitudes towards this exotica. A generation of French artists did that¹³, followed by the art market and critics and savants who interpreted these strange objects through a culture bound western aesthetic, rather than through a native exegesis which anthropologists might have done – had they been so inclined.

By the 1970s when anthropologists themselves began to recognise the relevance of ethnographic materials and as collections were being re-evaluated and incorporated into the current curriculum of teaching in anthropology, thus influencing public attitudes and with it a new emphasis being placed on museums, so also the movement for the return of cultural property gathered momentum. American museums were primarily affected by indigenous requests, but European museums, with the growth of independent states in the aftermath of colonialism,

¹³ It was artists such as Braque and Picasso who became fascinated by African sculpture, while Gauguin and the Dounier Rousseau among others romanticised exotic peoples and landscapes and incorporated them into their paintings around the turn of the twentieth century. Long before that, however, when the precious materials and goldwork from the new world was brought to Spain, European craftsmen marvelled at the workmanship and Durer and others of his time expressed their admiration of these Indian artists.

have also been affected for equally understandable reasons. It is a movement which appeared, at least until very recently, to be one which if taken to an extreme, could divest most western ethnographic museums of major parts of their collections.

There will clearly have to be a compromise. Some things have already gone. Others may have to go. Often it is not so much that cultural property is required to be returned. It is the manner of its presentation or display that is offensive. The museum used to display a case of Maori tattooed heads, until a visiting Maori thought she recognised an ancestral tattoo. The situation was not helped by the fact that early last century, before their transfer to the Pitt Rivers, large accession numbers had been marked across the foreheads of each one, making them look rather like convicts as well as obliterating much of the magnificent facial tattooing. These are sacred objects to the Maori and should rightly have been reinterred in ancestral graves. However, it was felt sufficient to remove them from display along with other heads or skulls showing deformation. Immediately there was a protest from the medical school in the University who used these examples as part of their coursework.

Many artifacts in museums are sacred objects and should never really have been collected in the first place, let alone displayed in a museum, while others were not so much collected as just taken or stolen. The story of the Rosetta Stone in the British Museum is an example of the spoils of war – so are the Benin bronzes, held by many museums – not least the Pitt Rivers. Compared to this Lord Elgin's acropolis transactions seem honourable. But it is not just British museums which have been guilty and at least the prevailing idea was to preserve these things. However, much of the sacredness of indigenous art is in its actual creation, as a manifestation or reflection of the power of ancestral beings or deities. In such cases to retain such an object would be to deny its religious sanctity¹⁴. Yet there is the matter of education – of understanding the religious nature and meaning of

¹⁴ Sacred objects encompass a vast range of materials. One could ask what in a museum is not sacred in some context or another? Skeletal material was recently returned from the Pitt Rivers to Australia for re-burial by aborigines, despite protests from some University science departments. The Zuni requested the return of all their 'war god' shrines from American museums in the 1980s so that these could be placed in a special steel cage, to prevent theft, and naturally disintegrate on a former sacred site. Museums were appalled at the destruction of these beautiful objects. All known examples were however returned on understandable religious grounds.

such objects. If we do not see and learn to appreciate such things, how can students and others be taught to respect other cultures? It is a vexed question. And after all what is more important – that a University Museum should retain objects just because it will benefit scholarship, or should they be returned so that they can form part of a growing national museum in a Pacific Island, or a local Indian community museum on Vancouver Island? As anthropologists, morality dictates their return. As curators, obligation tends to enforce retention and preservation.

«The museum communicates values in the types of programs it chooses to present and in the audiences it addresses, in the size of departments and the emphasis they are given, in the selection of objects for acquisition, and more concretely in the location of displays in the building and the subtleties of lighting and label copy. None of these things is neutral. None is overt. All tell the audience what to think beyond what the museum ostensibly is teaching». Clearly this comment of Susan Vogel's (1991:200) makes sense. However it implies that someone – presumably a curator, has to dictate the form in which displays will be exhibited dependant on the audience for which it is aimed. If her statement is aimed at ethnographic as well as art museums, then it lacks precise relevance to the Pitt Rivers: it does not fit the paradigm¹⁵. In terms of the programme chosen, that based on typological categories, it is difficult to see what is being stated or being communicated, other than that all things are equal which are of a similar category, unless the visitor should himself decide otherwise. Of course there has to be some choice exercised by the person who sets up the original exhibition, but in most cases this seems to be one to go for the widest variety of any category of objects. Moreover, the museum does not address any particular audience. There is little long-term selection of objects. This implies art market acquisitions and until very recently the museum did not have a purchase fund sufficient to pursue that goal¹⁶. As for the objects accepted from private donors, though it was

¹⁵ This passage from Vogel's stimulating essay is also quoted and endorsed by Shelton (1992) in his summarization of the dynamics of contemporary ethnographic museum exhibitions in Britain. In their Introduction Lavine & Karp (1991) point to the 'inherent contestability of museums exhibitions' and their social and political implications in the current highly volatile 'heated debate'. This paper concerns the specifics of the Pitt Rivers and academic anthropology and its formative ethos from the nineteenth century. This does not mean a lack of commitment with contemporary issues, but it does concern continuity and tradition. Julia Cousins' Gulbenkian award-winning *The Pitt Rivers Museum: A Souvenir Guide to the Collections* (1994), is an elegant example of this alternative view, in what has been described as a 'brilliant defense of a Victorian museum'.

¹⁶ Until the 1980s the total annual purchase grant for the Pitt Rivers stood at fifteen hundred pounds per annum; a sum which would obviously exclude any 'art market' acquisitions. Much of this small amount was used to supplement graduate students to acquire small but well documented collections or single items whilst undertaking fieldwork. Since the formation of the Friends of the Pitt Rivers and the generosity of one individual sponsor, this funding has increased three-fold, but still bears no comparison with comparable national institutions.

¹⁷ Jacquetta Hawkes's article 'A New Drum for the General' in *The Sunday Times Magazine*, June 22, 1969 – a pun on the shape of Nervi's design and Pitt Rivers' original idea, appeared as part of the extensive publicity engendered at the time over this controversial enterprise.

once suggested that this should exclude items of mass production, this is not adhered to. As for location of display: there is some general ordering of this but it is not particularly noticeable, and here I suppose Jacquetta Hawkes's tongue in cheek comment: «a rich welter of collections that suggests a combination of Aladdin's cave, art gallery and superior junk shop», is relatively apt¹⁷. This does not suggest any particular emphasis, rather a sort of organised disorder. The new track lighting placed in the galleries is not intended to highlight anything, apart from giving the visitor better visibility to see the collections. No one could adjudge anything from the labels – there is such variety, some still exist which were written when the cases were first placed in the court, over a hundred years ago.

When Vogel states that 'None of these things is neutral. None is overt' I would suggest that a typological system is relatively neutral and that displays if by present standards simplistic, are overt. Nor do I think the Pitt Rivers is trying to direct peoples thoughts in any subtle way as is implied in her last sentence. Indeed young visitors to the museum are sent on 'discovery' trails, the emphasis being on an individual's own initiative, and the ideas of a teacher who may have no association with the collections. There are few if any displays which are didactically laid down by a curator, the typological system tends to inhibit the individual quirks of academics. University teaching is another matter, but as I have indicated the ordering of exhibits or indeed the exhibits themselves have no direct bearing on university teaching as such¹⁸. In current terminology of museum theory, the Pitt Rivers does not really 'speak' to anyone. It does not contextualize culture, nor does it recontextualize it. It carries no specific message, except perhaps to overwhelm people with the richness of other people's past and present representations – a celebration to human ingenuity and creativity.

On this basis the Pitt Rivers must seem very bland, apolitical and moribund. Yet for most people who come to the museum it is a most exhilarating and

¹⁸ Although the museum's permanent displays are as 'neutral' and 'overt' as is possible short of being visible storage, and although they carry no 'specific' message, they are a manifestation of a theory; a generative one based on evolutionary-typological and comparative models. Pitt Rivers viewed artifacts as providing insights into man's origins and differentiations in ways which other approaches to a history of mankind could not. It was this human inventiveness with technology and its transmission over time and space, which led to his fascination with the human mind, and with what Chapman (1985:33) calls his 'psychology of the material arts'.

Contrary to any perceived hierarchical orderings of society that his system might have implied, his comparing of objects engendered similarities and dissimilarities which tended to undermine evolutionary social or cultural separations of peoples. (This equality of objects: works of art alongside workmen's tools is a hallmark of the museum's display; attractive to the lay public and anathema to the art connoisseur). As Howard Morphy has suggested (1988: 49-52), Pitt Rivers' system of showing analogies between people across the world was 'inherently reflexive', and his typologising 'contained the seeds of a radically different view of the relationship between cultures' and hence, his ordering of the Oxford collections; 'made them no neutral assemblage but the embodiment of theory' (pace Susan Vogel).

exciting experience. They return time and again. It has inspired novelists and poets and many an artist – even academics. Film and television companies seem sometimes to be taking over the collections. It should certainly have an entry in Halliwell's Film Guide – for services to the cinema.

Malinowski once wrote that: 'Anthropology, to me at least, was romantic escape from our over standardized culture' (1930:405), and notwithstanding subsequent disclosures in his private diaries, this is a remarkably honest statement, and most British anthropologists despite academic denials might admit the same inclination. Social anthropology always likened far away hills as the greenest and prided itself, unlike sociology for instance, in the presumed objectivity this gave to the observer over the observed – an assumption of which current post modern revisionists are most scornful. But there were good reasons why in the post second world war period the subject attracted an expanding and dedicated following, and particularly in Oxford with Evans-Pritchard's charismatic professorship. Among their number were many Catholic priests and colonial officers, but there were also a growing number of former students of history and english – including Leavisites and journalists and poet-novelist manqués. Most of the latter, if not the former, might concur with Malinowski's Polish forthrightness about the attractions of the other. But they would also have emphasised the intellectual challenges to conventional wisdom that the subject offered.

It is unfortunate but understandable why the ethnographic museum, apparently ensnared in outmoded intellectual paradigms, found no place in this explosion of interest in social anthropology. With the subsequent move to independence of former colonies and their pursuit of westernization, often to the detriment of tribal peoples, and with the expansion of international travel and tourism, different challenges have arisen and wars and mass migrations have tended to break down former linguistic and social distinction. To some extent anthropology has become more sociological and applied and normative and less ex-

tic, while museums have in a sense reestablished their otherness, because of the extraordinarily rich variety of representations within their collections. They have again become centres for learning and, for expanding minority groups within European states and elsewhere, places for reascertaining lost identities.

In some ways the intellectual centre has also moved back to the museum – but a vastly expanded museum from its Victorian counterpart. This is not just because of growth in collections or better documentation, but rather because of anthropology's current concerns in the wider fields of ethnomusicology, visual anthropology, ethnographic art, material culture, anthropological aesthetics and archaeology tend to be associated with anthropological museums for practical and other reasons. The burgeoning academic developments in these various fields has given the museum a reintegrating influence within the discipline, and none more so than the Pitt Rivers, as is vindicated by the development of new graduate and undergraduate courses with rapidly expanding student intakes. In a wider perspective these separate fields of study can be viewed as part of an anthropology concerned with art in all its manifestations – and more specifically defined; an Anthropology of Art which will lead to new insights into cultural representations, linking archaeology with anthropology and art history and which: 'from being an esoteric, museum-based branch of the discipline (of anthropology)... has moved, almost unawares, into the front line' (Morphy 1994:677). In brief, the temple of the muses has like its Alexandrian counterpart again become a forum for debate¹⁹. This exemplification of the internationalness of art, its commonality to all mankind, is reflected in the anthropological museum, and none more so than Oxford's long neglected collection, which assimilates and incapsulates to an extraordinary degree that lost romance of the other.

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¹⁹ I owe this allusion to Ptolemy Soter's 3rd Century B. C. Alexandrian museum and library, which lasted for seven centuries, to Duncan Cameron (1972) and William Fenton (1960).

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LES MUSÉES

D'ETHNOGRAPHIE
ONT-ILS ENCORE
UN SENS?

André Desvallées

Musées de France

ABSTRACT

L'objet des musées d'ethnographies n'est-il pas d'abord de parler de l'*autre*, appréhendé sous tous ses aspects, matériels et immatériels? Ne doivent-ils pas s'intéresser à la fois à tous les modèles de société et à toutes les classes sociales, sans limites de temps ni de lieu et ne pas limiter leur intérêt à des cultures du 19ème siècle, sur la base de collections se référant surtout à des critères esthétiques.

Notre époque a pris conscience que la recherche de l'objectivité n'avait aucun sens dans les sciences humaines et que toute exposition ne pouvait que

témoigner des choix de ses auteurs. C'est pourquoi l'exposition ne eut plus se limiter à l'étalage d'objets originaux qui n'expriment au premier degré que leur forme. Même la restitution d'une unité écologique avec tout son contexte d'origine *in situ* ne peut rendre que les aspects matériels du milieu. Aussi doit-on désormais donner à voir en relativisant les points de vue, par l'utilisation des moyens d'expression les plus rigoureux, mais les plus souples.

* * *

Les musées d'ethnographie sont à un tournant: personne ne le nie. Par contre il semble qu'on soit loin d'une convergence sur les solutions à adopter. Qu'on en propose plusieurs ou qu'on en propose une seule, beaucoup, estiment qu'il est urgent d'attendre pour prendre position.

Peut-être la difficulté de se décider provient-elle de ce que nous sommes ramenés à la question fondatrice, laquelle est de savoir si l'ethnographie, dans les musées, doit exister par elle-même et se cantonner dans un champ indépendant de celui des autres disciplines majeures que sont l'histoire naturelle et l'histoire de l'humanité, ou si elle doit n'être qu'un volet de ces mêmes disciplines – celui de la nature de l'homme, pour l'histoire naturelle, celui du regard anthropologique, pour l'histoire de l'humanité. Mais, vu du point de vue de Sirius, ou plus modestement de celui du simple visiteur de musée, c'est peut-être que l'on souhaite qu'ils nous racontent tout simplement l'aventure humaine dans son unité en même temps que dans sa diversité...

Alors même que, jusqu'à environ les années trente, le musée a été le complément affiché de la recherche, le décalage est à présent complet. Il est même devenu ridicule d'imaginer que l'on puisse trouver dans ce que la plupart des musées montrent, et dans la façon dont ils le montrent, un quelconque rapport avec ce qui est écrit dans les livres des ethnologues ou, plus généralement, des anthropologues. On en est resté à

une conception disons objectale et statique de l'ethnologie. Même les plus grands comme Georges Henri RIVIÈRE, pour la muséologie, ou Claude LÉVI-STRAUSS, pour la recherche, ont eu de la «synthèse ethnologique» des conceptions qui n'étaient peut être pas fausses en soi, mais qui se limitaient à l'épiderme de la réalité culturelle qu'elles recouvraient en s'arrêtant à ce que sont les choses elles-mêmes, dans leurs limites visuelles.

En ces quelques pages, et en m'appuyant surtout sur des exemples français, j'évoquerai en un premier temps les raisons pour lesquelles il est devenu nécessaire de sortir de l'impasse actuelle; en un second temps, j'examinerai les causes fondamentales qui rendent à la fois nécessaire et difficile l'évolution et j'examinerai les raisons qui rendent difficile de faire évoluer l'existant en restant dans la même logique; enfin j'évoquerai les solutions radicales auxquelles certains ont déjà recouru et auxquelles il semble difficile de ne pas se rallier.

En 1992, deux séries de problèmes différents avaient été soulevés en France dans le cadre de la revue *le Débat*. Les premiers par Claude LÉVI-STRAUSS, le maître de toute une génération en anthropologie sociale, lequel, répondant à des interrogations d'Isac CHIVA, son ancien collaborateur au Laboratoire d'Anthropologie sociale du Collège de France, assurait d'une part que seules des collections sélectionnées sur une base de qualité esthétique devaient entrer dans un musée d'ethnographie, d'autre part que les objets de ces collections devaient rester antérieurs à 1914, date au-delà de laquelle les témoins matériels rencontrés ne pouvaient qu'être «une production de masse, dénuée de toute qualité esthétique et qu'on se fait un pieux devoir de recueillir parce qu'elle est devenue périmée et témoigne pour un passé disparu depuis la veille». Car, expliquait encore Claude LÉVI-STRAUSS, le rôle de l'ethnologie est d'étudier «des sociétés vouées à l'extinction»¹.

La seconde série de problèmes était posée dans une discussion, par articles interposés, entre Jean-Claude

¹ «Qu'est-ce qu'un musée des arts et traditions populaires?» (Isac CHIVA, entretien avec Claude LÉVI-STRAUSS), *Le Débat*, 70, mai-août 1992, pp. 164-173.

DUCLOS, conservateur au Musée Dauphinois de Grenoble, et Jean CUISENIER, qui venait de quitter la direction du Musée national des Arts et traditions populaires, à Paris. Le premier défendait la conception d'un musée d'ethnographie conservant et exposant un patrimoine attaché à une mémoire collective et à une identité, tels que l'ont été la plupart des musées d'art et traditions populaires et tels que le sont encore bon nombre de musées locaux ou régionaux. Le second, après avoir considéré d'abord que *«la notion d'art et tradition populaire est une notion datée»* qui *«a servi à concevoir et réaliser un genre de musée bien défini, à pratiquer un genre d'investigation bien identifié»*, et après avoir estimé que *«tous [ces musées] donnent à penser qu'ils donnent de l'homme et de la société, au siècle passé, une représentation partielle, idéologiquement orientée, qui sépare abstraitement les sociétés locales de la société englobante»* ne pouvait que parvenir à la conclusion selon laquelle *«ces musées deviendront progressivement, avec le recul du temps, des musées d'archéologie et d'histoire»*. Et d'envisager comme inéluctable que *«nous cesserons de nous acharner à distinguer les usages et les pratiques 'populaires' pour les opposer aux usages et aux pratiques 'savantes'»*².

Laissons de côté le fait, attesté par Jean CUISENIER sur la base d'études de cas, que les musées d'art populaire n'ont été souvent que le reflet de la classe sociale qui les a créés. Subsistent alors quatre grandes questions.

a) Le champ des collections d'un musée d'ethnographie doit-il se limiter à la fois à ce qui n'est plus en usage et à ce qui est antérieur au début du vingtième siècle, ou ne doit-il se donner aucune limite chronologique?

b) Les seuls objets collectables doivent-ils revêtir une qualité esthétique, rejoignant en cela non seulement les critères des anciens musées d'art populaire, mais aussi ceux des anciens musées d'art et d'histoire—voire des musées d'art— ou ne doit-il se donner aucune limite qualitative, pouvant couvrir tout aussi bien la culture matérielle, la culture spirituelle et la culture sociale dans leur totalité?

² DUCLOS, Jean-Claude, «Pour des musées de l'homme et de la société»; CUISENIER, Jean, «Des musées de l'homme et de la société: oui, mais lesquels?», *id. loc.*, pp. 174-178 et 178-187.

c) Les mêmes objets doivent-ils nécessairement être les témoins d'un patrimoine identitaire ce qui risque déjà de poser une contradiction avec les deux limitations précédentes, les affirmations identitaires s'étant plutôt développées en notre siècle et leur patrimoine n'étant pas limité par des critères esthétiques?

d) Le champ de l'ethnographie des pays en voie de développement doit-il se confondre avec les cultures précoloniales, et donc préindustrielles, et celui de pays développés doit-il se confondre avec celui de la culture populaire, ou l'un et l'autre ne doivent-ils pas, au contraire, couvrir toutes les sociétés et toutes les classes sociales, sans limite de temps ni de lieu?

Autrement dit, l'ethnographie doit-elle se contenter d'étudier, comme sa définition d'origine l'a peut-être voulu, les groupes humains des sociétés traditionnelles, ou ne doit-elle pas connaître dans les musées la même évolution qu'a connue la recherche depuis plus d'un demi-siècle, en mordant sur le terrain chronologique que la sociologie était d'abord la seule à exploiter, afin d'étudier les sociétés contemporaines de n'importe quelle culture, et non pas seulement les sociétés qui sont en voie de disparition? Si cette discipline est remise à sa place dans le système général des sciences, on doit se demander si elle ne doit pas se confondre sans plus d'hésitations avec l'anthropologie afin d'étudier l'homme dans sa globalité et non pas se contenter de l'étudier (et de l'exposer) dans le cadre de groupes sinon bien homogènes, du moins bien définis. Ce qui suppose une anthropologie sous tous ses aspects, à la fois physiques, historiques, culturels, ... mais aussi sociaux. Les «faits sociaux» ne sont-ils pas désignés, depuis déjà un siècle, par Marcel MAUSS (et d'autres), comme étant la base des recherches ethnographiques? L'homme est un animal social et, en dehors de ce qui est simple survie, c'est dans la mesure où il vit en société qu'il fait tout ce qu'il fait: gestuelles, coutumes alimentaires et domestiques, transmission et amélioration de savoir-faire, modes esthétiques et évidemment règles et rites sociaux et religieux. C'est pourquoi, comme le remarquait récemment Marc AUGÉ, dans

une récente synthèse ethnologique: «*ce que découvre l'ethnologue, au premier regard, ce ne sont pas des cultures mais des sociétés, c'est-à-dire des ensembles organisés et hiérarchisés où les notions de différence et d'altérité ont un sens. [...] Il perçoit d'abord et avant tout la différence sociale*»³.

Évoquer d'emblée la société par les questions d'*altérité* peut paraître un fait de mode, en une époque où l'on se pose des questions sur la responsabilité, effective ou éventuelle, des musées d'ethnographie, dans les conflits meurtriers qui se déroulent ici ou là, et notamment en Europe, au nom de certaines prétendues identités ethniques. Et, il est vrai, aucun musée n'est neutre: si un musée peut prêcher le sectarisme, un autre musée peut prêcher la compréhension d'autrui. Mais, afficher une seule identité, comme l'ont fait, perdant près d'un siècle nombre de musées, pour justifier la recherche de racines, sans ouvrir simultanément à la connaissance de l'autre, pose à coup sûr la graves questions lorsqu'on se souvient que le musée est «*au service de la société*».

Les ethnologues n'ont certes pas attendu que des affrontements ethniques les interpellent pour s'interroger sur la distinction du *même* et de l'*autre*. Mais les musées, pour leur part, en dehors de quelques musées d'ethnologie générale et comparative, n'ont généralement guère cherché à exprimer qu'une seule culture, ou que des cultures variées mais simplement juxtaposées. Même le Musée des Civilisations de Hull-Ottawa, tout en s'abritant derrière l'ambition du «village planétaire», cher à Marshall MC LUHAN, juxtapose une exposition narrante l'histoire du peuplement du Canada à partir des Amérindiens, des Français et des Anglo-saxons, rendue très vivante par les *scènes de rue*, et, en d'autres galeries, sans lien aucun, des expositions sur la culture d'autres groupes d'émigrés. Différentes cultures cohabitent bien dans le musée, en passant d'une galerie à l'autre et au moyen de films, de spectacles et de festivals, mais elles ne communiquent guère par le langage même de l'exposition qui doit faire la spécificité d'un musée.

³ AUGÉ, Marc. *Le sens des autres. Actualité de l'anthropologie*. Paris, Fayard, 1994, 207 p. (p. 23).

Aussi ne doit-on pas avant tout se demander si, dans ces musées qui s'appuient sur le modèle monographique de la recherche ethnographique, on n'avait pas en réalité détourné l'ethnographie de sa mission première. Dès ses débuts, en effet, cette discipline n'a-t-elle pas cherché de façon raisonnée à faire connaître *l'autre*⁴ et les collectes opérées depuis le seizième siècle n'avaient-elles pas eu pour objet de montrer ce qu'était cet autre, dans sa diversité comme dans ses ressemblances avec *les autres*, nous-mêmes inclus⁵? Le responsable n'est-il pas le dix-neuvième siècle, avec ses légitimes affirmations nationalistes, mais aussi sa recherche de cultures des origines et de prétendues races pures? Et ne doit-on pas considérer, comme le dit encore Marc AUGÉ, d'une part que *«l'idée selon laquelle une société est un ensemble d'individus qui se reconnaissent dans une culture dont ils ne sont chacun pour sa part qu'une expression est une idée simpliste et éventuellement dangereuse que dément toute l'expérience ethnologique et historique»*, d'autre part que *«la meilleure manière de respecter une culture contemporaine, [...], c'est de dialoguer avec elle, métaphoriquement ou non (c'est affaire de circonstances), autrement dit de ne pas renoncer à l'affirmation de valeurs estimées universelles au nom d'un respect des cultures qui s'apparenterait à une forme d'apartheid culturel»*⁶.

C'est pourquoi il ne nous semble pas inutile de revenir rapidement, une fois de plus, sur le passé des musées d'ethnographie, dans la mesure où ces derniers ont eu des origines diverses, qui les ont marqués différemment. Les plus anciens sont ceux qui sont sortis des cabinets de curiosités, ou dans leur sillage, et dont le fond principal est constitué de collections dites exotiques. Ceux-là ont le contenu le plus varié, même si, pour chaque groupe ethnique enquêté, le nombre de témoins est à la fois limité et disparate.

La seconde catégorie est celle qui est née des musées d'art et d'archéologie nationales —ou régionales, ou locales—, dans l'esprit qui était le leur au 19^e siècle, approchant l'archéologie sous un angle surtout esthétique. C'est de ce concept que sont sortis la plupart

⁴ Il faut se souvenir que, bien avant que l'ethnographie n'existât en tant que discipline autonome, la proposition avait été faite, pendant la Révolution française, en 1796, dans le cadre du Muséum des Antiques, complémentaire du Cabinet des Médailles de la Bibliothèque nationale, de créer un musée, qui devait, dans l'esprit de ses initiateurs, *«offrir sous le même point de vue ce qui peut instruire des mœurs et des usages des peuples éloignés par les temps et par les lieux»*, autrement dit un musée globalisant ce qui concerne présentement à la fois l'archéologie et l'ethnographie, et, pour l'un et l'autre, sans limitation chronologique ni géographique. L'idée venait d'Aubin-Louis MILLIN (de GRANDMAISON), l'auteur, à partir de 1790, de la publication sur les *Antiquités nationales* et d'André BARTHÉLEMY tous deux nommés le 26 octobre 1795 conservateurs du Cabinet des Médailles de la Bibliothèque nationale. Pour cela ils partirent à la chasse des collections ethnographiques formées depuis le 16^e siècle et dispersées, en particulier au Muséum d'histoire naturelle.

⁵ Voir à ce propos le récent: *Travelers' Tales*, London and New York, Routledge, 1994. Notamment, pp. 164-176, le chapitre 10: DIAS, Nélia, «Looking at objects: memory, knowledge in nineteenth-century ethnographic displays».

⁶ Marc AUGÉ, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 et 118-119.

des musées d'art populaire et des musées de folklore, même si beaucoup ont évolué dans le sens plus ouvert que revêt la catégorie suivante.

Apparue en Scandinavie pendant le dernier tiers du dix-neuvième siècle, la troisième catégorie est en effet celle des musées qui se donnent comme propos, comme ceux de la catégorie précédente, de témoigner d'une identité, d'un patrimoine déterminé, mais qui ne se soucient d'orienter leur collecte ni par rapport à des critères esthétiques, ni par rapport à des marqueurs de différences ou d'opposition. Ils collectent simplement ce qui a existé et ce qui existe. Cette catégorie, qui s'était surtout développée entre les deux guerres mondiales, pour sauver un patrimoine rural menacé, était dans la ligne scientifique de l'évolution générale qui a marqué l'archéologie comme l'histoire, à la suite notamment de l'École de synthèse historique française (l'École des Annales) ou du développement de l'intérêt pour la culture matérielle dans l'Europe de l'Est. Connaissant son apogée après la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, elle s'est étendue au patrimoine industriel et au patrimoine urbain à partir des années soixante-dix, sans rupture – et les écomusées, apparus autour de la même date, n'ont pas tenu un rôle négligeable dans cette extension.

Les deux dernières catégories de musées d'ethnographie s'attachent essentiellement à un patrimoine défini par une géographie de proximité, par opposition à la première qui s'intéresse au contraire à tout qui est étranger. Ces différences sont parfois très marquées sur le plan institutionnel. Il n'existe pas encore de musée d'ethnographie sur le territoire national chinois, mais il en existe dans les provinces habitées par des minorités ethniques reconnues par le gouvernement central (en dehors du Tibet). Par contre, à Saint-Petersbourg, le musée d'ethnographie couvre toutes les ethnies de l'ancienne URSS – et c'est au Cabinet de Curiosités de Pierre le Grand qu'il revient de traiter de l'ethnographie des cultures étrangères au monde russe. Cette distinction entre ethnographie nationale et ethnographie étrangère se retrouve dans

les attributions que se sont donnés les comités du Conseil international des musées (l'ICOM). En effet le Comité des musées d'ethnographie s'occupe, pour chaque pays, des cultures qui lui sont étrangères –majoritairement celles qu'on appelait primitives–, pendant que les ethnographies nationales sont du ressort du Comité des musées régionaux.

Il n'est pas interdit cependant d'avoir également un autre point de vue et de rapprocher non pas les deux dernières catégories, lesquelles, ayant une base identitaire, tendent plus à opposer qu'à rapprocher les cultures, mais plutôt la première et la troisième catégorie, les musées d'ethnographie étrangère et les musées d'ethnographie territoriale créés dans un contexte non sélectif. Ces deux catégories offrent en effet un matériel très large, ou bien par la variété géographique, ou bien par la variété des témoins retenus lors de la collecte, et, par la diversité même de leur contenu, peuvent se présenter beaucoup mieux comme des instruments unifiants de l'humanité dans sa globalité.

De telles distinctions, de nature historique, peuvent conduire à se demander par ailleurs s'il ne faut pas éviter de confondre deux modèles de musée d'ethnographie qui ont des finalités différentes. D'une part ceux qui ont une mission de témoignage, ou bien pour un secteur thématique du patrimoine (le rural, l'industriel), et qui ont alors une obligation de sauvegarde, ou bien pour un ou des groupes ethniques (la Bretagne, l'Aquitaine, le pays Basque, la Catalogne), et qui ont alors en plus une mission de représentation – le «miroir» suggéré par Georges Henri RIVIÈRE. Ces musées de la mémoire collective sont indispensables dans la mesure où ils conservent ou permettent de retrouver ces racines nécessaires à une vie sociale équilibrée. D'autre part ceux qui se donnent une vocation générale et peuvent –et doivent– parler de tout avec des objets aux origines les plus variées dans le temps et dans l'espace. Ce sont ces derniers que nous aurions tendance à dénommer d'ethnologie générale ou d'anthropologie. Mais, pour des raisons d'opportunité locale –mais aussi touristique–, il n'est pas interdit

de concilier les deux missions en faisant de l'exposition permanente une encyclopédie du patrimoine et de l'histoire locale (régionale) sur les modèles du Musée d'Aquitaine à Bordeaux, du Musée de Bretagne à Rennes (France) ou du Musée des Civilisations à Hull (Canada) –et en donnant aux expositions temporaires la mission de traiter de questions universelles– comme au Musée de Neuchâtel.

Cette approche patrimoniale globalisante nous conduit à une vision plus diachronique de l'anthropologie. Autre débat de disciplines –sinon de chapelles. L'anthropologie historique, apparue au cours des années soixante-dix doit-elle absorber toute l'anthropologie, ou est-ce l'histoire elle-même qui doit être absorbée par l'anthropologie historique, sorte d'avatar de l'histoire de synthèse, intégrant à la fois le milieu naturel, la nature de l'homme, les conditions économiques et sociales? Tout compte fait, la question est de savoir si l'on part de la synchronie (l'anthropologie) ou de la diachronie (l'histoire); mais si l'on veut avoir une vue complète, les deux entrées doivent se compléter et même s'enchevêtrer⁷.

Il est vrai, même dans ses applications au musée, cette question n'est pas seulement épistémologique, voire byzantine: elle est liée également à des positions idéologiques–sinon elle aurait trouvé depuis longtemps une issue consensuelle. C'est que, si l'on part d'une vision diachronique, on peut ne retenir du déroulement dans le temps que les exemples qui sont bons pour la démonstration ou ceux qui ne sont pas «dérangeants». Par contre, si l'on part d'un moment donné, dans tous ses développements synchroniques, et que l'on veut ensuite aborder dans la diachronie chacun des aspects évoqués dans la synchronie, il est beaucoup plus difficile de passer sous silence les moments que certains pourraient estimer gênants.

Comme on pouvait s'y attendre, l'avenir des musées d'ethnographie se joue non seulement sur la mutation de leur contenu, mais aussi sur celle de leur forme. Davantage: du fait que leur contenu dépasse la

⁷ Je ne reviens pas sur l'histoire des rapports entre l'anthropologie et l'histoire, même si le débat est loin d'être tranché. Une bonne synthèse de Gérard LENCLUD a été publiée en 1987 dans: *Ethnologues en miroir* (Isac CHIVA, éd., Paris, M. S. H.), pp. 35-65: «Anthropologie et histoire, hier et aujourd'hui, en France».

simple forme des objets et qu'on ne peut ni les considérer, ni les montrer nus sans qu'ils soient dénaturés, le fond et la forme doivent tout autant s'entremêler lors de la restitution qu'ils s'entremêlent *in situ*.

Ayant évoqué seulement par un trop rapide résumé l'évolution qu'ont connues en deux siècles les sciences qui privilégient la recherche sur l'homme, je ne m'étendrai pas davantage sur l'histoire de la typologie des musées et des expositions, d'autant que quelques articles récents ont assez bien fait le point⁸. Rappelons simplement que les différentes mutations des musées d'ethnologie ont abouti à cette mutation fondamentale qu'a constitué, pour les établissements locaux, au début des années soixante-dix, l'invention des écomusées dont la nouveauté touche à la fois au fond et à la forme.

Les musées classiques, pour ce qui les concerne, se doivent de sortir, au moins pour leurs expositions temporaires, de présentations qui se partagent à ce jour la presque totalité de ce qui est donné à voir entre d'un côté la culture matérielle et les techniques, de l'autre les expressions cérémonielles et les signes de reconnaissance festifs –lesquels, plus encore que la culture matérielle, soulignent les différences identitaires en négligeant les ressemblances.

Encore faut-il, pour sortir de ce cadre centenaire d'exposition, se convaincre qu'il doit être remis en cause parce que donnant du monde une vision très partielle et même erronée. C'est pourquoi je vais d'abord m'employer à rappeler à la fois que l'objectivité n'existe pas, que l'objet n'a de sens que par son contexte (ses contextes) et que la polysémie de l'objet devrait être le point de départ de toute entreprise muséographique, et notamment expographique.

Cependant, poser ce problème suppose de considérer l'objet sous ses différents aspects: à la fois dans son milieu et dans l'espace muséal où il se trouve placé, dans le milieu où il se trouve et celui dans lequel on le transfère, et surtout de tenir compte de l'éclairage donné et du regard porté sur cet objet tout

⁸ Voir: DESVALLÉES, André. «L'anthropologie donnée à voir... et à comprendre», *AFA*, n° 39, 30 mars 1990, pp. 11-25; et DIAS, Nélia, *op. cit.*, note 5, ainsi que sa bibliographie.

autant par le collecteur et le présentateur que par le spectateur (lorsque je parle d'éclairage, j'entends évidemment les points de vue différents, et non pas les éclairages par la lumière, même si ces derniers ont leur part dans la variation des points de vue).

En premier lieu, avant de parler du regard porté sur l'objet par celui qui vit cet objet, par l'ethnologue qui l'étudie ou par le spectateur qui le regarde dans un musée ou dans une exposition, avant de se demander s'il a un sens et quel est son sens, il faut bien s'interroger sur ce que peut être cet objet.

Au préalable, il n'est peut-être pas indifférent de relire une courte intervention faite au cours de la très officielle dixième conférence générale de l'ICOM, au Danemark, en 1974, par Për KAKS, alors responsable du Bryggens Museum de Bergen, en Norvège. *«Je ne crois pas, disait Për KAKS, au principe selon lequel l'objet peut et devrait parler de lui-même. Pour être d'accord avec ce principe il faudrait se soustraire à la facilité et au confort que procure n'importe quelle autre contrainte que celle reconnue à la 'neutralité scientifique'. Nous revendiquons de sélectionner les objets qui sont nécessaires pour compléter nos collections, mais, quand nous choisissons, il y a des objets que nous écartons parce que 'ils ne sont pas parfaitement adéquats'. En éliminant certains objets et en choisissant d'autres parce qu'ils sont 'adéquats', nous prenons position pour ou contre quelque chose: cela n'est pas ce qui peut être considéré comme de la neutralité»⁹.*

Neutralité? Objectivité? La question n'est certes pas une question nouvelle. Mais la question se pose de plus en plus de savoir si, les disciplines scientifiques mais aussi la muséographie ayant évolué, les expositions ethnographiques, disons plus largement anthropologiques, peuvent conserver leur prétention à l'objectivité, ou si la propension à les voir devenir de plus en plus subjectives devait être acceptée comme une fatalité, ou comme une nécessité. *Il s'agit là d'une vraie question: reste à savoir si elle n'est pas attachée à un faux problème.* Il s'avère en effet que termes de *neutralité*, *d'objectivité* ou de *subjectivité*, même s'ils sont utilisés

⁹ *Le Musée et le Monde moderne.* Paris, Conseil international des Musées, 1975 (p. 34).

couramment, ne peuvent en réalité recouvrir que de bonnes intentions abstraites et que, dans la pratique, il ne peut être atteint qu'une *vérité* modestement humaine.

Sans prétendre se livrer à une dissertation philosophique sur ce que peut être un objet on peut se contenter de la banale approche muséographique. Mais un des problèmes des musées d'ethnographie c'est que l'objet a été défini par les critiques et les historiens d'art, en l'espèce les historiens des objets d'art. Si bien qu'il a été regardé généralement avec la même autonomie qui était appliquée, à tort également, aux oeuvres d'art. Objet cernable, défini dans l'espace, qu'il soit d'origine naturelle ou culturelle, que certains englobent dans la catégorie des «musealies» dès lors qu'il acquiert un statut muséal, que l'on inventoie et photographie. Rappelons-nous ce que Georges Henri RIVIÈRE, s'employant depuis près de deux ans à rénover le musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro, pensait, en 1931, de l'usage des objets d'intérêt ethnographique dans les musées de beaux-arts ou «musées de chefs-d'oeuvres»: *«Une question: mettez-vous parmi vos chefs d'oeuvre ceux, comme on dit, de l'art africain, océanien, précolombien? Un oui serait consternant. Si j'en avais le loisir, je me lamenterais sur ces pauvres masques que l'on ébarbe, ces statuettes munies de socles d'art, ces bois que leurs zéloteurs vernissent, surpatinent, grattent, astiquent et asticotent. Funèbres entreprises de laïcisation, qui prétendent... transformer en belles pièces des objets ethnographiques et les mutiler arbitrairement de tout ce qui peut justifier le caractère juridique, religieux, magique, ou tout humblement et saintement utilitaire»*¹⁰.

Et pourtant, un objet c'est bien autre chose. L'objet muséal ça n'est peut-être pas seulement cette «vraie chose», cet objet concret à trois dimensions comme on s'est souvent contenté de le définir. Pour un ethnologue, comme pour un muséologue averti, c'est tout ce qui est témoin ou reflet de la réalité, d'une réalité complexe, et pas seulement visible et lisible. Un exemple comme celui de l'instrument de musique, qui où n'existe pas sans les sons qu'il produit, n'est pas

¹⁰ G. H. R., «Musée des beaux-arts ou musée d'ethnographie», in «Musées», *Les Cahiers de la République des lettres, des sciences et des arts*, Paris, 1931.

un cas limite: il ne fait qu'illustrer la totalité des cas. Et la même remarque peut se faire à propos des objets donnés comme historiques: ils n'ont pas davantage de valeur absolue, sans contexte ils ne valent rien. Autrement dit, comme l'écrit Gérard LENCLUD, «*la valeur d'un document historique dépend autant des questions qui lui sont posées que de son contenu propre. [...] Dans les deux cas, terrain et archives, – envisagés comme moyens d'élaboration du savoir – la question, autant que la réalité «produit» la documentation*». Or, la documentation, c'est tout ce qui est autour, c'est le contexte à la fois immatériel et matériel qu'il faut avoir étudié et si possible «mis en boîte» avec le témoin spectaculaire.

Ayant déjà cité Marc AUGÉ, je reprendrai chez lui un exemple, classique chez les ethnologues de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. «*Chaque individu humain a son caract droit ou gras, ou pet. cap., ou (son signe, matérialisé sur un tesson d'argile), son (ensemble, notamment, des noix qui ont été jetées sur terre pour y dessiner son signe primordial), son (sac contenant, entre autres, un peu de sable sur lequel ont été jetées les noix de consultation et où elles ont dessiné le signe primordial) et son figuration en terre d'un dieu situé dans la chambre de l'adulte initié et à la porte de sa demeure*». Ces quatre types de traces peuvent être considérés comme des reliques, mais quelle est la plus relique de toutes? A supposer qu'un conservateur africain s'intéresse à conserver de tels témoignages personnels, que s'attachera-t-il à conserver? S'il le peut, et s'il raisonne en véritable ethnologue, il recueillera le tout. Mais s'il doit choisir? S'il raisonne comme un Occidental, il essaiera évidemment d'acquérir le *legba*, le témoignage le plus spectaculaire, parce que le plus figuratif et se réduisant facilement à ce que nous classons dans les Beaux-arts; mais, s'il ne peut l'obtenir, il se contentera, toujours dans une perspective occidentale, du tesson, le *du*, où a été inscrit le signe de notre individu. Ensuite, entre le *fa* et le *kpeli*, quel est la plus concrète, de la terre qui a reçu la trace qui a donné forme au signe? ou de l'ensemble des noix, objets matériels qui ont généré ce

signe? Pour les exposer dans un musée d'ethnographie, la terre aurait pu être moulée et le noix être replacées sur les empruntes, ou bien les originales ou bien d'autres noix qui auront la même signification dans l'exposition, le sac étant placé à côté.

Et pourtant, quel est le plus vrai, le plus original, de ces quatre témoignages du même signe d'un même individu? Incontestablement cela nous paraît être noix, puisque ce sont elles qui génèrent le signe, mais néanmoins elles n'ont aucun autre sens en elles-mêmes que celui d'être des noix. C'est pourquoi il n'est pas risqué d'assurer qu'aucun de ces témoignages, du plus métaphorique au plus figuratif, aucun n'est autre chose qu'une projection, une traduction de la réalité que l'on sera censé exprimer dans l'exposition, à savoir l'individu que l'on veut évoquer.

C'est pourquoi Marc AUGÉ peut conclure de cet exemple: *'L'exégèse des dieux-objets du dispositif rituel ouvre la même perspective: de l'un on nous dit toujours qu'il est le «messenger» de l'autre, fa de legba, kpeli de fa ou inversement, l'important étant que jamais il n'est question de la teneur précise du message mais simplement de sa transmission»*¹¹. Ce qui compte en matière d'ethnographie (et cela est aussi vrai pour toutes les sciences de la nature) cela n'est pas l'objet en soi, c'est aussi bien l'objet avec l'environnement qu'on lui trouve *in situ*, qui constitue son contexte, à la fois physique, religieux, social, et qui lui donne son sens, et le même contexte, exposé avec l'objet ou reconstitué lors de l'exposition de ce dernier, qui permet de lire ce sens.

Le contexte qui nous intéresse en premier est celui qui vient du terrain, celui dans lequel se trouvait l'objet au moment de sa collecte. Ce qui nous concerne, c'est le contexte dans son ensemble et non pas un objet qu'un en extrait parmi d'autres. Le plus étonnant, c'est qu'il ait fallu attendre très tard dans l'histoire de l'ethnographie pour se rendre compte que le contexte était un élément essentiel de l'expographie. Jusque là on se contentait d'évoquer, de faire des évocations, à partir d'objets sélectionnés que l'on consi-

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

dérait comme témoins, comme *objets-témoins*. Quitte à regrouper un certain nombre de ces témoins pour évoquer une famille —ou une ethnie—, comme ce fut le cas à Stockholm, depuis 1873, dans le cadre de la collection d'ethnographie scandinave d'HAZELIUS, comme ce fut aussi le cas de certaines unités de présentation du Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro, depuis 1884, avec ces évocations, enrichies par des mannequins habillés, façonnés d'après nature, sur des podiums au centre des salles, de tel ou tel habitat polynésien ou de tel «*intérieur breton de grandeur naturelle, frappant de vérité. Tout y est, pots, lits en forme d'armoires de bois ouvragé, et le vieux grand-père, toujours gelé, assis dans l'âtre même du foyer. Ce décor, très bien réglé, a le don d'attirer la foule*». Mais il semble bien que HAMY, le directeur du dit musée, regrettât l'intérêt populaire (ou culturel) qui était porté à ces évocations puisqu'il ajoutait, dans le même article: «*Dans des vitrines, malheureusement très exigües, on a accumulé des objets de ménage et de travail des anciennes provinces françaises et des pays d'Europe. Cette section est un peu délaissée, tout l'intérêt se portant sur l'intérieur breton, au grand détriment de ces détails qui remplissent le vrai but du musée d'ethnographie, qui est de montrer à nos artisans des modèles auprès desquels ils puissent chercher des inspirations...*»¹².

Dans le relais qu'il prendra à partir de 1929 au Trocadéro, et plus tard pour le musée national des Arts et traditions populaires, Georges Henri RIVIÈRE ira plus loin: «*Que nos systhèses expriment, plutôt que la reproduction, le milieu social. Préférons aux catégories d'objets et aux successions de techniques, de grandes notions simples prélevées dans la vie même, et par là même, familières au grand public*»¹³. Les objectifs de Georges Henri RIVIÈRE non seulement étaient scientifiques et ses exigences étaient grandes pour la rigueur dans les enquêtes, mais dans ce texte, il faisait le choix du social et non pas de l'objectal. On peut donc en conclure que ce sont les contraintes du milieu muséal et administratif dans lequel il s'est trouvé qui l'ont conduit à retenir en majorité les séries d'objets et les

¹² HAMY, Ernest-Théodore, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique et biographique de l'industrie et de arts industriels*, Paris, t. VI, 1886.

¹³ Archives du Musée des Atp.

séquences opératoires de préférence aux évocations «tirées de la vie même». On ne saurait donc lui opposer l'expographie moderne et notamment les scénographies de substitution alors qu'il avait lui-même anticipé, à la limite de ce que pouvait tolérer le milieu de ses collègues de la Direction des Musées de France, par ces «unités écologiques» qui recueillent depuis 1975, et encore maintenant, au Musée national des Arts et traditions populaires, le même succès qu'avaient recueilli, à la fin du siècle dernier au Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro, les reconstitutions de HAMY.

Cela n'est que dans le début des années soixante, au vu de l'intérêt que le public continuait à manifester pour les «dioramas» et les «tableaux vivants», mais surtout par la prise de conscience que les ethnographes manifestaient beaucoup moins de rigueur dans leurs collectes de terrain que les archéologues de la préhistoire, que RIVIÈRE décida d'aller plus loin que la reconstitution, de recueillir ce qu'il a appelé des «unités écologiques» et de les restituer intégralement dans l'exposition. L'*objet-témoin* est alors devenu l'*unité écologique* dans sa globalité. Et, ce faisant, nous semblons baigner dans la plus complète objectivité.

Quelques années plus tard, par une novation encore plus radicale, celle des écomusées, Georges Henri RIVIÈRE offrira aux muséologues la possibilité de maintenir sur place les unités écologiques, tout en les multipliant: les fondements même du musée classique, avec ses «prélèvements sur le vif» seront alors mis en cause.

Examinons toutefois d'un peu plus près s'il n'est pas quelques limites aux unités écologiques.

Première remarque: que l'on recueille la totalité d'un milieu ou qu'on n'en extraie qu'un élément, on n'en prélève qu'une partie, parce qu'il est toujours impossible de définir les limites d'un milieu, parce qu'un milieu est toujours situé dans un autre milieu, parce que plusieurs milieux se côtoient, se chevauchent et se superposent.

Seconde remarque: une unité écologique peut-elle prétendre être tout un fragment de la réalité? est-il possible de découper physiquement un morceau de la réalité? N'en délaisse-t-on pas nécessairement plus qu'on ne le souhaiterait? Tout d'abord par impossibilité matérielle. On n'emportera pas la totalité des déchets de la vie, ni des poussières, ni les odeurs, ni les bruits –même si on enregistre des bruits témoins–, et surtout, même dans le cas des unités écologique maintenues *in situ*, ne manquera-t-il pas toujours la vie, même si des êtres vivants sont naturalisés ou lyophilisés – même si les visites sont faites par des personnes revêtues d'habits aussi authentiques que le reste de la matière muséale.

Mais, troisième remarque, au-delà de ces limites, presque épistémologiques, ce maximum que l'on peut offrir restera forcément limité aux aspects matériels. On touche là sans doute la limite la plus grave du genre, car elle atteint les limites même de la muséalisation traditionnelle, du fait que le musée s'est institué essentiellement sur la «vraie chose»,

Quatrième remarque: il n'est peut-être pas inutile de se demander également si les limites de la restitution d'unités écologiques ne sont pas inhérentes aux méthodes de la discipline elle-même, impliquant qu'un choix soit fait des lieux d'enquêtes et de collecte, des témoins interrogés et de la nature des questions qui leur sont posées. La collecte et la restitution d'un savoir faire, par exemple, sont des processus qui se veulent objectifs, mais celui qui communique son savoir faire, comme celui qui le recueille peuvent-ils être objectifs? Le premier ne communique-t-il pas ce qu'il sait en se mettant, même à son insu, en représentation? Le second, quoi qu'il en veuille, ne collecte-t-il pas ses informations en étant persuadé qu'il recueille quelque chose de rare et qu'il fait quelque chose qui ne pourra plus se faire? Autre exemple: si, en même temps que l'on collecte des objets-témoins, on réalise un film qui en sera le complément audiovisuel, il est bien évident que la durée de chaque étape d'un processus opératoire, aussi bien que celle des temps morts

séparant chaque étape, sont très variables d'un individu à l'autre. Or, comme on filme rarement la continuité intégrale du temps écoulé du début à la fin d'un processus, quel moment privilégié choisira-t-on en vue d'une restitution? celui prétendu de l'individu étudié avec la collecte? ou un moment moyen découplant d'une étude théorique plus globale?

Ces remarques étant faites, il n'en reste pas moins que l'objet est indissociable de son contexte dans le musée, pour les mêmes raisons que l'objet de la recherche ne peut être l'objet isolé. Et il en va de même lorsque l'on passe à l'objet dans l'exposition. L'objet ne peut se passer de contexte.

L'objet étant physiquement cerné, c'est alors que nous pouvons nous interroger sur le sens qu'il a – ou qu'il peut prendre. Vieille interrogation puisque, déjà pour SAINT THOMAS D'AQUIN, *toute image mentait et seul comptait le sens qu'on lui donnait*. Mais il nous faut bien y revenir sans cesse puisque, depuis qu'existent des collectes et des expositions, les objets continuent à être détournés de leur sens ou, plus précisément, on leur attribue ou leur laisse attribuer un sens subjectivement.

Comme le rappelait, il y a vingt-cinq ans, dans un important article de la revue *Museum*, Jean GABUS, alors à la tête du Musée d'Ethnographie de Neuchâtel, mais aussi, avant son successeur Jacques HAINARD, un de ceux qui ont le plus contribué à faire progresser la muséographie: «*L'objet n'est jamais dû au hasard, il est le témoin de quelque chose ou de quelqu'un. [...] Cet objet-témoin communique ce qu'il sait, si nous savons l'interroger*». Et, après avoir rappelé les conditions d'une bonne enquête de terrain, pour bien préparer une restitution dans l'exposition, GABUS terminait, lapidaire: «*Aucun objet n'est gratuit*»¹⁴.

Ce que beaucoup oublie, par contre, c'est qu'un «témoin» n'est pas un simple «échantillon», mais qu'il a des choses à dire, qu'il doit parler – même s'il attend qu'on le questionne pour s'exprimer – et qu'il ne faut pas se contenter de l'enfermer avec ses pareils sans l'inviter à dire ce qu'il sait.

¹⁴ Gabus, Jean, «Principes esthétiques et préparation des expositions pédagogiques», *Museum*, 1965, XVIII, 1, pp. 1-59 et 2, pp. 65-97 (pp. 41-42). Repris dans: *L'Objet témoin. Les références d'une civilisation par l'objet*. Neuchâtel, Ides et Calendes, 1975; et dans: *Vagues*, Macon, Mnes, t. 1, 1992, pp. 337-386.

C'est pourtant ce qui s'est fait pendant des années dans les musées, et ce qui s'y fait encore le plus souvent. Respecte-t-on la «neutralité scientifique» dont on se targue lorsque l'on s'attache au seul objet sorti de son contexte? Une «neutralité scientifique» absolue, dans notre discipline, devrait consister à isoler l'objet *in vitro* afin que sa lecture ne soit polluée par aucune interférence externe, comme il est de règle dans les sciences exactes. Mais il y a fort à parier que ce procédé nous ferait aboutir à une impasse, car il implique que l'objet que l'on isole soit non seulement un objet fini, mais aussi un objet sans vie et un objet dont la mémoire se restitue sans défaillance, sur commande. Or nous avons constaté qu'il n'en était rien, dès lors que nous avons affaire aux sciences humaines, les analyses n'étant pas si simples, les objets que nous avons à traiter n'ayant généralement d'autre existence que celle qui leur vient de l'extérieur. Les philosophes ont écrit des volumes sur ce point.

Quant à la mémoire de l'objet, nous savons bien aussi que l'objet, une fois sorti de son contexte, ne nous dira que ce que nous lui ferons dire et que, ne le questionnant que sur ce que nous savions déjà, il ne saurait répondre à des questions que nous ne lui posons pas. La seule mémoire lisible par nous, nous l'avons vu, la seule que nous pouvons déchiffrer, c'est celle de son environnement, de son milieu, de son contexte. Il faut se rendre à l'évidence: *dès lors qu'il est arraché à son milieu, dès qu'il se trouve suspendu, l'objet perd tout sens autre que plastique, et le sens qu'il revêt n'est forcément plus objectif.* Nous n'avons donc d'autre issue que d'étudier et de conserver –voire de transporter– notre objet témoin avec tout son contexte¹⁵. Lorsqu'il ne s'agissait que d'étude, le contexte pouvait se limiter à de la documentation (écrite, graphique ou sonore); dès lors qu'il s'agit de muséalisation, c'est tout le contexte qui devient le témoin, qui devient l'objet.

Le contexte donnant irréfutablement son sens à l'objet, par l'enquête comme par la collecte, celui qu'il aura conservé ou celui qu'on lui affectera dans l'expo-

¹⁵ A ce propos nous nous devons de rappeler un fait significatif du malheur de la perte d'identité pour un objet. Lors de la ventilation des collections saisies par l'Etat pendant la Révolution les objets considérés comme les plus précieux ont été versés au Musée du Louvre ou au Cabinet des Médailles de la Bibliothèque nationale. Certains, considérés comme moins précieux, ou trop récents, l'ont été au Muséum d'histoire naturelle, lorsque l'on considérait que leurs matériaux constitutifs avaient un intérêt pour ce musée. C'est ainsi qu'une petite jatte en «bois de Madre» (= de Madère) s'est retrouvée au Muséum, sans doute parce que faite d'un bois exotique, et non pas dans une section ethnologique, alors qu'elle provenait du roi Saint Louis et était censée transmettre des qualités curatives aux liquides qui y séjournaient avant d'être bus. N'appartenant pas à des catégories normalement et clairement constituées du Muséum, cette jatte a disparu un jour, sans doute prise pour un simple objet utilitaire, pouvant servir à mettre des couleurs ou des colles. Cette affectation, qui n'avait pas été complètement stupide sur le plan de la discipline, s'est avérée tout à fait néfaste sur le plan de la conservation.

sition sera nécessairement de la première importance. Mais quel contexte? On ne peut jamais prétendre être complet, pas plus qu'on ne peut prétendre être tout à fait neutre. On ne peut jamais, quoi qu'on en veuille, que témoigner le plus impartialement possible. Que l'on ait prélevé deux mille objets d'un même ensemble, ou qu'on n'en ait prélevé qu'un seul! Simplement, la marge d'interprétation est de moins en moins grande lorsque la masse d'unités d'objets isolables est plus grande et, au contraire, si le témoignage est ramené à un seul objet, au sens classique, la marge offerte à l'interprétation personnelle est sans conteste la plus grande.

Je me dois ici de reprendre une fois de plus le texte, si souvent cité, de Jacques HAINARD, dans «*Objets prétextes, objets manipulés*»¹⁶. Si j'insiste, c'est que ce texte de 1984 a été discuté par le critique d'art Yves MICHAUD¹⁷, lequel avait apparemment feint de ne pas le comprendre. En effet, après avoir ironisé sur les fameuses phrases: «*L'objet n'est la vérité de rien du tout. Polyfonctionnel d'abord, polysémique ensuite, il ne prend de sens que mis dans un contexte...*», Yves MICHAUD a montré qu'il savait bien de quoi il était question puisqu'il a terminé sa critique en écrivant: «*L'objet est en réalité la vérité de ses contextes: de ses contextes de création, de production, d'existence, de commande et de justification sociale*». Simplement, même s'il a reconnu qu'un objet pouvait être regardé avec des sens seconds et finir sa vie comme objet décoratif –voire comme objet de musée–, n'étant pas anthropologue –après, tout, chacun son métier–, MICHAUD ignorait sans doute qu'un même vase pouvait servir à recueillir, à transporter et à conserver de l'eau, à conserver des grains, à préparer et même à cuire des aliments – ... et qu'un récepteur de télévision peut aussi bien servir à regarder les résultats du «loto» qu'à faire la révolution à Bucarest. Sans prétendre à l'exhaustivité, Martin R. SCHÄRER résume ainsi «*Le contexte culturel de l'objet révèle la complexité de sa valeur sémantique. Un objet peut avoir des valeurs très différentes, qui se modifient en outre constamment au cours de son exis-*

¹⁶ Hainard, Jacques, «*La revanche du conservateur*», dans: *Objets prétextes, objets manipulés*. Neuchâtel (Suisse), Musée d'ethnographie, 1984, pp. 183-191 (p. 189). Repris dans *Vagues 2*, 1994, pp. 393-404.

¹⁷ Dans: *L'artiste et les commissaires*. Nîmes, Edit. Jacqueline Chambon, 1989, 248. (p. 162).

tence. On pourrait citer les valeurs matérielle, technique, utilitaire, novatrice, esthétique, affective, sociale, mythique, religieuse, historique, didactique, scientifique»¹⁸.

Mais le comble c'est que la critique par MICHAUD d'une vision anthropologique de l'objet venait à propos de l'exposition sur «*Les années 50*», au Centre Georges Pompidou. Et en effet si l'on pouvait faire un reproche à cette exposition, c'était bien celui d'avoir traité les objets de cette décennie comme s'ils n'avaient pas eu d'existence. Ils n'ont été considérés ni en tant qu'objets qui se voudraient d'art appliqué ou de création industrielle et auraient été magnifiés comme tels, ni en tant qu'objets techniques fournissant avec eux leur part de connaissances intrinsèques, ni même en tant qu'objets d'intérêt ethnographique, exigeant en effet une contextualisation. Tout juste pouvaient-ils prétendre servir de décor d'ambiance.

On peut voir, ici ou là, plus d'un étalage d'instruments aratoires et autres machines agricoles, souvent anciens, certains pouvant même être considérés comme beaux du point de vue de la création industrielle. Et après? n'y aurait-il rien de plus à en dire? De tels exemples peuvent être multipliés de présentations de collections d'automobiles, de bateaux ou de postes de radio, expositions parfois remarquables sur le plan esthétique, mais généralement aussi peu explicites que celles de la plupart des musées de techniques ou de sciences, à l'exception d'un certain nombre de musées des sciences de la vie. Comme si les témoins de ces disciplines se comprenaient, hors de l'espace et hors du temps! Comme si un instrument agricole ou une automobile n'avaient d'existence que formelle, et surtout comme si ces objets pouvaient se comprendre sans référence à leur date et à leur lieu de création, de fabrication, d'acquisition et d'utilisation! Même si ce type d'exposition prétend à l'objectivité, il semble bien que le résultat n'en soit pas plus neutre que dans le cas des anciennes présentations de collections ethnographiques. Il offre toute la partialité de son incomplétude.

Tout concourt donc, dès que l'on passe à la mise en exposition, à ce que les problèmes de contexte ne se limi-

¹⁸ SCHÄRER, Martin R., «*La forme: le média musée*», in *700 ans au menu*, Vevey (Suisse), Alimentarium, 1991, pp. 43-65 (46).

tent plus à ceux des unités écologiques et de transferts directs du milieu physique à l'espace du musée. En effet, si les aspects les plus visibles des cultures ont longtemps accaparé le principal de l'intérêt des chercheurs et des conservateurs, l'évolution des sciences humaines ne permet plus d'en rester là. Tous les témoins de la vie matérielle et des expressions rituelles, qui étaient l'objectif essentiel des collectes, ne peuvent plus suffire à exprimer la vie dans tous ses aspects. Et, dès lors que le matériel se raréfie, apparaît le cauchemar de l'expographe. Ou du moins la nécessité d'avoir recours à son imagination.

Car ou bien il se contente de montrer le peu d'objets dont il dispose comme témoins, et qui deviennent des signes, ou bien il évoque, par une recreation, les phénomènes observés qu'il doit restituer. Il est bien évident que, dans la première hypothèse, il ne parlera qu'aux initiés, dont il excitera l'imagination, mais ce n'est sans doute pas le seul but recherché. Dans la seconde hypothèse, il devra faire appel à un maximum de substituts et de techniques de substitution.

Je ne reviens pas sur les problèmes posés par la restitution du contenu *in situ* et qui se veut objective. Par contre, lorsque ce mode de restitution n'est pas envisageable, plusieurs autres mises en contexte sont possibles: – ou bien d'une création esthétique, et qui joue sur le sensible; mangue un tigne (voir, texte original) autre façon de poser le problème–, souhaitez-vous une contextualisation qui oppose ou une contextualisation qui rapproche?

Nous pouvons être tentés de passer très vite sur la mise en contexte de caractère esthétique car elle n'en paraît pas une, du point de vue qui est nôtre. Le contexte créé par l'aménagement de l'espace architectural, de l'espace formel dans lequel s'inscrivent nos expôts ne nous concerne pas *a priori*, sauf pour ses effets pervers, à savoir la pollution qu'il inflige à notre discours.

Et pourtant, peut-être ne pouvons-nous rejeter ce mode d'expression qu'après en avoir mesuré les limites. En effet, dans l'article déjà cité, Jean GABUS n'évoquait-il pas l'apport qu'il attendait de l'artiste à côté

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de celui des scientifiques: «*En questionnant le monde de l'art, fait de sentiments, d'émotions parfois géniales, de tant d'éléments subjectifs, nous courions quelques risques. La scrupuleuse objectivité, réduite à une simple opération d'inventoriage avec ce qu'elle comporte d'excuses trop faciles à l'absence d'imagination ou d'esprit de synthèse, en serait peut-être compromise. Ces risques sont ceux de la recherche, et s'ils nous valent un peu de cette émotion qui rayonne de chaque être, s'ils nous font sentir sans même que ce soit nécessairement exprimé, 'une pensée, un geste comme les miens, des hommes!', alors nous ne faisons que nous approcher de la vérité*»¹⁹.

GABUS avait sans doute raison et il savait de quoi il parlait en opposant «*la scrupuleuse objectivité*» à «*l'absence d'imagination ou d'esprit de synthèse*». Nous avons vu ce que pouvait exprimer cette «*scrupuleuse objectivité*», ou plutôt ce qu'elle n'exprimait pas, et il a bien fallu la dépasser pour avancer. Mais GABUS savait aussi mesurer tous les risques de l'imagination. Il semble qu'il soit rarement tombé – pour ne pas dire jamais – dans le travers de la décoration-décorante et qu'il n'ait jamais usé des objets comme le font trop les décorateurs – «pour faire joli», puisant dans les réserves comme ils feraient dans un magasin d'accessoires.

C'est en effet au nom de l'objectivité ou de la neutralité que nous avons connu tout d'abord les panoplies, puis les présentations taxonomiques. Dans l'une comme dans l'autre, l'objet ne disait rien d'autre que l'évocation de l'idée d'étrangeté, d'exotisme, parfois même de monstruosité. Il n'était rien. Ou plutôt, puisque l'on trahissait, par défaut, sa réalité, sa vérité, tout en se croyant objectif, on portait en fait et on faisait porter sur lui un regard tout ce qu'il y a de subjectif, que ce soit le regard de l'esthétique ou celui de la domination culturelle, que cette domination fût coloniale ou simplement attachée à une histoire sociale.

La question se pose par contre de savoir quel niveau de vérité pouvait être atteinte au stade de la «synthèse», stade que Georges Henri RIVIÈRE considérait comme «le seul valable pour les masses»²⁰. Pour lui, en

¹⁹ GABUS, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

²⁰ Rivière, Georges Henri, «Les musées de folklore à l'étranger et le futur musée français des Arts et Traditions populaires», in *Revue de Folklore français et de Folklore colonial*, mai-juin 1936, pp. 58-71. Voir aussi: «Non pas une somme des musées régionaux mais un musée de synthèse...» (Atp, Arch).

une première période, la synthèse se faisait grâce à la documentation et aux textes d'accompagnement, qui apportaient le contexte. Certes, sur le plan scientifique, c'était un grand progrès, et le but était bien de tendre à un maximum d'objectivité. Mais était-ce suffisant pour lui? Sans doute pas puisqu'il fit évoluer notre expographie plus avant. souvenons-nous des deux fronts qui formaient l'instrumentation principale de RIVIÈRE: d'une part *la neutralisation de l'objet isolé par rapport à son contexte architectural*, et d'autre part *la situation de l'objet comme partie intégrante de son contexte d'origine*²¹. C'est en s'appuyant sur ce socle que s'est faite l'évolution et que le dépassement s'est produit, mais les armes ont changé, parce que les exigences du public (des publics) ont changé, et parce que la discipline aussi a évolué, modifiant la nature du problème.

Outre les exigences afférant à la complexité des données de la recherche, on ne peut méconnaître les réserves que faisait Pär KAKS, dans le texte cité précédemment: cette dure réalité selon laquelle, quoi qu'on fasse, la prétention à choisir scientifiquement les témoins est oblitérée par le fait que les critères qui ont présidé à ces choix, ainsi que les conditions de la collecte, restent subjectifs, empêchant d'atteindre l'objectivité recherchée. C'est pourquoi, en matière d'exposition, la question de la vérité est scientifiquement plus importante que celle de l'authenticité et c'est pourquoi les reconstitutions que constituent les «scènes de rue» (parties de Vancouver à partir de 1965 et répandues dans tout le Canada) témoignent de la même démarche en direction du public que les «unités écologiques», même si les éléments en sont surtout des substituts.

Plus riche en contenu toutefois est l'expographie dynamique apparue elle aussi, semble-t-il, d'abord en Scandinavie, puis en Amérique du Nord, notamment dans les centres d'interprétation des parcs, et que l'on retrouve parfois dans certaines des expositions du Musée national d'Histoire américaine, à Washington, au musée de l'Etat de New-York, à Albany (USA) et

²¹ Voir DESVALLÉES, *op. cit.*, note (8).

surtout dans celles du nouveau Musée de la Civilisation, à Québec. En France, c'est le Musée Dauphinois de Grenoble, avec les «scénographies» de Jean-Pierre LAURENT, qui a ouvert la voie à cette expographie dynamique. L'un des moyens utilisés est de ne pas trop se soucier du caractère original ou non des expôts, l'objectif étant d'exprimer et non de conserver. Les agrandissements photographiques, les sons ou les personnages en costume peuvent se mêler à des reproductions d'objets tout autant qu'à des objets authentiques, dans le seul but de l'efficacité du discours. Les «mise en situation» ne sont plus seulement de milieux physiques, comme dans les réalisations de Georges Henri RIVIÈRE. Mais, quels que soient les expôts et leur nature, la question de la vérité se pose dans les mêmes termes qu'avec des objets originaux. Simplement la souplesse des moyens permet de dire beaucoup plus de choses et d'évoquer plus aisément des questions qui échappent à la simple culture matérielle.

Toutefois, quel que soit le parti choisi, n'a-t-on pas tendance à méconnaître la subjectivité du visiteur-spectateur, lequel ne peut évidemment percevoir que ce qu'on lui laisse voir, ne peut comprendre que ce qu'on lui laisse entendre, mais, au-delà de toute l'information qui lui est éventuellement fournie, ne fera jamais qu'une lecture subjective? Après l'exigence de vérité au niveau de la restitution, l'essentiel réside évidemment dans la qualité du regard porté sur l'objet. L'éclairage donné induit la perception, certes, mais ne la conditionne pas au point d'exclure la liberté du regard. Chacun sait que le visiteur voit mal et lit encore plus mal. De ce fait il ne prend qu'une petite partie de ce qu'il lui est donné à voir, et fait l'appoint de ce qu'on veut lui signifier, avec ce qu'il sait et sent déjà de lui-même. Quelle que soit la puissance des messages que les concepteurs souhaitent délivrer, seule une toute petite partie est reçue.

Qui plus est, les connaissances qu'apporte le spectateur lui sont indispensables pour décrypter ce qui lui est montré: plus il saura déjà et plus sa «lecture» sera enrichie. Et si l'on doit compléter les

témoins d'un environnement, c'est non seulement pour essayer de substituer ce dernier à toutes les informations que ne donnent pas les témoins recueillis et restitués, mais aussi pour éclairer le spectateur dont le bagage culturel serait insuffisant. Par contre, il peut arriver que la situation soit inversée et que ce soit le public qui ait la plus grande connaissance du contenu. C'est ce qui se produit généralement dans les musées d'identité et notamment dans les écomusées. Pour de tels musées en effet les spectateurs peuvent être aussi les concepteurs. Ce sont donc eux qui définissent l'image muséale qu'ils veulent non seulement construire pour eux-même, mais également donner à voir aux autres. Cette image, même si elle utilise certaines certitudes scientifiques, se construit surtout avec la mémoire collective.

Si l'on revient aux sources et si le musée reprend la sainte obligation, qu'il avait abandonnée depuis plusieurs décennies, de suivre de plus près l'évolution de la recherche dans la discipline qui est la sienne, on en arrive vite à remettre en question à la fois le contenu de la collecte et la forme de l'exposition ethnographique. Car l'approfondissement de notre discipline, comme celle de nombreuses autres sciences, nous a appris à être beaucoup plus modestes vis à vis de ce que l'on concevait comme étant objet.

Nous savons à présent que poser la question de l'objectivité est poser un faux problème, car, de même que les historiens savent désormais qu'ils ne pourront plus oser entreprendre ce que leurs anciens appelaient «la résurrection du passé» par des fresques que l'on pouvait même ambitionner de reconstituer en des expositions; de même qu'en histoire l'objectivité est désormais constituée de l'addition de multiples témoignages particuliers, en anthropologie, où l'observation participante est de règle, prétendre à l'objectivité exige en outre de prendre en considération le rapport entre le témoin interrogé et l'enquêteur interrogant. *«Considérées dans leur globalité, remarque Marc AUGÉ, les cultures ne sont pas faites pour dialoguer; pour au moins deux raisons: si elles parlaient, elles*

ne parleraient pas la même langue; en outre, elles ne parlent pas, sauf au sens métaphorique: ce sont des hommes qui les parlent, ou plutôt qui en parlent, directement parfois, indirectement par leur pratique; et aucun d'eux n'en dit la totalité. Celle-ci est toujours reconstruite par des observateurs extérieurs [...]»²². Limites pour le chercheur, ce sont bien là aussi les limites de l'exposition ethnographique – et peut-être davantage de l'exposition historique: d'une part il faut construire le signifiant métaphoriquement à partir de signifiés qui ne disent que leur forme, d'autre part pas plus le visiteur-spectateur que le médiateur et que l'enquêteur ne peuvent s'abstraire de ce qu'ils savent. Comment par exemple transposer dans l'exposition le démarche ethnographique telle que la décrit D. SPERBER: «L'ethnologue essaie d'accorder ce qu'il pense que les gens pensent avec ce qu'il pense que lui-même penserait s'il était vraiment l'un d'entre eux?»²³. Et comment combiner la diversité des points de vue et la variation dans le temps à la fois des mêmes points de vue et les changements que connaît le terrain lui-même?

Cette situation complexe nous conduit à une réalité objective dont l'analyse implique trop de paramètres: réalité déjà difficile à prendre en considération dans les observations de terrain et quasiment impossible à transposer en langage d'exposition, sauf de laisser entendre que tout regard doit être relativisé.

C'est pourquoi, à partir du moment où il s'avère qu'il n'est de regard que relatif, il nous faut dépasser toute conception primaire et réductrice pour prendre en considération la remise à zéro qu'a faite pour nous tous Jacques HAINARD au Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel (Suisse), en nous rappelant que l'objet est polysémique et en nous proposant, derrière le concept de «muséologie de la rupture», une nouvelle expo-graphie qui généralise un moyen d'expression que certains n'ont utilisé qu'en des occasions exceptionnelles. Ce nouveau langage mérite pourtant la plus grande attention de la part des acteurs actuels des musées d'anthropologie.

²² *Op. cit.*, p. 107.

²³ In: *Le savoir des anthropologues*. Paris, Hermann, 1982. cité par LENCLUD, *op. cit.*, p. 59.



Fig. 1: Musée
d'ethnographie, Neuchâtel
Exposition *Si...*
5 juin 1993-9 janvier 1994
5.2. *On a gagné!*
Le terrain du sportif
©1993 Photo
Alain Germond, Neuchâtel

Associer et opposer: tel est le parti utilisé pour faire parler les objets dans les expositions du Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel. Les expôts sont retenus en raison de leur possibilités de dialoguer avec d'autres expôts et de faire naître du sens, par la comparaison de leurs similitudes ou de leurs différences. De même que les informations inscrites sur les disques de l'ordinateur ne peuvent être connues si on ne les met au jour au moyen d'un courant électrique qui relie toutes les informations des disques, de même l'objet, l'expôt, ne peut livrer ce qu'il porte comme informations que si un courant passe entre lui et d'autres objets, d'autres expôts, qui lui sont visuellement proches et forment un contexte lisible par nous (même s'il est parfois à plusieurs degrés de lecture). La reconstitution de tavernes (Fig. 1) ou d'intérieurs domestiques typiquement suisses (dans l'expo-

sition *Si*, 1993), dans un contexte universel de questionnement sur le «sens commun» et les propos de «café du commerce», en disent plus long sur l'identité suisse et les différences qu'un tableau vivant de musée régional ou local. Le rapprochement d'un bureau de chercheur (Fig. 2) et d'un salon de coopérant en dit long sur le travail de l'ethnologue (*Le Salon de l'ethnographie*, 1989).



Fig. 2: Musée d'ethnographie, Neuchâtel
Exposition *Le SALON de l'ethnographie*. 3 juin 1989-7 janvier 1990.

6.4. LEREGARD MARCHAND DES VALUEUX CONFIRMES
Vue partielle de la paroi nord: pensé en terme de décor, l'objet est décor comme le décor est lui-même objet de l'exposition. A droite: Dérive vers la gloire. De la case au Collège de France.
(Photo Alain Germond, Neuchâtel).

Mais le contexte dont il est ici question n'est plus seulement le premier degré de contexte physique cher à RIVIÈRE, c'est un contexte intellectuel. Un pilon ne dit rien de son usage s'il n'est accompagné de son mortier. Et le mortier, qui peut n'être qu'un récipient ou un support, ne dit rien de son usage s'il n'est accompagné de son pilon. Mais le sens, comme il en est de la poésie chez LAUTRÉAMONT, peut naître de rapprochements plus inattendus: celui, désormais célèbre, d'un piège à démon tibétain et d'un confessionnal catholique de Fribourg permet d'éclairer à la fois la psychanalyse et le rite de la confession (*Le Mal et la Douleur*, 1986); celui d'un ballon de football et

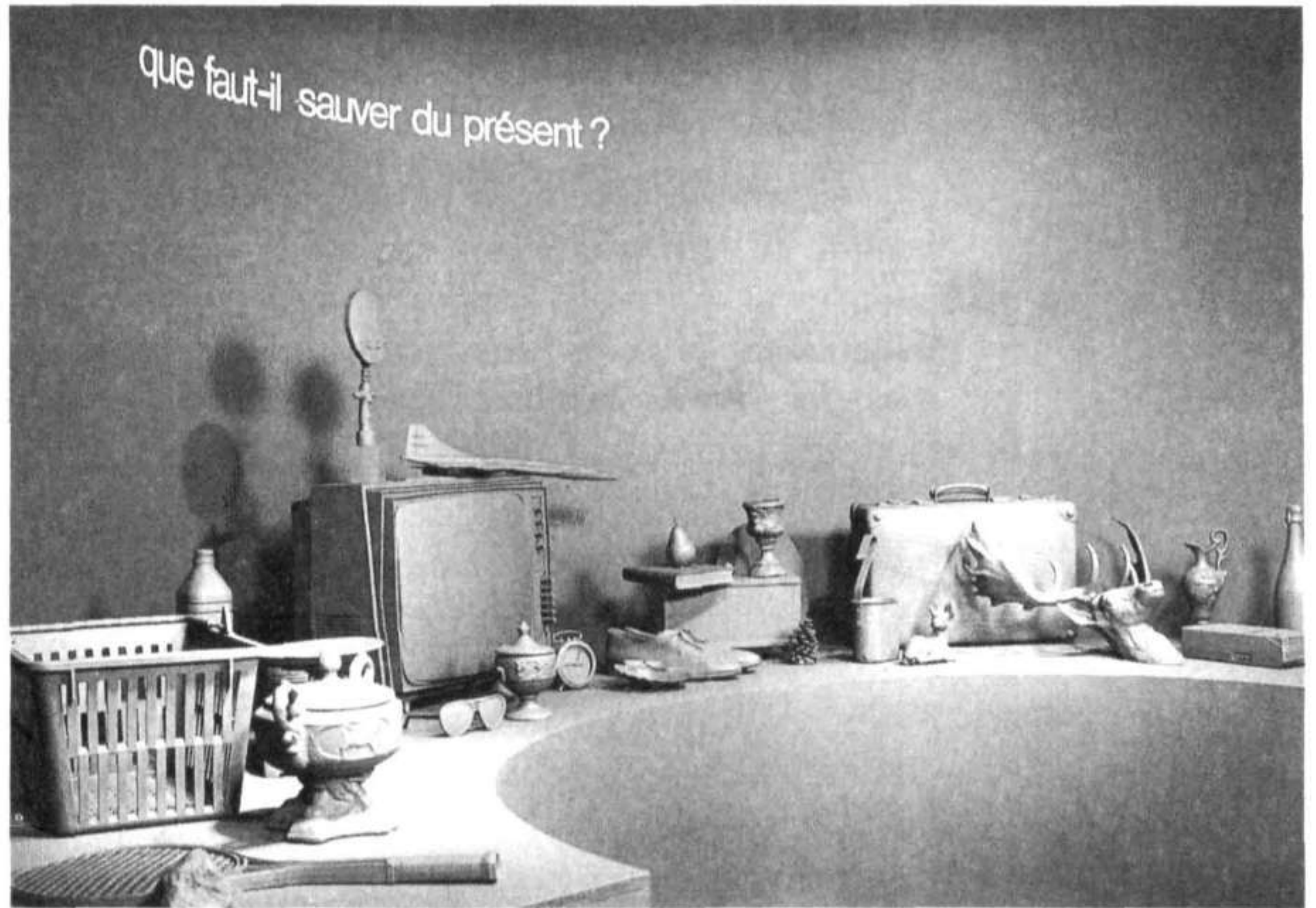
d'une sculpture masculine africaine nous éclaire sur le conditionnement sexiste des petits garçons et des petites filles (*Les femmes*, 1992).

Cependant le contexte peut aussi naître de l'utilisation de moyens extérieurs aux objets, mais non gratuitement décoratifs, lesquels deviennent eux-mêmes signifiants: couleurs neutralisant un objet ou un ensemble pour les banaliser (*Temps perdu, temps retrouvé*, 1985 (Fig. 3); *Le Salon de l'ethnographie*, 1989), mise sous cadre d'objets ordinaires pour faire comme s'ils étaient des oeuvres d'art (*Le Salon de l'ethnographie*) (Fig. 2)...

Il est bien certain qu'à y regarder de loin le parti de telles expositions peut paraître subjectif dans la mesure où les choix qui dictent les rapprochements peuvent être personnels. Mais certaines «scénographies», sont-elles plus personnelles que celles qui constituent les *installations* des artistes plasticiens. Dans ce dernier cas, les oeuvres sont alors considérées comme des «créations»: les oeuvres d'art ayant toujours été considérées comme des métaphores de la réalité, pourquoi les métaphores que constituent de telles installations de nature ethnographique seraient-elles moins valables que d'autres métaphores, exposées dans un musée d'art contemporain?

Et qu'on ne nous parle pas à nouveau de subjectivité: c'est un débat désormais bien dépassé qui consisterait à clouer au pilori celui qui n'a pas la même religion. Jacques HAINARD s'accuse lui-même de manipuler. Certes, il manipule avec ses mains, comme quiconque utilise des objets et fait des expositions! Mais est-ce vraiment manipuler, au sens figuré et péjoratif, que de faire dire à ce qui sort des réserves des musées autre chose que ce que dit l'épiderme des expôts? Souvenons-nous de la façon dont une exposition comme *Le Trou* (1990, sans doute la plus riche de sens) (Fig. 4) fouillait les moindres replis obscurs du «moi» dans ses pulsions et dans son imaginaire. Et surtout, est-ce manipuler que d'exposer des points de vue relatifs sur un même fait (pensons par exemple

Fig. 3: 15a Musée d'ethnographie, Neuchâtel
Exposition «*Temps perdu, temps retrouve: du côté de l'ethno...*»
1 juin 1985-5 janvier 1986
Que faut-il sauver du présent?
(Photo A. Germond, Neuchâtel).



aux différents modes d'approche de l'objet d'intérêt ethnographique, dans *le Salon de l'ethnographie*).

Chacun peut donc témoigner s'il le fait avec rigueur, s'il respecte l'obligation de signer son témoignage et de ne pas prétendre le donner comme vérité

Fig. 4: Musée d'ethnographie, Neuchâtel
Exposition *Le trou*
2 juin 1990-6 janvier 1991
17.1 Toilettes
Salle du trône.
©1990 Photo Alain Germond, Neuchâtel.



absolue. Il en est finalement du matériel récolté et de son exposition comme d'une partition musicale, puisque celle-ci n'existe que si elle est interprétée. Et chacun sait toutes les différences que l'on peut rencontrer d'une interprétation à l'autre – surtout si les interprètes sont multiples. Par contre si l'on ne veut pas voir s'accroître le décalage entre la discipline scientifique et son illustration muséale, il faut s'empresse d'abandonner le mode d'exposition simplement descriptive, aussi bien au bénéfice du musée que de celui de ses visiteurs.

Il existe certes d'autres musées où l'on cherche à abolir le décalage entre recherche et musée, où l'on conçoit des expositions réflexives. Je citerai, par exemple: le Musée Dauphinois de Grenoble (France), le Musée de la Civilisation de Québec (Canada), l'Alimentarium de Vevey (Suisse), le Marischal Museum de l'Université d'Aberdeen (Grande Bretagne) et quelques autres musées britanniques²⁴ et nord américains. Et il est aussi un certain nombre d'expositions temporaires qui oeuvrent dans le même sens. C'est toutefois la conception de l'exposition pratiquée au Musée de Neuchâtel qui permet le mieux de mettre en comparaison, aussi bien qu'en opposition, les traits culturels de civilisations, de sociétés, de groupes ethniques différents. Si l'expression de la diversité culturelle dans l'unité humaine est devenue le propos du musée-d'ethnographie, il pourra beaucoup mieux exprimer ce propos en se renouvelant qu'il ne le pouvait avec les précédents langages.

Veillons simplement à ce que, dans nos expositions, les excès de la médiatisation n'étouffent pas les exigences de la science et que soit bien conservée la saine rigueur et l'honnêteté qui ne sont déjà peut-être plus de mise dans le domaine voisin de l'audiovisuel. Car, nous l'observons chaque jour, et en chaque pays, après l'heure de la muséographie-recherche, nous sommes en train de passer directement à la muséographie-spectacle. Mais, si l'assaut de la décoration-décorante a brouillé les cartes en réintroduisant l'esthétisme que l'exigence scientifique avait réussi à

²⁴ Cités par Anthony SHELTON dans *Il faut construire le village planétaire*, in *Museum Journal*, août 1992. Traduit in *Vagues* 2, pp. 453-465.

chasser, la révision d'un langage que l'on voulait objectif et qui deviendrait relatif ne permettrait-elle pas de tenir le cap?

A Québec, en septembre 1992, lors de la sixième conférence générale de l'ICOM, la question a été posée de savoir si le musée avait des limites. Il a été répondu qu'il n'avait que celles qu'il se donnait. Ce qui s'applique au musée en général, s'applique encore davantage au musée d'ethnographie. Les seules limites qu'il peut recevoir, comme d'autres catégories de musées, sont celles qui le séparent de l'audiovisuel pur.

VON

DER KURIOSITÄT ZUM STUDIENOBJEKT

Angelika Tunis

Museum für Völkerkunde

ABSTRACT

The evolution of German Anthropological or Ethnographic Museums is not much different from that of its European neighbours; from 16th century «curiosity cabinets» and/or the royal private collections to the present public edifices. The German public collections are dispersed throughout some 40 different museums and universities. Included in this number one does find a small handful of highly specialised institutions such as the Leather Museum and Textile Museum.

The great German impetus, in the late 19th century, to construct Public Buildings to house the Ethnographic riches of a nation is directly traceable to the influence of Adolf Bastian. For it was he, who successfully argued, that Ethnography was a discipline and should have its own university curricula and the discipline's materials should be housed in its own

buildings. What is most important and still a very useful guide line for today's museum worker is Bastian's concept of a Museum as a living laboratory, or what we can in today's vernacular term «Dynamic Archiv» for the study of Man.

The growth of Germany's Ethnographic Museums is hardly one of continuity. Like most cultural institutions the Museums have also enjoyed and suffered periods of expansion, retrenchment, due to wars, unstable governments, depressions, and now the reunification of Germany. The two greatest difficulties facing Bastian's hypothesis, in the present day late 20th. century, is the curtailment of public spending on culture and the changing public interest leading to a steadily decreasing attendance. Very little can be done about the former except to wait and hope for an upturn in fortune but the latter can and must be squarely met. A few of the more enterprising Museums such as the Rautenstrauch-Joest in Cologne have turned their attention to current day social questions using the anthropological or Ethno-History approach, i.e. «Smoking and Reality-Drug using compared», in an effort to combat the «ivory tower/relic» view.

In my own view, our great laboratories for the study of Mankind, not only in Germany, but throughout the world must open their eyes and utilize the products of the information revolution, much as our predecessors utilized the French and German revolutions to bring the «curiosities» out of their royal closets. I am speaking about such things as a world-wide information retrieval network, the meeting of dynamic social and continuing historical questions such as has been attempted in Cologne, and reinvigorating Bastian's concepts but with the added proviso of more strongly emphasizing the Museums as a living laboratory for the youngsters who are just beginning their public school careers which has been attempted here in Berlin.

* * *

Auch in Deutschland sind die Anfänge der Institution Museum während der Renaissance zu finden und entwickelten sich zunächst über Privatsammlungen zu privaten Kabinetten, die allein einer elitären Gesellschaft vorbehalten waren. Unter solchen berühmten Kabinetten war die Berliner Kunstammer zur Zeit des Großen Kurfürsten v. Brandenburg und Friedrichs I., also 1640-1713, weniger eine glanzvolle Schatzkammer mit wertvollsten Kleinodien, wie z. B. die Münchener Bestände in der Residenz, und auch nicht so umfassend reich bestückt mit höchsten Kostbarkeiten aus dem Bereich des Kunstgewerbes, wie z. B. die des Kaisers in Wien bzw. Schloß Ambras in Tirol. Die Brandenburgisch-preussische Sammlung enthielt neben den Werken der Kunst, den «naturalia» und Raritäten, sehr viele Erzeugnisse wissenschaftlich praktischen Zweckcharakters, was den politisch-wirtschaftlichen Umständen und Forderungen des aufstrebenden Staatswesens entsprach¹. Friedrich Wilhelm, der Große Kurfürst hatte vier Jahre seiner Jugend in den Niederlanden verbracht. In dieser Zeit lernte er die Vorteile des Seehandels kennen. An die Macht gekommen, strebte er diesem Vorbild nach. Im Herbst 1680 segelten Schiffe unter brandenburgischer Flagge die Westafrikanische Küste entlang, um an der Goldküste (heute Ghana) einen Handelsstützpunkt, die Feste Großfriedrichsburg, zu errichten². Leider ist heute nur noch zu vermuten, welche «Curiositäten» von damals in den Beständen des Museums für Wölkerkunde zu finden sind. Über Mittelsmänner kamen auch «Merkwürdigkeiten und Naturalien» aus dem süd- und ostasiatischen Raum. 1680 faßte man die erworbenen Gegenstände in einer Kunstammer zusammen. Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts begann sich auch das entstehende gebildete Bürgertum für derartige Kuriositäten und Schätze zu interessieren. Die Bürgerlichen Revolutionen, speziell die Große Revolution in Frankreich 1789, schafften den kultischen, wie höfisch-hieratischen Gebrauch der Kunstwerke ab. Die Galerien, Naturalienkabinette, Kunst- und Wunderkammern, die aus Sammelleidenschaft, vor allem zum Zwecke der Erbauung und

¹ Die Brandenburgisch-Preussische Kunstammer; SMPK Berlin, 1981.

² Bändel, D.: Seemacht Brandenburg? Holländische Schiffe für die Mark; Museums Journal III, 5. J. Berlin, 1991.

Repräsentation angelegt worden waren, sollten nun Bildungsaufgaben für breitere Schichten erfüllen. Das bedingte zunächst eine sinnvolle Gliederung und überschaubare Aufstellung der Bestände, die daraufhin in eigenen Museumsgebäuden «dem öffentlichen Gebrauche zugänglich gemacht wurden», aber noch Privatbesitz waren.

Die Errichtung eines eigenständigen Völkerkundemuseums in Berlin im Jahre 1873, das größte Museum seiner Art in Kontinental-Europa, erfolgte weder aus den «mysischen» noch aus den bildungspolitischen Bemühungen des 19. Jahrhunderts heraus. Es verdankt sein Bestehen der explizit wissenschaftlich begründeten Initiative Adolf Bastians, der in Deutschland die «Vergleichende Völkerkunde» (Ethnologie) als universitäre Disziplin institutionalisiert hat. Für Bastian, den ersten Direktor, war dieses Museum eine kulturwissenschaftliche Forschungseinrichtung mit naturwissenschaftlicher (!) Arbeitsweise, das er daher in seinen theoretischen Schriften auch als «Laboratorium» apostrophierte. Die Schausammlungen sollten niemals der Schaulust dienen, sondern einzig und allein eine Art Datenbank (er spricht von «Archiv») für die theoretische Ethnologie und andere kulturwissenschaftliche Fachrichtungen sein.

Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland besitzt eine Vielzahl von Museen mit ethnographischen Sammlungen aller Völker und Kulturen³. Zum Teil haben diese Museen ein erhebliches Alter, weil ihre Bestände auf die genannten Kabinette zurückgehen. Die «Ethnographische Sammlung» der Königlich Preussischen Kunstammer besteht seit 1829 und war gelehrten Kreisen zugänglich⁴. Die Privatsammlungen der Wirrelebacher waren als die «Königlichen Vereinigten Sammlungen», die ebenfalls noch keinen Unterschied nach europäischer oder außereuropäischer Herkunft machten, seit 1780 in der eigens erbauten Hofgartengalerie in München öffentlich zugänglich. Als Gründungsjahr des bayrischen Völkerkundemuseums gilt 1868, als die «Ethnographischen Sammlungen im

³ Stepan, Peter (ed.): Die deutschen Museen; Braunschweig 1983.

⁴ Ledebur, Leopold V.: Leitfaden für die Königl. Kunstammer und das Ethnographische Cabinet zu Berlin; Berlin 1844.

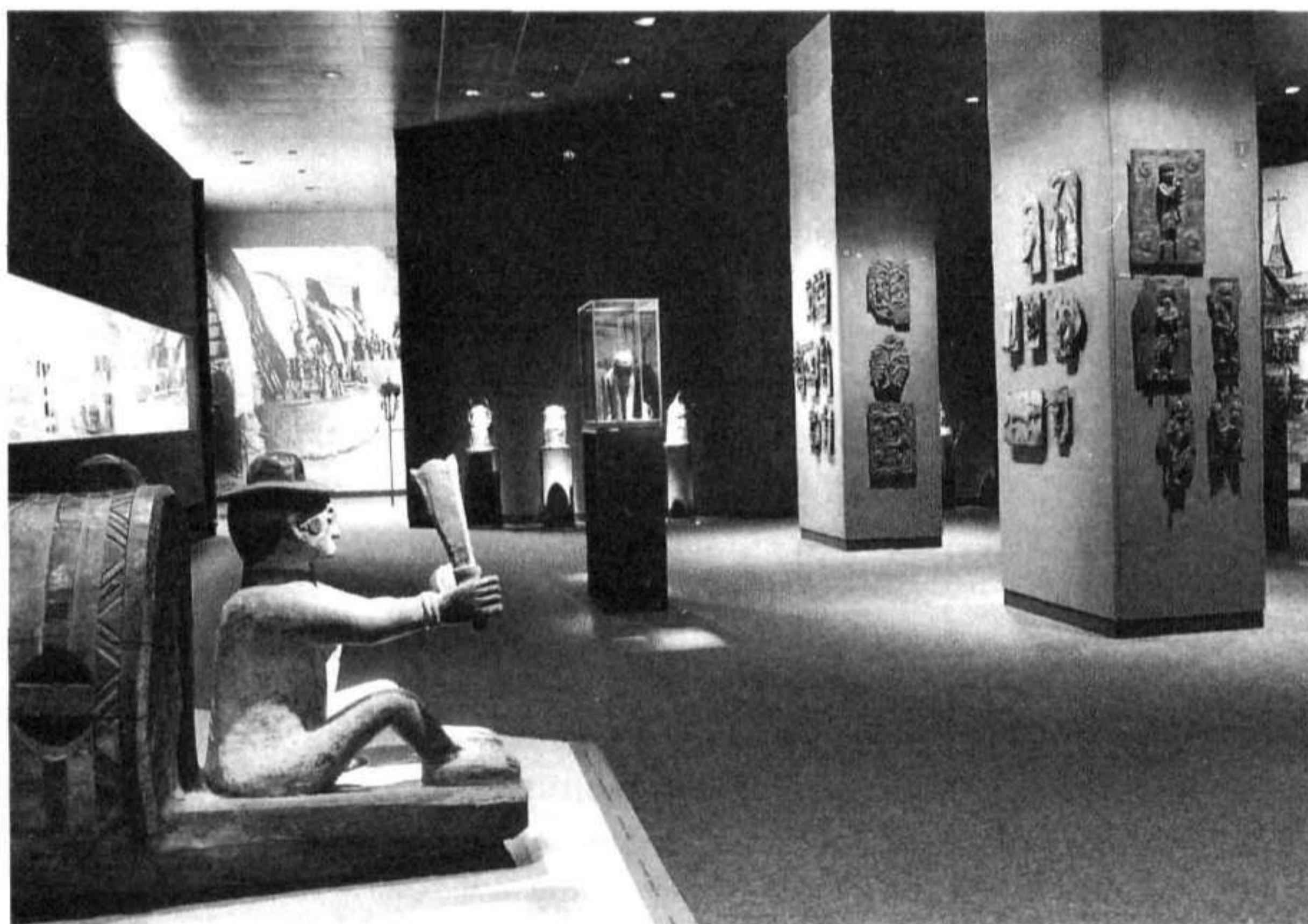


Fig. 1: Blick in den Beninraum der Dauerausstellung Africa; links im Vordergrund eine Trommel vom Crossfluß, Nigeria aus der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts

Galeriegebäude» eingerichtet wurden⁵. Das Museum in Oldenburg wurde schon 1836 gegründet und hat seit 1867 auch völkerkundliche Sammlungen. Hamburgs Völkerkundemuseum besteht seit 1848⁶, Leipzig folgte 1869, in Berlin konnte das Museum für Völkerkunde 1886, 13 Jahre nach seiner Gründung durch Adolf Bastian 1873, seinen eigenen Museumsbau beziehen, Kiel 1884, Lübeck 1892, um nur einige Beispiele zu nennen. Allein an Völkerkundemuseen expressis verbis gibt es 21 im ganzen Bundesgebiet⁷. Die Gründungsmotive, wie die Anliegen dieser Völkerkundemuseen waren ursprünglich aber sehr divergierend. Die Wissenschaften vor der Erde und von ihren Völkern, Geographie und Völkerkunde, hatten sich bereits in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts zu verselbstständigen begonnen. Im Jahre 1786 eröffnete der Bremer Naturwissenschaftliche Verein ein Raritätenkabinett, dessen Ethnographica den Grundstock für das Übersee Museum bildeten. Als älteste deutsche Handelsstadt spielte Bremen in der Hansezeit eine große Rolle, blieb allerdings zunächst auf europäische Küsten beschränkt. Erst der Verkehr

⁵ Goedl, Monika (Hg): Museen in München, München 1983.

⁶ Thilenius, G.: Das Hamburgische Museum für Völkerkunde; Beiheft zur Zeitschrift *Museumskunde* 14, 1916.

⁷ Völkerkundemuseen: Berlin, Braunschweig, Dresden, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Göttingen, Hamburg, Heidelberg, Hildesheim, Köln, Kiel, Leipzig, Lübeck, Mannheim, Marburg, München, St. Augustin, Stuttgart, Tübingen, Witzenhausen, Wuppertal.

mit Amerika im 19. Jahrhundert machte Bremen zum Welthandelsplatz. «Als Ruhmeshalle des Bremer Handels und Welthandels» wurde dann 1890 das Übersee Museum gegründet. In Stuttgart versuchte der «Württembergische Verein für Handelsgeographie» (gegründet 1882) der Wirtschaft zu helfen den überseeischen Markt zu erschließen. Ein handelsgeographisches Museum wurde dann 1884 in der Gewerbehalle eröffnet. Vorbild war u.a. das Orientalische Museum in Wien und das Museum des Zentralvereins für Handelsgeographie in Berlin. Seinen großen Aufstieg verdankt der Verein jedoch Graf Linden, dem Ersten Vorsitzenden seit 1889. Offenbar mit Stücken, die das Museum von der Weltausstellung in Chicago (1893) erhalten hatte, wurde ein Grundstock auch für eine ethnographische Sammlung gelegt. Graf Linden verschob den Schwerpunkt der Ausstellung auf die Kultur der Naturvölker, d.h. auf die Völkerkunde. Man sprach später auch von einem «Museum für Völker- und Länderkunde»⁸. Während in Berlin ein eigenes Kolonialmuseum gegründet werden mußte, weil das Völkerkundemuseum in dem materiellen Übergewicht der «Kolonialvölker» sein wissenschaftliches Anliegen gefährdet sah, hat der Direktor des Frankfurter Völkerkundemuseums bei der Eröffnung 1904 den Frankfurtern ihre Landsleute in Übersee vorführen wollen. Er wollte mit diesen Objekten vorführen, daß Kolonisation notwendig sei.

Ethnographica haben auch Universitäten in ihren Sammlungen (z. B. die «Lehr- und Studiensammlung des Seminars für Völkerkunde der Universität Bonn»). Selbst Spezialmuseen («Ledermuseum» in Offenbach, «Textilmuseum» in Krefeld) sammeln Beispiele aus aller Welt, ebenso wie Museen ausgewählter Sachgebiete (z. B. das «Staatliche Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte» in Oldenburg) oder Ethnien («Indianer-Museum» in Radebeul, die «Jüdische Abt. des Berlin-Museums» in Berlin). Es gibt rund 40 Museen dieser Art, d.h. mit ausgewählten bzw. spezialisierten ethnographischen Sammlungen⁹.

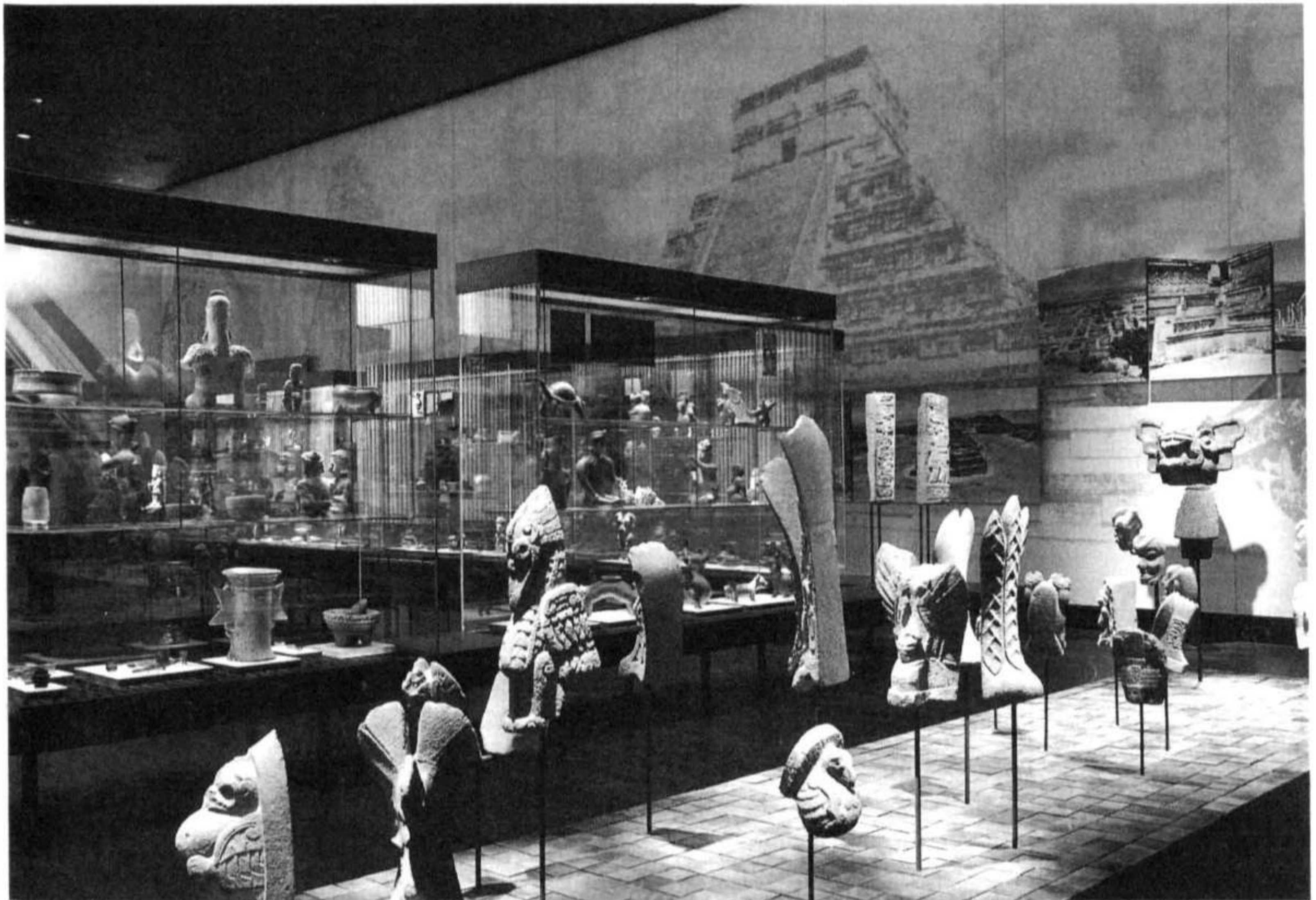
⁸ Hagen, Jürgen und Meckelein, Wolfgang: Hundert Jahre Gesellschaft für Erd- und Völkerkunde zu Stuttgart e.V.; Stuttgart, 1882.

⁹ Bamberg, Bad Driburg, Bergen, Berlin (Spezialmuseen mit außereuropäischer Kunst et al.), Bonn, Bremen, Coburg, Darmstadt, Detmold, Düsseldorf, Erbach, Erlanger, Gießen, Hannover, Hermannsburg, Karlsruhe, Krefeld, Leinefelden, Lemgo, Limburg, Mühlhausen, Münsterschwarzach, Nordhausen, Nürnberg, Offenbach, Offenbach, Oldenburg, Obergrünzburg, Radebeul, St. Ottilien, Unna, Verden, Werl, Wittenberg.

«Wie in der Vergangenheit, so wird es auch in der Zukunft die vordringlichste Aufgabe dieses Museums sein, für das Verständnis von Eigenarten und Kulturen der Menschen zu wirken». K. Krieger 1973 Dieses Mandat, formuliert vom Direktor des Museums für Völkerkunde Berlin anlässlich der Hundertjahrfeier dieser Institution¹⁰, gilt wohl für alle Sammlungen dieser Art in Deutschland. Umstritten ist jedoch die Art, wie das Museum diese Aufgabe optimal erfüllen kann. Das Selbstverständnis der Museumsethologen und somit der Museen steckt in einer Krise seit, im Gefolge der Studentenrevolte von 1968, Anfang der Siebziger Jahre alles, natürlich auch das Völkerkundemuseum, in Frage gestellt wurde. Seither reißt die Diskussion nicht ab. Um keinen Museumstyp hat man sich in den letzten dreißig Jahren derart viele kritische Gedanken gemacht wie über Inhalte und Auf-

¹⁰ Hundert Jahre Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin; Baessler-Archiv, N. F., Band XXI, Berlin, 1973.

Fig. 2: Hachas und Palmas aus Stein von der Golfküste Mexicos (Vordergrund) und Tonobjekte aus Westmexico (Vitrinen im Hintergrund) im Ausstellungsraum Mesoamerika im Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin



gaben des Völkerkundemuseums. Auf der Tagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Völkerkunde (DGV) in Bremen wurde 1973 die Arbeitsgruppe MUSEUM gegründet. Alle Bemühungen gehen dahin, dem Völkerkundemuseum wieder denselben Platz in der Gesellschaft zurückzuerobern, wie zu Zeiten seiner Gründung, als es mit noblen Neubauten ausgestattet wurde. Denn solange es auf allen Kontinenten noch Völker gibt, die ihre Geschichte hochschätzen und auf ihre Vergangenheit stolz sind, haben in unserer multikulturellen Gesellschaft auch die verpönten historischen Ausstellungskonzepte ihre Berechtigung.

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Damit kann sich die Funktion des Museums aber nicht allein in der möglichst publikumswirksamen Darbietung seiner Bestände erschöpfen, sondern die Forschungstätigkeit und die Erweiterung der Sammlungen mit Zeitdokumenten, u.a. Beispielen moderner Kunst aus allen Kontinenten, muß daneben gleichrangig bestehen. Bisher sammelt nur das Museum in Frankfurt konsequent zeitgenössische Kunst, die anderen Museen inzwischen auch, nach Maßgabe ihrer Mittel und Möglichkeiten.

Die Arbeitsgruppe Museum traf sich wieder 1988 in Frankfurt um zu überprüfen, ob bzw. welche «Zukunftsentwürfe von gestern» inzwischen eingelöst worden sind. Nach diesen zehn Jahren wurde resigniert die erhebliche Diskrepanz zwischen den Ansprüchen und der Realität in den Museen festgestellt. Mangel an Kreativität und Experimentierfreudigkeit war ein wesentlicher Kritikpunkt der Kommunikationswissenschaftler an den konventionellen Präsentationsformen in den völkerkundlichen Dauerausstellungen¹². Die Achtziger Jahre waren auch geprägt vom heftigen Streit um die Frage der Kunst in den Völkerkundemuseen. Die Kunst rückte nun ins Zentrum der Ausstellungskonzeptionen. Ganz nach dem amerikanischen Vorbild findet vor allem die afrikanische Kunst besondere Beachtung. Denn außereuropäische Kunst war für die Ethnologen in Deutschland bisher immer zweifellos ein integraler Bestandteil der Kultur. «Daß auch die wilde Kunst schon die Kunst ist, werden nur noch die zünftigsten Kleinkrämer mit dem engsten Gesichtskreis leugnen», stellte Buchner schon 1908 fest¹³. Deshalb wird die außereuropäische Kunst nur in der «Kunsthalle Nordrhein-Westfalen» in Düsseldorf konsequent als Kunst, losgelöst aus dem traditionellen Zusammenhang, also ohne jeglichen ethnologischen Kontext, ausgestellt. Denn Kunst ist eine Ermessensfrage¹⁴. Das Völkerkundemuseum in München zeigte 1982 die «Kunst des Alten Afrika», begleitet von einem ausführlichen Katalog. Dieser ist eine umgearbeitete

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¹⁴ Schmalenbach, W.: Kunst oder Nichtkunst - das ist hier die Frage; Baessler-Archiv N.F. XXXVII, 2, 1990: pp. 329-334: «Es geht in den Museen, auch in den Völkerkundemuseen, insofern sie über hochrangige Kunstwerke verfügen und diese zur Schau bringen, um die Kunst» (Seite 334).

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und erweiterte Fassung des Katalogs «Afrikanische Kunst» von 1976. In der Einleitung betont Maria Kecskesi, Leiterin der Abteilung Afrika, jedes Völkerkundemuseum habe die Aufgabe, die Kulturen der Dritten Welt möglichst erschöpfend, in allen Bereichen zu dokumentieren. Gleichmaßen muß auch das Berliner Museum, gemäß seinem wissenschaftlichen Auftrag, den materiellen Kulturbesitz möglichst systematisch und umfassend zu dokumentieren, «selbstverständlich auch solche materiellen Kulturgestaltungen in seinen Aufgabenbereich einbeziehen, die aus eurozentrischer Sicht für «Kunst» gehalten oder dazu erklärt werden (können) für die Ethnologie freilich ist eine solche Kategorisierung jedoch nur sinnvoll und zulässig, wenn deren Bestimmungskriterien kulturell wertneutral und intersubjektiv überprüfbar wären (was nicht der Fall sein kann) oder sich zumindest emisch begründen ließen (war ausnahmsweise möglich ist)»¹⁵.

Die Hauptfrage bei all diesen berechtigten Bemühungen um den gesellschaftlichen Stellenwert der Völkerkundemuseen bleibt aber doch, «wie gelingt es Laien im Ausstellungsmetier (Museumsethnologen!) ihr Anliegen der Öffentlichkeit zu vermitteln? «Die Tatsache, daß viele deutsche Museen einen eklatanten und kontinuierlichen Besucherrückgang zu verzeichnen haben, beweist, daß eine verbindliche Antwort noch aussteht. Bisher werden auch noch keine Gesellschaftswissenschaftler oder Medienspezialisten befragt, zu welchen Themen denn die Zeitgenossen, der berühmte «Mann auf der Straße» sozusagen, angesichts der wachsenden Zahl fremdartiger Gesichter in seinem Kiez und der Sprachenvielfalt schon im Laden an der Ecke und in den Schulklassen der Jüngsten, Anschauungsmaterial suchen, das wir Museumsethnologen bereitstellen könnten. Es fehlt vielfach das persönliche Engagement, die brennenden ethnischen Probleme «materiell» zu erläutern. Statt dessen sucht man die Themen in möglichst weiter Ferne oder übernimmt spektakuläre Sonderausstellungen, die sich schon an anderen Ausstellungsorten

¹⁵ Helfrich, K.: Zum Selbstverständnis des Museum für Völkerkunde; Berlin 19; unveröffentlichtes Ms.

als erfolgreich herausgestellt haben, sofern es sich ein Museum leisten kann. Nur die wenigsten Völkerkundemuseen sind bereit, sich den Herausforderungen der Zeit zu stellen, etwa in der Entwicklungspolitik, bei der Bewältigung des Nord-Süd-Konfliktes, der Fremdenfeindlichkeit, den Problemen der multikulturellen Gesellschaft oder der Rolle des Esoterik-Booms in der Jugendkultur, etc.

Dem Gros der Ethnologen fehlt eben das «handwerkliche» Rüstzeug um Völker und Kulturen, die nicht mehr Exoten, sondern Nachbarn, Urlaubsromanzen und Wirtschaftspartner geworden sind, adäquat in ihrer Problematik des Identitätsverlustes zu präsentieren. Zu sehr sind die gewählten Themen noch nach dem Fundus orientiert, stellen Ausstellungen die ästhetisch gestylten Ableger der Studiensammlungen dar um einem ausgewählten Kreis von Fachleuten und ihrer Klientel mit den Leistungen der Vorfahren (die solche Sammlungen schließlich zusammengetragen haben), zu imponieren.

Das Unbehagen darüber, wieweit die Gegenstände in den Ausstellungen wirklich noch auf das Handeln der Menschen bezogen sind, macht sich breit, sodaß 1993 im Museum in Berlin ein Symposium «Museum in Dialogue» stattfand. Ein handlungsorientiertes Ausstellen ist aber beim alten Sammlungsbestand zumeist schon unmöglich. Viele Gegenstände, die sich in den Museen befinden, werden heute nicht mehr hergestellt und gebraucht. Für sie kommt auch jede Feldforschung zu spät. Die Museen in diesem Lande stehen aber für das Objekt als Kulturleistung und für die wissenschaftliche Arbeit mit diesem Gegenstand. Es ist deshalb bestürzend, wie wenig die Objekte in der heutigen Ethnologie Verwendung finden. «Um mit den ethnographischen Objekten arbeiten zu können, müssen sie einem bekannt sein bzw. werden. Und das dürfte bei der selbstverständlichen Forderung der exakten Datenaufnahmen in der Gegenwartsethnologie bei gut 90% der Bestände fragwürdig im wörtlichen Sinn sein... Mit den Augen der Einheimischen zu sehen –und mit ihrer Hilfe zu

erläutern, das müßte zunächst das wesentliche Ziel sein: Wie wenige Objekte in den Museen bieten solche Informationen!... Doch die Masse der Museums-Objekte gibt eben nur gutes Ausstellungsmaterial zur optischen Dokumentation vergangener bzw. vergehender- oder auch noch stabiler, zudem «dynamischer» Kulturen... Das alte Malinowski-Zitat 'Die Vergangenheit ist tot und begraben, trifft leider viele frühe Museumsbestände'¹⁶. So formuliert ein Museumsmann, der sich fünfzig Jahre mit Ethnologie beschäftigt hat und auch Jahrzehnte in Berlin tätig war, die Gründe dafür, daß sich Museumskollegen so schwer tun, die vergangenen und gegenwärtigen Kulturinhalte und-werte anderer Völker wahrheitsgetreu und verständlich zu vermitteln.

Wir müssen uns selbst, aber auch unsere Besucher von der Idee befreien, daß man eine Kultur als solche im Museum darstellen kann. Wir müssen somit dem Traum von größtmöglicher Realitätsnähe abschwören und das Artifizielle und Abstrakte der Museumswelt, als Vorgabe akzeptieren. Die größte Akzeptanz erreichen bislang, neben den internationalen Wanderausstellungen, Kulturvergleiche über vieldiskutierte Themen, bei denen der Besucher seine eigenen Erfahrungen einbringen kann. Das Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum in Köln hat bislang drei umfangreiche Ausstellungen dieser Art mit großem Erfolg erarbeitet: 1981 «Rausch und Realität. Drogen im Kulturvergleich» (95000 Besucher), 1985 «Die Braut-geliebt, verkauft, getauscht, geraubt. die Rolle der Frau im Kulturvergleich» (155000 Besucher) und schließlich 1990 «Männernbünde-Männerbände. Zur Rolle des Mannes im Kulturvergleich» (65000 Besucher), jeweils begleitet von umfangreichen Katalogen.

Bisher müssen die Völkerkundemuseen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland immer noch neben dem weit höheren kulturpolitischen Stellenwert der europäischen Kunstmuseen ihren Platz erkämpfen.

¹⁶ Koch, G.: Kommentar; in: Müller, C. und Schindlbeck, M. (Hg): Museums in Dialogue; Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 118, 1, 1993: pp. 169-171.

BE HIND THE

SCENES. MUSEUMS AND SELECTIVE CRITICISM

Brian Durrans
British Museum

ABSTRACT

A recent upsurge of interest in representational politics has led to criticism of exhibitions and museums in the ethnographic/anthropological field. It is argued that this development has been positive to the extent that it recognizes museological practice to be part of a system of power and authority. But some criticism has been unhelpful in so far as it has underestimated the complexity of what museums do and of wider social implications of evidence-based efforts in public education. Since museological criticism is as much a product of its context as are museums themselves, productive discussion calls for greater reflexivity rather than less.

Since the Second World War, museums and material culture seemed marginal to most debates on the social role of anthropology. Recently, however, ethnographic exhibitions have become a hot issue. It is not that curators have become more daring—the occasional display has always aroused enthusiasm or dissent—but that displaying, especially of or by cultural «Others», is increasingly seen as overtly or implicitly political.

Exhibitions, and museums themselves, have come to be criticized as hegemonic devices of cultural elites or states. They distort and hence mask the oppression of the cultures they supposedly represent; and their ideological messages appear as 'truth' because museums do not or cannot reveal to their publics the actual choices and negotiations through which cultures are (mis)represented in particular objects or displays.

Since any form of representation is bound to omit and distort to some degree, museums find it easier to defend individual exhibitions, even when they are grossly misconceived, than the principle of representation itself. But in this, museums are hardly special. Any engagement with the world, in thought or in action, entails selecting what is relevant to the purpose in hand and rejecting what is not. The same applies to formalized methods of enquiry. The pertinent questions are therefore, first, how far a particular selection or representation is adequate to the purpose it is meant to serve; and second, how far that purpose is itself justified.

The latter may be a pertinent question and entails considerations of who has the power to represent whom, but in the absence of a consensus about the 'purpose' of anthropology, few are likely to agree on the answer. Most curators probably see their role as acquiring, displaying and preserving material objects to assist the present or future understanding of the contexts from which the objects themselves derive. Some indeed will anguish, but not usually to the

extent of paralysing their work, over what such 'understanding' might amount to.

Focused on museum display, the politics of representation are given a powerful if partial airing in a recent book entitled *Exhibiting Cultures* (Karp and Lavine, eds., 1991; for a report on the conference on which the book is based, see also Fischer, 1989). The book itself and the questions it raises emerge from the conjunction of two main trends, one largely internal and the other largely external to academic anthropology.

The internal trend concerns the now-familiar emphasis on the subjective construction of anthropological knowledge, of ethnography as the voice of the author. In collections and displays, however, this irresistible force meets its immovable object. If everything else is fabricated by the enquirer, the bits of material, however classified or interpreted as ethnographic artefacts, are certainly not. Exhibiting or publishing such material amounts to a public assertion that a world exists independently of what we say about it. The public, for whom this is old hat, are more likely to be interested in the objects themselves, in the ways of life or social processes they illustrate, and in the intellectual, political and economic histories through which artefacts enter museum collections. To postmodern theory, however, the materialism of this assertion is unacceptable. Its response is to sidetrack collections, and the productive questions of what and how anthropologists might communicate about the cultures they study, by digressing into a debate about claims and counter-claims to cultural authenticity.

The external trend with which anthropological postmodernism intersects, and without which current arguments about museum displays would hardly have arisen, is what might be called a consumerist politics, an expression of the success of contemporary capitalism in marshalling even critical theory behind globalization, commodification, and the privileging of exchange-value over use-value, or signifiers over signi-

fiers: '... it is in the nature of the commodity system, of its compelling systematicity *per se*, to substitute labor with magic, intrinsicity with marketing, authoring with ushering'. (Stewart 1988: 162; see also Harvey, 1989). What then becomes important in museums is not their field-and collection-based work in studying and interpreting cultures, or what people do, say or think, but rather the assumed needs or impressions of visitors. Market-oriented museum management, which in its extreme form favours a 'Disneyland' approach to exhibition design and prefers 'collections managers' to academic curators, allies with consumerist politics to scold as 'elitist' those responsible for displays that may take some effort to appreciate (Terrell, 1991).

Yet different sections of the public do not use (or create) cultural resources for the same purposes (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984). If traditional, educationally-oriented museums try to fill visitors' minds, while theme parks try to empty their pockets, both define their audiences restrictively. In neither is the public an active participant. Not everyone, of course, wants to 'create' culture, or at least not all the time; part of the continuing appeal of traditional museums is the access they give to what other people have created. How people respond to museum displays is a complex process, still imperfectly understood. While some empathize with artefacts of atmospheric settings, others seek in the same material the reassurance of human ingenuity or of explanation based on ascribing evidential status to objects. Museums have always been able to arouse the curiosity of visitors but it is sometimes argued that to do so now they have to offer doubt rather than knowledge. There are so many other claims on the time and attention of potential visitors that museums have to provide something distinctive. A worthwhile display, however, will generally spark off new ideas whatever its underlying philosophy; and most visitors seem to appreciate learning more than what to distrust.

It is therefore inadequate to describe the subtle changes which museum practice is undergoing as a contest between a benevolent dictatorship of connoisseurs and a tyranny of diversions, both of which actually limit consumer choice. This 'contest', in which entertainment now seems to be getting the upper hand, only expresses the current tendency of established cultural institutions to be marginalized or redefined by newer media, the effect of which is to privilege fantasy and profit. Representations are shifted further away from their referents. Public 'participation' is then reduced to playing with the options offered; it does not extend to control over the representational machinery itself. Clifford Geertz recently observed, for example, that the Festival of Indonesia which took place in the United States in 1990 involved culture being 'sent rather than 'brought': that it was, in broad terms, an instrument not of the representers but of the represented (Handler, 1991). Geertz sees in these representations evidence of 'internal Indonesian identity struggles', but the Festival also reflected an external power struggle in which the represented (or their 'representatives') are obliged to hawk their culture in the West (Wallis, 1991).



Fig. 1: adults learning about ancient Egypt, permanent gallery at the British Museum, 1964. Photo Trustees of the British Museum.

The issue of who controls representation, however, is hardly a productive subject for discussion outside a wider programme concerned with political power. Taken in isolation, as if it were a matter lightly to be considered by curators or directors, this deeply political question finds itself parodied as merely another consumer choice. It is strangely inconsistent for those emphasizing the social embeddedness of museums, as most contributors to *Exhibiting Cultures* do, to imply that control over the images created by exhibitions can be resolved without tackling the embracing issue of political power. Neither is anyone convincingly suggesting how agitation over museum displays might contribute to a solution of more far-reaching iniquities. Those who argue as if museums are in the front line of political struggle implicitly deny its history and complexity. The state is first detached from 'civil society', then overlooked, leaving civil society split between reproduction and representation, the determinate and the voluntary. Instead of an analysis of the interconnections between these complementary forms, one is abandoned in favour of the other. Social reproduction and its intractable structures slip from view leaving only tokens and symbols, which we are expected to believe that the fuss is all about.

In her article in the June issue of *A. T.*, Julie Cruikshank acknowledges that competition between communities for control over meanings is complicated by the division of those communities along class lines, and she correctly suggests that this implicates hegemony and the state. But it is not just obfuscating politicians who use the notion of 'values' to distract from material conditions; the issue of what museums and anthropologists are up to is often presented in the same terms. The idea that display or analysis (whatever their restrictions or misapprehensions) can be about how societies operate, how they have come to be as they are, and why they vary as they do, is being pushed aside. There is plenty of room in museums however, for experiment, hesitation, self-assessment, playfulness, and even chaos; but to let these overw-

helm the development and dissemination of knowledge is to deny its critical potential. Environmental arguments mean it is no longer radical to suggest that everyone's interests would be served by a global redistribution of wealth and power. But of this to even begin to happen, restrictive structures will need to be challenged not just by a desire for change, but by the conviction that change is possible. Demonstrating this, by documenting and interpreting the alternative forms and transformations of the past, is what social science is mainly about. Escaping discourse with the help of material evidence of such alternatives is to be reminded that if every signified has its signified, no ideology is safe from rejection.

If museums are ill-equipped to confront political power head-on, or by themselves, we can nevertheless ask how their work might help people overcome problems. For practical purposes, the interests of museum specialists, the public, and those whose cultures are exhibited, are much closer than the occasional well publicized controversy might suggest. Neo-liberal economics squeeze museums like other social services and encourage them to convert from long-term research to cheaper quick-fix entertainment; but this is being resisted. Ancillary programmes and display styles encourage visitors to deepen their understanding of other cultures beyond that of a tourist, while museums increasingly collaborate with (representatives of) the peoples concerned to prepare exhibitions of their ways of life. When a museum takes a sensitive interest in the cultures it interprets, and seeks to convey as accurate an understanding of them as possible, it may be necessary to self-censor an exhibition in order not to offend some or all of the community concerned, or of the visiting public. If exhibiting were all a museum did, such behaviour might be condemned, as unprincipled; but on-going, research, documenting and collecting, as well as public relations and fund-raising, are also essential museum activities and decision about displays may take account of any or all of them.

As *Exhibiting Cultures* shows, art historical curators who regard at least certain masterworks as capable of communicating cross-culturally the aesthetic values of their makers have become easy prey. Their stance is open to legitimate objections (e.g. McLeod, 1991), yet postmodernist and consumer-political criticism also targets the training and experience necessary to connoisseurship, implying that democratic access is denied where effort is necessary for understanding. The brutal truth, however, is that visitor access to information formally available in museums, no less than in libraries or through the education system itself, varies markedly according to class and other dimensions of social division. A 'radical' criticism that ignores such factors is clearly more interested in signifiers than in signifieds.

Another example of the excessive abstraction that bedevils museum criticism is the notion of the curator as prima donna. In fact, the anonymity of most exhibitions reflects not authorial privilege but the teamwork on which display depends. It is sometimes claimed that anonymity shields authority from questioning, and is therefore hegemonic. But if this criticism is valid, an exponential surfeit of doubt is hardly the corrective required. False or misleading interpretations are open to criticism on the basis of evidence: if, however, all interpretation is flawed on the *a priori* grounds that it can never escape subjectivity, then not only museums but social science (as something apart from literature) should indeed shut up shop. Insofar as they confuse artefacts as evidence of human activity with proof of some ultimate 'truth', museums are open to criticism, although this nut can be-cracked more economically than with an ultra-subjectivist sledgehammer. On the other hand, if museums that have inherited this reputation now seek to disown it, they risk undermining their credibility by completely abandoning any criterion on which visitors can feel reasonably confident about the interpretations offered. But this problem is hardly unique to museums: textbook writers are in a similar predicament.



Fig. 2: Point of Interest:
School Mexico,
The Skeleton at the Feast
exhibition currently at the
Museum of Mankind

Because of the complex negotiations from which exhibitions emerge, a curatorial line of argument may be easier to identify in labels or information panels than in the layout of exhibits, or *vice versa*. In these circumstances, exhibitions are unlikely to benefit from what postmodernists prescribe for ethnographic writing (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Enhanced awareness of the categories which different styles of writing use to define their subject-matter, has led to the emergence of the author as a conspicuous, even obligatory, component of ethnographic text. This has been a counter-hegemonic manoeuvre to divert the texts from their assumed role of legitimating, in terms of 'objective' reporting, the exercise of power over those described (i.e., interpreted). Yet, in the name of sensitivity to the political context of ethnography, this approach itself collapses into sterile introversion by overlooking the specifics of rival knowledge-claims and the grounds for deciding between them. It criticizes the power of the interpreter without empowering either the interpreted or the consumer of the interpretation. In fact, the power of interpreters (in this case, specialized academics and curators), al-

though greater than that of the people whose lives they interpret, is largely insignificant by comparison with the main concentrations of political power in society. Postmodernism not only substitutes relatively trivial distinctions for more deep-rooted ones, but also offers the palliative of a personal politics susceptible to will-power as a substitute for more thoroughgoing struggles needing collaboration with others.

One response to the privileging of exhibitions over other aspects of museum work is to emphasize, as Freed has done (1991), that what happens on the surface is based on supportwork underneath. Another is to see museums as influencing and influenced by alternative traditions and sites and modes of display (Hiller, ed., 1991). It may, however, be worth traditions and sites and modes of display (Hiller, ed., 1991). It may, however, be worth listing (not necessarily in order of importance) some of the other things museum staff do besides exhibiting: collecting, documenting, storing, conserving, publicizing, arranging access, ensuring security, researching, lecturing, training, advising, collaborating with other colleagues and institutions, fund-raising, publishing, and loaning. As this list indicates, museums are complex organizations; their objectives and methods are shaped by the varied, sometimes contradictory yet mutually-adjusting interests of funding bodies, trustees, directorates and other staff, and by the lobbyists, critics, specialists, visitors, non-visitors, producers and consumers who comprise their heterogeneous public. These complexities mean that the contemporary museum, whatever its speciality, shares the predicament of any set of practices (anthropology or history; or, at a further remove, writing or representing) that finds its purpose sharply questioned.

Disagreement about what museums are or should do shows no sign of being resolved; nor can it be; like interpretatin itself, 'all museum exhibitions are inherently problematical' (Beidelman, 1989). The focal issue varies considerably; for some it is collecting (Stewart, 1984; Clifford, 1988); for others, the extension

of museum-like methods into other dimensions of cultural life (Handler, 1985; Horne, 1984 and 1986; Eco, 1987); concepts of the 'Other' (Hiller, *op. cit.*; Price, 1989); museum display modes (Shanks and Tilley, 1987); or particular exhibitions (e.g. Cannizzo, 1991; Philip, 1991; Schildkrout, 1991). Yet of the almost limitless criticisms that could be directed at museums, only some have made it into the agenda. Among the most favoured arguments (together with comments and reservations) are the following; all are represented, explicitly or implicitly, in *Exhibiting Cultures*.

– *Museums are expressive (ideological) institutions rather than interpretive ('scientific') ones.* Even those who reject the possibility of non-ideological knowledge would recognize, however, that the expressiveness of a 'scientific' institution is at least in part a function of its interpretive practice or of its claim to such practice: a relationship that is also contentious throughout the academic world including biological and social or cultural anthropology (Haraway, 1989; Reynolds, 1991; Clifford, *op. cit.*; Beidelman, *op. cit.*).

– *Exhibitions should not be evaluated in terms of fidelity or sensitivity to their themes but in terms of their effects on contemporary contests around identity and power.* Rephrased to allow evaluation in both respects, this bland view is unexceptionable yet it does little to help curators strike an appropriate balance or critics to judge fairly what they have done. How accurately a display represents its chosen subject is almost always a matter for experts, while how well it is done with regard to audience response – beyond possibly uncritical approval on the one hand and hostility on the other – is usually a subjective matter.

– *Exhibits should be selected and displayed in a manner that is sensitive to the interests of varied audiences.* How these interests are to be discovered and taken into account is difficult enough even when it can be predicted which sections of the public will visit the exhibition. there is certainly a case for collaboration that goes

beyond prudently testing an almost finalized display for points likely to cause misunderstanding or offence. Generally, however, curators discuss exhibition plans and other aspects of their work with colleagues inside and outside museums, and with educators and members of local communities likely to be interested in the subjects concerned. Although much criticized, the 'authority' of the curator is often earned in the sense that it expresses views emerging from a whole network of discussions rather than being arrogantly 'imposed' through a display for visitors to make what they can of it.

– *Objects should be shown 'in context', i.e., with appropriate information to counteract, or to make explicit and therefore to undermine, the privileging effect of the museum habitus, and to provide insights into the cultural background of the objects and those who made or used them.* Much current discussion of these questions is too abstract and ignores both the possibility that the 'museum effect' may work to the advantage of some or many visitors in respect of some or many subjects, and the responses of visitors to displays of specific types. Whatever curators may want to do, moreover, there are always practical constraints, most obviously architectural and budgetary, on their freedom of manoeuvre. Perhaps less obvious, but in some ways even more important, are the limitations imposed on what curators can do –not just in exhibitions but also in other aspects of their research– by the nature and extent of the collections available to them.

– *Channels of communication should be expanded from the visual to other senses, mainly aural and tactile.* Again, while practical constraints are often ignored by museum critics, the advantages of multi-sensory communication for varied audiences are easily overestimated. For example, the 'festival' is often contracted to the 'exhibition' (Karp and Lavine, *op. cit.*) to point up the wider multi-sensory choices a festival provides, and therefore of the alternative 'readings' that it allows of the overall theme. But few participants in festivals get to sample more than a fraction of what is on offer, while may feel more frustration from things missed

than fulfilment from those experienced. Conversely, an exhibition visited is selected from among others in the same museum and in other museums. since there are many opportunities for multi-sensory experiences outside the museum, but not for the 'visual privileging' in which museums traditionally specialize, it may be especially a will to see that encourages peoples to visit museums rather than other places. One recent study discovered that visitors have a 'robust interest in traditional museum [diorama] cases' (Davidson, Heald and Hein, 1991) and recommended using such cases in conjunction with other forms of communication rather than abandoning them as old-fashioned. Although a diorama is a specialized type of display case, it evokes a past style of representation even more powerfully than mahogany ones with shelves. That 'dated' modes of display may be popular and educationally effective suggests that at least some visitors appreciate museums as counterweight to the vagaries of fashion and hence see their exhibits, perhaps despite the efforts of designers, as signifying an alternative to the decontextualising commodification of objects everywhere else.

– *Exhibitions should reinterpret the otherwise anonymous creators or bearers of cultures as individuals and active social subjects, and should give an impression of the dynamics of the cultures represented.* However, limitations of available material and (especially) of documentation mean it is often difficult to support a new interpretation of cultural phenomena with collections acquired by ethnographers or others working within an earlier paradigm. Material unsuitable for one purpose may still, however, be useful for another; there are many ways, for example, to convey sensitively and strikingly the complexity and achievements of other societies, or the interdependence of exhibited and exhibiting cultures, especially in relation to the latter's museum subculture.

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LO VING

CHARM
IN THE MUSEUM.
A VIDEO SCRIPT

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ABSTRACT

One of the main tasks of a museum is to translate results of research to convenient forms for visitors. We tried the same with the mere information about the Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich. So we draft a video-script and packed all the interesting information on the museum in a little story. The story tells a farce around the events in connection with a mysterious object that was offered to the museum.

Scene 1

Zoom and pan from a clear sky over to some exotic trees and to bamboo leaves into an office; twitting and leaves of a book turning over as background sound.

A telephone rings. You can see the telephone and a hand taking the receiver.

Zoom to a long shot: The museum's director is sitting at his table close to the open window making a phone call.

Director D:

Hello!

Female Voice on telephone off screen:

Hello? Am I speaking with the Ethnological Museum's Director of the University of Zurich?

Director D:

Speaking. What can I do for you? To whom am I speaking?

Female Voice:

This is about an ethnographical object that could be very interesting for your collection. I'm sorry: my name is Horner, Alexandra Horner, I'm one of the great grandchildren of the famous traveller. You already own some old pieces of his.

Director D (*slightly bored*):

Only rarely we do accept objects from private collections. Aside from that, it is the heads of department themselves who are responsible for their collection. At this time we have a department for Black Africa, for Northern Africa and the Orient, North and South America, South and Southeast Asia, East Asia and the Himalayas. Besides, where is your object from?

Female Voice:

That is the point! You can't assign it to a precise geographical area, apart its speciality laying in its effect.

Director D (*somewhat interested*):

In its effect? What does this effect consist of?

Female Voice:

I've heard your museum specializes on religious objects. There is something undescrivable about my object that I could call, in a wider sense, religious; something incredibly strong, good. You will notice soon if I ever get to show the object. There is some *feu sacré* about it which makes people who see the object fall in love at once.

During the conversation the camera follows the director's look at various paraphernalia on his bookshelf (Nkisi-fetish, Buddha statuettes, a shaman's drum, a clay skull from New Guinea) which all have their own fascination.

Director D:

Fall in love with the object?

Female Voice:

No, with each other.

Director D (*now definitely interested*):

Well, why don't you bring along the object, let's say tomorrow afternoon, ok? Good-bye.

The director puts down the receiver, muttering: Well, what will that be. Birds chirping off screen.

Scene 2

A big table in the middle of which stands an undefinable coloured object mounted with glass pearls. Scattered around, at some distance, the necessities for a meeting: pencils, a teapot, cups, coffee. The camera stays exactly over the object. Shot on the museum's employees sitting around the table. Discussion about the object. Now and then male and female employees exchange glances wittingly.

Director D:

At this point, I'd like to inform the staff about how much the owner asks for the famous object (*Shot around, expecting silence*): a half a million.

Administrador A:

Outrageous. I guess the project falls through.

Ethnologist B:

Let's think about it. No doubt the piece is marvelous. We could revolutionize our exhibitions. No more laborious pedagogical attempts to get people inside! We will have hundreds of completely satisfied visitors in our museum!

Ethnologist C:

Is the effect of this «fetish» proven?

Director D:

No doubt! Since I've seen the object I've become a completely different person, I'm at cloud nine, but I must admit that I'm involved in the matter itself. In other words: I've fallen in love with the owner.

Ethnologist E:

It must be a coincidence, but it had an effect on me too. I feel absolutely happy and yesterday I fell madly in love. It is surely worth making some more research on it.

Administrator A:

At any rate, we now don't have the funds. We cannot expect the government to give two or three times our normal annual budget. And we are not into commercial sponsoring for the acquisition of objects. Our only chance would be to apply for money from the lottery funds.

Good luck!

Ethnologist C:

In this way we would be obliged to exhibit the object.

Ethnologist B:

But this is what we want to do! This will be the exhibition of the century. Does anybody have an idea where the object is originated from?

Director D:



Foto: Peter Nebel, 1994

Ex africa semper aliquid novi. Honestly: I don't know. I've never seen something like that among the 25.000 objects of our collection.

Ethnologist C:

I've read something about it in Dürr' book «The Scientist and the Irrational»: From the Indians or from Siberia, I don't remember exactly. I'm sure we will find some information about it and its peculiar effect in one of the 18.000 volumes of our library.

Ethnologist E:

The alchemists from China to Spain have studied such effects. They observed changes in the matter.

In the same time frightened and amused, ethnologist E notices that while debating, his croissant has dissolved in his coffee. Everybody laughs.

Ethnologist B:

Brazil is also known for magic. The thing could also be old malaysian. While cataloguin it we should find out. Couldn't the owner give us more details?

Director D:

Sure, she said it would probably stem from Old Horner himself, of whom we have an early collection. I will do some research. But the object doesn't belong to us yet: I suggest that it should be acquired.

Administrator A:

I will prepare the necessary applications. It will take a couple of months until we get the money.

The camera slowly focuses the object and its game of lights. Fade out.

Scene 3

Corridor outside the photo-studio. The restorer goes to the door of the studio. In his hands he has a box with the object inside. The door is open, from inside we can hear the photographer manipulating the spotlights. The camera follows the restorator into the studio in a medium shot.

Long shot: the studio is full of boxes all filled with objetcs. Tibetan scroll painting are hanging on the wall.

Restorator R:

Here you have the object. Please make a picture of it as soon as you can, so that I can start with the restoration. It is very urgent, it has already started to fall apart. Can you see this? It wasn't like that three days ago!

Photographer Ph:

You too?! What happens to you all? I have to take pictures for the Himalaya department; the students of the museology course have finished cataloguing their objects, and they want to have them photographed. And now you! Besides I have to prepare the pictures for the boss' publication. Tell me when should I do all that in my part-time job?

Restorator R:

Sure, I see that. But without a picture I cannot start with the restoration, and you see, it can't be postponed. Couldn't you...

Cut on the ethnologist running into the studio.

Ethnologist C:

Oh! Here you are! Great, the object is already here. I absolutely need a series of pictures that can document the changes appearing on the object. You know I'm working on the project «Where love falls-Magic objects of love», and this object fits perfectly. I have a theory: An object you use for love-magic loses its power and its substance. I think this object represents the proof of my hypothesis.

You can see that to everybody who has something to do with this object something strange happens, but the object falls apart at the same time.

Restorator R:

But for the series of pictures the object should remain untouched, and I couldn't make it up for preservation. I can tell you that in six months the object will be so weakened that you won't take it in your hands without smashing it completely. Will you take the risk? I can't let you do it.

Ethnologist C:

'Don't be such a pessimist: I'm asking myself if we shouldn't take this risk in the name of research. Or maybe we could wait until the last possible moment before we restore it, so that we can at least follow the process during a short period.

Footsteps off screen. A colleague of ethnologist C comes in.

Ethnologist B:

I'm looking for the object. You are my last chance, do you have it?

Photographer Ph:

Yes, it is in this box. I have to take pictures of it, so that your colleague is able to use it for her research. She wants the restoration to be postponed as long as possible and to observe the changes.

Ethnologist B to Ethnologist C:

What? Do you want the object to be destroyed? This can't be true! I think too that it must be photographed, but I'm against the idea of taking it into your research. I would like to integrate this object into my coming exhibition about the history of our collection.

Ethnologist C:

You can't exhibit an object about whose power you don't have precise knowledge. First you have to study it. And you, of all people, are talking about preserving the object from destruction, but you want to exhibit it. It will be the presence of so many visitors to destroy it.

Ethnologist B:

I have a different opinion. Why not showing it, if it beautifully fits in the exhibition? We got so much money to buy it. We owe it to the public, we have to show it as best as we can.

Ethnologist C:

We are a university museum, we are commissioned to do research. It is obvious that we study objects from our own collection.

Ethnologist B:

But we are obliged to the public. We have to make sure that the visitors can see and feel something spectacular, If we have an object like that.

Restorator R:

How about this: As soon as the object is been photographed I start with the analysis of the material and do the necessary with the textile restorator.

Restorator R to Ethnologist C:

I will give you the results as soon as I have them.

Restorator R to Photographer Ph:

You will take pictures of it at regular intervals.

Restorator R to Ethnologist B:

And you think about how to exhibit it. Is this all right for everybody? (*everybody nodding*).

Ethnologist B:

I already have a concept in my mind for its exhibition. Something self-reflexive can be done: the history of our museum is going to be mirrored in this object.

Photographer Ph:

Exactly, we will make an exhibition that will surpass every other done until now, because of the visual characteristics that will be combined with the powers given off by the object.

Scene 4

Long shot on the entrance of the exhibition. A crowd of visitors invited to the opening party. Everybody stares at the little podium. B stands on the podium looking happily in the crowd.

Ethnologist B:

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm happy to welcome the many of you to the opening of our new exhibition «Extraordinary objects from yesterday till today». This exhibition wants to show to our visitors our perseverance and engagement in «making museum».

Cut on some employees nodding. Cut back to the previous shot.

Our house has a long tradition and we see that the number of our visitors gradually increases. We are particularly happy about that, because we are in Zurich, among many other well known museums, like the Swiss National Museum, the Museum of Art and the Rietberg Museum. By «a long tradition». I mean that our museum was created in 1889 by the Ethnographic Society in Zurich. The purpose was to foster the ethnological research. At that time, the museum didn't have a collection for the public yet, it was rather a collection for study purposes, used during the courses at the university and at various schools.

The objects that were used at that time came from Madagascar, Guatamala, Southwest Africa, Northwest coast of America, India and Japan.

In 1913 the University of Zurich gave her collection to the museum for research and studies; under few conditions: that the objects must be exhibited and that the professor of ethnology must be at the same time the director of the collection. And so it has been, ladies and gentlemen, until today.

Cut on the director, which is sighing deeply. Cut back.

In the following fifty years the collection was enlarged, among others, with objects from China, Central and West Africa, Ethiopia and also some from the Polar regions. They were all added to the permanent exhibition.

In the seventies the museum decided to change the philosophy of its exhibitions, becoming more and more open to the outside world and going out of the

university walls. The recipe was: Changing exhibitions and the most possible themes; the objects shown in their socio-cultural functions. Moreover, the museum wanted to show not only different cultures, but also their relationship to our own culture. As the place became too limited for all the objects it had, the museum looked for another place to stay and found an ideal one: It is here, where you all are, in the park 'Zur Katz', the former botanical garden, located in the heart of Zurich.

Cut on the listening audience. Cut back.

During all the years we have had the opportunity to make many exhibitions. The visitors were introduced to the life of different peoples, like the Eskimos, the Curds and also the Tuareg. They could touch unknown worlds, like those of the Hindukush, of Mexico, Nepal and many others. Moreover they could learn something about religious art of Ethiopia, Lion carpets from Iran, jewellery, children games Mandalas and so on.

These exhibitions consisted of many of our objects and were completed by objects we borrowed from other museums. But not in the exhibition we are opening today. We will show you objects from our own collection only; this exhibition is in fact the history of our museum. You will see our highlights, collected during the last century. The object with which we close the exhibition is our newest acquisition. I won't tell you by now what it is, you'll be surprised. We hope that this exhibition will have on you the same joyful effect it had on us.

Concluding, I would like to thank my two colleagues to whom I have felt a great attachment and who have helped me preparing the exhibition. Now, I declare the exhibition open.

Cut on the opening door in the back of the audience. Cut back on Ethnologist B's face. He stares terrified in the exhibition room. Cut through the entrance directly to the show case with the sensational object. Thus the show

case is empty. Ethnologist B clears a way through the crowd to the show case and stares into it. He calls the Director. Director D arrives.

Ethnologist B:

Where is it? It's gone! I can't believe it. Look, the show case is intact and still locked! But look at that mysterious glance in the eyes of the visitors. Do you think they already have consumed our precious object completely?

Sharp cut to a black screen. In the middle of the screen appears the following text:

Thus the future of the museum may begin. Everybody is invited to see in this empty show case what the museum is supposed to show but not always succeeds.

Text and idea: Susanne Grieder and Andreas Isler. Translation: Victoria Ceccarini.

PRE SENTING

COMMUNITY LIFE IN
OPEN AIR MUSEUMS:
EXHIBITION
OR PERFORMANCE?

Adriaan A. M. de Jong
Netherlands Open Air Museum

ABSTRACT

There is a difference between presenting traditional villages and traditional communities. Open air museums can display relics of traditional villages by transferring buildings and interiors, or by collecting tools etc. But mostly it is the aim of open air museums not only to show relics, but to present a former way of life. In this article I will not deal with the way we represent the material culture but with the question of how to represent traditional communities. To be clear: the question is not how the farmhouses

looked but how the life of the people living in traditional communities was.

* * *

SCENES AT THE UNIVERSAL EXHIBITIONS

The first attempts to present traditional community life in a museological way were the ethnological presentations at the Universal Exhibitions in the second half of the 19th century. The Universal Exhibitions were big events. The 1867 exhibition received eleven million visitors; the 1878 exhibition attracted more than sixteen million and the 1900 exhibition saw over fifty million visitors¹.

In 1867 the Swedish/Norwegian ethnological presentation of regional costumes attracted a great deal of attention. They depicted not only costumes but also scenes from folk life with life-size figures: a marriage proposal, a tour in a sledge, pulled by reindeer. At the 1878 Universal exhibition in Paris the Dutch presented their costumes showing also themes from community life such as people meeting one another at the market place, a young man skating with his fiancée, a complete room where some life-size figures represented the preparations for a Christening². Of course we cannot say these scenes represented life in a traditional community, but at least they tried to catch some typical highlights of it and with their mise-en-scene they did more than just presenting objects. Obviously the intention of using scenes was not only to convey material culture, but also to convey traditional values from community life.

There is a very close relation to the art of genre painting of the 19th century. Both ethnological presentations and genre paintings focused on recurring themes and events from life itself in traditional communities: the birth of a child, a christening, a wedding or a death-bed scene. The aim was not to depict what was universal, but what was typical for a region,

¹ *Verslag der Centrale Commissie voor de Wereldtentoonstelling te Parijs in 1900* (Haarlem, 1902) p.70; Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas; the expositions universelles, great exhibitions and world's fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, 1988), p. 37.

² Adriaan de Jong and Mette Skougaard, 'The Hindeloopen and the Amager rooms. Two examples of an historical museum phenomenon', *Journal of the History of Collections* 5 (1993) 2, pp.165-178; Bjarne Stoklund 'International Exhibitions and the New Museum Concept in the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century', *Ethnologia Scandinavica* vol.23 (1993) pp.87-113.

for a community. They did not depict major historical events like the history-painting, but rather what happened in the lives of the people. However it was not the individual alone that attracted interest. The situation which was shown, was considered to be a representation of a particular tradition³.

The colonial exhibition of Amsterdam in 1883 went a step further. A complete village from the

³ Ute Ricke-Immel, 'Die Düsseldorfer Genremalerei', in: *Die Düsseldorfer Malerschule* (Düsseldorf, 1979) p.149.



Fig. 1: A complete room with life-size figures in traditional costume at the Dutch section of the Paris Universal Exhibition 1878, representing the preparations for a Christening in a typical interior from the small town of Hindeloopen (province of Friesland). Engraving by Smeeton Tilly, published in the illustrated magazine *Eigen Haard* 1878 nr 31. Photo Netherlands Open air Museum

Dutch East-Indies was set up in Amsterdam. Native Indonesians were attracted to come and give the village a living character. They gave demonstrations of ploughing with buffalos and played the typical gamelan music⁴. In 1993 the Musée national des Arts et Traditions Populaires (ATP) in Paris made an exhibition on the way people from Guyana were displayed in the Jardin d'Acclimatisation in Paris at the end of the 19th century. Many natives became ill due to the cold climate in Paris and did not survive their stay⁵. In an article 'Der Mensch als lebendes Exponat' (Man

⁴ Ileen Montijn, *Kermis van koophandel. De Amsterdamse wereldtentoonstelling van 1883* (Bussum, 1983) pp.34-42.

⁵ Kaliña. *Des Amérindiens à Paris* (Paris, 1992).

as a Living Exhibit) Dr. Zippelius shows how through the ages displaying people led to strange situations which I think we now should qualify as unethical⁶.

⁶ Adelhart Zippelius, 'Der Mensch als lebendes Exponat', in: Utz Jeggle, G. Korff, M. Scharfe and B. J. Warneken (ed.), *Volkskultur in der Moderne; Probleme*

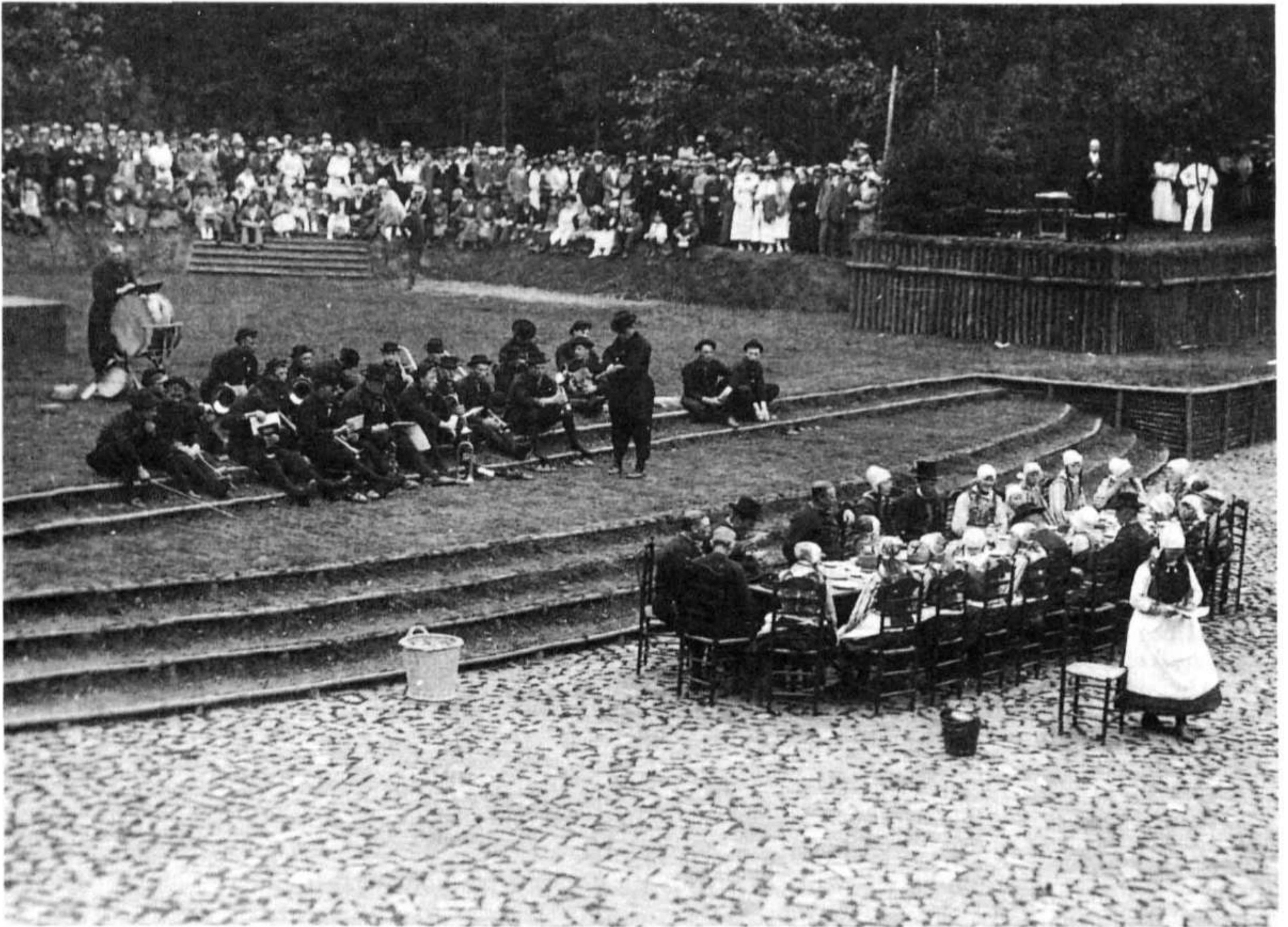


Fig. 2: Performance of a traditional wedding party as celebrated on the island of Marken at the open air theatre of the Netherlands Open Air Museum at Arnhem, 1919. Photo Netherlands Open air Museum.

OPEN AIR MUSEUMS AND THE THEATRE

The way of displaying folk culture at Universal Exhibitions was more or less taken over by the open air museums. Skansen in Stockholm (Sweden) tried to recreate elements from community life by contracting native Dalecarlians (inhabitants of the province of Dalarna) in their traditional costumes to stay in the houses of the museum. At Skansen there was also a colony of Laps accompanied by reindeer, like Hagen-

und Perspektiven empirischer Kulturforschung (Reinbek near Hamburg, 1986) pp. 410-429.

beck's Zoo in Hamburg (Germany) showed reindeer accompanied by Laps. The Netherlands Open Air Museum did not go that far, but for years Dutch people from traditional villages, who still wore their original regional costume, were given free entrance. And like other early open air museums there was an open air theatre where cultural traditions were presented, for example traditional wedding parties, folk songs, folk dances and folk plays. They showed aspects of community life which could not be displayed merely by presenting objects.

It was clear that the Universal Exhibitions and the open air museums didn't want merely to display artifacts in showcases, but tried to show folk life, including human beings and immaterial aspects of life. Open air museums differed from classical museums by presenting original settings as a whole instead of a systematic arrangement of categories of objects following specific classifications. Open air museums presented syntheses and not analyses.

The relation between a museum and an open air museum might be compared with the relation between a concert and an opera. Both the concert and the opera consist of music, but the opera adds drama. Both the museum and the open air museum consist of collections, but an open air museum adds scenes, surroundings and even performances. Long before the actual discovery of theatre by museums, ethnological presentations had already unveiled aspects of the naturalist theatre, like we saw at the Universal Exhibitions. It was a matter of giving the visitors the feeling of really being in the idyllic rural community, and momentarily escaping from the modern world.

Like the drama the ethnological presentations tried to represent folk life, re-present taken in the literal sense of the word: making the past present. They presented the interiors in a complete, closed picture, which is such a precise imitation of reality that the visitor soon forgets he is a visitor in a museum, and he identifies himself with the traditional community. The closed picture bares a narrative element in it: for

example the bride is being dressed for the wedding, a neighbour comes to visit, people gather around the death bed of a little child.

EDUCATED OBJECTIONS

Not everybody agreed or does agree with this approach. As soon as the interest in research was stronger than the need for identity, there was a inclination to look at folk life from a distance. Classification and stylization in the display were preferred by most scholars. Already in the founding time of the open air museums the presentations of Hazelius or Olsen provoked opposition. Later the main objections were brought forward in many countries and on a number of occasions, and they did not lose actuality. They can be summarized under the following three points:

- 1) What belonged within a small community was represented to a large public. The first ethnographer was still a curious voyeur among the participants in the community, but now the traditions became a spectacle performed for the sake of the public. Instead of only participants, there were now players and audience. The Dutch ethnologist, Dr. Paul Post⁷, calls this process the transition of the tradition from its mythical phase into the theatrical phase. As soon as it has become a show, a process of embellishment and adaptations starts and ruins the original tradition. Traditions are like a fine wineglass: gently rubbing the edge causes it to sing, but too much force causes it to break⁸. This is the same argument used against the effects of mass tourism.
- 2) A second objection was that in many cases a community and its traditions had already disappeared when ethnological and museological interest arose. Fantasy filled up the gap left by the lack of historical evidence and museums

⁷ Paul Post, *Volkskunde en museum: notities over museaal omgaan met volks-cultureel verleden* [not yet published lecture for the conference of the Nederlandse Sociologische en anthropologische Vereniging, held at the Netherlands Open Air Museum at Arnhem 9 October 1992].

⁸ Compare with W. Vroom, 'Merktken in de ziel voor het leven', *NRC Handelsblad* 25 May 1993, p.11.

idealized the past. From an academic point of view a museum can never convey historical reality completely, but only a reduced picture of it. These pictures are never more than fragments of the past. It is misleading the public to present a reduced picture as though it were the past itself. Mostly those presentations better express the ideas of the makers of it than the past itself. Besides, a naturalistic scene does not convey history as a process and freezes a moment. With doing this, a naturalistic scene emphasizes too much continuity.

- 3) Naturalism means that the visitor has to forget he is a visitor in a museum and has to see the evoked past as the present. That means that all objects would have to look like they looked when they were in use and not as relics from the past. In fact the naturalistic presentation was non-museological, because it treated the objects as props in a naturalistic theatre, very concerned with visual authenticity, but not at all with material authenticity. This way of presenting entails full-scale restoration to eliminate wear and tear and making replicas of missing objects. The American historian Mark Sandberg, who studied the early museum presentations of folk culture in the context of spectacle and spectatorship in late nineteenth century Scandinavia, quotes one of the polemics against this way of displaying: "...if one is indeed seeking a sort of time travel by making the old culture present before the spectator's eyes, then it makes no sense to display anything broken or in a state of disrepair, because the figures populating the rooms are implied to be using the objects in the spectator's now"⁹. This means a destruction of the relics as historical sources.

⁹ Mark Bennion Sandberg, *Missing Persons: Spectacle and Narrative in Late Nineteenth-Century Scandinavia* (dissertation Berkeley, California, 1991) p.146, quoting the Danish archaeologist Sophus Müller (1846-1934); Sophus Müller, 'Museum og Interiør', *Tilskueren*, September 1897, pp.683-700.



Fig. 3: 'Living history' at the open air museum 'Zuiderzeemuseum' at Enkhuiszen (Holland), 1993. Photo Netherlands Open Air Museum.

IDENTIFICATION AND IDENTITY

I think the reason why ethnological museums and open air museums in particular tried to include elements from the naturalistic theatre is to be found in the need for national identity which was considered to be conserved in traditional communities. In open air museums the visitors were evoked to identify themselves with the life in traditional communities. The use of naturalistic and theatrical impressions made this identification much more intense than mere relics in showcases would do¹⁰. The need for identity asks for identification.

The three objections mentioned above make the different views on museums explicit: are they archives for historic sources or are they institutions which

¹⁰ Manfred Pfister, *Das Drama. Theorie und Analyse* (Munich, 1988, 6th impression) pp.31- 47.

satisfy the need for identity by inducing the public to identify themselves with national traditions? The way open air museums deal with traditional communities is closely linked to these two kinds of approaches. The abstract or analytical approach focuses on the material relics like farmhouses, tools and furniture and tries to classify and present them with additional information about the users in traditional society. The naturalistic, identification directed approach aims to give a complete picture or even performance of traditional life, involving the public. It looks like a choice between the theoretical and the theatrical, between the academic intellectualism making things relative, and the emotional identification with past traditions to confirm our identity.

The culmination of the first approach is to be found in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Coming back to our analogy with the opera: never did the opera come so close to the concert with its empty and abstract stage. Never did the open air museum come so close to the classical museum of objects. The visitor had to be constantly made aware that he was in a museum and not in the past itself. Exhibitions of costumes became more analytical, theatrical decors and traditional *mise-en-scenes* from folk life disappeared. For instance, shows of regional costumes became more like fashion parades. Open air museums lost an important characteristic by reducing the presentation of folk life to the display of artifacts.

To my opinion there is a close relationship between the rekindled need for identity in the 1990's and the present revival of the naturalistic approach which stimulates identification. The success of the new naturalism is evident. So evident, that not only open air museums rediscover the naturalistic theatre but also other museums like the historical museums. The Amsterdam Maritime Museum is offering a so called authentic meal on board a reconstructed 18th century ship from the East India Company. The Jorvik Viking Centre turns visitors into tourists in a Viking community from the early middle ages in York (England).

Of course educational information is removed from the site. Everything that breaks the illusion of the past, such as information plaques, is discarded. And in The Netherlands Open Air Museum the new restaurant is not a modern building but a traditional barn because our guests explicitly prefer the atmosphere of the past over modern design.

IDENTIFICATION AND RELATIVIZATION

It is clear that in such a period with emphasis on identification there will be an alienation between the study of ethnology and the open air museum. At the 'European Conference of Ethnological and Social History Museums' in Paris in February 1993 the German ethnologist Gottfried Korff noticed an increasing gap between the ethnological museums and ethnology. According to him ethnological museums have already become places where the past is celebrated instead of researched, as a compensation for what we miss in our lives¹¹. To provide for the need of identity, museums have given a higher priority to design and theatrical manifestations than to analysis and documentation. This development would be very harmful to open air museums and I think it is the challenge of our time to reconsider the role of an open air museum in relation to the presentation of the past, and to explore new kinds of display methods without losing the basis of historical evidence.

The problem with the naturalistic approach in presenting community life is that it is essential to have such concrete pictures to help our imagination. Moreover the method is not overall bad. For instance the Jorvik Viking Centre corrects the prevailing image of the vikings being only barbarians and looters by presenting a community of traders. Neither is the use of theatre a bad thing as such. The use of naturalistic theatre and decors bears the same dangers as the naturalistic interiors in our houses, but the theatre is able to transfer other elements of folk life which belong as

¹¹ Gottfried Korff, Paper for the Conference 'Museums and Societies in a Europe of Different Cultures' (Paris, 23 February 1993) [not published]; see also H.Lübbe, 'Der Fortschritt und das Museum', in: *Dilthey Jahrbuch I* (Göttingen, 1983) pp. 39-56.

much to it as material culture, like dialects, songs, stories, ceremonies etc. If based on documentation and research, they only enrich the open air museum. We can say the same about using documentary photographs and films. They are a fascinating means to record community life where it still exists in its mythical stage.

However there are two conditions when using these means of presentation:

- 1) they must be based on historical documentation and
- 2) the museum must be very clear to the visitors about how it deals with the past.

Naturalistic and theatrical elements should know their place and not dominate the museum. The visitors should be made aware of the place and function of these elements. In any case the museum should not make visitors believe they are entering the past as soon as they enter the museum.

There is a difference between scientifically based institutions like a museum and artistic institutions or fantasy parks. In a museum naturalism has to be presented within a rational context which is dominated by the results of research. The identification with traditions should be made relative as well by showing how new identities and traditions are born in present circumstances. Consequently it is evident, that ethnological museums should not restrict themselves to a nostalgic mission fixed on lost traditions, but should also have an explorative mission, looking for the birth of new traditions and new diversities¹².

For example, the exhibition 'L'homme dans les Alpes' (Man in the Alps), which was held in Grenoble (France) in 1992 combined in an inspiring way naturalistic experiences –like walking along rocks, looking in a tunnel, or entering a traditional village and hearing the sounds of the cattle in the stable– with the question of the consequences of the use we make of nature, and the question if we should go on and on by building new facilities for wintersports.

¹² Krzysztof Pomian, lecture for the Conference 'Museums and Societies in a Europe of Different Cultures' (Paris, 22 February 1993) [not published].

It is a question of alternating evocation and relativization within the museum. In this way a visit to an open air museum does not become a journey *to* the past, but a journey *with* the past. The Dutch historian Willem Frijhoff attributes a very important function to the museum, by emphasizing the role of the museum to bring order in our collective memory. The museum then becomes a kind of laboratory of our memory¹³. In this way the open air museum reflects the problematic relationship of our society with traditions. The real excitement we get from traditional communities does not come from identifying ourselves with them in an artificial past. Neither does it come from putting everything in the perspective of academic analysis. The real excitement comes from the tension between identification and relativization in our attitude towards a changing world.

¹³ Willem Frijhoff, *Ordelijk vergeten. Het museum als geheugen van de gemeenschap* (Venlo 1992) [lecture published by the Goltzius-museum at Venlo, Holland].

This article is based on a lecture given at the conference of the Association of European Open Air Museums in Rumania, 2 September, 1993.

THE PRESENTATION

OF FOLK CULTURE
AT MUSEUMS

Perspectives
on the Exhibitions of Folk
Culture at the Danish
National Museum

Mette Skougaard

The National Museum of Denmark

ABSTRACT

The Danish National Museum is presently undergoing a large scale modernization with the aim of

strengthening its public appeal. As a result of this modernization programme, the museum has been rebuilt and the exhibitions renewed. As part of this, the displays of the Danish Folk Museum, which is a department of the National Museum, are being changed. The department is scheduled to open again in 1998 with a completely new exhibition of the cultural history of Denmark from 1660 to our times. This paper outlines some perspectives of the historical development of the Folk Museum seen in relation to the formulation of basic ideas and principles for the coming exhibitions.

* * *

The Danish Folk Museum was founded in the epoch of the great cultural history museums at the end of the last century, and is a typical child of its times. These great 19th century exhibitions reflected a cultural approach, which has been very persistent and which in many ways has characterized the museums until our times. The scientific basis was inspired by the evolution theories, and has focused on the development of culture from the simple, primitive way of life towards a more and more sophisticated culture.

In this context, the peasant of folk culture has played an essential role, because it included remnants from older stages of the cultural evolution. Here, we find the explanation for the first choices of peasant room interiors for the Folk Museum and for the first buildings reerected at the Open Air Museum, an extension of the Folk Museum established in 1897.

An other essential aspect which characterises the Folk Museum in Denmark and in other countries as well, is the urge to create a national identity together with the need to shelter the original local life against the new foreign ways, which was the result of the industrialization.

The museums could contribute to the promotion of the feeling, that every nation has its own cultural

characteristics and its own identity, based on a romantic conception of a national folk culture.

The founder of the Danish Folk Museum, Bernhard Olsen, showed this idea very clearly in the choice of several of the farm room interiors and buildings for his museum. They were, you see, selected from former provinces of Denmark, which had been lost to Sweden and to Germany –not only because ancient house types could be found in these areas, but because– as he expressed it this was the only way to reconquer the lost provinces «with our hearts», and make sure that they were not forgotten.

Everything taken into account, the first exhibitions of the Danish Folk Museum were of great current interest in their time. The worshipping of the national consciousness and the patriotism was in consensus with the strong political and cultural currents, and by using the evolution theories one was able to follow the newest scientific trends on an international level.

By the ingenious introduction of the exhibition of interiors, attributed to Artur Hazelius, but also influenced by the great world exhibitions, the Folk Museum had even been able to work out an advanced presentation technique, known from the popular panopticons, panoramas and theatres. The museum was no longer for only a narrow circle, the aim was deliberately and with great success directed towards reaching a greater public.

But how are these collections experienced by the public of the 1990s? If one observes groups of school children visiting the museum, it is easy to understand, why they might regard what they see as antiquated items placed in obsolete surroundings, which hardly offer any connection to their own daily life. Without exaggeration, one can describe this as an alienation of the public, and this is true for the Folk Museum as well as the Open Air Museum.

This has led us to come central points in our evaluation of the old exhibitions:

First of all we must ask ourselves in which ways we can place the museums objects in a relevant context.

One of the basic assumptions of the early presentations of traditional folk culture in the museums has been, that the objects «speak for themselves».

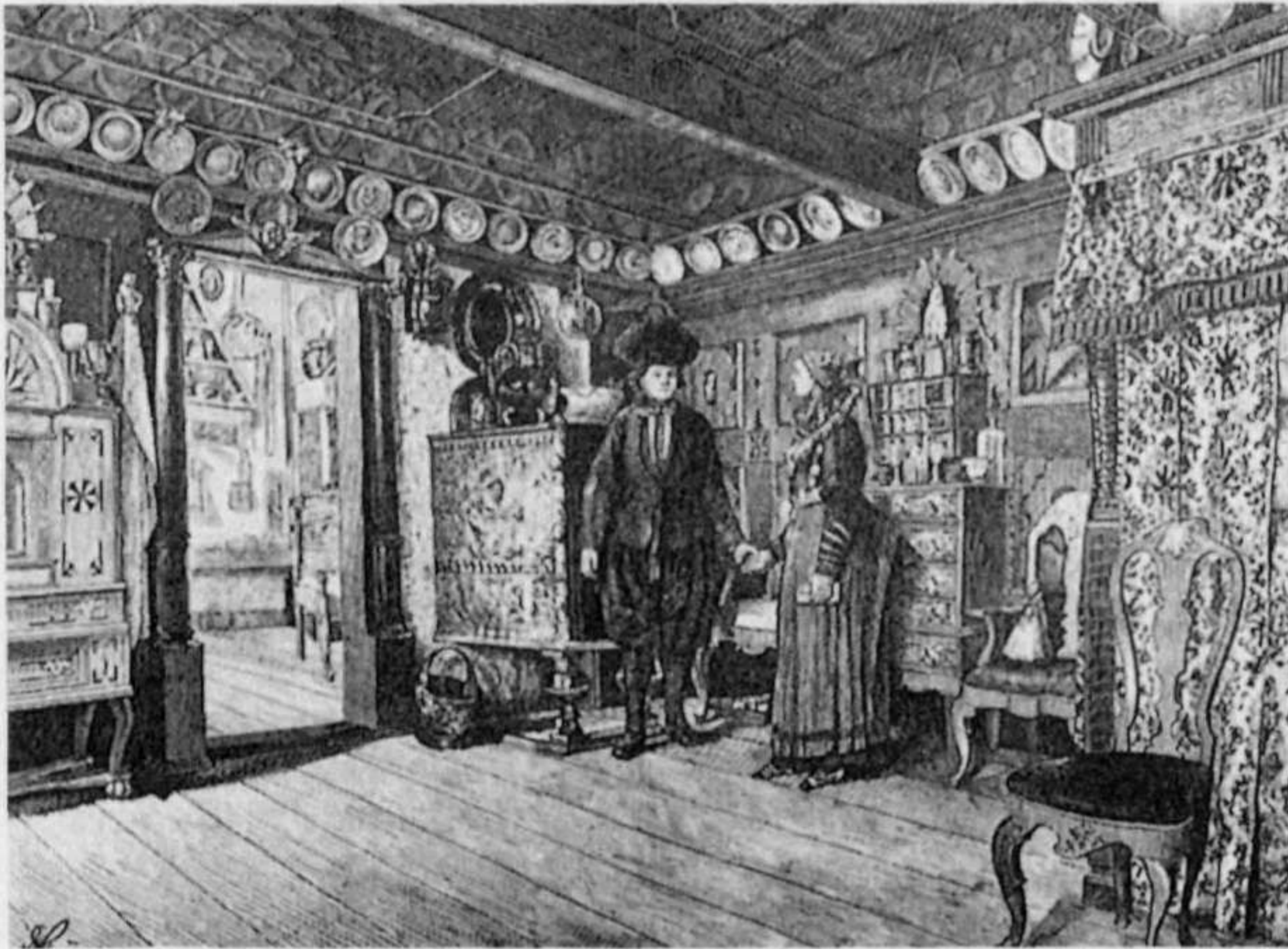


Fig. 1: The living room from a farm from Amager south of Copenhagen, exhibited for the first time as a great attraction at the Exhibition of Art and Industry in Copenhagen 1879. Later, this room became part of the Danisk Folk Museum. Does such a peasant room belong in a modern ethnological museum?

The consequence of this assumption has among other things been, that folk culture has acquired a very romantic stamp.

Somehow the museum involuntarily has created a uniform image of the people of the past, shown a cast solid idyll, while the individual in a life of social and economic conflicts has been forgotten.

Today, we must try whenever possible, to show the museum objects in both a social, economic and cultural-historical context. That is, we must try to show the relations between the single object and general trends of the society, to present objects, illustrations,

atmospheres, ideas, people, telling about the past in a manner so that the historical way of thinking and the historical experiences become evident to the visitor.

Looking back at the older exhibitions, one can maintain, that the recreation of interiors fulfilled these demands. They endeavoured to animate the folk life exactly by showing the objects in a context, which made their social functions understandable.

In the light of a complete rearrangement of the collections it can, however, be questioned, whether an exhibition of interiors from old farm houses and urban upper classes of the 18th century belong to a modern ethnological museum. A century ago, this exhibition form was of considerable current interest, and it was a sophisticated mixture of the most modern and popular media combined with the latest scientific trends (Figure 1). However, this is not necessarily obvious today. We must ask: are the objects, the authenticity and the style of exhibition still valid? What kind of picture do these interiors show of peasants and townsmen? What is original and what is reconstruction? Has this type of presentation faded in the light of the new media and technical advancements? How did the rooms look in reality with dirt, smell and daily wear and tear?

The criticism of the interiors in museum exhibitions is inextricably tied to the demand for a newer and broader approach to the subject. For a modern visitor, it is confusing, that the function of the rooms is not always clearly indicated, that only sometimes it is explained who used the rooms and in which manner the rooms were connected to other parts of the house where it originally belonged, etc.

Because of the fact that style history has been normative, there has been a clear tendency to show all objects in a room as originating from the same time period. There is no trace of what one may call «culture deposits», which although they might confuse, would give a more realistic picture of the past. There is no adequate information about the origin and the

Fig. 2: A room from the poor house at the Open Air Museum in Lyngby, Denmark. This room represents the living conditions in the poor house in the 1850s.



Fig. 3: A room from the poor house, arranged as it looked in the 1970s with television, telephone, etc.

authenticity of the objects shown, and there has been too many lifeless rooms that have not been able to catch the interest of a spoiled audience.

Still the old interiors have a great value. We must not forget, that the old rooms are the only ones left of their kind. Since they were collected, the original environments have disappeared completely. Therefore, they constitute in themselves an invaluable research material, which cannot easily be substituted.

Furthermore, the old interiors are historiographically important. The old peasant rooms tell us not only of their original inhabitants—they are brilliant examples of the search for identity in the 19th century, they tell about the attitudes of that time and of the people who presented the rooms in the museums—a splendid 19th century phenomenon which in itself is worthy as a museum object.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Another central question for the folk museums of today is the relation between *continuity and tradition, change and development*. Historians and ethnologists have for a long time studied the processes of changes. It is extremely important to integrate these processes in our future exhibitions, in contrast to the static picture of an «original and genuine» pre-industrial peasant culture which is often presented by the old folk museums (Figure 2). In an attempt to achieve this, the Open Air Museum in Copenhagen has arranged the rooms of a poor house, used by the poor people of a little village south of Copenhagen from 1710 to 1976, in order to illustrate the changing conditions of the inhabitants over a centuries long time span. There is a room from about 1750, one from 1840, from 1890 and 1930 and a reconstruction of the room of one of the last inhabitants who lived at the poor house in 1975 (Figure 3).

The poor house opened to the public in 1984 and the popularity which this house quickly received from

the public has confirmed our assumption, that the *process-oriented exhibitions* have a great appeal to the modern public. It will be important for the museum to continue to develop exhibitions on these themes.

TO MAKE FOLK MUSEUMS TOPICAL

The final problem to be mentioned here is perhaps the most urgent. In our traditional folk museum, we have huge collections of objects originating from the pre-industrial peasant culture, obsolete handicraft tools, 17th century faience etc. How can we make these collections relevant and alive to the public of today?

In this case, the problem is best looked upon in a greater context and seen in relation to the Danish National Museum as an entity. As part of the museum which deals with the cultural history of our country from prehistoric time to the present, the collections of the Folk Museum *can* play an essential role for the visitor of today. Here we find the collections and the capacity to create a coherent exhibition showing the development of the Danish cultural history from prehistory to the present day with an emphasis on the long trends and the overall coherences. Something of greater importance, perhaps, now than ever before.

Therefore, the museum has chosen three central themes as «leitmotifs» for the presentations of the Danish collections as a whole:

man and nature

man and society

man an spiritual life

In this manner, the exhibitions can be used interdisciplinarily, and across the exhibitions sections.

The question of the local, the regional and the national is an *example of a topic under the theme* «man and society», a question which is as relevant today as it was a century ago.

Today, however, the aim of the museum is not to encourage ideas of something «super Danish», which never existed. In quite the opposite way, The National Museum has the potential to show, that there has always been contacts and communication across borders, even if this communication was more slow than today.

The societies have existed locally, each in their own daily life, but at the same time, they have been actors on a larger stage. Denmark, and the Danish State is not a given entity, and the Danish identity is not something eternal. In the eyes of history, it is a relatively new phenomenon. And further more, we must remember, that this Danish identity has been changing constantly. Not only following the big and extreme events, such as wars, but also, and maybe even more so, in the changeable daily life, where the basic identity formed. Such aspects will be very important to emphasize in our new exhibitions.

THE PUBLIC AND THE MUSEUM

Regardless of how successfull our exhibitions might become, however, we know, that it is only a small part of the population that uses the museums. The last 15 years of exhibition work has shown, that changes in the exhibition types alone are not enough to attract and keep museum-goers from the non-user group.

The non-users have an attitude to the museums, not to exhibitions they know nothing about, when they choose their leisure occupation. So it will be necessary to undertake a great out-reaching work among the non-users, if we want more of these to come to the museum regularly. First of all this work must be directed towards the schools and other educational institutions. Here we have a unique opportunity to obtain contact with people who do not usually use the museums.

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Fig. 4: A group of retired citizens working in the gardens of the Open Air Museum in Lyngby.

We have, however, also started projects with other groups. For instance a project has been carried through at the Open Air Museum, in which a number of retired citizens have participated in the gardening and maintenance of some of the old gardens in the museum park. This work only being part of a larger programme including excursions, lectures and several other activities. There seem to be outstanding possibilities for the future in working with this type of project, which aims at breaking down traditional barriers between museum and the public. At the museums, we must learn not to see our visitors as a passive and anonymous group, which it really is hopeless or impossible to have an attitude towards. Instead, we must start an active dialogue with the many groups of interested, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic persons which in many ways have so much to offer (Figure 4).

In other words: we must not only change the attitude of the public towards the museum concept. Also the attitudes of the museum officials towards the public is in great need of revision and re-thinking.

* * *

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MU SEUMS

OF CULTURAL HISTORY
IN NORWAY:
STRUCTURE, STATUS
AND CHALLENGES

Bjarne Rogan and Magne Velude
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NORWEGIAN MUSEUMS IN STATISTICAL TERMS

With a population of 4,3 million inhabitants Norway has an amazingly high density of museums. Approximately 430 museums answer every year the questionnaires from the National Bureau of Statistics, but we know that nearly 700 institutions/collections call themselves museums. Some statistical information from the year of 1992 may throw some light on the landscape of museums in Norway.

- 413 museums gave rise to 3.034 *man-years*. Not more than 200 museums were permanently staffed, and

only 51% of the man-years were carried out by permanent staff. This means a high proportion of temporarily employed persons in Norwegian museums. One explanation is that the government during the last five years has financed different employment programmes to fight a growing national problem of unemployment. Museums have profited from these programmes, being enabled to carry out many tasks, hitherto undone. Less than 10% of man-years were carried out by volunteers.

- Norwegian museums constitute *a society of «smallholders»*: 72% of the institutions each involve less than 3 man-years by permanent staff; in 34 institutions (8,2%) more than 10 man-years are carried out by permanent staff. All permanent staff is included in these figures. This means that Norway has relatively few institutions showing a strong professional profile, and no large institutions, compared to the international museum society.

- *The total number of visitors* in 1992 was 7,6 million, which means an average of 1,73 visits per inhabitant, a relatively high score, compared to international statistic¹.

- *Museums of natural history*, 18 altogether, belong almost exclusively to Norway's 4 universities. They comprise more than 7 million objects, requiring approximately 200 man-years by permanent staff, visited by 0,7 million persons in 1992.

- *Museums of art and applied art* are 27, holding 247.000 objects, involving approximately 320 man-years by permanent staff, visited by 1,3 million persons in 1992.

- Some museums, comprising *both natural and cultural history*, form a special category of 68 institutions. Most of them basically museums of cultural history, containing some collections of natural history. Two major university museums belong to this integrated category. Their collections amount to 2,9 million objects, and they give rise to 390 man-years by permanent staff, being visited by 1,3 million persons in 1992.

¹ Mennesket i centrum. Dansk udgave af Human Development Report 1994 fra UNDP. (Danish version of Human Development Report 1994 from UNDP), p. 195.

- Most museums in Norway are dedicated to *local and cultural history*. 73% of the museums reporting to the National Bureau of Statistics in 1992 belong to this category. We assume that most «museums»/collections not responding to the questionnaires fall into the same category. The 300 museums comprise, 2,7 million objects and require 827 man-years by permanent staff. This constitutes only 43% of the total number of man-years of this category, which is fairly low compared to the other museum categories. Their collections comprise 2,7 million objects and the number of visitors amounts to 4,2 million. Museums of archaeology belong to this category, and all but one institution are integrated in universities.



Fig. 1: Ål bygdemuseum, Hallingdal. An open-air museum in the central part of south-eastern Norway. Photo Arthur Sand.

- An important subcategory of the museums of cultural history are *the open-air museums*, i.e. museums «collecting», holding and treating historic building as museum objects. There are 252 institutions of this kind². they have the responsibility for 4100 building, holding 1,6 million objects, giving rise to 722 man-years by permanent staff, and were visited by 3,6

² Open-air museum is statistically defined as an institution comprising 2 or more historic buildings as museum objects.

million persons in 1992, which constitutes 47,3% of all museum visitors. To some extent this museum category may be called the visitors' choice.

- Financing all these museums is predominantly a public responsibility, the governmental grants being most important, but counties and municipal authorities also contribute to financing museums. The public contribution to current expenses of museums in 1992 was 81%, i.e. 650 million Nkr.

Two features need further explanation: the open-air museum as a specific branch of museum, and the large number of small museums of cultural history.

OPEN-AIR MUSEUMS:

A SCANDINAVIAN CONTRIBUTION TO MUSEOLOGY

As far as we know the idea of open-air museum stems from Scandinavia, with Skansen in Stockholm, Sweden, being known as the first open-air museum, accessible to the public in 1891. The idea of open-air museum is, strictly speaking, based on a tradition of re-using and re-cycling parts, or complete buildings, of log construction: when people moved to a new location, moving old buildings as well was a commonly chosen alternative to erecting new buildings. Consequently, the pioneers of open-air museums were accustomed to consider buildings of log construction as mobile objects, and their achievement lies in turning a traditional recycling principle into an idea for a museum. During the first decades of this century, the largest and in some respects the best open-air museums were founded. For a long period, establishing a museum in Norway meant creating an open-air museum.

Most of the museums consist of single buildings which have been moved from different locations to a museum area. The aim was often to create and display a collection of «typical» buildings from different regions. This may be true for each building separately,

but the visual and functional totality, which the re-erected buildings form in an open-air museum, is a completely new one, having never existed outside the museum fences. Moreover, dwelling houses dominate at the expense of outbuildings. Nevertheless, already at the turn of the 19th century some of the pioneers realised that it was crucial to have *all* the building on a farm in order to illustrate and visualise preindustrial farm life³. Just a few of the open-air museums are based on real farms, thus displaying a more complete and authentic totality. As in all museums of cultural history one may question the selected examples of buildings/objects with regard to social, economic and occupational representativity.

Normally, museums of cultural history represent a fragmentary perspective on material culture, in the sense that they focus on single objects, detached from their original context. To some extent this way of exhibiting particulate objects of the material world means placing single objects into a universe of its own where they exist despite of and rescued from the world, that once created them. Treating buildings as

³ A dentist, Anders Sandvig (1862-1950), in 1908 bought a complete farm, consisting of 26 separate buildings. During the years of 1910-13 he succeeded in moving and re-erecting all buildings in his open-air museum at Maihaugen, Lillehammer. Together with Norsk Folkemuseum in Oslo, Maihaugen is the dominant open-air museum in Norway.



Fig. 2: «Activity days» at the Norsk Skogbruksmuseum (the Norwegian Forestry, Hunting and Fishing Museum). The traditional way of bringing timber from the woods down to the rivers for floating. Copyright Norsk Skogbruksmuseum.

objects sometimes represents a more holistic approach, simply because a building as a construction consists of many different parts, and different rooms or arenas for human interaction. Moreover, a house, and especially a dwelling house, forms a bridge to every visitor, because we all have a personal relationship to housing, thus promoting a sort of reciprocal communication between the visitor and the building.

Museums of cultural history in general, and open-air museums especially, represent a sort of «roots history», focusing on popular culture relating mainly to preindustrial work and life in agricultural and fishing communities. The extraordinarily high number of museums is in itself a proof of a generally positive attitude in the population and among local and central authorities towards the idea of protecting cultural heritage. It is a reflection of a general and broad interest in Norway for history, and not least local history. The local history movements has been remarkably strong in Norway all through this century. Local groups of historians, mostly amateurs, but normally with professionals associated, were established at an early date all over the country. It should be added that local history very early was accepted as a university discipline in Norway. Not seldom the work of these groups resulted in the establishing of local museums and collections.

To some extent, the ideological founders of eco museums were inspired by the idea of open-air museums because of the evident connection to «ordinary» people as members of local communities.

MANY SMALL MUSEUMS:
PERHAPS TOO MANY AND TOO SMALL?

An important feature in the development of Norwegian museums is that «heritage», both national and regional, to a great extent is perceived as popular culture, and hence predominantly representing regional or local cultural traits. This situation can be explained

with reference partly to our political history, and partly to our economic history. For 400 years, until 1814, Norway was a province under Denmark, and was then ruled by Swedish kings until 1905, when Norway became an independent nation. Throughout the 19th century there were strong intellectual and cultural movements, dedicated to the mission of establishing a Norwegian national identity. Heritage, of course, in all its manifestations, has played an important role as identity symbols, as always, when a young nation strives to define its position in relation to other nations.

It is important to note that Norway for a long time remained a country of peasants and fishermen. Industrialisation came relatively late, and the economy was related to traditional rural and coastal activities. From the Middle Ages to our century, the majority of the Norwegian peasants were either freeholders with allodial rights, or tenants who leased the land on liberal conditions for generations. Even during «the colonial time» under Denmark the Norwegian peasants held a very free position. The nobility was weak, serfdom did not exist, and forced labour and duties were relatively moderate. The absence of a strong nobility and of seigneurial estates is paramount for the understanding of the cultural and political role of the Norwegian peasant in the nationalisation process in the 19th century. The free, independent and strong peasant became our national hero, and his culture our national heritage – in all its regional varieties.

Lately, another decisive factor has promoted the development of a decentralised museum structure in Norway. During the 1970s the governmental authorities introduced a culture policy, stimulating economically local and regional cultural activities. In the museum field the counties, 19 altogether, had the operational responsibility, and the immediate result was that existing regional and local institutions for the first time had economic conditions which enabled them to carry out museum activities. Also, this deli-

berate policy of stimulating local activities resulted in still more new and small museums. The consequence of this development was that new funds have been channelled into the establishing of new institutions, or to some extent, expanding the infrastructure of existing museums. Few resources have so far been put into developing professional standards, other than those resulting from improved buildings and more technical posts. Until 1983 the State paid a fixed percentage of the total expenditure; after that year the State's contribution and any economic increase were evaluated separately, which means that the counties have gradually increased their portion of the public expenditure. Nevertheless, during the period from 1975 to 1991 the governmental part of the public expenditure to regional and local museums rose from 8,6 million Nkr to 95 million Nkr⁴. This says more about the rudimentary conditions before 1975 than about an economic paradise in the 1990s.

Small museums, scattered around the country have definitely their advantage in their close integration into local communities. But many of them being too small, they lack a level of professionalism which is necessary to serve their local communities optimally. They are not able to make the full advantage of their location. Small is beautiful, but not necessarily best in the world of museums.

RESEARCH IN MUSEUMS OF CULTURAL HISTORY: A FAREWELL STORY?

This period of institutional expansion has been paralleled by an increasing interest in museums of cultural history, both by the public and politicians. This is actually a very positive element in the interaction between museums and society. The mission of every museum is to serve society, not necessarily by comforting people and society, but by presenting sound information, and even knowledge with a critical attitude towards society. Most museums have tried in dif-

⁴ Beretningen om Statens museumsråd 1979-91 (Report on the Norwegian National Council of Museums 1979-91), p. 83.

Fig. 3: «Activity days» at the Norsk Skogbruksmuseum (The Norwegian Forestry, Hunting and Fishing Museum). Visitors learning to tie fleas for trout fishing. Copyright Norsk Skogbruksmuseum.



ferent ways to respond to this interest. Growing expectations have, however, often been met by more display and more exciting activities. There are different opinions as to what are the appropriate methods of disseminating museum knowledge, but this is a subjects of discussion which we leave for another occasion.

Anyhow, the combination of infrastructural expansion, a growing interest on the part of the public and a dispersed and vulnerable museum structure, is, of course, not the optimal basis for research and continuous production of new knowledge. Consequently, museums as research institutions have seen a period of decline, a paradox if we take into account the nominal and real growth of resources. Museums of art and applied art may represent an exception to this trend, as their efforts within the field of research might have been better and more profound.

The decline of museums of cultural history as institutions of research is not an isolated Norwegian phenomenon, but rather a sort of identity crisis which many museums of this category have experienced.

This means that structural problems and scarce economic resources do not constitute the only explanation for the decline in research. An important factor is also the shift of paradigms during the '60s and '70s in the Humanities, when material culture lost its importance as source material for research in academic disciplines like regional ethnology and anthropology. Until then there were often close ties between museums and university departments of ethnology, anthropology, history of art, etc. Museum curators often taught at the universities, and the directors of some central museums even held chairs at the universities. Much of the actual teaching often took place in museums, where material culture could be studied.

As long as research in cultural history was predominantly directed towards the 19th century and earlier, and as long as the research topics were primarily preindustrial, popular culture, peasants' and fishermen's culture, vanishing crafts and trades, etc., museum research was more or less identical with ethnological and ethnographic research. In this research museum collections offered much of the necessary source material, and the problems that were posed and the topics that were investigated coincided with strategies of museum documentary programmes.

From the 1960s onwards this descriptive, positivistic-influenced paradigm was gradually abandoned by most disciplines in the Humanities. With new paradigms –it should be sufficient to mention structuralism, phenomenology and hermeneutics– new questions were posed, questions that could not be answered by studying artefacts and museum collections as evidence. Very often modern man came into focus, and the perspectives shifted from «popular culture», and «folk»-phenomena, to individuals and everyday life.

A recent development in the universities' standard requirements for readers, lecturers and researchers broaden the gap between academics in museums and their colleagues at the universities. In order to obtain

a post at the university, the candidates must have passed the formal education of a doctor's degree. Museum curators do not need the same formal qualifications, which means that they very often will not have the same training as their university colleagues for research work. This, of course, constitutes a real problem for museum research.

CHALLENGES

To summarise: Norway has a highly decentralised museum structure, most of the museums relating to local and/or regional cultural history. The viability of this structure is based on a principle of constantly expanding public budgets. That was the situation in the 1970s and the first years of the '80s. But with no budgetary expansion and shrinking public budgets, the vulnerability of this museum structure is evident. Too many institutions are too weak and too small to carry out a satisfactory work within the whole range of museum work: collecting, researching, preserving and educating, with a special responsibility for cultural history based on material culture studies. Hence, future challenges may be identified at two levels, the first one related to structural and organisational questions, the second one being mainly scholarly, thought to some extent dependent of the first level.

The problems of structure are at the moment approached by a governmental committee, which is going to present a report on museums at the end of 1995. The ultimate objective of the governmental report is to present a basis for a national museum policy. The committee has to face questions like the following: how can we develop co-operation and co-ordination in a world of small units?

Would it be wise to introduce a network structure, where there are many points of exposure, i.e. many place for the public to meet exhibitions, activities, etc., and few, but highly professionalised institutions, having the responsibility for and the resources to

cover the whole range of museum work? What roles should the national museums, university museums included, play in relation to all the other museums? Would it be appropriate to introduce a system of museum accreditation, i.e. defining standards for museums which are funded by public money? How could we stimulate perspectives, where natural and cultural history are integrated? The economic starting point for such a discussion is fixed, however: no political promise of more public money for the museum sector in the years to come.

The scholarly challenge is to vitalise museums as arenas of research, especially those outside the universities. Museums as institutions of research is not an end in itself. But the society of scholars need knowledge about our material world as a decisive cultural force, both forming and reflecting collective and individual world views. It is logical that museums as the «homes» of material culture should contribute actively to the process of creating knowledge, simply because few other scholarly communities pay attention to the world of materiality, at least in Norway. If museums do not realise the importance and relevance of materiality as a field of research, no one else will. Also, if museums are to present appropriate and sound knowledge of material culture in all its facets, it must be based on research. The Norwegian Research Council has for the last three years funded a network project of museum research, promoting meeting and symposia, where scholars discuss and approach potential research projects. The working period of this project will apparently be prolonged after 1994, and the hope is to initiate and carry out comprehensive research projects. This means that there are some promising sings on the sky of museum research.

SO CIAL AN THROPOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF MATERIAL CULTURE IN IRISH MUSEUMS

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ABSTRACT

The study of artifacts and techniques is a central concern in ethnological museums but has not received very much attention in Irish social anthropology, partly because the programmes set out by major theorists are too generalised to be easily applicable to detailed empirical data. This paper will summarise some attempts to show how social relations are expressed through, or are affected by available technology. The most successful work of this kind has

been centred on relations of mutual help in rural areas, but the paper will argue that even here, complexities of technique are not included in the analysis. Despite massive difficulties in achieving this, it will be argued that the project should be considered important. Artifacts and techniques are of vital interest to Irish country people, and good fieldwork, and analysis, should take this into account.

* * *

The central task of museums is to demonstrate the significance of their artifact collections. In ethnological museums, collections gain most significance when they are examined in terms of the social context in which they were made or used. In this approach, collections of artifacts are often seen as representing the 'material culture' of a society, which researchers can explore with the aim of making other aspects of the society more intelligible. The term material culture is a categorisation which we impose on social phenomena. Phenomenologists, and others, would point out that many societies do not make a distinction between material and non-material worlds, while Marxists, and others, would argue that all culture is in the end 'material'. In looking at Irish rural society, there is evidence that the distinction is also arbitrary. The belief in the efficacy of magical 'charms', for example, in curing animals or making crops grow, illustrates a world-view where 'material' and 'non-material' elements are not rigidly separated in our commonsense way.

Whatever we call the area of study, however, directing attention to artifacts and techniques can be useful in deepening understanding. Also, in Irish terms, this boundary making is not a completely arbitrary imposition. During the last 200 years, literate Irish people have left a great deal of evidence suggesting that there would be a wide area of agreement between the relevant actors and modern researchers about what constitutes effective technical action within the

'material' world. (In farming literature, for example, modern agriculturalists can understand and comment on contemporary nineteenth century debates in Irish farming journals).

In ethnological museums in Ireland, the dominant approach to understanding artifacts was that developed in research in the subject area known as "folklife". This field of scholarship has produced large collections of empirical data, backed up by a generally unimpressive body of theory aimed at explaining their significance. Folklife studies in the north of Ireland emerged from human geography, through the work of E. Estyn Evans. Human geography of this period (the 1930s-1950s) emphasised the relationship between man and the environment. In rural Ireland, Evans believed that he had found a folk world which showed this relationship at its organic best. Materials and techniques showed a close fit with local conditions, this relationship having evolved over a very long time indeed¹.

Empirical evidence from archeology and history does suggest that some techniques have continued in use for a very long time. Cultivation ridges were being made in county Mayo five thousand years ago, and are still made in several areas of Ireland today. For Evans, however, simple constructions made from local materials, were enough to suggest an ancient pedigree. Commenting on slide-car, for example, he claimed, 'This primitive vehicle... is of high antiquity... [They are] strange survivals from the twilight of history' (Evans, 1957 (1979), pp. 173-174). In fact, while there is evidence for the use of spoked wheels in ancient Ireland, at present there is none for slide cars.

Apart from speculation on the antiquity of artifacts and techniques, folklife researchers concentrated on constructing typologies of artifacts and mapping their distribution. After a massive survey of northern 'vernacular' houses, for example, R. A. Gailey has categorised houses using the relationship between doors and chimneys (Gailey 1984, pp. 140-196). Other differences are seen as secondary to this basic structural

¹ The importance of Ireland is that, thanks to the time lag, it has rendered to Anthropology the unique inestimable service of carrying a primitive European *Precivilization* down into late historic times (Evans, 1957 (1979), p. 12). In [the]... oldest substratum [of its culture] Ireland preserves a sample of Palaeolithic Europe (Evans 1957 (1979), p. 6).

arrangement. Mapping of variations has led to the production of ethnological atlases showing the regional distributions of churns, flails, chairs, etc. The sheer volume of this work is impressive, and in some cases the variations mapped are accepted by the people who manufactured and used the artifacts. Irish spades, for example, are known by the area in which they were used, both locally and in surviving manuscripts from mills in which they were used.

Some folklife experts, or ethnologists go beyond this however. Maps are overlaid one on the other, and used to delimit 'culture areas'. (The north west Atlantic region would be seen as a clear example of one of these). One aim of folklife collectors carrying out this work is to identify 'relict' areas, populated by 'tradition bearers'. Ó Danachair, for example, identifies modern gaeltachts (areas in which Irish is spoken as a first language) as the most important areas in Ireland for survivals (Ó Danachair 1983, p. 10).

This latter project would not stand much scrutiny from almost any approach taken in modern social anthropology. 'Non-folk' artifacts are simply excluded from the distributions, and any artifact found outside its proper area is often dismissed as a 'bastard type'. The interest of the research lies in what it reveals about the ideology of the writers, rather in than the 'objective' discoveries folklorists claim to have made. Social anthropologists should not feel utterly superior to this approach, however. When we examine Irish anthropological writings, we do not find a great deal to help us understand artifacts or techniques. The great theorists like Marx and Durkheim, said interesting things about the place of technology in society, and some anthropologists, such as Murdock (1949), Marvin Harris (1971) and Lévi-Strauss (1966 (1972)), have also attempted to include techniques and artifacts in their general theoretical frameworks. When we attempt to apply this level of insight, however, the gap between the impressive generalisations and detailed empirical data remains very wide.

Some classic texts in Irish social anthropology do recognise the significance of the physical and technical environment in which people live. Arensberg and Kimball, for example, provide a summary of 1920s census returns as an attempt to place their area of study in a Irish economic context. They also discuss land holding and crop rotations, and describe typical days' work for both men and women, (Arensberg and Kimball 1961, p. 35) while their discussion of the significance of the west room is an interesting attempt to connect physical living space and cosmology. Arensberg does sound rather like a folklorist of his time when he says that 'the west room of Luogh is a dim survival, perhaps, of Avalon and *Tír-na-nÓg*' (Arensberg, 1959, pp. 24-27), but he is very far in advance of his contemporaries in folklore in his discussion of the changing way in which artifacts are researched².

Arensberg says this new approach represents the replacement of 'cultural' data by 'human'.

The area of study where Irish anthropological writing comes closest to relating techniques and society, is in work on relations of mutual help between farmers, and to some extent fishermen. These relationships are identified as very important by people throughout Ireland. The relationships are known by different words in different parts of the country; *meitheal*, *comhar*, *frizz*, *crinniú*, *neighbouring*, *swopping*, *joining*, *gathering*, *morrowing*, etc. The exchanges included labour, implements and animals, and their significance has been discussed by Arensberg and Kimball (1961), Rosemary Harris (1972), Elliot Leyton (1975), Eileen Ken (1979), Hugh Brody (1973) and Peter Gibbon (1973). The most interesting theoretical debate arising from this work is its significance for the concept of community. From the point of view of this paper, its main interest is that it has led to discussion of social relations expressed through or affected by artifacts and techniques.

² Where once a savage who used the bow was asked, «Where did you get it and how did you learn to make your particular kind of bow?» Now he was asked, «What use do you make of your bow, what does it mean to you and your friends, with whom do you share its quarry, and why do you flourish it so in your dances?» (Arensberg 1959, p. 7).

³ Paul Jamison... had, for years previously, worked with his father's... brother, but because he had prospered and could afford his own two horses, and because he had three growing sons to help with the work, his old 'swopping' arrangement had been amicably ended... His brother-in-law, Fred Richards... was glad to work with Paul since this saved him the necessity of having to keep two horses, for when two were needed he could borrow one of Paul's...

[However, Paul then bought a tractor] Once he had had done this Fred could no longer work with him on the basis of equality. In fact Paul had always been the slightly more influential partner, since he contributed not only his own labour but that of [a full-time paid worker]... as well. Moreover, his farm was bigger than Fred's, so that not surprisingly more work was always done at Paul's than at Fred's. Once Paul had bought the tractor his position vis á vis Fred was bound to become overwhelming. Paul's cousin Bill could still make a valuable contribution because with his background of agricultural contracting Bill was a skilled tractor operator and something of a mechanic (Harris 1972, pp. 69-72).

A good example of this comes from Rosemary Harris, writing of farm work in county Tyrone³.

Research centred on artifacts, however, should ideally go further than this. Social relations can be expressed in a very refined way through the manipulation of artifacts. One good instance of this was recorded in county Tyrone. A farmer who believed his neighbour had maltreated his horse, took his revenge by setting the draught for harrows, so that the neighbour's horse had all the heavy work to do, while his own did hardly any (Bell 1978, pp. 55-56). Another example, recorded by Mervyn Watson in north Antrim, involved allegations that a blacksmith had expressed his sectarian preferences by minute differences in the way he set the irons on ploughs for competitions involving protestants and catholics (Watson, UFTM tape R82.61). A sporting example from the Glens of Antrim was the allegation that early this century, young men found playing with GAA broad hurley sticks, which were seen as symbols of nationalist allegiance, were beaten up by the security forces. Those practising with older narrow sticks were left alone (Malachy McSparran, personal comment).

These examples are not typical, however, and in general there is still a long way to go. Philip Bock has argued that we should be able to uncover very tight relationships between technology and society⁴.

However, when we look at empirical examples of the application of technology in the Irish countryside, the most immediately striking impression is not of limitation, but of the flexibility and inventiveness with which farmers made use of techniques. New artifacts and techniques have been flooding in to Ireland for the last 250 years. Rather than replacing older methods, however, it is best to see these as increasing the range of available techniques (Bell and Watson, 1986).

Many implements were too expensive for small farmers to buy, but there are numerous examples of the ingenuity with which they gained access to them.

⁴ Because technology does not operate all by itself, changes in technology and in social structure go hand-in-hand. The technique and skills which make possible the survival of a human society must be shared and applied by specific categories of persons. Techniques are attributes of social roles and, as such, are expected to be manifested in culturally defined situations. The technological ability of a population also sets *limits* on its size and on the forms of social structure that the society may manifest (Bock 1969, p. 219).

Expensive implements could be borrowed in return for labour, hired as necessary, or in some cases bought co-operatively. Portable threshing machines are a good example of all of these methods. Machines of this kind came into Ireland in the early 1850s, and farmers quickly developed a system where machines were hired, travelling from farm to farm within an area, and worked by 10-15 neighbours who co-operated in the task. This is one of the clearest cases where we can say that the application of a new technique affected social relations very directly (Bell and Watson 1986, pp. 215-217). The examination of the division of labor associated with other techniques, however, shows how cautious we must be in even speculating of their possible social implications. The cultivation of potatoes using spadework is a clear example here. One person (usually a man) working alone, could perform all the tasks to tilling, planting or harvesting a potato crop. On the other hand, it was common for two neighbours to work together at these tasks, working at opposite sides of the same ridge. Again, whole groups of neighbours might also join together to cultivate fields, either for each member of the group in turn, or for local people who could not be expected to do the work for themselves; sick or old people, widows, or members of the clergy. A group of this kind could be 'called' by a farmer needing help, but sometimes a group of men might simply arrive at a farm and volunteer their services. In one account from county Tyrone, several men turned up in this way. The farmer would have preferred to organise their help in other tasks, but since digging was the help offered, he accepted it without dispute. Hiring of spademen has also been common in Ireland, for at least several centuries. The best known example of this were teams of spademen, *spailtíní* or spalpeens, who were migratory workers, coming mainly from Munster, and hiring themselves out in more eastern parts of Ireland (Bell, 1978).

Techniques which could be practised within the family, with help from neighbours, or using hired

help, are very common. At the moment, therefore, Irish evidence does not suggest any clear way in which the detailed study of artifacts and their use, can be tightly linked to any broad theoretical generalisation about the relationship between technology and other aspects of society. However, we must continue the search for connections. The great theorists were right. There is a systematic, although complex, relationship between techniques the division of labour, and other social relations. There are examples of historical understanding which illustrate this. We can, for example, follow Irish farmers' own way of seeing things, viewing farming as a system of interrelated techniques; how you plant your crop affects how you care for it when growing and how you harvest it. In some cases, this can allow a systematic understanding of the relationship between techniques, labour, the system of landholding and the system of trade. The linen industry in Ulster during the late 18th century is a neat example of this. Linen production from flax is very labour intensive, so it made sense to organise home production in small farming units with full family participation. In this way, we can understand the spread of very small farms throughout Ulster during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This in turn helps us to understand why Ulster farms are still small, even by Irish standards.

Anthropologists should work towards similar syntheses of levels of understanding. More basically, it is that the boast of social anthropologists who practise participant observation that they listen to what the people say and observe what they do. Irish country people certainly spend more time talking about and working at making a living, than they do in discussing, for example, the reality of the concept of community. Good anthropologists should direct more attention at this central concern.

* * *

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THE

COLLECTIONS OF ETHNOGRAPHY IN SLOVAKIA

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ABSTRACT

After the short history of collecting as the initial form of museums in Slovakia the manuscript deals with the beginnings of the Slovak National Museum. Besides the Slovak National Museum's Museum of ethnography the ethnographical collections were founded in another museums as well. The manuscript goes on with the description of the current situation of the collections of ethnography in Slovakia, and the main problems of these museums in the field of administration, organization, research, preservation, restoration, exhibition and publications.

* * *

Collecting as the initial form of museums also has its long tradition in Slovakia that was until the year 1919 part of Austria-Hungary. In the 17th but mainly

in the 18th century members of the nobility proved to be passionate collectors, and following the fashion of that time they amassed and filled their home with art-historical objects and curiosities among them also ethnological ones. Unfortunately, most of these collections are outside Slovakia now.

The first organizers of the museums in Slovakia were the members of so called Educated societies, which were constituted since the half of the 18th century. They founded the libraries and collected documents of natural history, literature and history. Collecting of ethnographical objects from our region is closely connected with the national movement.

The need for a nationwide Slovak institution with the task of organizing and directing cultural and spiritual life, of guarding Slovak national unity, of forwarding science and of protecting monuments was reached by founding of the institution Matica Slovenska in Martin in 1863. Within the Matica Slovenska, the first Slovak National Museum was established.

In 1875, according to the Magyarisation policy of the Hungarian Government, Matica Slovenska was canceled, and its property together with the collections of the museum, was confiscated and transferred to Budapest. Nevertheless the idea of having a national museum prevailed and was renewed by the Nestor of Slovak museology, priest Andrej Kmet, botanist, archeologist and ethnographer. Kmet with a small group of patriots tried to keep alive the national idea with the small enterprises (founding of the scientific club, journal, organizing the national exhibitions).

In 1887 he initiated the first public ethnographical exhibition in Martin. This exhibition became the basis of the new museum established in Martin in the year 1890. Its collections were later taken over by the Slovak Museum Association, which, due to Andrej Kmet, was founded at Martin in the year 1893. Since 1896 the Slovak Museum Association has been publishing its own "Annals" and since 1898 its

“Review”; till present the Annals of the Slovak Museum Association are published as Annals of the Slovak National Museum having the preeminence of being the oldest published Slovak scientific periodical. Slovak Museum Association built up the Slovak National Museum. Money was raised by the Slovak folk and the first purpose-built building of the Slovak National Museum was erected in 1908. A new edifice was built in the years 1930-1932 that has housed the museum up to present time. We can say that this building by architect Harminc is the first purposed build modern museum in our country.

In 1954 the Slovak National Museum was entrusted with a new task and became a specialized museum of ethnography.

Besides the museum in Martin the ethnographical collections were founded in another parts of Slovakia as well.

Nowadays there are in Slovakia 74 museums, which have central, regional or local character. The regional museums are mostly the museums of local history and domestic life /heimatkundliche Museen/. Besides the National Museum in Martin, which is the only specialized museum of ethnography, 40 museums in Slovakia have departments of ethnography. From the all of 951 specialized staff, there are 57 employees who have degrees in ethnography.

At present there are in Slovakia besides the central Museum of the Slovak Village in Martin other open-air museums, 5 in central and 2 in eastern Slovakia. To the open-air museums we can add some ethnographical memorial houses and village cottages open to public. All open-air museums and memorial houses and village cottages are part of the regional museums.

According to the numbers reflecting the year 1991, there were 2.977.933 visitors in all museums in Slovakia. From this number there were 1.693.457 visitors in the museums of ethnography.

Ethnographical collections of the local and regional museums are not extensive, the biggest one have 3000-7000 objects. In some of those we can find items of special interest from the ethnographical point of view. For example the Museum of Western Slovakia has a big collection of the Western Slovakia ceramics, Museum of Central Slovakia has an exhibition on folk crafts and The Municipal Museum of Bratislava has valuable documents and items on viticulture.

The ethnographical collections are the largest, the most complete and as for their contents the richest in the Slovak National Museum, in the Museum of Ethnography in Martin (about 70.000 objects) and in the Museum of History in Bratislava (nearly 25.000 objects).

In 1945 museums were gradually taken over into state administration. Based on the statute passed by the Slovak National Council, promulgated in 1961 about museums and galleries museums are the part of the subsystem of the section of heritage, museums and galleries under the Ministry of Culture.

After the second world war, all our life but the culture specially, had to reflect the socialist ideology. All the permanent exhibitions had to express the struggle for social rights of our people, eliminating the spiritual life and religion. During the socialist regime, our museums had enough money for their displays, which were sometimes very formal and vast of money was used for its architecture. After the revolution in 1989 most of the permanent exhibitions proved not to reflect the true image of traditional culture and they had to be changed. The new permanent exhibitions are being prepared and continuously opened. Everything is under the constant change, what concerns displays, museum's policy, legal status. Even the so-called restitution (returning back the property, confiscated after the second world war) threatens some museum buildings.

Since the revolution in 1989 the museums are gradually postponed under the municipal and regional

government. It is supposed that this will be the case of all the regional and local museums when the new statute about the preservation of the heritage is going to be promulgated. (Not before 1995). The museums are not happy about it since the local and regional governments do not have enough money and the museums are afraid that their problems are going to be only marginal.

Another problem of our museums is the restriction of financing. Most of the acquisitions in are museums are acquired by the purchase. As there is not enough money in many museums there are no acquisitions at all today. On the other hand there is the growing number of antique stores. And as the museums can not afford to buy objects, with no official international market, and poor governmental control, objects were been smuggled out of the country in alarming numbers.

The restricted financing concerns restoration, preservation and storing of objects as well. To buy technical equipment for conservation or security is not possible at all. Lack of money is reflected at the research projects of the museums, where all the field works are being stopped and the experts are becoming merely technical staff.

This concerns also exhibitions, and educational programs where the audiovisual and other media could help to interpret the richness of different elements of traditional life.

Long lasting problem is the conservation and restoration of museum objects. There is the lack of specialized conservators of certain materials (textiles, fur, leather) and lack of materials used for conservation and preservation of objects (acid-free materials for storing textiles).

Most of the graduated ethnographers have besides the aquisitional and exhibitional projects the research projects as well. This is reflected in thematic publications about their own ethnographical collections as well as about the collections of other museums in Slo-

vakia that have been issued in the edition of indexes Fontés and above mentioned Annals of the Slovak National Museum, Ethnography, which are published regularly. As the information on ethnographical museums, museology and ethnographers in museums serves the Bibliography of the Slovak Ethnography and Folkloristics published every 5 years by the Institute of ethnography of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Ethnographers from the museums took part at the work on the Slovak Encyclopedia of Ethnography due to be published in the end of this year. By working for the encyclopedia it was necessary to find the precise terminology. In the field of ethnographical museology the Museum of Ethnography is trying to coordinate the terminology for the purposes of computerization, which has been done only in some fields so far.

For the guidance and information among the museum and art gallery staff serves the study bulletin Museum edited by Slovak National Museum published since 1955. To promote the museums among public helps the journal Heritage and Museums published since 1952.

The institution which role is to serve as the data bank of all information on museums and art galleries in Slovakia is the Museum Information Center as a part of the Slovak National Museum.

ETH NO MU SEOLOGY

IN MACEDONIA

Petar Namicev
Museum of Macedonia

ABSTRACT

In addition to the Ethnological Museum, which exists in the frames of the Museum of Macedonia, as the only institution specialized for contemporary museum interpretation and presentation of ethnological material, 15 minor ethnological museums are active in the frames of the city museums. The number of the ethnological items collected in the museums amounts to 37000 and is permanently increasing. The items are dated mainly to the 19th and 20th century and there is only a small number of items dated before the 19 th century.

Taking into consideration the today's social and economic situation, Republic of Macedonia is a region in which one can still find, collect and research objects showing high standard of workmanship, to have retained their original function in their original environment.

The Ethnological Museum is a department of The Museum of Macedonia and, as a national institution, it carries out the task of superintendence upon the other museums in the state (skilled supervision in the domain of exhibition activities, explorations, purchase and publishing).

The ethnomuseological science is aimed at developing the domain of its activity, expanding of the team-work, increasing the exhibition activities, increasing the number of the purchased items and maintenance of the continual editorial activity.

The financing of the Ethnological Museums is carried out in the frames of the funds from the Ministry of Culture.

The museums do not have very long tradition, there are no small local traditional museums with small collections, because the official politics promoted the state museums, in municipal governance and way of financing.

The municipal (national) museums are responsible for the geographical area they cover with financial support from the state.

The ethnological collections are part of these local municipal museums which include archeological and historical collections.

These city museums still work with the same directions, with difficult and hard way of transforming, with many organisational problems.

Basic characteristic of the population is the multinational environment, where different cultures encounter and oriental influences are exerted, but the autochthonous local characteristics are still present.

The shortage of resources for carrying out the ethnological explorations, financing the scientific editorial activities, presentation of the abundant fund of items and their protection is the biggest problem of the museum institutions. The ever increasing migra-



Fig. 1: Tower house 19 s.
vill. Tresonce, Reka area,
Macedonia

tion of people from the country to the city in the last three decades is the main reason for wreckage of the traditional way of life and destruction of the architectural heritage. The abandoning of the rural way of life diminishes the possibilities for finding authentic ethnological material for recording and research of the national culture. The modernization of the life and living conditions has increased the possibilities of destruction of the traditional crafts, which breaks the continuity of their preservation and development.

In addition to the Ethnological Museum, which exists in the frames of the Museum of Macedonia, 15

minor ethnological museums are active in the frames of the city museums.

The researching activity in the domain of ethnology is restricted by the funds granted solely by the Ministry for Culture, to be carried out in the territories of the ethnic regions in Macedonia. The researches are carried out in particular areas by forming teams consisting of experts (ethnologists, art historians and architects). In the explorations carried out mainly in the last five decades, all the ethnic regions have been included, the material having been presented in the publications issued by the Museum of Macedonia (Ethnologist, Museum bulletin and Herald) and the minor museums within the city museums (Bulletins).

The number of the ethnological items collected in the museums amounts to 37000 and is permanently increasing. The items are dated mainly to the 19th and 20th century and there is only a small number of items dated before the 19th century. The evaluation of some of them points to three categories of items and has been carried out in three museum institutions.

The collections of museum items include valuable and rare examples of diverse traditional heritage of the Macedonians.

The material and spiritual culture of Macedonia has very well been presented by the abundant fund of items in possession of the museum.

The Museum of Macedonia is the only institution specialized for contemporary museum interpretation and presentation of ethnological material from the entire territory of Macedonia.

A separate ethnological documentation has been made in the Ethnological Museum of Macedonia, comprising files, photo documentation, slide documentation and video documentation.

The museum has in possession the following collections: textile artefacts, traditional agriculture, metal processing crafts, pottery, porcelain, glass, folk

architecture, traditional customs, musical instruments, etc.

The abundance of items is expressed through the coloratura and the ornamental diversity included in each detail.

The preserving of the material culture, i.e. the portable objects, is carried out by purchase on the spot, their treatment and maintenance in the depot of the museums. The depots provide optimum conditions for warehousing of the items, but there is still a lack

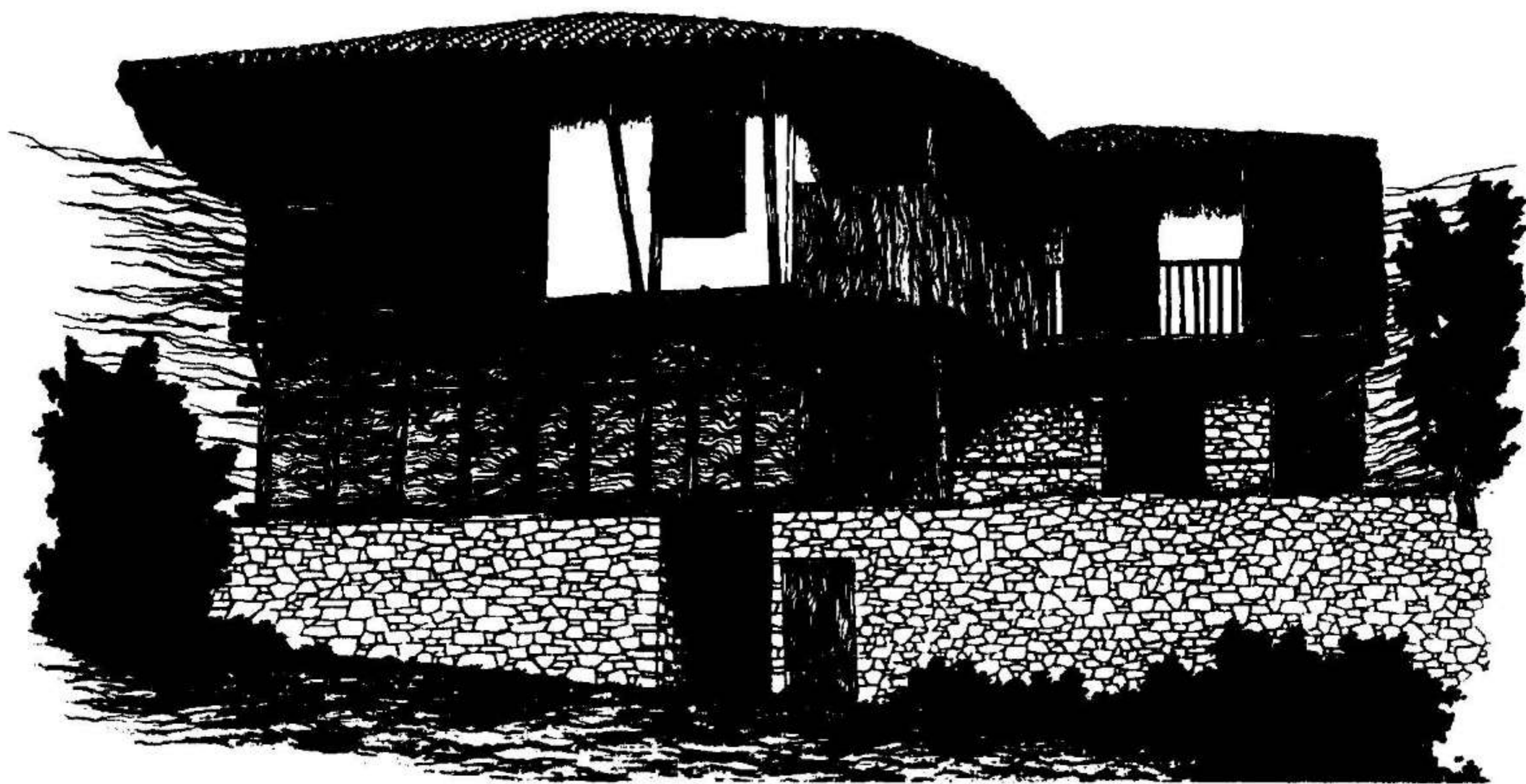


Fig. 2: House δ Cardaklija
δ 19s. vill. Ratevo Berovo
area Macedonia.

of special appliances for maintenance of constant climatic conditions. The section for restoration, conservation and preparation consists of skilled workers, who perform the tasks of maintenance of the good condition of the items in the laboratories for textile, wood, metal, pottery, leather and glass. As to the examples of architectural cultural heritage, i.e., the structures of the rural and city architecture, attempts have been made for their restoration and protection. Whereas the first ethnological park is in the stage of

its formation. Abandoning of the buildings in the old city hearts, resulting from the crumbling constructive material and bad hygienic conditions, as well the impossibility for their protection, has finally brought about ruining of a vast number of structures with high standards for the historic and cultural heritage, and their total destruction.

The Museum of Macedonia is in a possession of 2400 square meters room for the permanent exhibition and 670 square meters for temporary exhibitions, whereas the other city museums have at disposal a total surface of 500 square meters exhibition space. A total number of 28 keepers (ethnologists, art historians, geographers and architects) are employed in all the museums.

The exhibition activities of the museums include presentation of material and spiritual culture by means of thematic exhibitions covering all the spheres.

Foundations and sponsoring of the exhibitions is getting more usual.

International cooperation has concentrated on contacts between museums and universities from Poland, Bulgaria and Turkey, in changing exhibitions, researched projects and publication activities.

The Ethnological Museum has established cooperation with the corresponding institutions from some other countries, such as, Bulgaria, Turkey, Norway, Belgium, Poland, France, Danmark, USA, and Yugoslavia, and these contacts have already become a tradition.

ETHNOGRAPHICAL

AND SOCIAL HISTORY
MUSEUMS IN SWEDEN:
ORIGIN, TRADITIONS
AND FUTURE

Katarina Arre

The Swedish Museums Association

ABSTRACT

The first generation of ethnographical museums, around 1900, worked primarily with protection and also with education and partaking.

From the 1940's regional ethnographical or cultural history museums, as we call them, have been built

all over the country. After the 1960's the traditionally way of working changed towards movable activities, directed at a broad range of target groups. The museums also started cooperating with schools, libraries and hospitals. One of the goals in the 1970's national cultural policy programme was the promotion of decentralization of culture and therefore national financial support was and still is given to all regional museums.

The Swedish cultural history museums of today are working more with sponsoring and marketing towards press and public. A good example of this is the over-all History exhib project that took place in 1993-94. National and regional museums from the whole country came together and produced exhibitions on the same theme, our national history. The project worked strongly towards the media and the campaigning resulted in an enormous amount of visitors.

The museum of tomorrow will probably work more with similarities and parallell phenomena than with the differences between regions and peoples. The international cooperation will increase with the help of organisations like ICOM and NEMO (a network for museums in the EU countries). It is also important that the museums catch up with the latest information technique and use it in their everyday work.

* * *

There are about 200 professionally managed museums in Sweden. More than two thirds of them belong to the ethnographical field, if we define an ethnographical museums as one mainly dealing with the traces and memories of human activity, except for sheer art museums, natural history and archaeological museums. Most of these museums are publicly owned.

On so-called grass-root level there are also more than one thousand small rural collections, often arranged as open-air museums, that are managed by amateurs, on a voluntary basis, open to the public

only part of the year. They are doing a good job, but they will not be treated in this connection.

I have been asked to give a presentation of the situation for ethnographical museums in my country and try to make a sketch of the future aims and needs.

This paper, however, will also cover the background. Museums people tend always to have yesterday in mind when thinking about today and tomorrow...

So - here is a simplified version of Swedish museums history, a history that Sweden might have in common with some of the other European countries:

Around 1900 Sweden, from having been a poor farmers nation for hundreds of years, was heading for industrialization. Our natural resources, wood and metal, were becoming increasingly popular abroad. Suddenly everything started to happen very quickly: people left the countryside, moving into the growing cities. Working life was being mechanized.

In this era of sudden modernization, most people looked with disdain upon the artefacts that were the visible proofs of their old way of living - old peasant cottages were abandoned or radically rebuilt and the old things in them were being thrown away or, at best, put in the attic.

Now, with the threat of a tragedy in sight, a new movement for preserving the rural heritage was formed in the educated classes. Voluntaries started to recollect artefacts and memories, bringing them together in the old countryside cottages, showing them to the public. The Nordic Museum was the first big new building especially erected for the purpose of ethnographical collecting and learning. Adjacent to this, open-air museum Skansen was created for display and live performances of old rural traditions.

This movement of course also partly coincided in time with the general nationalistic thoughts of the period, as expressed in our field especially by excavations of Viking sites.

How did the first generations of ethnographical museums actually work? Quite early two principles are clearly to be seen within the heritage movement in Sweden, two theories or methods to fulfil the purpose of rescue and survival.

One is based primarily on protection. The perspective is identical with the one used for the protection of monuments and sites and archaeological heritage that has been dominant in Sweden since the 17th century, also expressed in our legislation concerning that field.

The other method proclaims education and partaking as being the best means for heritage survival – partaking by the national, regional or local inhabitant. Rather than building a fence around the heritage you make a play pen and invite people to come and play.

Both of these principles have been used parallelly, a various proportions, from the beginning of the century till today. Most of the early museums put the stress on protection. Maybe it is due to the educative aspects applied on the ethnographical heritage that Sweden never got any legislation especially for museums.

From the 1940s and onwards regional ethnographical or –as we prefer to call them– cultural history museums have been built all over the country, as well as many local museums. They all are mainly financed by regional and local authorities, the collections in most cases being based on what was brought together by the early voluntary rural heritage associations. Collecting and documentation has been broadened towards life and traditions in towns and cities – still, however, mainly concentrated on the artefacts.

Museums on the whole worked very traditionally up till the 1960s. The different fields of learning followed the museum director from the university directly into museums practice. Exhibitions (by the way: never outside the museum building) were either about ethnography, archaeology or art. The possibili-

ties of integration and interchange between the classical university disciplines were not considered (they still aren't in some places). Dividing reality in this manner hardly is the best way to make people get interested, though.

Today methods have changed in many Swedish museums towards more of movable activities, directed at a broad range of target groups. Museums also cooperate with others - schools, libraries and hospitals for example. Twenty years ago all political parties in the Swedish parliament agreed on a national cultural policy programme. One of the goals set up in this programme is to revitalize the cultural heritage, another to promote the decentralization of culture. For that purpose national financial support is given to all regional museums at a rate of about one third of the staff costs.

A few years ago the government imposed new responsibilities on five of the national museums, according to their different fields of collection. One of these so-called responsibility museums is the main ethnographical or social history museum, The Nordic Museum. These five national museums have been given more explicit tasks in relation to regional and local museums than before. To help and advise other museums in computerizing the documentation of their collections is one of these special tasks. Claiming that nationally subsidized museums should do more for their money than they seem to have done, the government has questioned the whole structure of the national support to museums. A government commission has compared the museum grants with the results and it has studied the structure of the whole system. The commission has put forward its amendments only recently and the reactions from the Swedish museums are now being pondered upon by the Department of Culture.

Now for some facts about financing and supervision: I mentioned that the state subsidizes part of the staff cost in regional museums. Most of the income of these museums derives from the regional and local

authorities that constitute the governing bodies in the regional museum foundations. But both regional, national and local museums have additional funds to help purchasing objects, these funds being private donations made in the early museum period, the voluntary period.

Local museums –professional museums, attached to a municipality– are financed and governed by the local authorities.

So: nota bene – these museum boards mainly consist of politicians. In the national museums the board members are appointed by the government.

In all museums an increasing degree of self-financing has been notable lately, corresponding to the political aims of diminishing the public spending. Swedish museums statistics shows that national museums obtain 70% of their income from public grants and regional museums 67%. Local museums get 78% from public grants. The rest is entrance fees, museum shop income and the funds I mentioned earlier.

Sponsoring is getting more usual. One example is a series of professional memories published by the Nordic Museum. The costs are divided between the different trade unions and the museum.

Well – what are the ambitions of Swedish cultural history museums today? What are the relations between museums and the rest of the world like?

I think it would be right to say that their perspective has become more holistic. The immaterial aspect of the heritage is also finding its expression in museum programmes and exhibitions, with a little help from our friends: interactive video and computer technique.

Contemporary documentation is continually done, by pooling: the different museums share the responsibility for each sector (home life, forestry, shops, etc.) between them.

It is agreed that ecological aspects ought to be shown in cultural history museums and some museums have started to employ ecologists.

People with competence within the fields of economic history and the history of ideas are needed in the museums.

Information officers are much sought for in museums – there is a demand for professional knowledge about new media such as desk top publishing and multimedia for exhibition purpose. Professional skill is needed to keep in touch with press, wireless and TV, in order to make them show the public what the museum is offering.

An example of the impact of media on public response is the big co-exhibition that has been going on in Swedish museums during 1993 and 1994 about Swedish history. National museums have come together, showing the whole chronology of the national history and the regional museums have exhibited their regional political history, related to –and sometimes opposed to– the national one. A massive media campaign was carried out and the amount of visitors as a result of this campaign has been enormous.

In the earlier days museums were used to point out differences, to sort out the heritage from the rest of reality. Tomorrow I think they will deal more with similarities. They will work more comparatively, by mirroring past, present and places. In our country we have received a large amount of refugees from various cultures during the last ten years. We are facing some problems here and museums could help solving them by letting people discover the likenesses rather than the differences.

International co-operation up til quite recently has concentrated on contacts between experts of the academic fields and exhibitions exchange. The international committees of ICOM have been of great importance for the development of personal professional contacts within and across the continents.

Nordic ethnologists have a long tradition of co-operation, both in research projects and publication activities. On a basic level museum cooperation in the Nordic countries now is being developed through a new periodical for museology, and by the construction of a Nordic co-operation programme for all kinds of museums, initiated by The Nordic Council of Ministers. The Nordic Ministers of State have recently decided that all money available for Nordic co-operation should be concentrated to the sectors for culture and information, for reasons obviously connected with the issue of EU membership.

A network for museum organisation in the EU-countries has now been launched, initiated from Denmark, its primary aim being to keep up with those legislative changes that might influence museums.

From now on I think museums have to speed up their communications, using all the new technique there is. Information exchange on museum issues must reach approximately the same level as within other sectors – that is if we want museums to count in society. I'm convinced that INTERNET and other IT-connection between experts on different museum fields and museum generalists, as well as between the museum and the world around, will be of great help to the museums in the future.

DIE

AUßEREUROPÄISCHE SAMMLUNG DES MUSIKINSTRUMENTEN- MUSEUMS IM MÜNCHNER STADT- MUSEUM ZUSTAND UND AKTIVITÄTEN

András Varsányi

Musikinstrumentenmuseum

ABSTRACT

Das Musikinstrumentenmuseum im Münchner Stadtmuseum gehört zu den größten für die Öffentlichkeit zugänglichen Museen seiner Art. Seine Basis bildet die Privatsammlung des Münchners Georg Neuner mit Musikinstrumenten vornehmlich nichteuropäischer Herkunft. Seit nunmehr über zehn Jahren werden hier Führungen durch die Sammlung gehalten, die sich von denen anderer Museen in

besonderem Maße durch die Aktivierung der Besucher selbst in einem ihnen unbekanntem Metier unterscheidet. Neben der kurzen Historie des Museums und Aspekten neuerer Sammlungstätigkeit werden die Probleme einer Führung mit einer Schulklasse und deren Lösungen behandelt.

* * *

ZUR GESCHICHTE DER SAMMLUNG NEUNER

Gegründet wurde die Musikinstrumentensammlung, die zu den interessantesten der Welt zählt, von Georg Neuner (1904-1962), dem Sohn einer Münchner Konditorsfamilie. Sein musikalisches Interesse erwachte sehr früh, schenkte ihm doch sein Vater bereits «vor 1910», wie er selbst später in das Inventarbuch schrieb, sein erstes Musikinstrument, eine kleine Dreiviertel Geige. Georg Neuner konzentrierte sich in seiner Sammlertätigkeit in besonderem Maße auf die Musikinstrumente nichteuropäischer Herkunft. Bei der Anlage seines ersten Inventarbuches gab er die Nummer «9-1»¹ einer mittelgroßen hölzernen Schlitztrommel aus dem Sepik-Gebiet in Neuguinea. Sie stammte vom Münchner Kunstmarkt und wurde ihm 1929 von seinen Eltern geschenkt.

¹ «9» steht für Neuner.

Zu Beginn des II. Weltkrieges vermachte Georg Neuner seine Sammlung, die mittlerweile bereits über 900 Objekte zählte, der Stadt München. 1940 wurde er zum ersten Direktor der «Städtischen Musikinstrumentensammlung» ernannt. Nach einer wechselvollen Geschichte, bei der die Sammlung während des Krieges auf das Gut Meierhofen in der Oberpfalz ausgelagert wurde, mehr in Kisten und Koffern existierte und von der Stadtverwaltung sogar wieder aufgelöst werden sollte, bekam Neuner 1958 die Chance, seine Träume von einem Museum zu verwirklichen.

Mit großem Elan begann er für die mittlerweile erheblich erweiterte Sammlung eine ständige Ausstellung im damals neu entstehenden IV. Stock des Münchner Stadtmuseums vorzubereiten.

Die Eröffnung seines Museums konnte Georg Neuner allerdings nicht mehr erleben. Er starb am 15. Februar 1962, wenige Monate vor dem Umzugstermin.

In der Folgezeit leitete der Musikwissenschaftler Dr. Jürgen Eppelsheim zusammen mit Dr. Kurt Haselhorst die «Städtische Musikinstrumentensammlung». Sie bestückten die Ausstellung in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Architekten Johannes Segieth, zunächst mehr nach Gesichtspunkten der künstlerischen Ästhetik und der Hornbostel-Sachs'schen Organologie. 1963 konnte diese erste Ausstellung auf einer Fläche von ca. 500 m² mit Instrumenten aus Afrika, Ozeanien, dem gesamtasiatischem Raum, Amerika sowie der vorderorientalischen Antike eröffnet werden. Zur Eröffnung gab es ein Konzert auf einer kleinen fränkischen Hausorgel von 1774, das allerdings etwas in Kontrast zu den ausgestellten Instrumenten vorwiegend nichteuropäischer Provenienz stand.

1967 wurde Dr. Kurt Haselhorst offizieller Leiter der Sammlung. Er erweiterte 1973 die Ausstellung um den neuen Bereich «Europa» und rief gleichzeitig die Museumskonzerte ins Leben, die sich bis heute großer Beliebtheit erfreuen. 1977 verstarb Kurt Haselhorst frühzeitig an Krebs.

Erst 1979 wurde die Stelle mit dem Musikwissenschaftler Dr. Manfred Hermann Schmid neu besetzt. Ihm gelang es, mit 200 Objekten den Großteil der europäischen Instrumente aus der Musikinstrumentensammlung des Bayerischen Nationalmuseums, darunter Unikate von unschätzbarem Wert, als Dauerleihgabe zu bekommen. Nach einer einjährigen Umbauphase wurde 1983 die neue erweiterte Ausstellung der nun in «Musikinstrumentenmuseum im Münchner Stadtmuseum» (ab jetzt im Text mit MIM bezeichnet) umbenannten Sammlung eröffnet.

Nach der Berufung von Dr. Manfred H. Schmid 1986 zum Ordinarius für Musikwissenschaft an die Universität Tübingen war die Sammlung wieder einmal verwaist. Seit 1987 ist Dr. Gunther Jopping Lei-

ter des MIM, der sich als Fachmann für Doppelrohrblatt-Instrumente besonders für die Erweiterung der Sammlung mit Instrumenten aus dem Münchner Raum und für vermehrte Publikumsarbeit einsetzt.

SAMMLUNGSTÄTIGKEIT

Der Ansatz früherer Sammlungstätigkeit war ein anderer als heute. Georg Neuner richtete sich damals nach den Ergebnissen der «vergleichenden Musikwissenschaft», einem damals noch recht jungen Zweig der Musikwissenschaft. Er schrieb einmal in einem Artikel für eine Kunstzeitschrift: «Die Musikinstrumentensammlung der Stadt München war die erste öffentliche Sammlung, die den außereuropäischen Musikinstrumenten ihre besondere Aufmerksamkeit widmete. Die Leitung ging von der Erkenntnis aus, daß sämtliche heute gebräuchlichen europäischen Musikinstrumente ihre Vorläufer bzw. Ahnen außerhalb der europäischen Grenzen haben. Die europäischen Völker haben kein Instrument erfunden, sondern nur technisch weiterentwickelt und klanglich-akustisch verbessert».

Diese Idee der »Kulturkreislehre«, von Curt Sachs auf Musikinstrumente übertragen², als auch die von Erich Moritz von Hornbostel und Curt Sachs gemeinsam erstellte Organologie der Musikinstrumente³ waren die bestimmenden Grundgedanken der Sammlertätigkeit Georg Neuners. Die Hornbostel-Sachs'sche «Organologie» ist jedoch in der Gesamtanlage rein naturwissenschaftlich und in Verbindung mit der Kulturkreislehre «ethnozentrisch». Trotzdem ist sie bis heute Grundlage zur Einordnung von Musikinstrumenten in den Museen geblieben. Auch die in diesem Jahr fertiggestellte «Checklist der nichteuropäischen Musikinstrumente im MIM»⁴ nimmt in ihrer Einteilung diese Organologie als Basis.

Noch von einer anderen Seite wurde die Sammlertätigkeit Georg Neuners entscheidend geprägt: der Entwicklung der neuen Musik nach der Jahrhundert-

² Curt Sachs, Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente, Berlin 1928:5.

³ Erich Moritz von Hornbostel und Curt Sachs, Systematik der Musikinstrumente-Ein Versuch, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Bd. 46, Jahrgang, 1914.

⁴ Erstellt vom Verfasser, mit über 3.100 Instrumenten (im Druck).

wende. Die Suche nach immer neuen Klangquellen, bereits im 19. Jahrhundert in Europa durch die Industrialisierung des Instrumentenbaus unterstützt⁵, führte sowohl zu einer Fülle von «Verbesserungen» alter Instrumententypen als auch zu Weiterentwicklungen und Neu-Erfindungen.

Zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts machte das Schlagwerk im europäischen Orchester eine gewaltige Entwicklung. Viele der noch nie dagewesenen und meist exotischen Instrumente mußten für Aufführungen aus den Museen entliehen werden. Auch diese Entwicklung begünstigte eine ernsthafte Auseinandersetzung mit nichteuropäischen Musikkulturen auf breiterer Basis. War doch bis dahin eine ernsthafte Beschäftigung mit der Musik fremder Kulturen nur auf wenige Wissenschaftler beschränkt⁶. Die breitere Öffentlichkeit hatte – und hat leider oftmals heute noch – für die Musik fremder Kulturen nur im Rahmen einer Art «exotischen Stimulans» eine entsprechende Aufnahmefähigkeit.

Doch auch die Lager der Interessierten teilte sich: in das der Ethnologen/Anthropologen, die Musikinstrumente hauptsächlich in einem soziokulturellen Zusammenhang sehen wollten, meist jedoch keine musikalischen Kenntnisse und Fähigkeiten hatten, und auf der anderen Seite in das der Musiker, die ohne Berücksichtigung der kulturellen und spieltechnischen Zusammenhänge diese Instrumente in einem völlig anderen Kontext gebrauchten. Diese Divergenz wurde durch eine größere Anschaffung des MIM behoben:

JAVANISCHES GAMELAN

Seit dem Frühjahr 1987 besitzt das MIM ein vollständiges Gamelan-Instrumentarium in den beiden Tonarten *slendro* und *pelog*⁷ aus Surakarta/ Zentral-Java. Im Rahmen eines zweimonatigen Aufenthaltes in Java und Bali konnte der Verfasser 1986 für das MIM bei dem mittlerweile verstorbenen Game-

⁵ Siehe z. B. die Weltausstellungen in Paris seit der Mitte der achtziger Jahre des 19. Jhs.

⁶ Z. B. Carl Stumpf mit den «Lieder der Bellakulla Indiander», Francis Densmore und ihre Veröffentlichungen zur Musikkultur der nordamerikanischen Indianer, die «Tonometrical observations on some existing nonharmonic musical scales» von A. J. Ellis u.a.m.

⁷ Die beiden wichtigsten Tonarten in Java: *slendro* ist ein Tonsystem mit fünf Tönen pro Oktave, deren Intervalle relativ groß, jedoch nicht äquidistant (= gleichstufig) sind, *pelog* ist der Name des Tonsystems mit sieben Tönen pro Oktave, deren Intervalle enger, d. h. kleiner als die des *slendro*-Systems sind, jedoch zwei größere Stufen eingebaut haben.

lanschmied Empu Resowiguno (1918-1994)⁸ den Auftrag für ein javanisches Gamelan geben. Es wurden bewußt eine Neuanfertigung erworben, trotz vieler Angebote alter, jedoch selten vollständiger Ensembles. Das Instrumentarium sollte erstens ein möglichst vollständiges Bild der Musikkultur des Gamelan in seiner instrumentalen Zusammensetzung und Stimmung einer bestimmten Gegend (Surakarta) geben. Zweitens sollten diese Instrumente in einem spielbaren Zustand sein und nicht immer von professionellen Musikern gespielt werden, und drittens – dies ist in manchen Museen heute noch ein heikler Punkt in der Diskussion um den Erwerb von Sammlungsobjekten – sollte der Auftrag der Förderung des traditionellen einheimischen handwerks dienen. Bei der Bestellung wurde besonderer Wert darauf gelegt, daß sowohl die Arbeit als auch der Arbeitsverlauf möglichst bis ins Detail nach traditionellem Muster und Vorbild geschieht. So wurde zum Beispiel nach der Herstellung der Bronzelegierung für den großen Gong eine spezielle Zeremonie (selametan) für gutes Gelingen⁹ gehalten, bei der ein hindu-javanischer dukun und ein islamischer ulama¹⁰, nacheinander ihre Glückwunschgebete sprachen. Bei den Instrumenten mußte auf viele kleine Details geachtet werden. Zum Beispiel wurden die großen Buckelgongs (gong ageng) nur am Buckel poliert, die restliche Oberfläche schwarz belassen. Heute wird meist die gesamte Oberfläche glänzend poliert, was zudem noch sehr viel teurer ist! Für die Resonatoren der Metallophone (gendér, slenthem) wurden Bambusrohre verwendet. In Java werden diese heute meist durch eingegossen gegen Witterungseinflüsse widerstandsfähiges Industriematerial, Zinkrohre oder Plastik-Abflußrohre, ersetzt. Des weiteren sind die Halterungen der Spannschnüre für die Klangplatten der Metallophone aus Horn und nicht, wie heute meist üblich, aus Messing. So wird nicht nur im MIM in München traditionelle Herstellungsmethode vermittelt, sondern zugleich auch das Bewusstsein, besonders der jungen javanischen Instrumentenbauer, auf ihre eigenen Traditionen gelenkt.

⁸ Empu Resowiguno galt als der letzte Schüler der Gong-Schmiede in Semarang an der Nordküste Javas, wo schon lange keine Gongs mehr hergestellt werden. Er hat diese Kunst nach Solo gebracht. Empu Resowiguno starb im Juni 1994, kurz bevor der Verfasser die Gelegenheit hatte, ihn wieder zu besuchen.

⁹ vgl. analog dazu die Tradition bei den europäischen Glockengießern.

¹⁰ Vertreter genannter Religionen, Rechtsgelehrte, z. T. mit einem großen Wissen an traditioneller Heilpraxis.

MUSIK FREMDER KULTUREN IN DER SCHULE

Seit Anfang der Achziger Jahre ist in den bayerischen Gymnasien im Lehrplan die Pflichtstunde «außereuropäische Musik» eingeführt worden, die in den 10.-12. Klassen gegeben wird.

Mangels geeigneter Fortbildung machen sich nur sehr wenige Lehrer die Mühe, sich auf eigene Faust Kenntnisse und Erfahrungen mit anderen Musikkulturen zu erwerben. Gerade in diese Lücke der musikalischen Fortbildung fällt das Angebot des MIM mit seinen Führungen in der außereuropäischen Abteilung.

FÜHRUNGEN

Seit 1983 bietet das MIM Führungen mit einem intrakulturellen Ansatz an. D. h. den Besuchern werden nicht nur Klänge, Spielweisen, Bautechniken, etc., sondern besonders auch das kulturelle Umfeld, aus dem die vorgeführten Instrumente stammen, nahegebracht. Die Sensibilisierung, auch von Nicht-Musikern, kann durch Erklärung und besonders durch eigenes Nachvollziehen, das bedeutet hier durch Nachmachen einfacher musikalischer Strukturen und Phänomene, in beeindruckender Weise erreicht werden. Die Materialien der jüngsten musikethnologischen Forschungen bieten dazu genügend Unterlagen. Eine musikalische Ausbildung sowie Vertrautsein mit wenigstens einer nichteuropäischen Kultur ist für eine solche Arbeit jedoch fundamental.

VERLAUF EINER FÜHRUNG IM MIM

Im MIM wird besonderer Wert auf eine vom Objekt ausgehende Darstellung einer Musikkultur gelegt.

Alle Führungen im MIM müssen zuvor telefonisch angemeldet werden, denn Informationen über Alter-

stufe, Schulart und Anzahl der Teilnehmer sind wichtig, um den jeweiligen Führungsverlauf optimal zu gestalten. Es hat sich herausgestellt, daß eine ideale Größe ca. 15 Personen sind. Meist sind es jedoch ca. 20-30 Schüler, bedingt durch die Klassenstärke. Bereits im Vorgespräch wird der Wissenstand der Gruppe besprochen, sowie die Themen, auf welche sich die Führung beziehen soll. Dazu werden von der Seite des MIM Vorschläge gemacht oder mit den Vorstellungen der Lehrkraft abgesprochen. Erfahrungsgemäß haben sogenannte «Spaziergang-Führungen» durch die Sammlung nur bedingt einen Wert. Fokussierung des Themas ergibt sich von selbst durch die Masse der ausgestellten Objekte¹¹. Die unter kulturhistorischen und fremdem musikalischen Aspekt betrachteten Instrumente erfordern von den europäischen Besuchern sehr viel mehr Aufnahmefähigkeit und Einfühlungsvermögen als z. B. die Instrumente des westlichen Orchesters. Der Bekanntheitsgrad einer Geige ermöglicht im Allgemeinen leichter eine detailgetreue Einführung, als dies bei einem Instrument aus einer fremden Kultur möglich ist.

Ähnlichen Reaktionen begegnet man überall, wo sich fremde Kulturen ohne gegenseitige Vorbereitung begegnen.

«A western chamber music ensemble sent of a tour of Africa is probably understood by members of a minority social class in those countries in a manner very similar to that of any concert audience in a European city. However, the majority of the population especially in rural areas, which has learned musical understanding within African systems of education, would react in a different way. It was once observed in Lomé, Togo, that the assembled class of a secondary school regularly burst out in roaring laughter, whenever the deadly serious musicians of a touring German string orchestra played pizzicato in a piece of Mozart»¹².

Ähnlich den Schülern der Oberschule in Lomé fehlen auch den Besuchern des MIM meist jegliche asso-

¹¹ Es sind 1014 Objekte im Bereich «Außereuropa» ausgestellt, von kleinen Scheiteln aus Mittelamerika bis hin zu einer 800 kg. schweren Riesen-Bechertrommel (klong yao) aus Thailand, Stand vom November, 1994.

¹² Gerhard Kubik, African Music: The dimension of crosscultural understanding, SAMUS, 1985:4; «Ein westliches Kammermusikensemble auf Tournee in Afrika wird in diesen Ländern wahrscheinlich von einer kleinen sozialen Schicht in einer ähnlichen Weise verstanden, wie von jedem Konzertpublikum in einer europäischen Stadt. Allerdings wird die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung, besonders in ländlichen Gebieten, die ihr Musikverständnis innerhalb afrikanischer Erziehungssysteme erworben haben, in anderer Weise reagieren. In Lomé, Togo, wurde einst beobachtet, wie die versammelten Schüler einer Oberschule jedesmal in brüllendes Gelächter ausbrachen, wenn die todernsten Musiker einer deutschen Streichorchesters in einem Stück von Mozart pizzicato spielten». (Übersetzung des Verfassers).

ziative Vorstellungen von der anderen Kultur. Der erste Zugang scheint in unserer Industriegesellschaft somit durch eine rein naturwissenschaftliche Vorgehensweise gerechtfertigt. Gerade dies ist jedoch im Zusammenhang mit einer verantwortungsbewußten Einführung höchst gefährlich! So geschah es einmal bei einer Führung im MIM, daß Schüler der 10. Klasse einer Realschule recht befremdliche Gesichter machte, als ihnen ein *likembe*-Lamellophon aus Zaïre aus der Glasvitrine gezeigt wurde. In den hinteren Reihen konnte man sogar abschätziges Bemerkungen hören und entsprechende Gesichtsausdrücke erkennen. In diesem Falle genügten zwei einfache Aspekte, um bis zu einem gewissen Grad einen objektiven Respekt vor der anderen Kultur herzustellen:

1. Die Erklärung der Arbeitsweise und der zur Verfügung stehenden Mittel: jeder kann sich vorstellen, wieviel Geschicklichkeit und technisches «know how» dazu gehört, mit einem einfachen Messer ein Korpus mit einer dünner Wandung aus einem Stück Holz auszuschnitzen unter gleichzeitiger Berücksichtigung der später zu beachtenden instrumentalen Besonderheiten.

2. Das Vorspielen einer guten Aufnahme. Hier ist anzumerken, daß die Hörgewohnheiten – besonders bei Schülern – stark von den Medien geprägt sind. Deshalb ist es unerlässlich, beim Vorspielen eines Musikbeispiels auch die Aufnahmesituation zu erklären. Verfälschte Klangbilder, hervorgerufen durch entsprechende Position des Mikrophons bei der Aufnahme, Verstärkung und heute meist basslastige Modifikationen des Aufnahmesignals, entsprechen mehr dem Geschmack und der Absicht des Aufnehmenden und haben mit der klanglichen Realität nichts mehr zu tun! Nachdem man jedock den Klang eines originalen Instrumentes «live» gehört hat – einige Töne genügen –, ist eine Grundlage für die entsprechende Abstraktion beim nachfolgenden Anhören einer Aufnahme gegeben. Allerdings ist dies nicht genug. Wichtig ist, daß die Teilnehmer angeregt werden, in ihrer jeweiligen Vorstellungswelt bereit zu

sein, sich mit dem Andersartigen und Fremden auseinanderzusetzen. Dazu ist eine Bewußtseinsbildung durch eigenes Erleben Voraussetzung.

Zu diesem Zweck bildet das weiter oben beschriebene Instrumentarium des javanischen Gamelan einen festen Bestandteil fast aller Führungen im nichteuropäischen Bereich des MIM. Wie die oben erwähnten Aspekte in die Führungsarbeit im MIM einfließen, sei an einer genaueren einer Führung auf dem javanischen Gamelan gezeigt.

SPIEL AUF DEM JAVANISCHEN GAMELAN

Nach einer kurzen Erklärung der Instrumente, unter anderem auch nach Aspekten der Hornsbostel-Sachs'schen Organologie (s.o.) und einer Einführung in die vorhandenen Tonsysteme *slendro* und *peog*, werden einige der Instrumente mit Personen aus dem Besucherkreis besetzt. Dazu eignet sich besonders die Gongphrase, eine der Grundlagen indonesischer Musik überhaupt¹³. Im javanischen Gamelan werden dazu vier bis fünf Arten von Buckelgongs verwendet: *gong ageng/gong suwukan*, *kenong*, *kempul*, *kethuk*¹⁴. Da die Namen der Instrumente lautmalerisch (onomatopoesisch) sind, können alle Teilnehmer zunächst die gesamte Kolotomie sprechen: *gong* (G) = «gooong», *kempul* (P) = «pul», *kenong* (N) = «nong» *kethuk* (T) = «tuk». Je eine Person betätigt mit dem entsprechenden Schlägel eines der genannten Instrumente.

Diese erste Konfrontation mit einer komplementären Spielweise eröffnet bereits einen wichtigen Zugang zur Musik fremder Kulturen hinsichtlich a. der Klanglichkeit, b. des gemeinsamen Tuns unterschiedlicher Art in zeitlicher Versetzung und doch eine Einheit bildend, sowie c. der Erkenntnis, daß die unterschiedliche Schichtung der Schwerzeit-Leichtzeit Abfolge –repräsentiert durch die unterschiedlichen Tonhöhen der Buckelgongs– einem bereits bekannten Gefühl von «Takt» und «beat» entspricht.

¹³ Von dem holländischen Musikethnologen Jaap Kunst wurde das Wort «Kolotomie» eingeführt, das das musikalisch-metrische Rahmenwerk bezeichnet, das durch verschiedene Instrumente komplementär gespielt wird.

¹⁴ *Kethuk* ist ein kleiner liegender Buckelgong mit relativ tiefem Klang auf einer Schnurverspannung in einem Holzkasten, der mit einem schnurumwickelten Schlägel so angeschlagen wird, daß der Schlägel auf dem Buckel liegenbleibt und den Ton dämpft. *Kenong* ist ein hochwandiger Buckelgong, ebenfalls horizontal auf einer Schnurverspannung in einem Gestell liegend, jedoch klingend gespielt und mit einem hohen penetranten Ton. *Kempul* sind mittelgroße hängende Buckelgongs, die mit kleinen Polsterkopfschlägeln angeschlagen werden. *Gong ageng* und *gong suwukan*, der «große» und der (kleinere, jedoch eigenartigerweise) «Schluß-» Gong, sind die größten Spezies der hängenden Buckelgongs im Gamelan. Sie hängen zusammen mit den *kempul* in einem großen Balkengestell.

Interessant ist auch festzustellen, daß der «down-beat» nicht wie in westlicher Notation an den Anfang (Taktanfang), sondern an den Schluß einer Zeile gesetzt wird. Grund dafür ist eine auf den Zielton gerichtete Spielweise der umspielenden Instrumente. Der Schlag auf den Gong bildet dann sozusagen eine Art «Abschluß einer Entwicklung».

Die nächste Stufe ist die Besetzung der fünf Metallophone *slenthem*, *demung*, *zwie saron barung* und *peking*¹⁵.

Anhand eines einfachen Stückes werden zunächst die Tonbezeichnungen der Ziffernotation (1-2-3-5-6-i für *slendro*, oder 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 für *pelog*) und ihre Zourdnung auf den einoktavigen Instrumenten erklärt. Die Spieler schlagen dann die wichtigsten Töne des Stückes einzeln ohne metrischen Zusammenhang an, um sich auf dem Instrument zu orientieren. Die Klangplatten der Metallophone müssen nachgedämpft werden, um während des Spiels kein Klangchaos zu erzeugen. Als kleine Übung wird ein zweitöniges Motiv aus dem zu spielenden Stück unisono in regelmäßiger Folge geschlagen, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Nachdämpfung des vorhergehenden Tones durch die linke Hand. Die Koordination fällt vielen Schülern oft erstaunlich leicht. Schlagen und Dämpfen geschieht auf den verschiedenen Tönen gleichzeitig:

rechte Hand - schlagen: 6 . 5 . 6 . 5 . 6

gleichzeitig:

linke Hand - dämpfen: 5 . 6 . 5 . 6 . 5 usw.

Selbst bei einer genauen Vorgabe durch (visuelles) Dirigieren hört man in diesem Moment immer ein mehr oder weniger starkes «arpeggio» der fünf Metallophone, worauf die Teilnehmer hingewiesen werden. Manchmal können sie eigene Lösungsvorschläge machen, wie man das schafft, daß alle gleichzeitig zusammen schlagen. Die originale Lösung, durch Unterteilung in die zugrunde liegende Pulsation von 1:2, 1:4 oder 1:8 durch das kleine *peking*, bringt immer das erwünschte Ergebnis.

¹⁵ *Slenthem*, ein einoktaviges Metallophon mit sieben breiten, jedoch dünnen Klangplatten aus Bronze, diese in einer Schnurverspannung über einzelnen Resonatoren aus Bambus schwebend (entspricht somit baulich den *gendér*). *Demung*, das größte, zwei *saron barung*, mittelgroße, und *peking*, das kleinste Instrument einer Familie von Metallophonen mit schweren liegenden Klangplatten aus Bronze über massiven Trogresonatoren, die aus einem Stück Holz geschlitten sind.

Nun kann die erste Zeile des Stückes gespielt werden. Je nach musikalischer Fähigkeit der Gruppe kann auch noch die zweite oder dritte Zeile dazugenommen werden, oft bleibt das Musikbeispiel jedoch in seiner «einzeiligen Version». Während die Metallophone die Kernmelodie ostinat spielen, können die bisher wartenden Kolotomie-Instrumente nacheinander einsetzen. Hier ist es notwendig, bei einer kurzen Unterbrechung die verschiedenen Tonhöhen der *kenong* und *kempul* zu erklären und daß die Tonhöhen mit denen der Kernmelodie übereinstimmen müssen.

Oft ist die Zeit der Führung (1-1, 5 std) bis zu diesem Punkt bereits abgelaufen, bei manchen Gruppen kann man jedoch noch weitere musikalische Schichten hinzugügen: die quasi melodische Umspielung der zweireihigen Gongspiele *bonang*. Wenn entsprechend begabte oder ausgebildete Teilnehmer zur Verfügung stehen, kann man hier die etwas komplexere komplementäre Spielweise des *imbalan bonang* versuchen. Als Vorübung sollen alle Teilnehmer der Führung eine Schlag-gegen-Schlag Verzahnung klatschen. Dies wird dann von den beiden Spielern auf Töne passend zur Melodie umgesetzt. Diese Umspielung macht das Spiel des Gamelan wesentlich komplexer. Durch eine lebhaftere Spielweise auf den zweifelligen *kendang*-Trommeln durch den Leiter der Führung wird der spielerische Charakter auch den Zuschauern deutlich. Aspekte der Dynamik und des Tempos sind wesentliche Faktoren, die hier auch noch besprochen werden können.

Bis hierher ist bereits manches von der javanischen Kultur und ihren musikalischen und ästhetischen Wertvorstellungen eingeflossen, was explizit schwierig zu erklären gewesen wäre und mit Sicherheit nicht den bleibenden Effekt erzielen könnte wie eine solche «selbste erlebte, weil selbst gemachte» Erfahrung.

Auf diese Weise können Führungen in der nichteuropäischen Abteilung des MIM wesentlich differenzierter gestaltet werden, unter Einbeziehung einer relativ großer Anzahl von Teilnehmern. Leider steht

in den wenigsten Fällen genügend Zeit zur Verfügung, um anschließend über das Erlebte zu sprechen.

Die Einbeziehung der Medien rundet gegebenenfalls einige Themen ab. Dies gilt besonders für virtuose Solomusik. Durch das Mitklatschen der *bols* eines indischen *Tala* bei einem von Cassette vorgespielten Tablasolo oder den übereinander gelagerten rhythmischen Schichten eines westafrikanischen Trommelensembles können auch die Besucher «Teilnehmer» bei komplizierteren musikalischen Formen werden.

Bei der Vorführung einer Video-Aufnahme ist es von besonderem Interesse, die –anscheinend– außermusikalischen Aspekte des Musizierens kennenzulernen. Die tänzerischen Bewegungen eines afrikanischen Xylophonisten, die emotionslose, würdevolle Haltung eines javanischen Palastmusikers oder die lachende Gruppe bei einer balinesischen Gamelanprobe sind wesentlich, um ein Gefühl für den Rahmen zu vermitteln, in welchem sich die verschiedenen Musikkulturen bewegen.

Am wichtigsten bleibt trotzdem das direkte Vormachen und Nachmachen. Der nachhaltig beeindruckende Moment bleibt, bei aller Vorteile der Technik, die zwischenmenschliche Beziehung. Die gilt es aufzubauen und so die anscheinend reglosen Objekte mit Leben zu füllen.

M U S E O

EL MUSEO

NACIONAL
DE ANTROPOLOGÍA:
NOS/OTROS

Andrés Carretero Pérez

Museo Nacional de Antropología

RESUMEN

El Museo Nacional de Antropología supone la superación de los antiguos museos etnológicos y de artes y tradiciones populares, tanto en su planteamiento teórico globalizador como en su proyecto expositivo. Frente a la separación de lo propio y lo ajeno, a la dicotomía del nos/otros, busca intencionadamente una unidad en la descripción y comparación de similitudes y diferencias culturales, con el ánimo de difundir los valores del pluralismo y la comprensión intercultural.

* * *

DE LA HISTORIA DE LOS MUSEOS ETNOGRÁFICOS

Es costumbre buscar los orígenes de los museos etnográficos en las colecciones de objetos de culturas indígenas de todo el mundo que comienzan a llegar a las Cortes europeas desde el siglo XVI. A partir de los Gabinetes de Historia Natural, la práctica totalidad de los Estados europeos crearon en el siglo XIX museos etnográficos, que se vieron ricamente potenciados durante ese período de gran expansión mundial.

Desde finales del siglo XIX, y de manera especial en el primer tercio del siglo XX, a medida que el desarrollo industrial provocaba un fuerte cambio social, y borraba muchos de los particularismos locales, surgieron en todo el continente secciones especializadas o museos etnográficos dedicados en exclusiva a la propia cultura, que se han constituido en claros símbolos de identidad y conservatorio de la memoria colectiva para los países.

Con posterioridad a la Segunda Guerra Mundial se observa una clara tendencia a la expansión de este tipo de museos de la "cultura local". Sobre los modelos que ofrecían los de ámbito estatal, van centrándose en regiones, comarcas e incluso localidades cada vez más reducidas, en búsqueda de la propia identidad cultural, de una historia individualizada.

España ha participado plenamente en este proceso. Sin embargo, una simple comparación con cualquier otro ejemplo europeo resulta indicativa de la escasa integración española en el desarrollo de la secuencia histórica, a pesar del paralelismo.

El Real Gabinete de Historia Natural contuvo amplias colecciones de "etnografía exótica" que posteriormente pasaron a diversos museos (Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Museo Nacional de Etnología, Museo de América, ...).

En 1875 se creó el Museo Antropológico, antecedente del Museo Nacional de Etnología. Y en 1934 surge el Museo del Pueblo Español. Ambos fueron

creados tres años antes que sus equivalentes franceses, por ejemplo: Museo del Trocadero, origen del actual Museo del Hombre de París, 1878; Museo de Artes y Tradiciones Populares, 1937.

Por desgracia, la evolución de los centros no ha sido la misma: Mientras los dos museos del país vecino son grandes centros de investigación y difusión cultural, el Museo Nacional de Etnología tiene una escasa capacidad de acción debido a su pequeño tamaño y escaso presupuesto, y el Museo del Pueblo Español ha permanecido "históricamente" cerrado al público, como una *eterna crisálida* en palabras de D. Julio Caro Baroja.

Llegando a los tiempos actuales, continuamos observando la conexión europea en el desarrollo de los museos etnográficos españoles. Al margen de numerosos museos locales o comarcales, la práctica totalidad de las Comunidades Autónomas tienen, o están elaborando proyectos de instalación de museos etnográficos. Existe ya una significativa red que refleja la tendencia a la potenciación de las identidades regionales y nacionales.

DEL CONCEPTO DE MUSEO ETNOGRÁFICO

Múltiples ideas aparecen como definitorias del contenido de los museos en los párrafos anteriores, desde culturas remotas a la cultura local, desde lo muy diferente hasta la propia identidad.

Como norma, los museos etnográficos nacidos en el siglo XIX recogen culturas exóticas, diferentes de la nuestra, mientras la mayor parte de los museos etnográficos creados durante el siglo XX se centran en la cultura occidental, en el mundo europeo, en las particularidades de los propios países, cuando no de comarcas o pequeñas localidades.

Pueden encontrarse numerosas justificaciones históricas para este cambio de perspectiva. La primera y más evidente es que durante el siglo XIX nos encon-

tramos en pleno colonialismo floreciente: Continuamente llegan de las diversas colonias todo tipo de objetos de las sociedades locales, objetos que se exhiben quizás con el orgullo de mostrar la amplitud de los propios imperios, objetos que se alinean en las vitrinas casi como una continuación, como una pervivencia de los tiempos prehistóricos, en la más pura perspectiva evolucionista; para divertimento y enseñanza de los habitantes de la metrópoli, y a menudo, porqué no decirlo, justificando la superioridad y el dominio que ejercen los blancos sobre aquellos salvajes.

En el siglo XX el evolucionismo ya no puede usarse como esquema matriz simple; de aquellas culturas primitivas expoliadas apenas queda nada, y el interés 'administrativo' por *otras sociedades* decae a medida que se derrumba el sistema colonial. Pero a cambio, los intelectuales se hacen cada vez más conscientes de que la continua modernización de Europa hace desaparecer formas de vida antigua que se mantenían en el 'pueblo', eso que hoy llamamos la 'vida tradicional', y que con más propiedad deberíamos denominar 'vida preindustrial', y con ello se va diluyendo la *identidad* de sus naciones.

Ya en el siglo XIX algunos eruditos se alarmaron por la pérdida de las tradiciones orales, e iniciaron su estudio; poco después era la indumentaria 'popular' la que desaparecía; sin tardar mucho se unieron las técnicas y utillajes de la ganadería, agricultura, pesca... tradicionales, y prácticamente todos los oficios artesanos: Habían nacido los museos etnográficos del mundo occidental.

Sin embargo, hay un deslizamiento de ideas en el desarrollo temporal que acabamos de comentar. ¿Existe alguna continuidad de planteamientos?, ¿estamos hablando todo el tiempo de museos etnográficos o de otra cosa?

Parece claro que, conceptualmente, poco tienen que ver aquellos museos del siglo XIX, los etnológicos por excelencia, con sus hermanos más jóvenes. El

planteamiento ha de ser diferente dado el ámbito que abarcan, pero no se trata de un simple hecho mecánico, de una consecuencia de la escala con la que se trabaja. Hagamos otro poco de historia para comprender las diferencias.

Cuando en el siglo XIX se define la antropología como ciencia no se trata de la ciencia de la sociedad o de la cultura tal como hoy se concibe, es esencialmente la ciencia de los primitivos, de todos aquellos que en la escala de la evolución están algunos peldaños por debajo de *nosotros*.

Algunos investigadores observaron, con una clara falta de conocimiento de lo que es la dinámica social, que en nuestra propia cultura había rasgos más o menos antiguos, que no correspondían al momento histórico que vivía la vanguardia de nuestro mundo, y que solían asentarse en las capas populares, es decir, pobres y generalmente campesinas, del mundo occidental, supervivencias a cuyo estudio se dedicaron con fruición en las zonas rurales, selvas mucho más cercanas y menos peligrosas que las de las colonias.

Su ciencia se llamó Folk-lore, 'saber del pueblo', por puro etnocentrismo. Aunque muy a menudo considerasen inferior, cultural e 'históricamente' a ese pueblo llano que estudiaban, no era socialmente admisible que la ciencia de los salvajes entrara en el mundo civilizado. No se podía consentir que *los mismos métodos y principios* con que se estudiaba a los aborígenes australianos sirvieran para analizar la cultura y superior civilización occidental. Y quizás sea ésta una interpretación *presentista*, y aquellos autores ni siquiera se plantearan la posibilidad de una ciencia única para ambos campos de estudio.

Aun cuando muchos años más tarde la antropología comenzó a penetrar en nuestra cultura, persiste esa resistencia al autoanálisis antropológico. Los museos etnológicos se supone que son para las cosas de los negros y filipinos, son los museos de *los otros*; en cambio, eso que antes hemos llamado 'museos de etnografía europea' en realidad no suelen denominarse

museos etnográficos, sino museos de artes y costumbres populares, museos de artes y tradiciones populares, museos del pueblo, o de la cultura popular; son los museos de *nosotros*.

Y no son propiamente museos de la cultura, sino museos de 'historia reciente', basados en dos conceptos problemáticos: *identidad* y *popular*.

Si se analizan las aplicaciones ordinarias del término *popular* se puede observar que resulta un adjetivo genérico para denotar 'retardatario', 'imperfecto', 'obsoleto', 'inculto', y sólo en los últimos tiempos, o en determinados ambientes ideológicos, 'auténtico' o 'con raigambre'. Las cosas, los elementos y fenómenos culturales pertenecen al mundo de lo popular cuando tienden hacia la desinstitución, cuando se alejan de la vida ordinaria de la sociedad en general. En ese momento, cuando ya no hay posibilidad de recuperación funcional, pueden reivindicarse como señas de *identidad*. Fenómeno particularmente evidente en los pequeños museos locales 'de la identidad perdida' por así decir, museos de la añoranza, del más puro romanticismo que trata de fijar sus raíces clavándolas en las paredes de los ayuntamientos y casas parroquiales.

Sólo cuando se han impuesto las cosechadoras, las fábricas industriales de cerámica, los tejidos sintéticos, o las construcciones con hormigón prelaborado; cuando los arados, los talleres de alfarería, los telares manuales, o el conocimiento de cómo se levanta una estructura de madera para una vivienda, o se construye un barco de pesca han comenzado a ser rasgos obsoletos, reducidos a unos cuantos núcleos rurales, sólo entonces han adquirido la estética intelectualista de lo popular, y no puede haber museo de artes y tradiciones que no tenga un telar, mejor o peor montado, con un maniquí al lado, con indumentaria tradicional, que sostiene una rueca y un huso.

Y aún en estas circunstancias, no todas las manifestaciones de la cultura exhiben el mismo interés: Si ha habido un boom del amor al tejido manual, a la alfarería, cuanto más basta mejor, o a las danzas popu-

lares, pocos estudiosos o amantes del pasado se han interesado por cómo se fabrica el tapial, o por documentar los toques de campana que ya sólo recuerdan unos cuantos viejos.

Seguimos inmersos en el mundo de la estética museística y del elemento diferenciador de lo propio frente al vecino. No estamos hablando de museos etnológicos, es decir, de museos que tratan de exhibir culturas, sino de museos que atesoran algunas manifestaciones estéticas de nuestra historia reciente, o para expresarlo mejor, algunos objetos de uso cotidiano a los que su paso a la historia ha conferido un carácter estético que antes no tenían, y en los que la comunidad, o sus representantes ideológicos, buscan la identificación frente a la actual normalización de los elementos materiales.

Quizás sea inevitable, pero tanto los museos etnológicos como los de artes y tradiciones populares son museos imperfectos.

Los primeros, por su amplitud, se limitan a mostrar unas cuantas pinceladas de un gran número de culturas, y acaban mostrando los elementos más llamativos; de alguna manera las anécdotas. Y salvo excepciones se han detenido en el momento de la colonización y nos dan simples repertorios geográficos intemporales con mapas más o menos educativos.

Nos muestran esas culturas como ajenas al mundo real, congeladas en el tiempo, fuera de la historia, como si no hubiera pasado por ellas un rodillo civilizador que las ha destruido en su mayor parte, como si las piezas no hubieran ingresado hace cien años, como si los esquimales siguieran cazando focas con arpones de hueso, hasta el punto que muy a menudo el público que los visita no sabe qué referencias tomar: ¿Siguen los jíbaros reduciendo cabezas?. El museo no suele ofrecer respuesta por falta de un contexto conocido para el público habitual.

Por el contrario, los museos de artes y tradiciones son museos sentimentales; museos en los que uno puede solazarse con aquellos tiempos en que el traba-

jo no contaba, en que los artesanos hacían su obra con amor, en que las mujeres tenían tiempo para bordar enormes piezas de lino, en que los hombres se sentían dueños de su actividad, sin sufrir la esclavitud de las cadenas de montaje. Pura ilusión. La sociedad 'tradicional' nunca ha sido así.

En uno y otro caso nos encontramos ante monumentos, activos o pasivos, de valoración de lo propio.

DE LOS MUSEOS ETNOGRÁFICOS Y LA COMPRENSIÓN INTERCULTURAL

Hay, sin embargo, otros modos menos etnocéntricos de concebir los museos etnográficos.

Suponer, por ejemplo, que esas 'piezas etnográficas' que hay que recoger son los documentos, materiales o no, del objeto de estudio de la antropología cultural, es decir, de LA CULTURA; no sólo de las costumbres "exóticas" o "tradicionales", sino también de las culturas históricas y de la cultura en que vivimos hoy en día.

Considerar que el museo debe exponer no ya unos cuantos arcos o plumas, trajes 'populares' o reproducciones de talleres artesanales, sino, olvidando las distinciones entre propio y ajeno, culto y popular, obra de arte y objeto convencional, mostrar cómo es y cómo ha sido, en su unidad y diversidad, la cultura de los hombres; cómo han evolucionado a lo largo del tiempo las culturas particulares; y cuales son o pueden ser las articulaciones lógicas entre los diversos elementos culturales, tanto en una visión sincrónica como en la historia.

El planteamiento es mucho más difícil, por la amplitud temática, por la necesidad de establecer unos postulados teóricos que hilvanen y den sentido a toda la exposición, postulados que siempre serán discutibles para unos u otros, por la constante necesidad de renovación de la muestra en función de las investigaciones en curso, y sobre todo por el reto museológico.

co de exponer conceptos y procesos sociales en lugar de filas de piezas con rotulitos.

Sin embargo, un museo etnológico debería ser un centro donde se analice didácticamente la diversidad de las culturas y se explique el necesario relativismo en su consideración; donde se valoren los objetos no por su propio interés formal, sino como elementos significativos de las culturas representadas; donde se unifique descripción y comparación de similitudes y diferencias, con el ánimo de difundir los valores del pluralismo y la comprensión intercultural.

Y en este sentido la existencia de instituciones culturales cuya diferencia exclusiva es el área geográfica-cultural a la que dedican su actividad, supone un corte epistemológico del mismo tipo de la oposición culto/popular.

La finalidad de los centros, la metodología científica de estudio, e incluso la técnica expositiva es la misma para el conjunto. La actual extensión de nuestra cultura occidental a nivel mundial difumina cada vez más los límites geográficos, haciendo ineficaces los análisis parciales. Y en gran medida lo que conocemos de otros pueblos (y lo que de su patrimonio guardan nuestros museos) forma parte de nuestra propia historia.

El grueso de las colecciones "exóticas" del Museo Nacional de Etnología, por ejemplo, han sido recogidas durante siglos por españoles que, por motivos de trabajo o investigación, tuvieron contacto con las culturas en cuestión, y es en su comparación con las formas de vida hispanas donde adquieren toda su significación histórica.

El mantenimiento en tiempos pasados de esta separación respondía, como hemos visto, a una visión histórica y etnocéntrica simple que separaba la cultura occidental de las de los pueblos primitivos, el mundo colonial, o el tercer mundo, según las denominaciones de cada período. Desde una perspectiva actual resulta, como mínimo, un anacronismo.

En estas premisas se basa el proyecto del Museo Nacional de Antropología.

DEL PROYECTO
DEL MUSEO NACIONAL DE ANTROPOLOGÍA

Los museos de origen

El MUSEO NACIONAL DE ETNOLOGÍA¹ tiene su origen en el Museo Antropológico ("Museo Anatómico"), fundado por el Dr. González Velasco en 1875, y adquirido por el Estado en 1887 tras la muerte de su creador. En 1910 obtiene la categoría de museo nacional, con el nombre de Museo Antropológico, y desde 1940 se denomina Museo Etnológico Nacional, cambio que hacía referencia a su progresiva especialización en el campo de la Etnografía.

El museo del Dr. Velasco tenía como núcleo central una amplia sección anatómica, con colecciones de Antropología Física, hoy depositadas en su mayor parte en la Escuela de Medicina Legal de la Universidad Complutense, que fueron dando paso a series cada vez más importantes de materiales etnográficos, testimonio de las culturas indígenas de todo el mundo:

Colecciones de Filipinas y Oceanía, procedentes básicamente de la gran Exposición de Filipinas realizada en Madrid en 1887; de Africa, fruto de las expediciones científicas de Ossorio, Sorela y otros investigadores del siglo XIX, a las que se sumaron en 1973 los fondos del Museo de Africa; de América, fruto de la denominada Comisión del Pacífico (1862-1865); de Asia, principalmente India y Extremo Oriente, que incluyen la colección del antiguo Museo Biblioteca de Ultramar, y donaciones tan significativas como la del Sr. Santos Munsuri, ya en 1989. Más reciente es la sección de Europa, formada esencialmente por la donación del Sr. Wulf Köpke y la recientemente adquirida colección Seipoldy.

El volumen, siempre creciente, de estos fondos museográficos, que ascienden en la actualidad a más de 15.000 objetos, y la riqueza de su biblioteca especializada, han desbordado hace tiempo la capacidad del pequeño edificio (obra del marqués de Cubas) que

¹ Una historia, mucho más detallada y sugerente de la institución, puede encontrarse en Romero de Tejada, Pilar, *Un templo a la ciencia*, Madrid, Ministerio de Cultura, 1992, XX pp.

alberga el Museo, que cuenta con aproximadamente 3800 m² construidos, insuficientes para el almacenamiento y conservación de las colecciones, y de los que apenas una cuarta parte son utilizables para la exposición pública.

El MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PUEBLO ESPAÑOL, creado en 1934 para satisfacer "la deuda cultural y política contraída por la República con el Pueblo Español", según reza el preámbulo de su Decreto Fundacional (28 de julio de 1934), y situado en el Palacio de Grimaldi, no llegó a inaugurarse en el verano de 1936, tal como estaba previsto.

De hecho, nunca ha satisfecho esa deuda cultural. Sólo en 1971 logró abrir sus puertas al público, y ello de forma breve, ya que en 1973 las necesidades de espacio de la entonces sede del Consejo del Movimiento (actualmente Senado), obligaron a desalojar apresuradamente el edificio.

El Museo quedó almacenado en la antigua Facultad de Medicina de San Carlos, hasta que, en 1987, un nuevo desalojo permitió su traslado y la correcta instalación de sus fondos y servicios internos en el edificio del MEAC, donde actualmente se encuentra, recuperando la actividad científica que originalmente tuvo.

Esta azarosa historia, en la que pueden verse numerosas implicaciones políticas que analizaremos en otra ocasión, no ha impedido que además de conservarse, hayan crecido continuamente sus ricas colecciones: El fondo inicial del Museo estaba compuesto por las colecciones de indumentaria y joyería populares procedentes de la Exposición del Traje Regional de 1925, las colecciones de Etnografía de la Escuela Superior de Magisterio y el desaparecido Museo del Encaje, a los que se sumaron amplias series de objetos domésticos y útiles de trabajo, que se adquirieron entre 1934 y 1936 con vistas al montaje inaugural.

A ellas se fueron sumando en años posteriores colecciones representativas de las técnicas y actividades productivas (agricultura, ganadería, oficios, trans-

tución. No obstante, la idea de la unión sólo fue tomando cuerpo después de que el Museo del Pueblo Español se instalara en el edificio del antiguo Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo, lo que resolvía un importante problema práctico: la ubicación del futuro Museo.

Los museos de origen ofrecían las colecciones museográficas necesarias, incrementadas significativamente; las plantillas de personal técnico; y unos presupuestos de funcionamiento que servirían como punto de partida necesario.

El edificio de la Avenida de Juan de Herrera proporcionaba el cuarto elemento básico: una sede idónea en la que desarrollar sus actividades.

La creación del Museo

El Consejo de Dirección del Ministerio de Cultura, en reunión de 25 de junio de 1992, aprobó el proyecto de creación del Museo Nacional de Antropología presentado por la Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, considerando su interés y viabilidad.

Sometido el proyecto a dictamen de la Junta Superior de Museos, ésta resolvió favorablemente en sesión de 10 de julio de 1992.

Se inició entonces un plan de actuación con cuatro líneas paralelas esenciales, y un calendario ajustado que debía permitir la apertura al público del nuevo centro a finales de 1996:

– Formulación legal de la nueva institución, *que tuvo lugar con la aprobación por el Consejo de Ministros del Real Decreto 684/1993, de 7 de mayo, por el que se crea el Museo Nacional de Antropología (B.O.E. 27-5-93), como centro al que se encomienda la tarea de “mostrar desde una perspectiva antropológica la unidad y diversidad de las manifestaciones culturales, tanto en España como en el resto del mundo, con especial referencia a aquellas regiones con las que nuestro país ha mantenido contactos históricos significativos” (art. 1).*

– Unificación funcional, documental y de gestión de los dos museos de origen, *tarea para la que se estableció un programa de reuniones de coordinación entre los equipos responsables: estructuración de los departamentos científicos, unificación de criterios catalográficos de fondos, reasignación de códigos de identificación (registros, inventarios, ...), establecimiento de una política unitaria de adquisición de fondos museográficos y bibliográficos, análisis del proceso de reunión de las bibliotecas, adecuación de los puestos de trabajo al nuevo organigrama, etc.*

– Estudio de las necesidades de reforma en el inmueble que, a partir de los estudios técnicos previos, dió lugar a la redacción de un proyecto por el arquitecto Luis de la Rica, dispuesto para su ejecución material a comienzos de 1994: *El edificio de la Avenida de Juan de Herrera se construyó básicamente en hormigón, aluminio y cristal, dotado de lo que entonces era la más moderna tecnología en climatización y seguridad. Desde su construcción no ha sufrido reformas ni reparaciones significativas, más allá del refuerzo de forjados en la zona de garajes y la progresiva compartimentación de la planta baja.*

El propio uso, y lo que parecen ser defectos estructurales y de acabado, hace que hoy la construcción muestre problemas de aislamiento, filtraciones de agua en algunas zonas de garaje y salas de exposición, deficiencias en los ascensores, obstrucciones y mal (además de costoso) funcionamiento general del sistema de aire acondicionado, por citar las cuestiones más significativas.

Paralelamente, sus sistemas de evacuación de emergencia y seguridad han quedado desfasados respecto a las normativas actuales.

– Redacción del proyecto museológico básico de la nueva institución, *que debe dar paso a la inmediata elaboración de los documentos museográficos del montaje expositivo, cuya tramitación y ejecución material será en gran parte paralela a la reforma arquitectónica.*

Los tres primeros aspectos tienen un contenido más administrativo, y no vamos a detenernos ahora en

tución. No obstante, la idea de la unión sólo fue tomando cuerpo después de que el Museo del Pueblo Español se instalara en el edificio del antiguo Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo, lo que resolvía un importante problema práctico: la ubicación del futuro Museo.

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ellos, limitándonos a señalar que diversos avatares han ido introduciendo modificaciones en el calendario previsto, produciendo algunos desajustes entre el avance de los trabajos y su falta de materialización. Por el contrario, el último, el proyecto museológico, es un aspecto fundamental, de pleno contenido científico, y crucial para la definición y futuro de la institución.

Dado que el proyecto contempla la máxima colaboración del mayor número de especialistas posible², ofrecemos en *Anexo*, como una primera oportunidad de difusión y discusión pública, un fragmento del documento de trabajo, un borrador inicial, sobre el que se ha centrado la elaboración del futuro montaje expositivo, incluyendo como ejemplo el texto preliminar relativo al montaje del área de la Península Ibérica.

El próximo número de la revista contendrá una sección especial dedicada al proyecto museológico, en la que habrá espacio para una presentación más detallada, así como para ofrecer puntos de vista de técnicos e investigadores de diversas especialidades, tanto museológicas como científicas.

* * *

² Ya en el documento «Museo Nacional de Antropología. Actuaciones básicas», elaborado en 1992, al hablar del programa científico del Museo, se decía: «Tarea en cuyo desarrollo, junto al trabajo interno del equipo técnico del Museo que desarrolla en estos momentos el proyecto museológico, deberá colaborar el mayor número posible de profesionales, dada la envergadura de la tarea, y el ánimo de diseñar una exposición que incorpore los más recientes desarrollos de la teoría antropológica.

Con este fin, y a la vista de la diversidad de contenidos de la institución, más que la fórmula clásica de establecer una Comisión Científica Asesora estable, compuesta por un reducido número de miembros (será difícil lograr un grupo cuya colaboración permanente sea posible y eficaz a lo largo de todo el proceso), parece más viable y operativo buscar la colaboración puntual y específica de los investigadores que en cada momento se consideren de interés por sus conocimientos particulares: A medida que vayan definiéndose áreas temáticas de trabajo, puede pedirse la colaboración de especialistas en las respectivas materias (antropólogos, geógrafos, historiadores,...) para perfilar los contenidos con el mayor rigor y consenso».

ANEXO

PROYECTO MUSEOLÓGICO. NOTAS INICIALES³

La fusión de Museo Nacional de Etnología y Museo del Pueblo Español, tan dispares en sus fondos y estructura, supone una oportunidad única para abordar una renovación total de los tradicionales discursos expositivos de los museos etnográficos.

El montaje de un museo etnográfico en la actualidad exige inevitablemente reflexionar sobre el concepto de patrimonio etnológico (y sobre el concepto conexo de colección etnográfica); hacerlo en la España actual nos lleva, también a detenernos en el concepto de identidad, o quizás más adecuadamente, en el concepto de contexto cultural.

Lejos de profundizar en visiones fundamentalistas de la cuestión, debemos centrarnos en una "reflexión aplicada": no podemos perder de vista en ningún momento la realidad de lo que el museo es; la realidad de su/s historia/s, de sus colecciones, de los criterios con que se han formado, y de sus posibilidades de desarrollo inmediato; ni tampoco el interés de llevar a cabo la apertura del centro al público en el menor plazo; lo que nos conduce a sostener, como planteamiento inicial de trabajo, una exposición básica en la que se solapen los respectivos museos de origen, con la máxima coherencia global, reservando para una introducción general sobre los conceptos de cultura y relativismo cultural, y para un programa de exposiciones temporales, la fusión sistemática de ambas colecciones, que podrían configurar una futura exposición permanente.

Patrimonio etnológico, ¿es aquello que la investigación científica demuestra que son los elementos básicos que permiten comprender el funcionamiento de un grupo de vida? ¿o todo aquello que identifica una forma de vivir, todo aquello capaz de expresar o definir las conductas "culturales" de una comunidad?

En el primer caso, se propone una reducción "teóricamente" controlada. En el segundo, el patrimonio etnológico sería del mismo tamaño que la propia cultura, de hecho "es" la propia cultura.

Se plantea así desde el comienzo la disyuntiva entre el museo de análisis o el museo de comunidad, entre lo que la investigación sugiere como elementos de reflexión y los

³ El contenido íntegro de este texto debe entenderse como un documento previo de trabajo y reflexión para los equipos técnicos que participen en la elaboración del proyecto museológico, no como una propuesta acabada. Por otra parte, al tratarse de una elaboración del autor, es posible que otros miembros del equipo técnico del Museo no se sientan plenamente identificados con algunos aspectos de su contenido o redacción

¿Utilizamos un mismo criterio para toda la muestra, u optamos por dos distintos en función de la "cercanía" cultural de lo representado a nosotros mismos?

Sin entrar ahora en definiciones o análisis globales de la identidad cultural, ni del concepto de cultura como tal, podemos preguntarnos ¿en el Estado Español, nos encontramos ante varias culturas diferentes, ante varias subculturas, o ante diversas formas ideológicas de vivir la misma cultura?, ¿son culturas diferentes aquellos grupos humanos que exhiben un conjunto de pautas económicas, sociales, etc, comunes, y se diferencian por determinados postulados ideológicos, histórico-políticos, o en el mayor de los casos por diferencias lingüísticas? ¿un estado de opinión sobre las propias diferencias conforma un grupo cultural...?

Una exposición independiente, aislada, sobre patrimonio etnológico español, ¿debería centrarse en las diferencias, en las similitudes entre nuestras regiones y nacionalidades, o en la relatividad contextual de sus identidades?, ¿encontraría rasgos significativos "materializables", sin caer en el tipismo, para mostrar separadamente las distintas culturas ibéricas?, ¿cuáles son éstas?

¿Qué ocurriría con esa misma exposición sobre el patrimonio etnológico español inserta en otra más general?

Para situar el problema de manera práctica, pensemos que la exposición abarca toda Europa Occidental, ¿tendrían sentido quince, veinte o cincuenta muestras paralelas para España, Francia, Alemania, Italia, ... (o en una Europa "de los pueblos" para vascos, gallegos, bretones, ...), o sería preferible una sola unitaria de la cultura europea, señalando en los apartados correspondientes las particularidades o rasgos distintivos de necesaria mención?. ¿En qué se diferenciarían materialmente, más allá de algunos elementos folklóricos, las salas de cada país o grupo "cultural"?

La cuestión se complica definitivamente cuando extendemos la exposición a todo el planeta. ¿Qué criterio adoptar?. ¿Detallar miles de grupos culturales, a ejemplo de lo comentado en el caso europeo aislado?, ¿detallar al máximo la geografía cultural del área europea (o española simplemente) y generalizar para las culturas más o menos exóticas?, ¿o agrupar a todos por medio de grandes áreas geográfico-culturales, de las cuales la europea, o la española, sería una más?

El volumen y distribución cultural, temática y temporal de los fondos museográficos disponibles viene a simplificar en parte, y de manera fáctica, nuestras dudas, aunque no a limitar el problema de programación:

La colección actual se compone de unos 60.000 objetos: 3.000 piezas de Antropología Física; 12.000 correspondientes a Asia, Africa, Oceanía, América y Europa; y 45.000 españolas.

Doce mil piezas que representan "todo el mundo" difícilmente permiten ir al detalle de grupos culturales individualizados, obligando a una estructura, casi un bosquejo descriptivo, por áreas geográficas mayores.

Algo similar ocurre con las piezas españolas: Las cuarenta y cinco mil piezas disponibles no tienen la homogeneidad necesaria para plantear secciones de Galicia, País Vasco, Cataluña, Andalucía, ..., lo que por otra parte podría ser reiterativo y terminaría, con toda seguridad, proporcionando "salas administrativas" más que culturales.

Respecto a la contemporaneidad o historicidad de la muestra, debe tenerse igualmente en cuenta que el grueso de las colecciones del Museo Nacional de Etnología fueron recogidas en el siglo XIX y las del Museo del Pueblo Español en las décadas iniciales del siglo XX.

Una visión actual de las culturas con estos fondos sería difícil, e igualmente lo sería una adquisición masiva de nuevas piezas, por lo que parece necesario volcarse expositivamente en el mundo de "lo tradicional", marcando de manera complementaria, y con más información gráfica y audiovisual que objetual, el cambio cultural.

En resumen,

a) a partir de las colecciones procedentes del Museo Nacional de Etnología parece lógico que,

1. se mantenga una distribución expositiva de tipo geográfico-cultural, dada la amplitud del área que abarcan, y la limitación de los fondos para muchas de las culturas representadas.

b) Dentro de esta muestra podría programarse un área geográfico-cultural particular, de mayor amplitud expositiva que el resto: Europa, o la Península Ibérica, en la que, habida cuenta de los fondos procedentes del Museo del Pueblo Español, el discurso:

1. Ha de centrarse en la vida preindustrial, complementando con fotografías, filmaciones, etc, pero escaso apoyo de fondos museográficos, la modernización de la prácticas descritas.
2. Debe adoptar una estructura temática, ya que es notable el desequilibrio en las regiones de procedencia de las colecciones, lo que impide toda distribución geográfica equilibrada de la muestra, aunque siempre podrán tomarse regiones o comarcas particulares para explicar muchos de los temas, buscando zonas en que los problemas o las actividades sean característicos o ejemplares.
3. Su implantación tendrá un marcado carácter de narración histórica, aunque alejándose tanto del mero historicismo como de la simple descripción etnográfica de la "vida rural tradicional", que en breve plazo desembocaría en una muestra de una época histórica concreta.

La finalidad básica de la muestra, el hilo conductor que guíe al visitante, y que articule la narración, ha de ser la complejidad de la estructura cultural, y la continua evolución o cambio de las prácticas; el contraste entre permanencia y cambio, entre unidad y diversidad cultural; la explicación de que "todo tiene una fecha" y un contexto.

La comparación entre las diversas culturas del planeta y su evolución actual en un caso; y en otro entre los elementos que son comunes a toda la cultura de los pueblos ibéricos, y la variedad de sus manifestaciones particulares por zonas o grupos sociales. Los diferentes orígenes históricos, la tendencia a la unificación administrativa y cultural, el mantenimiento de actividades económicas diferenciadas, el aislamiento de algunas zonas y el desarrollo industrial de otras, la urbanización y su nueva tendencia a la unificación, el resurgimiento de las "culturas" locales, etc.

IMPLANTACIÓN INTRODUCTORIA

Junto a las reflexiones anteriores, que han de servir para una amplia discusión sobre los planteamientos básicos del museo, en las páginas que siguen se ofrece una aproximación inicial, meramente orientativa, a la forma que podría adoptar la exposición permanente.

Area introductoria

Como inicio de la exposición se plantea una amplia zona en la que, frente a la "descripción etnográfica" de las salas restantes, se expliquen conceptos básicos de la mecánica cultural y de la disciplina antropológica.

Su contenido podría desarrollarse en cuatro secciones (nombradas provisionalmente):

1. "La cultura"
2. "Las culturas"
3. "Una (mi) cultura"
4. "Todas las culturas"

1. *La cultura*

Area inicial, de montaje intencionadamente confuso, en la que se mezclen y superpongan numerosas imágenes y objetos de diversas culturas, diversas actividades y épocas, para crear en el público la sensación de complejidad y caos, de variedad y dificultad de comprensión, de la cultura humana.

La conclusión de esta zona podría ser un mensaje bastante simple del tipo: "Esto que acaba usted de ver es LA CULTURA".

2. *Las culturas*

En la siguiente zona, de manera más sistemática, aunque no exhaustiva, pueden irse mostrando una serie de elementos o factores influyentes en la definición de la "diferencia" cultural global.

Algunos posibles:

– Comentario y explicación de la diversidad de *grupos físicos*, con notas sobre su estudio, sobre la tradicional visión de los caracteres raciales ("un gran cuadro sinóptico de las razas tachado en rojo") y el tipo de estudios actuales.

– Visión de la diversidad de *grupos lingüísticos*, quizás con un simple mapa mundial de las lenguas, cuadros sinópticos de los troncos lingüísticos, muestras de la complejidad y diversa riqueza "adaptativa" de unas y otras lenguas (abundancia de términos esquimales para la nieve, riqueza tonal china, ...), y grabaciones en las que se puedan oír diversos idiomas, etc.

– *Adaptación ecológica*: distribución en el planeta de sociedades cazadoras, ganaderas, ..., en función de ecosistemas; desarrollo por el contrario de los mismos tipos de actividad económica en distintos climas; variedad de formas arquitectónicas; etc.

– *Difusión*: tomando quizás el caso de la extensión de los animales domésticos y los cultivos (y mejor que los clásicos del café, etc, puede mostrarse, por ejemplo, la expansión mundial del arroz o de los cereales europeos); o de las religiones universalistas.

– *"Paralelismo"*: variedad y similitud de rasgos de las formas de organización política (estados "prístinos"); diversidad de creencias religiosas con rituales y prácticas destinados a los mismos fines; extensión y paralelismo entre ritos de paso vitales en diferentes culturas; formas de adorno personal; etc.

– *Historia*: Visión de los sucesivos y coetáneos "centros de civilización" a lo largo del tiempo; ejemplos de contactos o movimientos culturales masivos (preferible con casos no occidentales: progresiva ocupación prehispánica de América, extensión bantú africana, expansión desde el continente hacia los archipiélagos del Sudeste Asiático, ...); etc.

– *"Sistema"*: Visión esquemática de la organización interna de varias culturas; ejemplos de cambios sociales encadenados en un grupo cultural; procesos paralelos de aculturación en una misma dirección de varios grupos de características iniciales muy diferentes, tanto históricos como actuales; ...

– etc.

La conclusión de esta zona, de esta sucesión de pequeñas salas conceptuales, podría ser: Los factores que se han tomado como ejemplos, y muchos más, son los causantes de la diversidad cultural pasada y presente, son el origen de la variedad de LAS CULTURAS.

3. *Una (mi) cultura*

Cultura, identidad y etnocentrismo: En esta diversidad, todos los hombres son educados dentro de una determinada cultura (representación de formas de enculturación), y el resultado final es una formación ideológica básica por la que *nuestra cultura* es la mejor (revisión del concepto de "bárbaro" en la antigüedad y en el presente, de las denominaciones que los grupos emplean para llamarse a sí mismos

y a los otros, etc), y los demás son extraños (imágenes y textos de las "rarezas" de otras culturas, chistes étnicos, etc) o inferiores (grupos marginales, racismo, etc). Análisis de los factores económicos, etc, que influyen en estas visiones exclusivistas de lo propio.

Reflexión sobre el hecho de que ninguna cultura existe ni evoluciona aislada, y que el contacto y el cambio cultural son una parte sustancial de cualquiera de ellas.

("... se asoma a la ventana, hecha de vidrio inventado en Egipto y, si está lloviendo, se calza unos zapatos de caucho, descubierto por los indios de Centroamérica, y coge un paraguas, inventado en Asia sudoriental. Se cubre la cabeza con un sombrero hecho de fieltro, material inventado en las estepas asiáticas... Mientras fuma lee las noticias del día impresas con caracteres inventados por los antiguos semitas sobre un material inventado en China, según un proceso descubierto en Alemania. A medida que se va enterando de las dificultades que hay en el extranjero, si es un consciente ciudadano conservador irá dando gracias a una deidad hebrea, en un lenguaje indoeuropeo, por haber nacido en el continente americano". *Linton, R., Estudio del hombre*, pp. 318-319).

La conclusión de esta zona deberá ser la defensa o reivindicación del relativismo cultural y el respeto a la diversidad.

4. *Todas las culturas*

Breve definición y visión histórica de la Antropología como ciencia que estudia la cultura / las culturas: definiciones, evolución del pensamiento antropológico científico y precientífico: viajeros, científicos naturales, funcionarios coloniales, antropólogos en el tercer mundo y en nuestra sociedad; postulados básicos de estudio; desarrollo de la disciplina en España; etc.

Áreas de descripción etnográfica [Ejemplo: Península Ibérica].

Al plantear las secciones expositivas de descripción etnográfica de la diversidad cultural, caben tres posibilidades básicas de muy diferente concepción.

La fórmula más simple y clásica es mantener cinco grandes zonas dedicadas a cada continente, y dentro de ellas un número variable de salas o espacios destinados a diversas áreas "geográfico-culturales", conectando estas salas de los diversos continentes con áreas intermedias que

describan los océanos que les separan, sus poblamientos y culturas, narren elementos de contacto histórico entre esos continentes, etc; solución que puede ofrecer inconvenientes ante la previsible irregular representación de las diferentes zonas del planeta.

Alternativa casi opuesta sería un planteamiento expositivo unitario, que tome en consideración los elementos culturales, al margen de su distribución geográfica (es decir, sin un establecimiento físico de "salas geográficas") para recalcar con más energía la similitud de la mecánica de funcionamiento de las diversas culturas al margen de las expresiones específicas de los elementos y estructuras; propuesta que suele acabar ofreciendo una visión excesivamente evolucionista de cada uno de los temas planteados.

Una tercera opción intermedia es plantear un número reducido de áreas "histórico-culturales" cuya definición permita hacer frente, dentro de la perspectiva global buscada, tanto al volumen real de fondos de cada región, como a la existencia de otros centros específicos (Museo de América, por ejemplo), a la vinculación histórica de cada región con España, y la significación de dichos vínculos.

Notas de museografía:

- *Establecimiento de una unidad de criterios en la definición de las áreas.*
- *Cálculo espacial sobre comprobación previa del porcentaje de distribución de fondos, y significatividad de los mismos, por "áreas".*
- *Centrar la exposición de cada área alrededor de (al menos) una reconstrucción ambiental de alguna de las culturas representadas.*

En todo caso, la idea global sería, en primer lugar, una exposición en cuyo planteamiento (en el presente nivel de comienzo de la elaboración) se tengan en cuenta más los conceptos a exponer que los materiales museográficos disponibles (que han de ser considerados por ahora como un simple apoyo, como un texto, una imagen, etc), y en segundo lugar una formalización física con una estructura de contenidos básicamente similar a la planteada para el Área de la Península Ibérica que describimos a continuación a modo de ejemplo, con interconexión múltiple entre nodos básicos, y creación de bucles internos de conexión entre los conceptos a desarrollar en el seno de cada uno.

De esta forma, el visitante nunca tendrá un camino único establecido dentro de cada bloque expositivo (al margen de que la rotulación o cualquier otro sistema de señalización pueda guiarle), sino que en cada sala o sección tendrá una serie de opciones entre las que deba decidir para continuar su visita, y en sucesivas visitas podrá ver la exposición de maneras secuenciales diferentes.

Notas de museografía:

- *La conexión múltiple entre salas, casi por simple geometría, quedará, en cualquier caso, limitada a tres, o excepcionalmente cuatro, líneas a partir de cada punto; no pueden conectarse todas las salas entre sí, a no ser que se entrecrucen los pasillos, lo cual podría ser confuso (salvo salas intermedias de conexión múltiple).*
- *Por otra parte, las "calles" que conecten los nodos han de ofrecer su información en una determinada dirección, y si el visitante, en su libertad de movimiento y asociación de conceptos, lo recorre en sentido inverso al de la narración puede verse confundido. Por ello esas informaciones deberán ser básicamente históricas o polarizadas, de forma que puedan leerse en ambos sentidos.*
- *Del mismo modo, las "calles" no pueden limitarse a ser simples espacios de transición, y ofrecer información textual o gráfica, a riesgo de que el público los perciba como zonas neutras y no "salas de piezas", no deteniéndose en sus contenidos.*

Olvidando ahora estos condicionantes, estrictamente físicos y solventables en parte mediante el diseño espacial, tomemos para cada bloque expositivo el menor número posible de aspectos básicos de nuestra actividad cultural. Por ejemplo:

1. Territorio
2. Historia
3. Actividades Económicas
4. Estructura Social
5. Vida doméstica-Individuo
6. Creencias
7. Actividades Lúdicas,

todos ellos evidentemente interconectados, y dentro de los cuales pueden irse desglosando subconceptos.

1. Territorio

Introducción geográfica que recogerá información básica sobre las principales características físicas de la Península Ibérica (relieve, precipitaciones, vegetación, recursos naturales, evolución del paisaje, etc), así como su actual estructura humana y productiva (hábitat y urbanismo, comunicaciones, cultivos, etc), con apoyo informático documental, mapas que resuman y combinen los elementos, etc.

Notas de museografía:

- *Los caracteres físicos pueden acumularse sobre la misma imagen, sea con mapas luminosos, sea con proyecciones superpuestas.*
- *La información "humana" debe producirse igualmente por acumulación sobre las imágenes obtenidas previamente: Sobre el mapa de caracteres físicos (íntegro o simplificado) se superpone el de cultivos o comunicaciones, sobre éste el de tipos de asentamiento o la trama urbana del país, etc.*
- *Modo gráfico de representar el desarrollo de las comunicaciones: A partir de un ejemplo de un recorrido cualquiera, ir señalando el tipo de caminos, el tipo de transporte y el tiempo necesario en diversos períodos históricos, combinando mapas, dibujos/grabados/fotos, e idealmente textos de la época.*
- *Sistema informático, de consulta individualizada o con pantalla de gran formato, que permita seleccionar o combinar cualquiera de las informaciones mostradas, consultar datos estadísticos, etc.*

La Sección Territorio podría tener una sala específica sobre Arquitectura, con la que se conectaría a través de las características climáticas y los recursos y materias primas que cada zona proporciona [y desde la que debería haber acceso, idealmente, por una parte a Vida doméstica (a través de la vivienda), y por otro a Actividades económicas (a través de las construcciones de trabajo, industriales y comerciales, y de los oficios relacionados)].

Como complemento se incluirán los oficios relacionados con la construcción, así como el análisis de los materiales y técnicas constructivas (tapial, adobe, ladrillo, piedra, madera, cubiertas de teja, pizarra, paja, ...), la tipología de elementos complementarios y servicios (glorias, hornos,

conducciones, etc), e incluso las prácticas sociales alrededor de la vivienda.

Notas de museografía:

- *Una posible sala de arquitectura: Un mapa central de la península con maquetas de los principales tipos "generales" de construcción, y alveolos periféricos con los materiales o elementos más característicos, su forma de fabricación o construcción, las áreas de empleo, etc.*

Aunque no sea posible reproducir el esquema ni la amplitud de la antigua idea de Caro Baroja ("Proyecto para la instalación al aire libre del Museo del Pueblo Español"), puede servir de modelo inicial.

- *Combinación de maquetas de volumen y maquetas esquemáticas de planta.*

Conexión de Territorio con

- Historia, a través del desarrollo del conocimiento geográfico (cartografía, etc) sobre la Península; de datos de demografía histórica, de distribución actual de la población; etc.
- Actividades económicas, a través de los mapas de los principales recursos naturales que cada región ofrece, de las redes de comunicación que se han ido generando a su alrededor, etc.
- Estructura social, a través, p.e., de la distribución geográfica de los centros de poder político y de decisión económica; del hábitat urbano de la población según ocupaciones, nivel económico, etc.
- Creencias, a través de la distribución espacial de los centros de culto y la propia ordenación geográfica de las jerarquías religiosas.

2. *Historia*

Introducción histórica, con mapas y paneles explicativos sobre las diversas etapas históricas básicas de la Península, y una visión de la España actual con explicación de su división administrativa, áreas culturales, lenguas, etc.

Notas de museografía:

El esquema de la sala puede plantearse a modo de gran cuadro sinóptico: Sobre un eje la cronología, sobre el otro las sucesivas configuraciones políticas, las áreas del mapa

peninsular que se incorporan a los Estados dominantes, para desembocar en la actual formación. Todo ello quizás acompañado de una gráfica lineal superpuesta que dé idea rápida del distinto ritmo de "mudanzas" políticas y conflictos internos según las épocas históricas.

Conexión de Historia con

- Territorio, (v. supra)
- Actividades económicas, a través de informaciones históricas sobre la economía de las diversas regiones, del análisis del desarrollo industrial, de los movimientos internos y externos de población, etc.
- Estructura Social, a través de una visión sintética de las diversas formas de organización política y gobierno que ha tenido el país y su organización interna; de la formación de los grandes grupos familiares y económicos; etc.

3. *Actividades Económicas*

Descripción y análisis de los medios a través de los cuales se realiza la producción de bienes, y se ordenan estas actividades.

Su contenido podría desarrollarse en varias salas, a partir de una general (en la que se establecerá la conexión con los demás módulos de exposición), que fueran detallando actividades productivas básicas, de transformación, y de distribución, y sus relaciones.

A la sala general de Actividades Económicas se desembocará en principio desde Historia (con información de desarrollo industrial y movimientos demográfico-laborales) o desde Territorio (con información geográfica sobre recursos naturales y redes de comunicación); aunque también podría hacerse desde Estructura Social (con información sobre grupos ocupacionales, etc).

El contenido básico de esta sala general debería ser la estructura económica o de organización de la producción: Una gráfica que explique el significado de "Actividades primarias, secundarias y terciarias" y su presencia en todo sistema económico, tomando la secuencia de actividades que desembocan en productos acabados y consumibles o utilizables (desde la producción primaria a la venta especializada); la interrelación entre recursos, trabajo, capital económico y propiedad, y su combinación en las economías

familiares tradicionales, su transformación hacia la empresa industrial; etc.

Notas de museografía:

- *Una secuencia productiva de un objeto cualquiera (preferentemente si no se va a mostrar en otras salas su proceso instrumental), desde la materia prima a un estante de una tienda, y el distinto número de oficios diferenciados, personal especializado, o máquinas, que aparecen en su realización según la organización productiva de distintas épocas.*
- *El equipamiento, la financiación y el personal de un ganadero o un agricultor doméstico frente a los mismos implementos de una empresa lechera o agropecuaria actual.*

Desarrollo de salas internas:

En ellas, por complejidad espacial, no cabe plantear conexiones secuenciales con el resto de los apartados. En todo caso una serie de "bucles" internos entre las propias subsalas.

Las *Actividades primarias* pueden aglutinarse en una sola sala, centrando el discurso en la preponderancia de ganadería y agricultura.

Actividades extractivas: Poca información genérica puede proporcionarse sobre estas actividades, salvo que sobrecarguemos de información estadística, etc, o se centre el discurso en las actividades más generales de producción de energía.

Notas de museografía:

- *El diseño ideal, de compleja estructura con graves dificultades físicas de implantación, sería una "sala en estrella" con varios pasillos de salida. A partir de la explicación básica de la sala, casi con un simple rótulo sobre los pequeños lienzos de pared de los vértices internos pueden irse indicando las actividades que se van a destacar, cuya información se encontrará ya en los correspondientes pasillos de salida: A través de la piedra, etc, conecta con la arquitectura; a través de metales con la forja y la herrería, y su producción de objetos varios para industria, equipamiento doméstico, agricultura, ...; a través de arcillas con alfarería, tejería, etc, que a su vez deberían conectar con arquitectura, equipamiento doméstico, ...; a través de las salinas conecta con alimentación; etc.*

Silvicultura: El aprovechamiento forestal es una tarea cada vez más limitada y especializada geográficamente, pero que permite recoger múltiples actividades básicas (leñadores, resinado, carboneo, extracción de corcho, transporte de materiales), y documentar prácticas de propiedad y trabajo comunal aún vigentes.

Sus productos son tan genéricos que, salvo la arquitectura, o la carpintería, resulta difícil establecer conexiones secuenciales con otras actividades (una serrería serviría para cualquiera de los dos ejemplos citados).

Recolección: Los productos de recolección siguen siendo abundantes (setas, higos chumbos, manzanilla y té, moras, algas, leña, helechos, etc), raramente con utillajes específicos, lo que hace difícil la materialización de la muestra.

Cabría recalcar su práctica genérica como aporte subsidiario a la economía doméstica, y la existencia ocasional de derechos consuetudinarios sobre zonas, etc, como muestra de su mayor importancia en épocas anteriores.

Caza: La caza, mayor y menor, sí permite abundante representación material (armas de fuego; trampas, cepos, lazos y otros sistemas que en su mayor parte son hoy ilegales).

Es una actividad viva que genera una fuerte actividad económica y social, aunque su finalidad alimentaria sea cada vez más reducida. Por ello su conexión secuencial con alimentación no tendría demasiado sentido, y tampoco parece tenerla una simple vinculación "deportiva". Debería buscarse la fórmula (y los datos) para aclarar el carácter social del "ir a pegar unos tiros" actual o las costosas licencias de caza mayor.

Pesca: La pesca marítima indudablemente sigue siendo un sector económico vivo, con una amplia variedad de técnicas y métodos, unas tradicionales y otras modernas, que por su tamaño apenas podrán mostrarse con elementos reales, sino a través de maquetas, modelos, filmaciones, etc.

En los últimos años se han desarrollado un buen número de estudios antropológicos sobre la pesca en España que nos permitirán interpretar las formas de vida de las comunidades de pescadores.

Más difícil, pero no de menos interés, será mostrar las prácticas de pesca fluvial (barcos de Tajo, Guadiana y Gua-

dalquivir, artes de río, etc), y de ribera, en su mayor parte desaparecidas y pobremente documentadas.

Dado que es improbable que en Actividades de transformación se pueda recoger una fábrica conservera, cabe plantearse la inclusión de las actividades de tratamiento posterior de la pesca (secado, adobos, etc) en esta misma sección.

Ganadería: La ganadería ofrece un amplio abanico de especies, actividades, zonas especializadas, desde las que derivar la explicación a casi todas las manifestaciones sociales, de la alimentación a la historia o la estructura social.

Si encontramos prácticas ganaderas domésticas (gallinas, conejos, apicultura, ...), o especializadas geográficamente (como la sericultura en Levante), otras se encuentran extendidas a todo el país como la cría de ganado porcino (ejemplo evidente, Extremadura), o los bovinos (ejemplo posible, ganadería pasiega) con sus variedades de animales de carne, leche, labor o reses bravas (ejemplo extremeño-andaluz), generando una inusual actividad económica.

Perfectamente documentable la decadencia de la ganadería doméstica con el desarrollo de la industrialización agraria y su repercusión en las explotaciones familiares. Igual ocurre con el ganado ovino, desde el cual es fácil además derivar hacia la organización social y la historia a través de la Mesta, la trashumancia, el comercio de lana, etc.

Notas de museografía:

– *Su vinculación secuencial principal, a través de los procesos de producción y transformación de carne, leche, conservas, etc, conectaría de nuevo con alimentación. Más fácil sería representar la conexión, a través de la producción y transformación de lana, pieles, etc, con textiles e indumentaria; a través de la cría de diferentes animales con transporte, agricultura, espectáculos; etc.*

Agricultura: La agricultura requerirá un amplio espacio expositivo por su diversidad y la riqueza de su historia, utillaje y técnicas.

Junto al tradicional ciclo general de los cereales, o los cultivos de huerta, los más extendidos en el país, deberán reflejarse la arboricultura frutícola, los forrajes de uso básicamente ganadero, los cultivos industriales (cáñamo, lino, algodón, lúpulo, ...) que proveen de materia a otros oficios,

y otras formas recientes e industrializadas (plataneras, cultivos enarenados, etc).

En particular para los cultivos destinados a la alimentación pueden desarrollarse los ciclos completos de tratamiento y elaboración posterior de los productos.

La agricultura da pie además para introducirse en aspectos de organización social, a través del análisis de las formas de propiedad según los diversos tipos de cultivo, la evolución y distribución de las explotaciones familiares y de las grandes propiedades, etc.

Notas de museografía:

- *Olvidando la vinculación secuencial alimentaria (salvo que tomáramos este caso como único y ejemplar que vinculara las actividades productivas con la alimentación), las secuencias más fáciles de establecer físicamente irían hacia los oficios textiles y la indumentaria, a través de los cultivos industriales y su transformación; o hacia la ganadería, a través de las explotaciones mixtas agrícola-ganaderas, los forrajes, cultivos para alimentación animal, aprovechamiento de rastrojeras, etc.*

Las *Actividades de transformación*. A partir de los productos básicos cuya obtención habrá tratado de explicarse en el apartado anterior, aparece una de las secciones ya clásicas de los museos etnográficos: la de los "talleres de oficios artesanos".

En parte puede recurrirse a la tradicional reconstrucción de ambientes (de carpintería, de herrería o joyería, de alfarería, ...), aunque para el conjunto, dada la reiteración del tipo de montaje en muchos museos etnográficos, sería más interesante tratar de agrupar y explicar en pequeñas salas o grandes vitrinas únicas las diversas actividades u oficios que parten de una misma materia base, formando a menudo una secuencia de elaboraciones primarias.

Notas de museografía:

- *"Gráfico-diorama" que ocupe toda la sala y que, a partir de las materias primas, muestre las ramificaciones, reconstruya la secuencia y niveles de las actividades de transformación, y la interrelación entre ellas hasta producir elementos acabados. En doblete, dos visiones enfrentadas: gráfico de las secuencias de oficios tradicionales y de la actual estructura industrial para producir esos mismos bienes.*

Las Actividades de distribución. Lograda una mínima visión de conjunto de las actividades productivas, el siguiente paso explicativo de la muestra sería la extensión social de los bienes elaborados.

Después del tránsito "técnico" por las actividades primarias y secundarias, esta sección devuelve a la exposición el contenido social global de la sala general de Actividades Económicas.

Tras una somera exposición de los diversos métodos de transporte, desde los clásicos y manuales (transporte humano, arrastre, con animales, etc) hasta los mecanizados actuales, el núcleo básico de esta sección debería ser el comercio (tiendas estables, comercio ambulante, mercados y ferias, comercio especializado y genérico, etc.); las prácticas contables, sociales y económicas generadas a su alrededor (trueque, pesas y medidas, intermediarios, finanzas, etc); y la distribución propiamente dicha del producto social (lugar idóneo para analizar la existencia de grupos "directamente" productivos y otros de organización, control, etc).

Notas de museografía:

- *Problema técnico museográfico clásico con la sección de transporte: el gran tamaño de la mayor parte de los elementos a exponer, y su exigencia de metros cuadrados y cúbicos, puede desequilibrar su importancia conceptual.*
- *Sala de actividades terciarias: una reconstrucción de una calle con diversos tipos de tiendas, bares y servicios al público, unas practicables y otras sólo fachada, terminando con tipos actuales: un supermercado, un banco, etc.*
- *Si el paso desde Historia, Territorio o Estructura Social lleva a la sala general de Actividades Económicas, debe analizarse en qué puntos conectan las salas de Vida Doméstica, Creencias, ...*

Conexión de Actividades Económicas con

- Territorio, (v. supra)
- Historia, (v. supra)
- Estructura social, a través del análisis de la organización económica (grupos ocupacionales, formas de propiedad, etc); del cambio tecnológico y social, las alteraciones del mercado de trabajo ante la modernización, la "reestructuración" de los sectores productivos; etc.

- Vida doméstica-Individuo, a través del aprendizaje del trabajo; de la apropiación de los recursos económicos; etc. (Buenos ejemplos podrían ser un cálculo de herencias de tierras, fábricas o negocios en una sucesión de matrimonios, o la progresiva integración del niño en el trabajo familiar, en la sociedad tradicional).
- Creencias, a través del patronazgo religioso sobre los oficios y actividades económicas; del ciclo anual-religioso de muchas labores; de su pérdida de importancia; etc.

4. *Estructura social*

Apartado destinado a la revisión general de la organización social, a través de la existencia de normas de conducta, clases sociales, sistemas de gobierno, instituciones jurídicas, servicios sociales, grupos marginales, etc.

A esta sección se accede desde Territorio, a través de la distribución geográfica de los centros de poder y las clases o grupos ocupacionales; desde Historia, a través de la visión temporal de la organización política y formas gobierno y de la formación de los grandes grupos familiares y económicos; desde Actividades Económicas, a través de la visión de grupos ocupacionales, formas de propiedad, mercado de trabajo, ...

Y desde ella se pasa (inversamente, se puede acceder también) a Vida doméstica, a través de los procesos educativos y las normas de conducta sociales, y a Creencias, a través del paralelismo entre la organización política civil y la jerarquía eclesiástica.

Será difícil representar el concepto de relación social, plantear una exposición de la vida social desconectada, separada linealmente, del resto de las manifestaciones que venimos comentando, ya que queda prácticamente vacía de contenido "materializable".

Deberán buscarse los elementos materiales que, a modo de símbolos, representan la enculturación, diferencian las clases y grupos sociales. Recoger la existencia de "servicios sociales públicos"... Para reflejar la organización política y jurídica quizás sea preferible recurrir a elementos e instituciones tradicionales como los concejos, guardas comunales, tribunales de aguas y pastos, etc, más que a la estructura actual, o a un análisis comparativo.

Notas de museografía:

- *Representación del concepto de relación social: Una "maqueta" con un individuo inserto en una serie de círculos que se entrecortan entre sí: relaciones familiares, relaciones laborales, relaciones vecinales, relaciones de grupo político o religioso, relaciones de dependencia administrativa/política, relaciones de "ocio" (pertenencia a un club de fútbol, asistencia a actos culturales, ..), etc. En cada uno de estos círculos secantes pueden dibujarse o maquetarse elementos identificativos del hecho, pequeñas figuras de otras personas que participan, e incluso "lazos" que las unen al individuo central.*
- *Estructura política y jurídica actual reflejada, sobre un mapa, con una pirámide tramada de cargos, desde el Presidente del Gobierno a los concejales municipales: Distintos colores para Administración central, autonómica, provincial, local, judicial, militar, ...*
- *Un programa informático que "explique" y permita reproducir/simular un proceso electoral, explicando las cuotas de representación, etc.*

Conexión de Estructura social con

- Territorio, (v. supra)
- Historia, (v. supra)
- Actividades económicas, (v. supra)
- Vida doméstica-individuo, a través de la normativa: procesos educativos; normas de urbanidad y conducta social general; etc.
- Creencias, a través de la visión del paralelismo e interrelación de la estructura jerárquica del poder civil y religioso; de la imbricación entre festividades religiosas y civiles.

5. *Vida doméstica-individuo*

Apartado destinado al análisis de las prácticas "privadas" de los individuos, desde su ciclo vital y sus relaciones con los demás individuos, hasta la vivienda que habitan, el modo en que visten, o su alimentación, pasando por las estructuras familiares y sus formas de organización y reproducción.

El ciclo vital, como inclusión del individuo en el grupo social, se verá indefectiblemente analizado a través de los

clásicos ritos de paso (nacimiento, matrimonio, muerte), conectando tanto con Creencias como con Actividades Lúdicas.

Para la vivienda ("hogar") pueden seleccionarse algunos modelos pertenecientes a diferentes épocas y clases sociales con los que reconstruir ambientes (cocina, sala, dormitorio, etc). [Idealmente debería conseguirse una conexión secuencial con la sección de Arquitectura].

La exposición de indumentaria, para dar coherencia al conjunto, y no tener una simple "sala de trajes", puede intentar resolverse mostrando el cambio de las prácticas dentro de los mismos grupos sociales u ocupacionales, en asociación con la vivienda, el ciclo vital, etc.

Las estructuras familiares dan pie a una difícil, pero interesante, representación de tipos de familia, formas de herencia y estrategias adaptativas, demográficas y económicas.

En todo caso debe huirse de una sucesión de salas de reconstrucción, buscando temas puntuales y significativos a través de los que representar la importancia y diversidad de manifestaciones de la vida doméstica y familiar: "Las comodidades domésticas" (sobre la vivienda en sí y el utillaje doméstico a lo largo del tiempo), "el simbolismo y el uso del espacio doméstico", "vida y educación familiar", "polifuncionalidad y especialización de los muebles" (del arcón a la diversidad actual), "prácticas alimentarias", etc.

Notas de museografía:

- *El apartado de familia podría plantearse por medio de audiovisuales de casos más o menos reales (con fotos, grabados y/o dibujos de los personajes o acciones) con narración en primera persona de varias genealogías en distintas situaciones económicas y legales.*
- *Analizar aplicación de "maquetas" de representación genealógico-residencial para explicar tipos familiares.*

Conexión de Vida doméstica-individuo con

- Actividades económicas, (v. supra)
- Estructura social, (v. supra)
- Creencias, a través de la "religiosidad doméstica"; de los ritos de paso vitales; etc.
- Actividades lúdicas, a través del ciclo vital.

6. Creencias

Apartado destinado a analizar la base ideológica de nuestra sociedad.

Inevitablemente deberá incluirse un apartado sobre prácticas "mágicas y supersticiosas" (curanderos, amuletos, adivinación, leyendas, ...), pero el interés principal ha de centrarse en las distintas creencias religiosas, y de manera particular en las prácticas que giran alrededor del catolicismo históricamente dominante: Principales devociones, centros de culto, prácticas instrumentales, grupos sociales especializados, objetos religiosos, ...

Quizás puede analizarse la religiosidad desde varias perspectivas: la religión individual y doméstica, la religión "grupal" o de colectividad, la religión oficial como estructura, ...; la religiosidad "lineal" del ciclo vital frente a la "circular" del ciclo anual; etc.

Por otra parte, deberá estudiarse si el apartado se centra exclusivamente en las creencias, o si incluye "creencias y conocimientos".

Conexión de Creencias con

- Territorio, (v. supra)
- Actividades económicas, (v. supra)
- Estructura social, (v. supra)
- Vida doméstica-individuo, (v. supra)
- Actividades lúdicas, a través del ciclo festivo anual; del teatro, la música y la danza de carácter religioso; etc.

7. Actividades lúdicas

Apartado que recoge la diversidad de las manifestaciones de arte popular, música y danza, juegos y deportes, espectáculos (toros, títeres, circo, etc), fiestas, ...

Notas de museografía:

- *Tras una sala de entrada con explicaciones "teóricas" sobre los conceptos de fiesta, juego, etc: Reconstrucción de un "área festiva" (sala o plaza con baile) y alveolos laterales, a modo de espectáculos anunciados, con salas donde se exhiban los juguetes, los fondos relacionados con toros y espectáculos, se puedan ver escenas de ocio, etc. La zona de salida podría ser la visión tras cristalera de una discoteca, ..., y un cine en el que proyectar diversas filmaciones.*

- Conexión de Actividades lúdicas con
- Vida doméstica-individuo, (v. supra)
 - Creencias, (v. supra)

ACQUA LIDA

Enero de 1995

Brooklyn Museum, New York.

Permanent Installation. Andean Reinstallation.
200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11238-6052. Telf.
(718) 638-5000, ext. 330. Fax (718) 638-3731.

Del 27 enero al 23 de abril de 1995

British Museum, Londres.

Exposición «East meets West: Chinese Trade Porcelain».
Room 91. Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG.
Telf. 0171-636 1555.

Hasta febrero de 1995

Licenciatura en Museología en Amsterdam.

La Academia Reinwardt, único centro de formación a tiempo completo que otorga en Europa el grado de bachiller en museología, inaugurará en septiembre de 1994 un programa de licenciatura en esta disciplina. Los cursos se impartirán en inglés y están abiertos a los graduados de todas las universidades. Comprenderá seis asignaturas, gestión, registro y documentación de colecciones, conservación, educación y comunicación, encuestas a los visitantes y diseño de las exposiciones. Inscripción, en septiembre de 1994 o en febrero de 1995.
Amsterdam School of the Arts, Department of Museology, Reinward Academy, Dapperstraat 315, 1093 B Amsterdam, Paises Bajos. Telf. (31) (20) 692 63 38 / 692 21 11. Fax (31) (20) 6925762 / 692 68 36.

Del 1 al 3 de febrero de 1995

Montecarlo, Mónaco.

XIV Conferencia «Imagina». Tema: Gráficos informatizados en la era cibernética.
INA-Imagina, 4 Ave. de l'Europe, 94366 Bry-sur-Marne cedex, Francia.

Del 2 febrero al 23 de abril de 1995

British Museum, Londres.

Exposición «Japanese Art in the British Museum».
Rooms 92-94. Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG. Telf. 0171-636 1555.

Del 20 al 23/24 de febrero de 1995

Washington, D.C., Estados Unidos.

Conferencia Nacional de la Smithsonian Institution: La Protección del Patrimonio Cultural. 24 de febrero: Taller sobre la planificación de emergencia.
Smithsonian Institution. Telf. (1 202) 287 3446. Fax (1 202) 287 2007.

Del 26 al 28 de febrero de 1995

Boston, Massachusetts, Estados Unidos.

Feria Comercial anual internacional de la conservación y la restauración.

Dr. Steven J. Schuyler, Show Director, RAI/EGI Exhibitions, Inc., Ten Tower Office Park, Woburn, MA 01801. Telf. (1 617) 933 9699. Fax (1 617) 933 8744.

9 de marzo de 1995

The Brooklyn Museum, New York.

Permanent Installation. African Reinstallation.

200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11238-6052. Telf. (718) 638-5000, ext. 330. Fax (718) 638-3731.

9 de marzo de 1995

The Brooklyn Museum, New York.

Permanent Installation. Oceanic Reinstallation.

200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11238-6052. Telf. (718) 638-5000, ext. 330. Fax (718) 638-3731.

Del 15 al 19 de marzo de 1995

Barcelona, España.

IV Congreso internacional de interpretación del patrimonio.

Anna Amin, Centre Europeu del Patrimoni, Passeig de Gracia 35, 08007 Barcelona. Telf. (34 3) 487 22 70. Fax (34 3) 487 26 90.

Hasta el 19 de marzo de 1995

Museo Canadiense de las Civilizaciones, Quebec.

Exposición «Places of Power».

100 Laurier Street P o Box. 3100, Station B, Hull, Quebec. J8X 4H2. Fax 819-776-7143.

Del 5 al 7 de abril de 1995

Amsterdam, Países Bajos.

IV Reunión internacional intermedia del comité del ICOM para la Conservación - Grupo de trabajo sobre la conservación de la artesanía del cuero y objetos afines. Tema: El tratamiento y la investigación del cuero (en particular los objetos etnográficos).

Pieter Hallebeek, Central Research Laboratory for Objects of Art and Science, Gabriël Metsustraat 8, 1070 Amsterdam. Telf. (31 20) 673 5162. Fax (31 20) 675 1661.

Hasta el 9 de abril de 1995

Museo Canadiense de las Civilizaciones. Quebec.

Exposición «From Cardle to Grave: Objects for Life».

100 Laurier Street P o Box. 3100, Station B, Hull, Quebec. J8X 4H2. Fax 819-776-7143.

Del 19 de abril al 9 de julio de 1995

British Museum, Londres.

Exposición «The Cribb Collection of Religious Medals».

Rooms 69a. *Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG. Telf. 0171-636 1555.***Del 24 al 27 de abril de 1995**

Caracas, Venezuela.

Cuarto coloquio regional ICOGFFOM-LAM. Encuentro internacional: Patrimonio, museos y turismo. Curso Latinoamericano de turismo cultural.

*María Ismenia Toledo, Presidenta, ICOM Venezuela, Parque Central, Apartado Postal 17316, Caracas, Venezuela 1015-A. Telf. (58-2) 577 04 57; Fax (58 2) 577 49 46, (58 2) 33 44 96.***Hasta el 7 de mayo de 1995**

Museo Canadiense de las Civilizaciones, Quebec.

Exposición «Chiefly Feasts - The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch».

*100 Laurier Street P o Box. 3100, Station B, Hull, Quebec. J8X 4H2. Fax 819-776-7143.***Del 28 de mayo al 3 de junio de 1995**

La Granja. España.

Reunión anual del Comité Internacional del vidrio.

*Olga Hein, Fundación Central Nacional del Vidrio, Paseo del Pocillo, 1, 40100. La Granja de Sain Ildefonso, Segovia, España. Telf. (34 21) 47 17 12. Fax (34 21) 47 15 72.***De junio a agosto de 1995**

British Museum, Londres.

Exposición «Europe in India: Indian Paintings and their European Prototypes».

*Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG. Telf. 0171-636 1555.***Del 1 de junio al 29 de octubre de 1995**

Museo Canadiense de las Civilizaciones, Quebec.

Exposición «Kimonos by Itchiku Kubota».

*100 Laurier Street P o Box. 3100, Station B, Hull, Quebec. J8X 4H2. Fax 819-776-7143.***Hasta el 4 de junio de 1995**

Museo Canadiense de las Civilizaciones, Quebec.

Exposición «Labour of Love: The bridal Lingerie of Miss Madeleine Stuart Cassels».

100 Laurier Street P o Box. 3100, Station B, Hull, Quebec. J8H 4H2. Fax. 819-776-7143.

Del 6 al 10 de junio de 1995

Saint Paul, Minnesota, Estados Unidos.

«Ética de la conservación: los dilemas planteados».

American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 1717 K St. NW, Ste. 301, Washington, D. C. Telf. (1 202) 452 9545. Fax (1 202) 452 9328.

Del 9 de junio al 29 de octubre de 1995

PTT Museum, Holanda.

Exposición «Naarde de Gordel van Smaragd». (Connections between the Netherlands and the former Dutch Indies).

Del 16 al 27 de junio de 1995

Brno, República Checa

Escuela Internacional de Verano de Museología de la UNESCO. Tema: Comunicación y educación en el museo, creación de exposiciones.

ISSOM Secretariat, Rectorate of Masaryk University, Zerotínovo nám. 9, 601 77 Brno. Telf. y Fax (42 5) 421 28 266.

Del 25 al 29 de junio de 1995

Boulder, Colorado, Estados Unidos.

Programa de Administración de Museos 1995. Tema: Planificación para el mañana.

Victor J. Danilov, Museum Management Program, University of Colorado, 250 Bristlecone Way, Boulder, CO 80304. Telf. (1 303) 473 9150. Fax (1 303) 443 8486.

Del 25 al 30 de junio de 1995

Munich, Alemania.

Curso de administración de museos.

Abt. Bildung, Deutsches Museum, 80538 Munich. Telf. (49 89) 217 9294. Fax (49 89) 217 9324.

Del 1 al 7 de julio de 1995

Stavanger, Noruega.

XVIIª Conferencia General del ICOM. Tema: «El museo y las comunidades».

ICOM 1995, Arkeologist Museum in Stavanger, P.O. Box 478, N-4001, Stavanger, Norway. Telf. (47 4) 53 41 40. Fax (47 4) 53 11 81.

Del 18 al 22 de julio de 1995

Saint Paul, Minnesota, Estados Unidos.

VIII Conferencia anual de estudios sobre los visitantes.

Stephan Carlson, University of Minnesota, 340 Coffrey Hall, 1420 Eckless Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108. Telf. (1 612) 625 1259. Fax (1 612) 625 1731.

De julio a octubre de 1995

British Museum. Londres.

Exposición «Scottish Banknotes».

*Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG. Telf. 0171-636 1555.***Del 31 de agosto al 22 de septiembre de 1995**

Brno. República Checa.

Escuela Internacional de Verano de Museología de la UNESCO. Tema: Museología general.

*ISSOM Secretariat, Rectorate of Masaryk University, Zerottново nám. 9, 601 77 Brno. Telf. y Fax (42 5) 421 28 266.***Del 11 al 15 de septiembre de 1995**

Budapest, Hungría.

Conferencia del Comité Internacional para la Conservación, Grupo de trabajo sobre los textiles: Tema: Distintos enfoques para la conservación de los textiles (métodos, ética, ciencia).

*Agnes Tímar-Balázsy, HNM, 1450 Budapest 9 Pf. 124. Telf. (36 1) 21 01 330. Fax (36 1) 21 01 338.***Del 25 al 28 de septiembre de 1995**

Semur en Auxois, Francia.

Conferencia Internacional del Comité del ICOM para la Conservación - Grupo de trabajo sobre los metales.

*Sres. MacLeod, Pennec o Robbiola, 8 rue des Tanneries, 21440 Semur en Avois. Telf. (33) 80 96 64 09. Fax (33) 80 97 29 43.***Del 28 de septiembre de 1995 al 28 de septiembre de 1997**

Museo Canadiense de las Civilizaciones, Quebec.

Exposición «Hold On to Your Hats».

*100 Laurier Street P o Box. 3100, Station B, Hull, Quebec. J8X 4H2. Fax 819-776-7143.***Del 9 al 10 de noviembre de 1995**

Edimburgo, Escocia.

VII Conferencia Internacional de la Asociación de Documentación de los Museos.

*MDA, Lincoln House, 347 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB; 4DH, Reino Unido. Telf.(44 223) 242 848. Fax (44 223) 213 575.***Del 15 al 17 de noviembre de 1995**

Nedlands, Western Australia.

Conferencia anual de Museos de Antropología.

Convenor: Ms. C. Ahoy, Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Kentucky Street, Armidale NSW 2351. Telf. +619-67-711-249. Fax: +619-67-714-579.

Del 17 de noviembre de 1995 al 7 de septiembre de 1996

Museo Canadiense de las Civilizaciones, Quebec.

Exposición «Living in Canada in the Time of Camplain».

100 Laurier Street P o Box 3100, Station B, Hull,

Quebec. J8X 4H2. Fax 819-776-7143.

Del 21 al 25 de noviembre de 1995

Nedlands, Western Australia.

Congreso de los Museos Australianos, 1995; tema:
«Museums: Communicating Cultures».

Convenor: c/ -Carillion/Conference Management Pty

Ltd., P.O? Box 177, Red Hill Qld 4059. Telf. +617-

368-2644. Fax +617-369-3731.

Del 30 de noviembre de 1995 al 29 de enero de 1996

Museo Canadiense de las Civilizaciones, Quebec.

Exposición «Old Nova Scotian Quilts».

100 Laurier Street P o Box. 3100, Station B, Hull,

Quebec. J8X 4H2. Fax 819-776-7143.

Del 1 de marzo al 14 de julio de 1996

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